

LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 633
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

Was Lenin a Great Man?

Anna Louise Strong

ALEX PHILLIPS
405 Galbreath Ave.
New Castle, Pa. 16101

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Felt to the Ends of the Earth?

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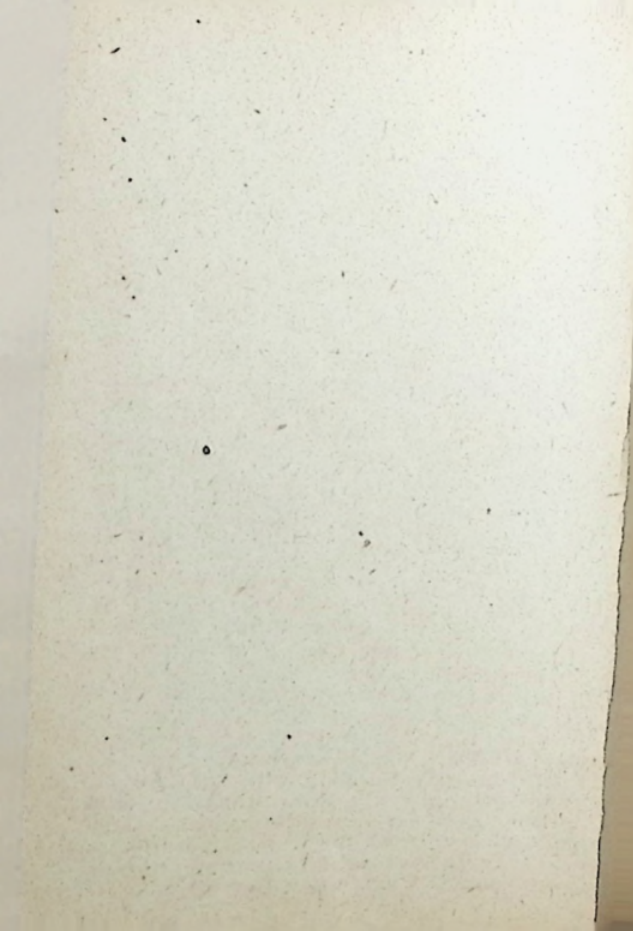
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WAS LENIN A GREAT MAN?

WHAT WAS THE SECRET OF HIS INFLUENCE FELT TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH?

Of all men in our generation, history will have most to say about Lenin. Other great men stand as a succession of their fellows. He bursts forth out of darkness to create something new. Something new that already holds in its grip vast populations from the Baltic to the Pacific, from the Polar Seas to the warm waters of the south; that reaches out to affect all Asia; that goes on beyond his own lifetime and challenges with its program the ends of the earth. Probably never in history has it been possible for one man in his lifetime to affect the lives of so many millions of people. Not till modern times have the conditions existed for such influence. To the peasants of the greatest stretch of country on earth, he is known as the leader who gave them at last their land. To the city workers, less in number but politically more awakened, he is the comrade who gave them dominion over government and industry. To Russian patriots, even old czarist generals and anti-communist intellectuals who suffered the loss of property, he is none the less the careful planner who brought Russia through wars which the whole world

launched against her, and laid anew the foundations of national greatness. To revolutionists throughout the world he is the ultimate source of authority and guidance; to tens of millions of plain people in every land, he is the successful prophet of a new era of history.

His connection with the era he predicted and helped to bring into being is so close that the history of Lenin is less that of a man than of a movement. The story of his life is the story of the Russian Revolution and the Communist Movement throughout the world. Unlike some great men who stand as isolated personalities unconditioned by any special age or nation, his life and greatness was bound in every intimate detail to the concrete life of his day and generation. His whole being was shaped by the clashing problems in which he grew up; his greatness rests on his careful and courageous evaluation of those forces, and his cool and ruthless use of them to the ends he served.

WHAT MAKES LENIN GREAT?

Scores of attempts have been made to interpret the greatness of Lenin, and explain why men who have never seen him or spoken with him felt his power, and what was the secret of his influence felt to the ends of the earth. All mention his simplicity, his direct responsiveness to the thoughts of common people, his honesty in admitting mistakes, his uncompromising, even unscrupulous tenacity in carrying through whatever seemed to him a matter of principle. Stalin describes especially his imperturbability in defeat as well as in success, and describes how in the darkest hours he thought in terms of the inevitable coming victory, yet how in the moment of victory he remained calmly critical, always warning the enthusiasts of the many difficulties yet to be encountered.

All of these characteristics go back to his fundamental attitude towards human progress, and his own share in it or the share of any individual person. From early youth his attitude was that of the careful, honest student of economic forces and of those groups in human society which have in them new creative power. He never over-estimated the importance of himself or of any individual. Knowledge of social and economic forces might make it possible, he felt, to hasten or retard or organ-

ize or direct the inevitable march of history, but could not make it any less or any more inevitable. Thus he escaped the delusions of personal grandeur which have destroyed many great names of history, and retained to the end a simple, direct and uncompromisingly honest vision.

This basic attitude expressed itself in every side of his life. In his personal habits and relations it gave him the simplicity which made him comprehensible to the most ordinary worker or peasant. In his political technique it gave him the unique method of winning perfect confidence by fearless admission of mistakes. It gave him as a life-long job the study of forces which create human progress, and a recognition that the path to power lay in the understanding and use of those basic forces.

From one standpoint, Lenin may be said to have risen to greatness through unbending will, ruthless realism and lifelong study of the road to power. His hundreds of pamphlets are no literary productions, covering wide fields of knowledge, as are the writings of his predecessor Plekhanof. They are clear, precise, biting discussions of just one question: "How to get power and how to keep it." All his life he discussed just this, with relentless insistence on what seemed even minor details: how to keep the ranks of the party pure; how to make of it a fighting force; how to win allegiance of necessary groups without giving them control; when and how to rise and seize command; what to do afterwards; what group

in the nation it was necessary to conciliate and what groups one might defy.

— Dry technical questions, all of these, in the science of political power. But power was not to him the cheap, vulgar thing of most politicians, a personal eminence of place, giving luxury and prestige. It was not even the military glory of a Napoleon, advancing the grandeur of a single nation. He saw power as the lifting of the whole race of man one step forward in history. For this it was worth while making life-long study and throwing individual life itself away. For this it was needful to understand the clashing groups of society, the stresses and strains of modern civilization, and to know which social class had in it the power to do the next big job of history.

He studied power, not for himself but for the revolution which he believed inevitable in the onward march of mankind. How to ride and organize the storming upheaval which would be produced by contradictions inherent in modern society; how to choose and train those classes which had within them strength to create a new economic order; how, at last, to organize mankind for the conquest of nature and the ultimate harmony of man with man; this was what Lenin meant by the study of power. Relying on invincible forces of evolution, which he could only interpret, and smooth channels for—he had, almost alone among great men, no belief in personal greatness, no thought that he, or any man, was finally responsible. He escaped the worries of self-importance. He

could laugh with good cheer and lightness of heart even at his own hunger.

The classes he chose to understand and organize were the industrial workers, reinforced by the peasants. He was simple in all his approach to them. When he spoke, his homely illustrations were not beyond the vocabulary and experience of the peasant or industrial worker. He used, says one of his friends, such direct simple language without strain or affectation, that it always seemed to the workers and peasants that Lenin guessed their thoughts, that he was speaking of that which they themselves were thinking.

It is one element of his greatness that he was able to preserve this close approach to the most ignorant worker and most backward peasant, even while he was for many years living in exile, out of any easy contact with Russian life. But he had an ability, drawn no doubt from early days in the Russian countryside, strengthened by years of exile in Siberia, and consciously reinforced by his political theories of the classes necessary for the revolution, to listen even at long distance for the voice of the peasant and worker. He knew how to select a simple, comprehensive slogan which united millions of people by expressing their common desire. From conversation with individual workers, from chance talks with peasant men and women, he was able to sense what people were thinking and what troubled

ness from any demands for personal comforts or privileges. His two-room apartment in the Kremlin was plain even to bareness. The dining-room was small and narrow, a simple oil-cloth covered the table, the only decorations were flower-pots on the window-sills. The bedroom was undecorated; the blankets plain, almost like soldiers' blankets. It was an apartment designed for a man absorbed in work, not in the comforts of living; a man always on duty. The same simplicity was maintained in his clothing. He was often seen with patched shoes and threadbare jacket. He set the example which he expected all leaders, and in fact all Communists, to follow, that of a simplicity and economy which demanded in return for unremitting labors only enough food and shelter and clothing to enable him to go on working. The standards of the Communist Party today, which I have discussed in my Little Blue Book, "How the Communists Rule Russia" (No. 1147), and which have made them unique among the world's governing groups, are due to the example as well as the precept of Lenin.

When I entered Russia in 1921, I found that everywhere in the land, all classes knew and honored this personal economy of Lenin, and understood quite well that it grew out of his desire for honest equality among all whom he considered his comrades. They knew that the gifts of special food or special fuel which were sent in by admiring peasants to "Comrade Lenin" were turned over by him to the common storerooms, and that he restricted himsel

to the rationed diet of black bread and the meager publicly served meal. In the famine area I have heard peasants cursing corrupt local authorities, but ending: "We will send to Moscow about it. Our Ilych is a good man." . . . I have heard them discuss sins of communists and the human frailties that made communism in their judgment impracticable, but they ended: "This communism Ilych tells of—that is truly the right way to live." Even an embittered French governess formerly employed by a noble Russian family, and stranded by the revolution in famine-stricken Samara, ended her curses of the "barbarous, lazy, dirty Russians" by a tribute to Lenin, "One honest man—but what can he do in a nation of thieves?"

From the Arctic Circle to the warm shores of the Crimea, in villages and factories and children's homes and government departments, only once in five years in the Soviet Union did I meet a word of bitterness against Lenin. For while to the outside world he remained the leader of upheaval, to the dwellers in Russia he was already thought of, years before his death, as the steady preacher of order and discipline, and hard work, and production, and punctuality and efficiency, and all those other unromantic virtues whose pursuit in Russia is the height of today's romance.

One characteristic of his political technique deserves mention because of its uniqueness; he never disguised or minimized mistakes. He never deluded himself or his followers with false optimism. Not once through six years

of revolution till his death did he prophesy sure success. Instead, he emphasized difficulties, dangers, shortcomings, saying coolly: "But there is a *chance* of success, if we conquer these things." In his last significant message to the Russian Communist Party, he warned them clearly that their progress towards socialism was not even yet certain, but would surely be defeated unless they eliminated the bureaucracy and red tape which clogged the state machine.

On one occasion the opposition within his own party made much of the inefficiency of the various public services, mentioning the sabotage of officials in the State Bank and other departments, and sounding a note of pessimism. The tactics of any other political leader would be to claim successes. Lenin's tactic was to overstate the case of his opponents. When he rose to answer them, he claimed that they had not given truly the magnitude of the difficulties. "They tell you," he said, "that of the employees in the State Bank, only twenty are working. I tell you—there are only five working. They tell you that in such and such a department there are only fifteen persons really on the job. I tell you—there are only three. They say that the state of affairs is very bad—no, comrades, it is worse, it is disgusting. But"—here he came forward and paused, staring straight at his dismayed hearers, adding: "The State Bank is open; it has begun to do business." . . . Suddenly his hearers realized that even this meager achievement, secured under unparalleled obstacles, was the first halting step towards success. But they

realized also, that not for one moment dare they risk a rest or relinquish the battle.

As a preliminary to every year's conference, Lenin summed up the mistakes of the past few months. As a New Year's greeting to a friend over the telephone he said: "Let us hope we do fewer stupid things this year than last." He constantly berated the rotten bureaucracy of his government and the shallow idealisms of his followers. He said frankly on necessary occasions: "At this point we must make a bitter retreat, for we are not strong enough to do otherwise. By accepting this severe humiliation, we shall gain a breathing space to organize for a later victory." He made remarks like this, not merely to a trusted few, but to the great masses of hungry, despairing soldiers, peasants and workers. He pursued these amazing tactics in utter sincerity with complete carelessness of personal reputation and complete intent that the whole nation should understand and learn from every mistake and failure.

The result is that he has been trusted more completely and through greater hardships than any ruler on earth has been trusted. The result of his open discussion of blunders is, rather surprisingly, that he is considered "the leader who never made a major mistake." Yet even with this example before their eyes, none of his successors have been great enough to follow him. A Communist official said to me cynically: "The old man began Party Congresses with a list of our mistakes; but today we begin them with a list of triumphs." . . .

Only a very great leader dares pursue the tactic which Lenin used successfully.

The ruthless firmness of Lenin's will is emphasized in all descriptions of him. When he had once convinced himself of the need of certain measures, he allowed no emotional or personal considerations to sway him. Again and again he broke with close comrades when he believed that they were hindering the cause of the proletariat. In such cases he never hesitated to denounce them in violent terms, to undermine them by any and all tactics, using even personal slanders as weapons. In his view the end justified the means, or as he put it: "Who wills the end, wills the means also." For men who claimed to desire socialism, but were unwilling to face all the steps involved, he had only scorn and expulsion from the party councils.

In a sense, the greatest single achievement of Lenin was the organization of the party which today carries on his work. Planning as he did for a goal far beyond his own lifetime, he did not end, as most great men have, with the taking and keeping of power; but before his own strength was broken by the greatness of the struggle, he had already built the machine which could go on without him, fit to carry forward beyond his own life and their lives, the plans he had visioned for his country and for the world. This machine, the Communist Party, is described in my Little Blue Book, "How the Communists Rule Russia (No. 1147). It was formed step by step in accordance with the plans of Lenin, beginning thirty

years ago. It is like no other political party in the world, and for its uniqueness Lenin is responsible, from the early days when he insisted on making it a disciplined fighting force, excluding mere "believers," down to the days of his death when already there appeared the subsidiary organizations of Young Communists and Pioneers, the second and third fighting lines in his program. The slogan which upon Lenin's death flamed across Russia: "Lenin died, but Leninism lives," indicates their whole-hearted intention to carry on the program as he left it.

To some extent it is a dangerous inheritance he left them. The unscrupulous tactics used in eliminating opponents; the ruthless doctrine of end justifying means, is one thing in the hands of a great genius who understands both the end and the true means to reach it, but becomes a two-edged sword in the hands of lesser men. Only time will show if Lenin's successors can wield his weapons without undue damage. Today, at any rate, the organization as he has left it has shown remarkable powers of discipline combined with flexibility, and is proving a governing machine unique in history in its ability to carry forward a continuous yet infinitely complex program.

With all his disregard and even denial of personal importance, Lenin yet remains a personality supremely important, who understood and molded the forces of history. Without him there would indeed have been a great upheaval and chaos; this outburst was created by events and conditions, not by any man. But

without him there would not have been the final success of organization; there might well have been of Russia merely a vast territory of broken peoples, each under its own dictator, all of them the playthings of international imperialism. The knowledge and will and organizing genius of Lenin thrown on the scale was a factor in tipping the balance. If he was the product of the conditions of his epoch, he was also a force in the creation of a new epoch.

Lenin has won allegiance from men of all nations, from the sophisticated communist leaders who knew him closely to distant simple people who can only guess across alien lands what it was he fought for. His greatest helper, Trotzsky, who on many concrete occasions opposed him strongly, could cry sincerely: "When Comrade Lenin lay ill and struggling with death, our own lives seemed so insignificant, so unimportant."

Shortly after Lenin's death I was talking with a woman from the rough farm lands of Western Washington, whose interests seemed circumscribed by the keeping of poultry. I mentioned Lenin's name and her eyes brightened. "What does Lenin mean to you?" I asked curiously, "out here where you never see anything about him but an inch of misrepresentation in the papers?"

"I don't suppose I know much about him," she said, after a pause. "I am too busy and far away. But to me he seems always like the opening of a door. A new door for human thought and progress. He found the door and

opened it and took a whole nation through with him. Like Franklin and electricity, you know; we know more about electricity than Franklin, but he helped start it. And Lenin, maybe he made lots of mistakes and did things he didn't have to; I'm too far away to know. But he found a door. Someday everyone will be walking through it, as easy as we turn on electric light."

“What kind of a door do you mean?” I asked.

“All of us folks who work,” she answered, “you can't deny that we are slaves to something or other. Maybe it's the boss, and maybe it's the landlord, or maybe it's railroads and commission men. The landlord and the boss—they are slaves in another way. No one is free or secure. But Lenin opened a way. Russia is trying it, with the folks that work controlling the government, and the government running most of the industries and the oil and banks and railroads. That's how it is, isn't it?” she asked anxiously, wondering if it was really as good as that.

“Yes, that's how it is,” I answered, surprised that across so much fog and darkness she should have seen so clearly.

“Well, that's something big. Bigger than electricity. You can't tell where it will end. It doesn't surprise me if it works badly at first; it would take a lot of time to get it working right. But ever since I heard of it, I feel it's the Open Door. It's the way out—from slavery.”

LENIN'S LIFE AND TIMES

The knowledge of Lenin's origin goes back only to his grandfather, who was registered as a townsman in the city of Astrakan. Lenin's sister, in writing what she knows of the family's antecedents, says: "I think he was a small civil servant but cannot certify. I know for certain that his oldest son, Vassili, who was later Lenin's uncle, was an office clerk; but I do not know if it was in a government or private establishment." Years before Lenin's birth, when his father Ilya was still a small boy, this grandfather died, and the burden of the family fell on the oldest son Vassili, who, true to the Russian family obligations, gave up his own plans of education and marriage to take up the support of his mother, two sisters and little brother Ilya. Out of this sacrifice came the education of Ilya in the university of Kazan and his subsequent career as teacher, inspector of schools and finally director of village schools in Simbirsk province.

Just as Lenin's own life was later to embody the revolutionary struggle of his own generation, so the life and work of Lenin's father, Ilya, embodied the Russian struggle for liberty as it was seen in his day. He devoted himself unsparingly to the education of the backward peasantry, seeing in this the road to Russia's progress and freedom. The education which he had gained at the cost of a brother's life-

long sacrifice, he gave back to the villages of Simbirsk province, traveling weeks by horseback before the railroad came to the province. and organizing under these difficult conditions some 400 schools with 20,000 pupils. This was the service which in those days attracted the best of the Russian youth. As a result of his work Ilya Ulyanov was ennobled to the ranks of the petty nobility. But to the end of his life he remained a democrat by nature, never associating with the rest of the nobility except when they also were interested in education.

"The last years of his life," writes Lenin's sister, "were deeply disappointing. The village schools were replaced by church schools; the attraction of work for public education passed away." . . . Thus for Ilya Ulyanov, as for the Russian idealists of his generation, the dream of freedom through education ended in darkness.

There followed the dream of Russian freedom through terrorist assassination. In this Alexander, the older brother of Lenin, took part. The generation to which he belonged had lost faith in educating the peasants under czarist conditions; the dark rural population proved slow, unresponsive, timid to learn. The impatient freedom-loving students, exasperated by unbearable acts of tyranny towards the people, yet feeling their own lack of numbers, believed that by openly assassinating the worst of their rulers they might terrorize the others into granting some modicum of liberty.

It was a naive faith, bravely held and bravely died for. Eager young men and girls of good family bound themselves to heroic, disciplined lives for the sake of their high calling, which was to go out with revolver and bomb to do murder. They were torn to pieces and tortured to death by soldiers; and from each new martyr their comrades made a new appeal for freedom. Lenin's brother, Alexander, was one of these sacrifices; he was executed at the age of twenty-one for a plot on the life of Alexander the Third.

The character of Lenin's mother is shown by her interview with the chief of police in Leningrad, where she later went to ask for permission for her son to go abroad. "You ought to be very proud of your children," said the sneering czarist official. "One of them has been hanged and the other has the noose around his neck."

Lenin's mother replied with extreme dignity: "Yes, I am proud of my children." From such courageous revolutionary stock came the young Vladimir Ilych Ulianov, who was to rise to leadership by the name of Lenin.

It was the older brother Alexander who first gave young Vladimir Ilych a copy of Marx's *Das Capital*, a forbidden book hard to obtain in Russia. They discussed it on long train journeys and on trips by horse across the plain of their home province. Alexander stood at the parting of the ways between the old Terrorists and the new Marxists; but Vladimir Ilych was from the beginning a fighter for this new road to revolution.

He had seen two disillusionments: his father who sought the slow education of the peasants; his brother who sought the swift disastrous road of personal daring. Lenin planned from the beginning carefully and scientifically, a different road to the overthrow of czarism and the seizure of power. Not by scattered peasants, nor idealistic students, but by the hard-knit organization of a working-class which did not yet exist in Russia.

Already in his student days Vladimir Ilych Ulianov was known as a coming leader. Born in 1870, he graduated from Simbirsk College in 1887 at the age of seventeen, at the head of his class. He was not permitted to enter the Petersburg University because of his revolutionary leanings; he entered Kazan University, but was expelled for organizing students. He applied for permission to go abroad to study but this was refused by the czarist government. He continued his studies alone and in 1891 was permitted to take the examination in Petersburg Law Faculty, receiving the degree of Assistant Barrister.

During all this time his studies in the doctrines of Marx had increased and his power as a convincing speaker had already become known among student groups in many cities, where he routed opponents of much greater experience. Even before he went to Petersburg he had organized in Samara a small but firm group of revolutionists who were discussing the new method of revolution, based on an organized working class. Lenin himself tells how, when he came to the capitol, he "Walked

the streets searching for a Marxist." There was none. The intellectuals were Narodniki, while the working-class was only beginning to awake to its need of a few kopeks advance in wages. Lenin himself helped to build the first working-class organizations and the first group of Marxist intellectuals; his special interest was in establishing connections between these two groups through a "Central Group for Guidance of the Labor Movement."

Comrade Fisher, a member of the Old Bolsheviks, who used to go to Lenin for revolutionary instruction back in the early nineties, remembers to this day the sharp clear doctrine Lenin taught him. "I was a worker in the shipyards then. Lenin could not go to workers' meetings; he would have been arrested. But special workers from every group would go to him for instruction, and bring his message back to other workers. I saw him thus half a dozen times; he sort of polished off my education; then he told me what books to read and said I should go ahead alone.

"He said that capitalism would come in Russia. At that time there was only agriculture and feudalism and a few big mines and shipyards owned by the state. The Narodniki said that the Russian people were different from other people, and would go straight to a form of national socialism through the nature of the peasants. Lenin said this was a lie; that the peasants and the intellectuals would not make socialism. He said there would be capitalism, and that capitalism would make wage-workers, and only these wage-workers

would be able at last to make the revolution. . . . I was a wage-worker—that was why he was teaching me. I and my kind were the folks who must prepare to make the revolution.”

Such was the message which Lenin hammered into the consciousness of this young worker with such firmness that after six talks with Lenin he remembers it for thirty years through the prisons and exiles into which it led him. It was a message concerned chiefly with the tactics of seizing power; it stated what class in modern society had the strength for creating a new order. The class of industrial workers, organized by capitalism around factories and machines—this was the basically powerful class in modern civilization, which could be organized to take power and to create a new social order. The details of that new social order concerned Lenin less than the technique by which it was to be created. Once establish the dictatorship of the organized industrial workers, and let them begin to organize the collective ownership and use of the tools of production, and they would work out step by step the new forms needed. Ultimately these new forms would lead to the absorption of all social classes into one class of productive “workers,” to the abolition of all exploitation of man by man, and eventually to the dissolving of all forms of compulsion including the state itself. How long this would take and what new forms of economic and social life would arise in the process, co-operatives, collectives, communes, municipal and state owner-

ship; or what would be the detailed forms of the new society, Lenin did not outline with any finality. It was enough that it should be a society built by the collective will and effort of the working elements, creating its own new forms out of an increasing collective experience. All of Lenin's writings are concerned with the technique of step by step advance along the various stages of this road.

These workers, however, Lenin saw, must have leaders and organizers, especially in the early stages of their complete suppression. These leaders, he declared, must be professional revolutionists, giving their whole lives to the Revolution, studying the road to successful revolt always, ruthlessly, steadily. They should not be men whose support depended in any way upon the success of the existing order. They must be a disciplined force, consisting not merely of men who believed in the revolution, but who put their daily acts under the orders of a central organization.

Lenin split the Social Democrat Party of Russia by this view. The older leaders opposed him; he would frighten away the liberals, they said. But Lenin wished exactly to frighten away the liberals. He said that whatever their views, if they were not committed by disciplined action, and especially if their means of livelihood was bound up with the present economic system, as in the case of intellectual workers, lawyers, teachers, writers, then when the terrible hour of revolution struck they would be only amateurs without nerve to carry it through, and would even draw back and

become defenders of the old established order. He therefore pursued always the tactics of exclusion; he tried not to conciliate shaky followers but to repel them, wishing only those who could not be repelled.

Holding this view of the revolutionary power of an organized working-class under the leadership of professional revolutionists, he aimed to use even every trifling demand to unite and stimulate the workers. Later in his life workers from far Siberia would say to him: "Do you remember how in the early nineties we stirred up an agitation of hot water for tea at railway stations by means of a certain illegal leaflet." An early pamphlet by Lenin, "On Fines," is another example of his use of economic abuse to raise a political issue.

At the same time that Lenin was connecting the workers' economic problems with political demands, he was engaged in close theoretical reasoning on questions of revolutionary theory, cutting like a knife through the vagueness of contemporary thinking and steadily developing its program of the technique of power. He went abroad in 1895 to make his first connection with the famous Russian revolutionary leaders who were living in exile. Shortly after his return he was thrown into prison, and after a year's confinement was sent for three years to Siberia. During all this time he was increasing his grasp of the theory and technique of revolutionary uprising, studying how the working-class might grasp power and keep it. He was becoming the chief of those "profes-

sional revolutionists" which he said the workers needed.

In prison he produced his work on "The Development of Capitalism in Russia," proving with facts and figures how capitalism was steadily developing, how it was ruining the peasantry and producing a class of landless laborers, how it was ruining handicraftsmen and making the worker dependent on the factory and the machine, proving that neither for the worker nor the peasant was there any way out except by seizing political power through revolution. In his Siberian exile he wrote a masterly pamphlet, "The Tasks of the Russian Social Democracy," dealing with the relation between the struggle for political freedom from the czar and the struggle for economic freedom from the big interests. The prevailing view in those days was that the political struggle should be left to the educated liberals and that workers should confine themselves to the fight for higher wages. "No," cried Lenin, "we have not lagged behind Europe for a hundred years in order to hang back and let capitalists take power from the czar. Now is the time to build a workers' organization fighting at once against czardom and economic exploitation." This pamphlet caused a sensation in the ranks of political exiles in Europe. It was like the dawning spring to these homesick revolutionists. "A star of first magnitude has appeared in our ranks," wrote Axelrod. And across the Siberian snows a young revolutionist, Stalin, who is today the strongest political leader in Rus-

sia, wrote of Lenin as "the mountain eagle of our party."

This enthusiasm suffered a sharp division in 1903, when the issue was raised of the disciplined nature of the party and its attitude towards "mere believers." Lenin fought uncompromisingly for his view on a matter which seemed to most people a slight question of tactics, until he split the party into the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. The old leaders were very bitter. "Lenin is a dead man," said Plekhanof. "In a few weeks he will be only fit for a scarecrow in an orchard—since he broke away from us, the leaders."

At this time Lenin had already begun his long period of voluntary exile in Europe, which lasted with a few brief intermissions from the end of his Siberian exile in 1900 till his triumphal return to the arms of the Petersburg workers in 1917. A few months of attempted work in Russia after his return from Siberia, showed that his slightest move on Russian soil led to immediate arrest and interruption of work. He went abroad and continued the education of small groups of workers, who went to him from Russia and returned to do illegal organizing and propaganda in factories and industrial centers. He wrote voluminously, smuggling his pamphlets over the border.

Steadily the condition of Russia's workers grew more intolerable; the Japanese war increased the burden. On January 9, 1905, came the "Bloody Sunday," when thousands of unarmed workers marched in orderly procession with ikons and crosses to petition the czar,

and were shot down in the square in front of the Winter Palace. More than a thousand people were thus slaughtered; the whole country began to seethe with indignation. Peasant revolts broke out; landlords' estates were set on fire; the "Red Cock," as the incendiary movement was called, stalked through the estates. A mutiny broke out in the Black Sea fleet, headed by the cruiser *Potemkin*.

The revolution of 1905 was suppressed in blood and terror. The popular song of that day says:

The czar was scared
And issued a decree:
Freedom for the dead
And jail for the living.

Throughout the land the upheaval was drowned in the blood of peasants and workers. Plekhanof contented himself with criticizing the workers: "They should not have taken up arms." But Lenin set to work to collect all available material about the uprising, to study it thoroughly, to understand and explain to the workers themselves how the uprising had been prepared and why it had failed. He declared that this was only a first skirmish; that next time better organization and a more determined and conscious seizing of power was necessary.

One thing Lenin had learned which was destined to be of great importance in his program. The 1905 revolution produced the Soviet, a spontaneous form of workers' organization based on each separate factory, and centralizing itself through delegates to municipi-

pal "soviets" or councils. It gave Lenin a new vision; a State based on Soviets began to appear in his writings. The Soviet, he claimed, was not a chance organization, nor yet something like a trade union for purpose of economic struggle. It was a new form of state organization, opening a new page in history. "The 1905 Revolution was a great one, because for the first time, for the space of a month, a Soviet flitted before the eyes of the world's workers. The Revolution will arise once more; the Soviets will be reborn and will win."

Chaos and demoralization followed that first failure. Everywhere czarism was brutal and triumphant, massacring peasants and workers by thousands. Discouragement lay on the land; epidemics of suicides began among young idealists; others formed free love clubs and drowned sorrow in debauch; others sought the comfort of weird religions. Life was chaotic and degenerate. In the midst of this the Social Democratic Party of Russia met in Stockholm and overthrew the revolutionary majority of Lenin, declaring for paths of gradual reform. A Paris comic paper challenged anyone to name a fourth Bolshevik, in addition to Lenin, Kamenev and Zinoviev, who were all exiles together.

Lenin never lost faith. "I remember him after Stockholm," said to me Borodin, who today (1927) is the Russian adviser to the Cantonese government. "He stood on a little hill among the faithful few. 'The Revolution is going upward,' he said. 'We must prepare for an armed uprising next time.' The man is

mad, I thought. I had come from the provinces and had seen the Cossack whip and sword. There was no heart left in the people. And this man said the Revolution goes upward! It was by the courage or despair rather than of faith that we held to Lenin that day. But by the attitude of men to Lenin then, their whole future lives and revolutionary careers were determined."

There followed a period of discouraging underground activities, pursued constantly by the czar. Lenin lived in exile, writing pamphlets which were smuggled over the border, and teaching small groups of revolutionary workmen who later made their way back into Russia. Lenin himself was not without his own hair-breadth escapes from the czarist police. Nuorteva told me of a wild night on the Finnish coast, when word came that Lenin was passing on the way to Sweden and they looked for him all night after the train came in. Lenin had recognized on the train a secret service officer of the czar and had leaped into the snow many miles from town. He made his way through darkness and arrived fainting with cold. After several hours spent in restoring life to his body he was hurried in a sleigh to overtake the boat at another haven.

Episodes like this were all in the day's work for any Russian revolutionist. They are hardly remembered as important. The real thrill came when half a dozen new workers were added to Lenin's fighting force or when unrest of workers gave hope for the future.

By 1910 the discouraging stagnation was passing away, and in 1912 the massacre in the Lena gold fields of eastern Siberia of hundreds of innocent workers for striking, again stirred the working-class of Russia. By 1914 the strike movement had spread over whole districts, even developing into armed fighting and barricades. Then the world war broke out, considered by the czar a means of suppressing internal disorder.

From his simple quarters in Geneva (described in the next chapter, "What Lenin's Widow Remembers") Lenin watched the world war prepare the stage for revolution. In spite of his lack of trust in the more moderate socialist leaders of Europe, he was none the less appalled at the ease with which they not only voted for war, but accepted the capitalists' plans of war credits. He declared that the Second International (the international federation of socialist parties) had died in the war and that a Third International must be built, which should take up the final task of organizing the workers for revolutionary attack on all capitalist governments. "We must change this imperialist war into civil war," cried Lenin, affronting patriots and pacifists alike.

As early as November, 1914, Lenin took this position for which he found few followers. The majority of socialists in all countries had turned patriot, and were uniting with capitalist parties to carry on the war. Small minorities in each land took a pacifist attitude, refusing military service or calling for strikes against

war. Lenin at this time wrote: "The war is not an accident, nor a punishment for our sins. . . . It is an inevitable stage of capitalism. . . . Refusal to take up military service, strikes against war and similar action are sheer stupidity, a crude and cowardly dream of an unarmed struggle against the armed bourgeoisie. In the period of imperialistic armed conflict between the bourgeoisie of all nations, the sole work of the socialists is to direct affairs towards the conversion of the war of nations into civil war. . . . The proletarian banner of civil war, if not today, then tomorrow, if not during this war, then in the next war, which is not far off, will rally around it not only hundreds of thousands of class-conscious workers, but also the millions of semi-proletarian and petty bourgeois who are at present intoxicated with patriotism, whom the grimaces of war will not only terrorize and crush but will also enlighten, teach, rouse, organize, harden and train for the war against the bourgeoisie in their own and in other countries."

In this attitude Lenin stood almost alone. Yet with the close of war the upheavals in many lands of Europe justified his clear diagnosis. The czar fell in Russia; and Lenin hastened back to take part in the first meeting of the Petrograd Soviet, the delegate organization of the city's workers which arose again as it had in 1905. It was under the control of the Social Democrats with Plekhanof as leader. In a glittering speech Plekhanof gloried in the fall of the czar and called for unity of all groups in building a new Russia.

But he produced no plan for the chaotic conditions which had caused the czar to fall; he gave only glittering generalities. Lenin had worked on the train in the night, and read a series of rough theses, affronting his audiences with proposals that left them gasping. He demanded fraternization with German soldiers on the front, and an appeal to them to end the war by a revolution at home in fraternity with the Russians. He called for continued opposition to the Provisional Government, in order to take power from the hands of the bourgeoisie and give it to the proletariat and poorest peasantry, who should construct a State based from top to bottom on soviets, or councils of workers, peasants and soldiers' deputies. He called for the formation of a "Third International" to oppose the "outworn" Second International. He outlined in detail the problems of the next few months and the drastic revolutionary ways of meeting them. Plekhanof and the party majority called him an utter madman.

This was only one of the times when Lenin stood alone and watched time bring the others to him. Dramatic week followed dramatic week. Lenin worked and debated and organized in confidence. He was sure of himself and of the times and seasons. In July came a premature workers' uprising; Lenin opposed it. "The army is not yet with us; it will return and crush us." Lenin's prediction proved true; he himself fled for his life from the forces of Kerensky; other leading Bolsheviks were im-

prisoned and the Bolshevik press was suppressed.

Of all the moments typifying all sides of Lenin's life and character, I would choose perhaps that time when, sleeping in a haystack by a swamp on the Finnish border, in hourly peril of discovery and death, he wrote a pamphlet, "Can the Bolsheviks Keep Power?" The irony of that subject was unconscious. He did not ask whether the Bolsheviks could escape the suppression and death that threatened them; nor whether the time would come when they could seize power; he took these things for granted. He raised only the question whether, after all other groups had failed to organize government and maintain control of the chaos which was Russia, the Bolsheviks had the elements of organizing success. It was his most thorough production of the year; it analyzed the classes in the nation, their needs and demands; it analyzed the various parties and how each in turn would be unable to satisfy these conflicting classes. Thus power would come to the Bolsheviks; he analyzed elements of strength they had at their disposal, and what their tactics must be in order to ride the whirlwind and bring the upheaval into organization and order. He argued and proved this calmly and sent it to the Central Committee as a manual of tactics—out in the swamp with a price of \$100,000 on his head!

The hour came in October; Lenin knew it. He returned secretly to Petrograd and began to advocate the immediate seizure of power. His central committee opposed him. The work-

ers, they said, were disheartened by the July failure. "Now is the time, not a week sooner or later," said Lenin. "Already Kerensky prepares to surrender Petrograd to the Germans, and this will make our chances a hundred times worse. . . . If we wait, we shall lose the faith of the workers, who have now given us the majority in the Soviets and expect us to use it. . . . We must make a revolution and take power at once. Our slogans should be: 'All power to the Soviets, land to the peasants, peace to the people, bread to the hungry.' Victory is certain." With the adherence of Trotzsky and a few others, he won an assent of the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks, although many of its prominent members withdrew temporarily and denounced the project.

The act of revolution was simple and without much bloodshed in Petrograd. It was the mere announcement that from now on the Soviets considered themselves the government of the country. These Soviets were composed of delegates from factory workers and soldiers; later the Soviet of Peasants' Delegates joined them. They had the confidence of the effective classes in the land; Lenin had been right in his diagnosis of what classes were needed for controlling a country. They had *de facto* authority, since the workers and soldiers obeyed their orders. When they announced their authority, Kerensky fled, and the Provisional Government had fallen.

It is known now that suppression and slaughter of the Bolsheviks had been plotted for the

time of the Constituent Assembly, which now when it met was dissolved by an announcement of a soldier. It is known now that a few weeks' delay would have crushed not only the red revolution but even the weakly struggling democracy of Kerensky under the iron heel of returning reaction. One dictatorship or another was destined for Russia that month of November. History knows it now; Lenin knew it then and acted.

He came to power—a shaky power, menaced from without and within, threatened every day with dissolution from the demands of peasants, the starvation of workers, the armed forces of counter-revolution on a dozen fronts. Almost at once the storm broke; armed attack from various forces. But these forces were not united; their attacks were local and spasmodic. The delegate councils of workers and soldiers were the only coherent organized authority in the country. Lenin had been right in his estimate of the effective classes in Russia, made in those early days in Petersburg twenty-five years before.

Yet for two years, so uncertain were they of permanence, the Bolsheviks kept their illegal organization intact, ready to go underground in case of defeat. And now, with the attainment of power, this man Lenin, till then the arch-leader of upheaval and disruption, became the exponent of discipline and order and honesty and common sense. He was not overthrowing a government now, but consolidating one; and he had the rare ability to go over to this totally different attitude of work.

He shouted in the Sovnarkom: "Facts, give me facts," when confronted with long-winded theories and debates. He never refused to look any fact in the face, however ugly. He sought for facts from simple workers and peasants, from anyone who brought him a concrete report of trouble. An old Bolshevnik tells how he went to report to Lenin and found him so exhausted that he seemed not listening. He offered to cut his report short but Lenin told him to go on. He went through lengthy details and left dissatisfied since Lenin had yawned, answered the telephone in an exhausted manner, and seemed unable to pay attention. A short time later he was surprised to find all his information used by Lenin in debate against the bureaucracy of government. Lenin never allowed his followers to be deluded by false optimism. He looked for dangers and discontents and sore spots, dismissing successes as already accomplished, but setting out to hunt trouble and conquer it before it overthrew him.

There were serious troubles enough in those first years of Lenin's power. There came first the strike of the specialists, the refusal of almost the entire trained civil service to work under the new government. There were hungry workers and soldiers who could only be fed by taking grain by force from the peasants. There were wars on many fronts, civil strife through every village, ending in an exhaustion more complete than any modern nation has ever known. There were conflicts on policy within the Bolshevnik Party, the necessity of organiz-

ing a disciplined armed force out of men who had just deserted the front in chaos. For years Lenin felt no certainty of long survival in power. But two things carried him through: the disciplined force he had begun to build fifteen years before of the Bolshevik organization, based on intimate contact with workers, soldiers and peasants, and his own ruthless honesty in facing facts and analyzing their meaning.

The greatest example of this was the peace of Brest-Litovsk. Germany imposed on broken Russia a robber's peace which it was a national humiliation to sign, and which surrendered hundreds of Russian villages to the power of the Germans. Trotzsky, sent to Brest, refused to sign it. He turned and wrote on the wall (I have seen the inscription): "Neither war nor peace." It was intended as an appeal to the conscience of the world and especially of the German workingmen. We cannot fight any more, it said, but neither can we sign this treaty of injustice, selling vast populations into alien bondage.

It was a noble gesture, but futile. The German general staff marched on into Russia and no German workers rose to prevent them. Lenin, against Trotzsky, against the overwhelming majority in the Soviets, against for a time even the majority in his Central Committee, demanded that any terms, however humiliating, be signed, "Gain a breathing space for the Revolution," he said. "Now while Germany is occupied is our only chance to escape complete conquest. Give lands, give peoples, give anything for a few months' rest in even a part of

Russia, where we can recover and organize defense."

Not for a moment did he use high-sounding words to cover the fact of disaster, as every other war politician did. "We must know how to retreat," he said. "It is, of course, a bitter phrase. We must say, 'God grant that we may retreat in semi-order, for retreat in full order we cannot.'" These brutal facts Lenin did not keep for his higher staff alone; he trusted the common workers and peasants with full knowledge of the worst; and in return the workers and peasants gave him a completeness of trust which no leader of our day has known how to inspire. He began in that hour of disaster to plan a disciplined "Red Army," under the organizing genius of Trotzsky, which was later to survive worse trials than Brest-Litovsk had offered.

In addition to outer perils, Lenin faced also the danger of assassination. The members of overthrown parties and classes conspired with foreign governments to seize the Volga, Siberia, the Ukraine, putting forward one pretender to power after another, with the aid of British, French, German, Japanese and American soldiers, munitions and money. In full understanding with foreign governments, they organized local uprisings, the blowing up and burning of stores. They tried also to assassinate the most prominent leaders.

An attack was made on Lenin by Fanny Kaplan, a member of the Social Revolutionist Party, the party of Kerensky. She shot into him revolver bullets, blunted and poisoned with

curare, as he was attending a workers' meeting. For days his condition was extremely serious; and the response to the attacks of assassins on Lenin and on other leaders, led to the "red terror," i.e., the widespread arrest and execution of people opposing the government and suspected of intending violent methods.

The last important act of Lenin was to carry his party and country through to the period of the "new economic policy," establishing the principles on which it was planned to "build socialism" for decades to come. This is discussed more at length in the Little Blue Book "How Soviet Russia Does Business" (No. 1234). It was the transition from war to a peace basis; it came in time to save the country from utter disruption but not in time to prevent many upheavals and widespread famine. During the protracted civil war, the government had seized progressively all the resources of the country, beginning with the banks and ending with the peasants' grain; they had used grain, textiles, shoes, iron and all other goods under a rigid central control for the winning of the war. This policy saved the revolution, but it exhausted every factory and every peasant grain reserve, discouraged planting and productive labor, and when the drought of 1920 and 1921 smote the land, proved a secondary cause of the great famine.

The task of the New Economic Policy was to start production again, by giving the peasant the right to sell his grain in a free market, and by furnishing to factories and their workers the incentive of expansion and a better living

through production—and yet to create an economic system with as many socialist and collective elements as might prove possible in the backward condition of Russia; to create at the same time, a political and educational control which should encourage a continuous advance in the direction of a socialist economic system, using that term to cover all collective efforts, whether through state or municipal control, or cooperatives, or workers' collectives. The foundations for this policy were laid by Lenin.

From this time on his health, which had never been good since the attempted assassination, failed rapidly. He appeared more and more seldom at public meetings. One of his last political acts was to assign to Trotzsky the task of preparing the details of the new "Program for Industry" in 1923; he himself prepared the plan for "Fighting Bureaucracy and Inefficiency in the State Apparatus," by means of a special "Control Commission" drawn from the most experienced members of the party. He died after a lingering illness early in 1924, and all Russia, as well as millions of workers beyond the seas, arose to mourn him. For days long lines of men, women and children passed his body lying in state in the Hall of the Columns, the labor temple of Moscow, for a last look at their beloved leader.

No man could have chosen a better time to die. If he had died in the midst of civil war, that war might have ended differently. If he had died before he carried through the new economic policy, a conflict between peasants and city workers might have wrecked the new

estate. But he lived to see his estimate of the clashing forces in Russian society justified; and to carry through the purpose he had held from his youth; he achieved for it success far beyond what anyone had dreamed in his lifetime; he perfected an organization which could carry on for indefinite years after his death.

Then he died, knowing that he was loved by the people of a great nation and by millions of simple folk in all the lands of earth; knowing, as few rulers have ever known, that within his own government there was no whisper of opposition to his personality or achievements; knowing also, what was probably far more in his consciousness, that he had lived through a great turning-point in world history and had had the chance to play in it a directing part. And that his work, as far as a man's work may be, was finished, and sealed and secure; that for generations to come, past his grave under the Kremlin walls in the great Red Square, the workers and children of free Russia would celebrate May Days and October Days in triumph.

WHAT LENIN'S WIDOW REMEMBERS

When Lenin was sent to his first exile in the wilds of Siberia, in January, 1897, his friend and co-worker, Nadyezhda Constantinova Krupskaja, went out to join him and married him there. She chose that moment of exile to bind herself to him, and so effectively did she make herself a companion in his work that by the time his sentence ended, three years later, Krupskaja was finishing a sentence on her account thousands of miles away in Ufa. He went to see her there and later they went abroad together.

Krupskaja acted as secretary of the "Iskra" (*The Spark*), a journal which Lenin started in 1901. The correspondence with secret workers over the whole of Russia fell on her. From that day till now, when she has charge of Political Instruction under the Central Department of Education, she has filled important posts. Besides this, she did the household work in the humble one-room menage which she shared with Lenin in city after city, accustomed to welcome comrades and refresh them with tea at all hours of day and night.

Her account of the last few months in exile and the triumphant return to Russia is one of the most poignant human documents ever written about a great man by his wife. She reveals the struggles, the beating against iron bars, the joy in the news, the desperate fight to get back to his own land, and the welcome back

into the arms of Russia's workers, who, says Lenin's widow frankly, "were nearer to him than any other persons in the world." She shows him not as the calm genius the world knows, but as the struggling man his wife remembers.

She shows, also, unconsciously, her own innermost self, and the qualities that made her a helpmeet for Lenin, a mother-soul keenly understanding the travail of spirit that she was powerless to assuage, accepting with frankness and dignity the knowledge that Russia's workers were nearer to her husband than even she was; a childless wife who cannot remember details of great ovations in Stockholm but whose mind clings after ten years to the childish prattle of four-year-old Robert; a self-forgetting woman who, with all this deep love of children, faces calmly the fact that her man belongs not to her but to history and that their only children must be those to whom she gives her life today—the homeless wandering ones of Russia. What follows is from the pen of Lenin's widow:

FROM EXILE TO PETERSBURG

By Krupskaja.

That last winter, (1916-17) we lived in Zurich. We lived not happily. The threads with Russia were broken; neither letters nor people could come from our homeland to us. We kept ourselves somewhat apart from the little dwindling colony of emigrants in Zurich. Only every day ran over to us from the Emigres Dining Hall, Grisha Usslyevich, a dear young comrade who later fell at the front. Fairly regularly in the morning dropped in the nephew of General Semliatska, a Bolshevik who through long starvation had become ill mentally. He went about so torn and filthy that they would not admit him to the Swiss libraries. He was always trying to find Ilych (Lenin) rather early in order to discuss questions of principle, and came therefore before nine o'clock, when Ilych got away to the library. . . . Since these talks with the mentally ill comrade led to a sense of depression, as if everything in the world hurt, we formed a habit of taking a walk on the shore of the lake before going to the library.

We had a rented room in a working-class region. It was not very comfortable. An old dark house, (Spiegelgasse 14) dating from the sixteenth century; the windows we dared open only at night for there was a little sausage factory in the house and from the court a frightful smell of sausage arose. We could easily have got a better room for the same money, but we prized our host and hostess very much. They were workers clear to the roots, hating capitalism and instinctively damning the imperialist war. Our house was a real "international"; the host and hostess occupied two rooms (carpenter by trade); in another room lived with her children the wife of a German baker away at the front; in another an Italian; in a third Austrian actors with an astonishing red-haired cat; in a fourth, we, the Russians. There was no talk of chauvinism, but once as we women in the kitchen

were all putting our pieces of meat on the gas range, the hostess cried loudly: "The soldiers must turn their weapons against their own rulers!" After this even Ilych wouldn't hear of changing our room but always greeted our hostess with special friendliness.

Unfortunately the Swiss Socialists were less revolutionary than this working woman. For a time Ilych tried to start work on an international scale. We began to meet in a little cafe, "Zum Adler," in a nearby alley. Some Russian and Polish Bolsheviks, Swiss Socialists, a few from German and Italian young peoples' organizations. To the first meeting came in all forty people, and Ilych laid before them his viewpoint about the war, the need of condemning the leaders who had betrayed the workers; he set out a program of action. But the westerners were startled and upset by Ilych's decisiveness, although they were internationalists. I remember the speech of a Swiss youth: "You can't shove your head against a wall." Anyway our meetings grew smaller and smaller and at the fourth session appeared only Poles and Russians, all Bolsheviks. We joked with each other and went home. It was during this time that we drew closer to Fritz Platten and Will Munsonberg.

I remember another scene from a somewhat later date. We happened to be in a rather elegant section of Zurich and suddenly met Nobs, the editor of the Zurich Socialist paper, who in those days held himself "left wing." When Nobs saw Ilych, he hurried as if he must get in the street-car. But Ilych succeeded in reaching him and, holding him fast by an elbow, began to explain his view of the incapability of world revolution. Very funny was the figure of the opportunist Nobs, who didn't know how to get away from this "wild" Russian; but Ilych's form, clinging desperately to Nobs' sleeve and trying to convince him, seemed to me tragic. No outlet for his terrific energy, all his endless devotion to the workers falling vainly to earth, all his clear analysis of events quite fruitless. And somehow—I suddenly had a vision of that white polar-wolf, before whose cage in the London Zoological Gardens Ilych and I had once stood long. "All wild

animals get used in time to confinement," said the keeper, "bears, tigers, lions. Only the white wolf from the Russian North never grows used to cages. Day and night he hurls himself against the iron bars of his prison." . . . To try to convince a Nobs by argument—wasn't that hurling one's self against bars of iron?

One morning in February we were getting ready to go to the library when Comrade Bronski came to tell us of the Revolution in Russia. Ilych's breathing quite stopped. When Bronski had left and we had come to ourselves a little, we went to the lake, where under a weatherproof roof all Swiss papers were hung up. Yes, the telegrams spoke of Revolution in Russia!

Ilych rushed here and there. He begged Bronski to learn if by aid of a smuggler one could get through Germany to Russia. We soon found that the smuggler could bring us only as far as Berlin. Besides, this contrabandist was connected with Parvus, who was committed to war as a social patriot. We must find some other way. What way? We thought of flying by airplane; the possibility of being shot down was not so serious to us. But where was such a magic airplane to take us to Russia, who was making her Revolution? For nights Ilych did not sleep. One night he said to me: "You know, I might go on the passport of a deaf and dumb Swede." I laughed: "That won't do. You would talk in your sleep and betray yourself. When the Cadets appear to you in dreams you will shout: 'Rascal! rascal!' Then it will come out that you are no Swede." None the less it was more possible to ride on the passport of a deaf and dumb Swede than to get an impossible airplane. Ilych wrote about this plan to Hanetski in Sweden. But naturally nothing came of it.

When it seemed that it might be possible, with the help of Swiss comrades, to get a permit for passing through Germany, Ilych pulled himself together and took pains so to arrange conditions that nothing could take the nature of a compromise, not only with the German government, but even with the German Socialist patriots. He was careful to get the legal form straight. It was a daring pro-

cedure, not only because of the danger of calumny that we had betrayed our own fatherland; but also because we had no guarantee that Germany would really let us through and not seize the chance to intern the Bolsheviki. Later after us Bolsheviki there followed Mensheviki and other troops of emigres, but the first step nobody cared to make.

When the letter came from Berne that the matter was in order, that we could travel from there to Germany, Ilych said: "We go with the first train!" There were two hours till it left. I had misgivings. We must pack up our entire household, take back the many books to the library, settle with the landlady. . . . "You go alone," I said, "and I will come tomorrow." "No, let us go," he insisted. Our establishment was settled up, the books packed, the letters destroyed, our small amount of clothing and necessaries thrown together. We went with that first train. After all, we needn't have hurried, for it was Easter and we had therefore to wait some days in Berne.

Gradually in the Berne People's House (a workers' lodging place) gathered the various Bolsheviki who wanted to go back—we, Zinoviev, Ussiyevich, Inez Armand, Charitonoff, Sokolnikoff, Mechi Zhakala and others. Also there went with us a woman member of the Arbeiter Bund with a darling curly-haired four-year-old son Robert, who knew no Russian but only French. Radek also went with us as a "Russian citizen." Platten was our conductor.

On the entire way we spoke with no Germans; once, not far from Berlin, some German majority-socialists got into a coupe next us but none of us talked with them. Only little Robert peeked into their compartment and began to ask them: "What is the conductor doing?" I do not know if the Germans told him what the conductor was doing, but their questions addressed to us Bolsheviki brought no response. We looked from the car window and were astonished at the utter absence of men. Lots of women, children, youths, in both city and country. They served us dinner in our car, cutlets with peas. Apparently they wished to show us that in Germany was fullness and plenty. We went through well provided for.

In Stockholm we were met with speeches in the waiting-rooms; a red flag was hung up and a meeting gathered. I remember Stockholm very vaguely and poorly for all my thoughts were already in Russia. In Finnish trains we went over the border. Everything was already so dear, so homelike—those bad little third-class cars with Russian soldiers. We left tremendously happy. In a short time little Robert found himself in the arms of an old soldier, threw his arms around him and began to chatter French to him, eating meantime Easter cheesecakes with which the soldier stopped his mouth. We all clung to the windows. At the stations as we passed stood soldiers in groups. Ussiye-vich leaned from the windows and called "Hurrah for World Revolution!" The soldiers stared astonished at us travelers. Several times a pale lieutenant passed us in the train and as Ilych and I changed over to an empty coupe he sat down with us and began talking. The lieutenant was a member of "Defenders of the Fatherland." Ilych defended against him his own views and got terribly pale also. In the car more and more soldiers gathered until it was jammed full; the soldiers climbed into the upper sleeping-shelves to hear and see better who was speaking so well against the "Robber War." With every moment their faces grew more excited.

In Belo-Ostrov awaited us Maria Ilinichna (Lenin's sister), Shlapnikov, Stal and others. There were also working women there. Comrade Stal tried to get me to say some words of greeting to them, but all words had left me and I could say nothing.

The comrades sat down with us and began to relate events. Soon we came to Petersburg.

The Petersburg masses, workers, soldiers, came out to greet their leader. How had they learned of our coming? I do not know. Around us was an ocean of people, like a great elemental force of nature. Who has never lived through a Revolution cannot picture its tremendous majestic beauty.

Red flags, a guard of honor of Cronstadt sailors, searchlights from the Peter-Paul fortress lighted the way from the Finland station to the Palace of Ksheshinskaya (the new headquarters of Bol-

sneviks). Armored cars, a chain of working men and women guarded the road. Ilych was lifted to an armored car. He spoke a few words. About him were those who in all the world were nearest to him—the masses of workers.

The revolutionary folk greeted the coming of their leader with the same processional solemnity with which they afterward followed him to his grave.

LENIN DEAD STILL DOMINATES RUSSIA

The power of Lenin alive, as it was in Russia, pales before the influence of Lenin dead. Then, he was mere man, constantly admitting mistakes; now he is the infallible Authority to which every conflicting view appeals for support. Leaders of government use him to attack each other. Even the anti-Communists quote him—sometimes against the Communists.

Once he was chief of his party and head of the state—big jobs, but finite. Now he is the dead Messiah. Pictures of Lenin replace the holy ikons in the homes of true believers; the mausoleum of Lenin is the focal point of thousands of pilgrims daily; conversions to Leninism take place spectacularly; and in amateur dramas glorifying Lenin he thunders his voice from an invisible point offstage. Such emotionalism is, of course, scorned by the sober leaders of the Soviet government, but even these sophisticated leaders hardly risk a serious speech on an important subject without taking a text from Lenin, quoting him frequently, and bringing in a reference to him at the end. It is one of the things that "isn't done"—to make a speech that fails to claim to be Leninism.

The nightly pilgrimage to the tomb of Lenin remains year after year an impressive sight. As dusk falls the lines begin to form in the Red Square, each person equipped with a ticket of admission procured free by proper identification in a nearby office. When peas-

ant congresses are going on in Moscow, the line increases to many thousand, but every evening it comprises hundreds. They wait in snow and rain or clear twilight till the massive squat mausoleum is opened, then they pass slowly into the guarded entrance, down the red carpeted steps and corridors lined with red, to a small crypt in which Lenin lies, as if sleeping, in a glass casket, guarded by red soldiers. Near his head, in another glass case, is the time-blackened "red flag" of the Paris Commune, brought to Moscow a few years back by French communists and received by the representatives of the Moscow workers with the solemn words: "We will give it back to Paris when we have carried it around the world." Until that time it hangs at the head of Lenin, viewed by pilgrims of all lands and classes.

A factory-girl whispers, as she passes out: "I try to come here every Saturday. Life is not so easy; it goes slowly. Somehow it helps me to come and visit Lenin."

Immediately after the death of Lenin the workers of Russia began to pour into the Communist Party in response to what came to be known as the "Lenin Call." I have seen many dramatic productions, both amateur and professional, portraying that moment. The news, carried throughout the land by sad, hurrying messengers, through the coldest blizzards of winter, far beyond the telegraph, by horsemen in snow-swept darkness. The stricken little meetings of workers, stopping in the

midst of their program at the shock of learning that their leader had fallen. The bowed heads of men, the weeping faces of women, the atmosphere in the humble little meeting room of an unbearable catastrophe. Then, from somewhere, the new motto: "Lenin Dies, but Leninism Lives!" And the steady pouring forward of men and women to pledge themselves in life-long service to the ideas and program of Lenin.

Typical of all these people is the letter of an old workingwoman:

"I am an old textile worker of the factory of the Red Textile Worker. I wish to tell other working women how I was influenced by the death of our leader. Death is a terrible word; it is difficult for me to speak of Lenin and Death together. Each of these words has five letters, but what difference in their meaning. One is destruction of a living being that worked and thought and aimed; but the other means not a single life but a life-current which couldn't be stopped by any force in the world but which lives long, forever.

"'Lenin Lives; Lenin is with us; Lenin did not die'; we read it on all the posters. But we do not see Lenin, nor do we hear his voice. How are we to understand this motto? My old heart aches. Because I am hardly literate and cannot give the right answer how to find Lenin, how to show to everyone that Lenin really lives. Yesterday I asked a working woman: 'Who is Lenin and where is he now?' She looked at me in surprise: 'Why, Aunt Masha, surely you know Lenin. Ask my three-year-old son; he'll tell you.'

"'But where is Lenin now?' I continued my quest. 'Surely you know that,' she said. 'He died. Did you just drop from the skies?' 'But why,' I asked, 'do they write on the posters that Lenin lives?' The working woman said: 'It is nonsense that they write. The dead cannot live.'

"These words stung me. Nonsense, is it? Is it

possible to write nonsense about Lenin? And I, it must be said, I am a Leninka (follower of Lenin). I said to her: 'Here am I, a Leninka. Lenin lives in me. Is that also according to you nonsense?'

"'Nonsense,' she cried, 'you are simply a textile worker and Lenin is by far no relative of yours. For he was cleverer than all.' Then I feel pained and wish to cry but manage to hold back. This working-woman is a non-party-member. I must prove to her that it is not without reason that I am a Leninka, that Lenin really lives and that the thousands, the hundreds of thousands of Leninists in the whole united republic—that all of this is not nonsense. Lenin, that means the struggle for freedom and equality of people; I call after her. But she sadly answers: 'For us—for us is no freedom and equality and never will be. We were and will remain slaves. Only the grave will free us.'

"Then I remember the words of Lenin that I learned in the Lenin circle: 'No one is to blame that he was born a slave. But a slave is he most who does not even strive towards freedom but justifies his own slavery. Such a slave provokes contempt.' But I do not despise my comrade. It is not her fault; it is the fault of the age-long oppression of us women, and it is the task of each Leninka who has recognized the significance of the aim of Lenin, to explain that Lenin is a force still living in us, aiding us to conduct the struggle; that Lenin as a man died, but Leninism lives and will live from generation to generation." *M. Meriteeva.*

If Lenin's death gave an impetus to the Communist Party, it brought an even greater influx into the ranks of Communist Youth. The organization changed its name to Leninist Communist Youth and increased its membership with great rapidity. As for the still younger organization of Pioneers, they are all Lenin's grandchildren. At the mention of his name or any of his slogans, they raise hands in salute and say: "Always Ready!" There

are two million of them today, with health cared for, bringing to Russia for the first time the habits of camping, physical culture, learning to love outdoors and manual labor and to hate exploiters. Above their red neckerchiefs their faces are serious and determined. All their mottoes tell them that they are to be "young Lenins" for the world revolution.

Some of the youthful reactions towards Lenin become humorous. Amateur dramas tell of two young Communists who inveigle their plous and vodka-loving father into a Communist meeting, where he becomes converted by a slogan from Lenin, and gives up drink and religion. Other dramas, dealing with the events of the revolution, represent Lenin as a thundering voice off-stage which personally gives orders for the shipment of guns by car-load lots, ordering obedience "on penalty of your head," and receiving always the answer: "It shall be done, Comrade Lenin."

Even the crudeness with which this is done testifies to the extent to which Lenin had entered into the intimate life of the Russian people. Down in the provinces they call electric lamps "lamps of Ilych" in reference to Lenin's advocacy of electrification.

Among the simpler, still superstitious peasants in the heart of Asia, the adoration takes odd religious forms. A Russian writer, visiting a little town south of the Urals, with a population of dozens of intense religious sects, found the legend of Lenin taking almost the form of a cult. Wealthy conservative Old Believers proved that Lenin was Anti-Christ, the Beast

with Number 666! The poorer peasants argued against them, quoting Scripture in defense of Lenin, who followed divine orders to "take away the fat lands of the rich." "For woe unto them that pile house on house and field on field." A black-bearded sectarian denounced those ungodly "Lenin words," the abbreviation whereby Council of Peoples Commissars becomes "Sovnarkom," and Department of Education become "Narkompros." "Thou wilt not regard any longer a people of confused tongue," he thunders from Isaiah.

On the other hand, a Bashkir horseman, of those submerged Mohammedans to whom Christianity was but a name for oppression, hails "Red Master Lenin who defended the Bashkirs from Christian cruelty." This despised and rejected race has found a savior, who gave political and cultural equality even to the Bashkirs, and declared that the submerged peoples of the East were potent factors in the Red Master's own dream of world revolution.

Down in Kirgisia a peasant laborer named Ingale complained to a traveling teacher that his master beat him and was a horse-thief, and that he wanted to go and tell Lenin. "Lenin is no more," explained the teacher. "Alas, have they killed him?" "No," said the teacher, "he died naturally." When the cruel master heard that Lenin was no more, he beat the laborer harder, till Ingale arose in the night, wrote upon the tent-flap: "Lenin Lives" and fled to the police to inform on the horse-thief. He next went to a meeting of Young Communists and declared that though men said Lenin was

dead, he, Ingale, knew that Lenin lives and he wished to follow Lenin. He was sent at last to the University of Eastern Peoples in Moscow, where he has, of course, become more sophisticated.

Naturally in the central districts of Russia, and more and more throughout the land, one finds a clearer notion of what Lenin taught. Even today a peasant woman may light a candle in church for the soul of the dead leader. But steadily, the organized propaganda, penetrating into the depth of the land, makes it plain that Lenin was an atheist, and that his followers disclaim all religious dogmas.

Even in the cities, however, the reverence for Lenin, while different in form, is no less fervent. No factory, no trade-union, no organization is complete without its Lenin Corner. In the factories, these are often large well-decorated rooms with many portraits of Lenin and complete collections of his works, together with magazines, and newspapers, making a general reading-room which features Lenin. On the wall are quotations from Lenin, some permanent, some put up for temporary campaigns; slogans on co-operation, on party unity, on the education of woman, on anything under discussion. Here in this room they keep the factory banners between celebrations. It is the shrine from which issues education and politics under the name of Lenin.

Busts of Lenin are plentiful at street corner booths. Most cities are acquiring larger monuments of Lenin. Bas-reliefs of Lenin even have to be controlled by the Commission for

Immortalizing the Name of Lenin, which attempts to eliminate the cruder forms of art. Hundreds of people devote all their time to selecting passages from the works of Lenin and making them into small pamphlets. Lenin on Co-operation; Lenin on almost every subject is thus compiled. There are text-books for every class and grade about Lenin. This flood of literature became so great that a decree had to be issued that no one might publish anything more about Lenin without permission of the Lenin Institute, whose task is to preserve the orthodoxy of Leninism.

Meantime the more enduring monuments to Lenin still remain the forms of government and of economic life which he devised, and the communist party which he organized to perpetuate his work. As new problems claim the center of the stage, it is amazing how easy it seems to find some phrase of Lenin's which applies, showing the wide range of that leader's genius. The present drive to draw the masses of non-party workers and peasants into governmental activity is introduced by Lenin's words: "Draw the masses of peasants and workers into party, government and social activity." Educational campaigns are launched with a Lenin slogan: "There can be no political life when there is illiteracy." Other Lenin phrases which make current thought of Russia today are: "Every scrubwoman must learn to rule the state"; "No people can attain freedom while half of it is enslaved in the kitchen."

One of the most charming of the many folktales which have arisen about Lenin comes

come under my hands and refuse to go to them. And since they are not workers but spenders, they will not last long on the earth."

The tale concludes with the bitter disillusion of Czar Nicky, who finds that "my generals only eat, drink and grow fat. My landlords know only how to spend. My factory owners know only how to give orders. And the foreign black-boned refuse to serve me because of your secret word." So a great war starts over the whole earth, and the old woman croons in the light of the dying lamp: "The white-boned will not last on the bright world."

Thus in a few years of Lenin's death there is built on his life and teachings not only new forms of government and economic and social life, not only a political party pledged to carry on his work through future years and throughout the world, but also that folklore which is the deepest heart of a people.

ALEX PHILLIPS
405 Galbreath Ave.
New Castle, Pa.

