

Selected Works
of
Cecilia Zelikson-Bobrovskaya



Cecilia Zelikson-Bobrovskaya

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The following articles represent the majority of the shorter works of Comrade Bobrovskaya which have been translated into English. Comrade Bobrovskaya was a long time Bolshevik activist who gave the best years of her life to the cause of the rule of the workers in the future Soviet Union. Ever faithful to the revolutionary line of Lenin-Stalin, she worked tirelessly and without concern for self. On this topic comrade Lenin said, "[S]he is capable of suffering in silence indefinitely."¹

During the later stage of the People's War in Russia she worked as Chairman of the military affairs council of the Bolshevik Party's Moscow Branch. After first victory she worked for the Comintern until 1940. Finally, she served as a member of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in her later years.

¹ "To House Manager of A.R.C.E.C", November 30th 1921

PROVOCATEURS I HAVE KNOWN – 1931

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

In this pamphlet I give a brief description of several *agent provocateurs* who penetrated into the ranks of the Bolsheviks in the days of Tsarism, and with whom I came into personal contact. I do not attempt to go into the question of why or how these men sank to the position of spies and agents of Tsarism. I merely want to depict in brief outline the appearance and methods of work employed by the spies and agents with whom I came into contact during the many years I spent in underground party work during the days of Tsarism.

A perusal of these sketches will show that it was difficult to detect the agent provocateurs; the "art" of the spy was to camouflage himself as an ardent and active revolutionary. The more successfully he did that the more successfully was he able to carry on his treacherous work. These sketches also show how vigilant it was necessary to be to guard the party and party workers against these pests.

AGENT PROVOCATEUR No. 1. KAPLINSKY.

The extensive development of the mass working class movement in Russia in the beginning of the "nineties," considerably alarmed the Tsarist government, and it began to seek for ways of diverting the attention of the working masses, who were being roused for the political struggle. The favorite method of setting one nationality against another by means of pogroms had also been found to be insufficient, and so Zubatov, chief of the secret police of Moscow began to organize fake trade unions under police supervision, in the hope of keeping the masses of workers away from politics by leading them to expect slight improvements in wages and conditions through the medium of these police protected unions,

And so, in 1900-1902, Zubatov set up legal trade unions in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kharkov, Odessa and other places, all of which were subsidized from the special funds of the Department of Police. At meetings of workers organized by these Zubatov unions, priests delivered sermons and bourgeois professors of economics delivered lectures designed to persuade the workers that the capitalist system was rational and everlasting.

Besides trying to fool the workers with, this "police Socialism," as it was called by revolutionaries, Zubatov tried to wheedle himself into the confidence of political prisoners who fell into his hands; for, needless to say, while this pretense of "organizing" the workers to "protect their economic interests" was being kept up, the fight against the revolutionary movement continued to be waged as ruthlessly as ever. Zubatov himself visited these prisoners in their cells, displayed "fatherly concern" for their welfare and even brought them Marxian literature to read. Both during his visits to the cells, and during interrogations, which he arranged, not in the prison office, but in his own study at home, where he regaled the prisoner with tea and biscuits, cigars and so on, he provoked the arrested revolutionaries into discussions on questions of the Russian Revolution, and tried to convince them of the expediency of organizing the workers in the way he was doing.

The less experienced were caught in his net; not only falling victims themselves but also dragging in their comrades. When he got them into his clutches Zubatov recruited them as agents of

the Tsarist secret police.² One of these agents, as it transpired many years later, was Kaplinsky, who, in the order of sequence in which I met him I will call agent-provocateur No. 1.

It was in the Spring of 1902. After a somewhat trying year of solitary confinement and hunger strike, in the Karkov prison, I was sent to a secluded little town in my own country where I had to await my sentence, i.e., exile to Siberia. I felt I ought to take advantage of this interval of liberty, between prison and exile, for it would be difficult to escape from Siberia later on. The party work could not wait, the temper of the masses was rising, and there were few enough workers in the party as it was. I decided to escape immediately to travel abroad to the party center, the *Iskra* editorial board, of which Lenin was the chief. Abroad it would be possible to get a little respite, to read the party literature, to get a passport, instructions and a letter of introduction to some Russian proletarian center for work there.

However, I had no direct contact with the *Iskra* comrades which would enable me to cross the border illegally, and so I turned to the *Bund*³ for assistance. They sent me to their permanent representative, who was especially engaged in providing plant for secret printing works, and transferring literature and people across the frontiers: to Kaplinsky in Dvinsk...

I found, myself in a poorly furnished, two-roomed worker's flat, where I was met by a little, emaciated, carelessly attired woman — the wife of Kaplinsky. Kaplinsky himself was not at home, she said, he had gone off on conspiratorial work for the party and would not return for three or four days.

Kaplinskaya kept me in her rooms while I waited for her husband, as I had no passport and could not, therefore, stay in a hotel. I lived there for two days, played with Kaplinsky's children while Kaplinskaya did her sewing; she was a dress-maker. We became very friendly, and already by the third day I knew the sad story, the life drama of this little woman.

She and Kaplinsky had both been arrested during the raid on all the Bundist organizations. She was a weak, uneducated woman, and the police during the interrogations frightened her considerably, threatening her with the gallows, and then during one of the interrogations, she blurted something out, from sheer fright, about one of the comrades.

When the news got round to the neighboring cells, she began to be shunned by the prisoners, but her husband, Kaplinsky, being a very influential member of the Bund, managed to persuade the comrades that she should be forgiven for her ignorance; after this she was forgiven by the comrades, and most of all her husband forgave her.

Soon after this they were released, first she, and a short time afterwards Kaplinsky.

In spite of the fact that this story made a most unpleasant impression upon me, somehow, not the slightest doubt, even for a moment, entered my head; the flat was so very poor, the furniture,

² See *Bolsheviks on Trial* in this series — ed

³ Jewish Social-Democratic Workers' League of Poland and Lithuania

their whole way of living; it never entered my head that an agent of the police, generously paid from the Tsarist treasury, was living here.

Soon Kaplinsky himself arrived. He was a tall man, with an open, attractive face, in the shabby clothes of a workman. Smiling cheerfully, he met with a firm, comradely handshake, and informed me that there would be some delay in crossing the frontier since, owing to the police' raid on the party conference in Belostok, connections with Europe were temporarily interrupted, but in a few days they would be restored.

I lived with these hospitable people for a few days more, both of them being extremely punctilious and taking no money from me. Kaplinsky, while working at his bench in one corner (he was a carpenter), questioned me about party work in Kharkov, about my prison experiences and my plans for the future.

While I did not for a moment doubt Kaplinsky, nevertheless, from the habit of caution that one acquires in the revolutionary movement, I told him about the Kharkov party organizations without mentioning names, and about my future plans I merely stated that I was going abroad and that time would show what I would do.

On the appointed day Kaplinsky sent me to a border town to comrades who were directly in touch with smugglers with whom the illegal crossing of the frontier was arranged. The latter brought me safely to the Prussian frontier, after which I left for Switzerland and thus, without further adventures, reached the *Iskra* editorial office. Thus, nothing that Kaplinsky did on that occasion could give ground for suspicion against him.

In 1917 when the Tsarist autocracy was overthrown and the documents of the Tsarist police fell into the hands of the revolutionaries, it was discovered that Kaplinsky was a police agent.

For fifteen years Kaplinsky, the man with a frank, open face and a welcoming smile on his lips, worked as a police agent, ruined hundreds of revolutionary fighters, broke up dozens of proletarian organizations, which had been built up, as is well known, with such tremendous difficulty, at the cost of considerable sacrifice.

Apparently Kaplinsky did not think it worthwhile to let me down on the occasion I had to deal with him. On the contrary, he calculated that in assisting me to get across the frontier he would be able to retain the confidence of the revolutionaries on the one hand and at the same time inform the police that so and so had gone abroad on such and such secret business for the party.

After the revolution in 1917 Kaplinsky managed to escape into hiding, and he was discovered only in 1922 living under an assumed name in Samara. He then paid the penalty for his treachery.

No. 2: ZHITOMIRSKY.

It was the summer of 1904. I was living temporarily in Berlin and waiting for my turn to be sent for work in Russia.

I met Bolshevik comrades who were engaged in transporting our literature across the frontier, and also in sending people across. It was a dangerous period; the great events of 1905 were approaching. Our "transporters" were up to their ears in work, the atmosphere was tense. A number of comrades had been trapped in crossing the frontier, and there was much reason for uneasiness. But there was one of the group of comrades engaged in this tedious work who was imperturbably calm — Zhitomirsky.

He was a medical student at the Berlin University, and was an adherent to the *Iskra* group. In 1904, when the group split up into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, Zhitomirsky went with the Bolsheviks. By all appearances he was one of us, a sincere, one hundred percent, Bolshevik; yet on meeting him one was irritated by his dandified appearance, his enormously high collars, his colored ties — by his dapper appearance in general. However, when we began to make fun of his perfumed figure, Zhitomirsky invariably replied that he dressed so carefully for conspirative reasons, that he was not spending party money on his posh clothes, that his parents were rich merchants and sent him as much money as he asked for.

We believed Zhitomirsky. The fact that comrades sent across to Russia through Berlin were tracked by the police in some town or other was no reason why suspicion should be directed against him; for the whole of the Tsarist Russia at that time was teeming with spies, and these comrades may have been discovered in the places where they worked. There was no reason, therefore, for suspecting that Zhitomirsky was informing the Department of Police of the departure of comrades for this town or the other.

Not so long ago, while working on the archives of the Department of Police I came across an extremely interesting document a letter from Zhitomirsky to the Director of the Department of Police informing him that a Bolshevik was going to Russia, carrying a letter of instructions in code from the center abroad to all Russian Bolshevik organizations, the contents of which were so and so; and here followed the text of the letter, which, he informed the police, would be carried by the bearer in the heel of his boot.

From the document in this file, I learned also that the police authorities regarded Zhitomirsky as a valuable assistant, that they paid him extremely large sums of money, that the police were working to get him a passport to enable him to come to St. Petersburg to report in person, etc.

When the Moscow uprising in December, 1905, was suppressed, when temporarily triumphant reaction again raised its head, when Lenin was compelled to emigrate for the second time and the Bolshevik center was once more transferred abroad, Zhitomirsky again joined the Bolsheviks and offered his services for the purpose of restoring the old connections with Europe and organizing the transport of illegal Bolshevik literature into Russia. His offer was accepted.

As a result of Zhitomirsky's treacherous work the Bolshevik organizations were discovered and raided by the police one after another. He tried his utmost to get into the technical commission of the Central Committee and at last succeeded in becoming one of its members, which gave him wide opportunities for extensive provocation.

One episode in the provocational exploits of Zhitomirsky is characteristic of all the others.

It was in 1909 – during the period of darkest reaction in Russia.

A prominent Bolshevik was under arrest. Because he had escaped from exile several times, and in order to ensure his safe arrival at the place of exile, to which he was then assigned, he was put into chains, both hands and feet. The long journey under these awful conditions had a terrible effect upon the comrade, and on arrival he was seized with fits of coughing. His temperature ran high, and his legs became covered with big sores from the chafing of the fetters. Nevertheless, in spite of his physical condition, this comrade was so strong in spirit that he again decided to escape immediately. After a tremendous effort he managed to escape and reach Paris. The Bolshevik center was then in Paris.

By this time Zhitomirsky had succeeded in finishing his medical training, had become a doctor and was practicing in his own consulting room in his flat in Paris. He proposed that the sick man should live with him, since he would be in a position to give him both medical and comradely assistance; thus, the sick comrade fell under the guardianship of the police agent. The sick man's condition was critical, the flesh wounds on his legs during the journey to Paris had become considerably worse; physically he was a broken man. And Zhitomirsky chose this moment, wishing to serve his masters – the Tsarist police to use the following means of dispatching an active Bolshevik to the other world. In his capacity as doctor, he began to assure the patient that the wounds on his legs were syphilitic, that there was no hope for him, that he was doomed.

On hearing the doctor's report, this comrade thought that he had become infected with this awful disease while in prison, and considering himself too weak to fight against this sickness, decided to die and took poison. The dose, however, was too small, and when he recovered somewhat and was examined by another doctor, it became quite clear, of course, that there was no sign of syphilis, and the wounds rapidly healed.

Zhitomirsky defended himself by pleading that he was an inexperienced doctor and that he had not been sufficiently tactful in the manner in which he had revealed to the sick man the character of his ailment. Everything seemed quite simple and plausible.

Zhitomirsky's police activities stretched over a period of eight years, and not till 1911 was he first caught in the act of provocation: it was proved that when he left for Russia, The Tsarist police agents in Paris sent a report to the Department of Police in St. Petersburg as they usually did when their agents left.

No. 3: OLGA NIKOLAEVNA PUTYATA.

It was in the beginning of 1907. The tortuous process of crawling back underground through which the Bolshevik organization were passing, had in some places come to an end. With inconceivable difficulties, the illegal party apparatus, shaken during the all too short days of freedom in 1905, was fitted together again. It was not firm, however, for there were so few secret meeting places available; the intellectuals no longer placed their apartments at their disposal. The lawyers and

doctors had ceased to sympathize with us. We Bolsheviks were not fashionable, for we had "failed." Decadent poets were now in vogue, who wrote lines such as: "I come to thee from the land of the prematurely born"...

There were still a few isolated connections among the intellectuals, however, and one of these was Olga Nikolaevna Putyata, an ephemeral creature, the wife of a semi-decadent writer. Olga Nikolaevna helped us considerably in the way of concealing the illegal side of our work, providing us with addresses for our secret correspondence, and so on. For instance, a quantity of Bolshevik literature arrived in Moscow from Finland, where it had to be issued illegally. This literature had to be collected in exchange for the luggage receipt, taken off to the central rooms, sorted out there, distributed according to locals and sent from there round the factories. I went to Olga Nikolaevna, there was nothing else to do, for we had no one else. She received me in her husband's luxurious study, the walls of which were lined with book-cases filled with books. This study involuntarily imbued one with respect. Olga Nikolaevna was very charming, thanked me for the trust put in her, and willingly took upon herself the task of going to the station to collect the material. In order to dispel suspicions on the part of the railway police, she said: "I'll take mamma with me; she is very old and extremely respectable"; whereupon she introduced me to an elderly lady – her mother, who at that moment entered the room.

Thus, everything was beautifully arranged. I handed over the luggage receipt, gave the address of our central rooms to which the basket had to be taken, and without feeling the slightest suspicion, but simply through force of habit, being always on the alert, replied, when Olga Nikolaevna asked whether we should need her help to sort the literature, that we would not distribute it that day, but the next, although in my heart I knew that to leave such an enormous amount of illegal literature in one place for a whole night would be dangerous.

A couple of hours later the basket was safely brought by Olga Nikolaevna to the place indicated by me, and before evening came and I and a group of comrades had succeeded in sorting it out and sending it to the locals.

In the night the police came to our central rooms, but no literature was found, and they went away empty handed.

It is characteristic that none of us thought of suspecting Olga Nikolaevna; we all were convinced that she had simply been followed by spies while bringing the basket to us, hence the raid on our rooms.

I even went to warn Olga Nikolaevna of the danger which threatened her of being searched and perhaps arrested, since the police had been to the central rooms that night. She assured me that there was nothing to be alarmed at; that the police looked upon her as a woman of society and would hardly suspect her of revolutionary work, the more so since all the decadent writers who surrounded her were engaged in revising their works, no longer believed in the revolution and had no desire to help it, and this circumstance could not but be observed by the police; but, on the other hand, were anything to happen to her and were she arrested, she was quite prepared to bear her part of the

sacrifice for the cause of revolution, etc. My vigilance was lulled by declarations of this kind; I trusted this police agent, believed in her and many others over a period of several years, until rumors began to be heard regarding her, and she immediately vanished. The documents of the Moscow police fully confirm all the rumors that went the rounds then about the police activities of Putyata-Storozheva. She had been working as a police agent for several years.

No. 4: ROMANOV.

It was towards the end of 1907. I was working in the Bolshevik Moscow District organization, which covered all the factories and workshops in the area of what was then the Moscow Gubernia, or Province. The Kolomno works was the biggest center of our work, yet whenever we arranged for a meeting in Moscow with the representatives of Kolomno, they always sent not a worker in the Kolomno works, but a book-binder named Romanov. His party nickname was "George."

George was a little chap, insignificant enough to look at. somewhat brisk and resourceful when it was a question of carrying out party measures, but never stating his opinion, when questions of party policy were under discussion.

Nobody ever suspected George of any underhand dealings, but it seemed a great pity that a huge works like the Kolomno Works with masses of skilled metal workers, real, sturdy proletarians so to speak, should send as its representative to the meetings of the Bolshevik Party Committee in Moscow a simple little "artisan" – the book-binder George. Once a meeting of the members of the Moscow District Organization which was held in the woods was raided by the police. Only a few of the comrades were caught, for the rest managed to hide. Hence, no suspicion was aroused by the fact that George, the representative of the Kolomno Works, was also among the lucky ones to escape.

Four years passed.

After being imprisoned and exiled, I returned to Moscow, and in the winter of 1911 I met George in the corridor of the People's University (late Shanyavsky). Outwardly George still looked, insignificant, but he was not quite so ferret-like. His gestures were not so jerky. He spoke with more confidence and hinted that he knew all the latest Party news, since he had close connections with Europe; that he had only recently returned from abroad, where he had been studying in the party school in Capri.

I was at first surprised at the thought that Moscow had been unable to send a better, more capable proletarian to the party school, to the first Communist University, organized at that time by Maxim Gorky in Capri; but then I thought to myself: four years have passed, the man has developed, has become a true Bolshevik – a professional revolutionary and this thought put my mind at rest.

Commenting on our meeting in the corridor of the university, George declared quite frankly that he understood quite well why I should join evening classes; it was, of course, not in order to hear all the rubbish taught by liberal professors, but in order to use the place for the purpose of meeting the comrades.

As for himself, he told me that he had purposely enrolled for a series of lectures on co-operation, that he had an entrance ticket to the building of the University, that he had no intention of attending the lectures, but that he could meet many comrades here. In reply to my question about the party literature published abroad and the possibility of getting it regularly through him, George readily agreed to help me and, taking me to a secluded part of the corridor, told me in a whisper, that he was empowered to serve the entire Moscow district with party literature, and to pass on to them the directions of the Central Committee.

From that day I met George frequently; he regularly supplied me with party material, not only gave me information about the work in Moscow, but detailed information about the Bolshevik Conference which was in session in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, which he attended as a person entrusted by the Central Committee, etc., and so forth.

My rooms were carefully watched by spies, whenever I left my home I was followed, but I never connected this in any way with my meetings with George, since I had only recently returned from exile, and it was quite natural, therefore, that I should be kept under the surveillance of the police. I decided that I must be very careful about meeting comrades, not to visit them in their homes, and so I kept my appointments at the University.

One day a comrade, an old Moscow metal-worker, whom I had known through Party work long before the 1905 revolution, came to my flat in a state of agitation and told me that he was intent on committing suicide, since in the party circles someone had spread rumors to the effect that he was a police spy. I offered to help him and volunteered to take the initiative in investigating the matter but we both knew that since the recent raid on the Moscow Bolshevik Committee no real party organization existed at the moment. We could not wait for the party organization to be restored; every day was precious when it was a question of the political honor of a comrade; I therefore decided to speak to George, and asked him to form a Commission to investigate the matter and to call me as a witness.

I made an appointment with George and told him that, of course, in general, I could really only answer for myself, but that all I knew of the life of the suspected comrade was certainly in his favor; that I knew him as a good, faithful, honest party member.

George also had known this comrade for a long time, and appeared to be very indignant about the rumor having been spread. He took it upon himself to call a commission as soon as possible to look into the matter, and advised me to wait calmly until I was called as witness.

Some time passed, and finally I was called to the home of two good Bolshevik party people, who managed to bring their father in to help our illegal party work. The two comrades, brother and sister, were in exile at the time. I came into the room. At the table was seated an old man the head of the house, two comrades who until then had been unknown to me — members of the commission, George, who acted as chairman, and the suspected comrade, pale as death, whom George was interrogating.

After the interrogation the comrade was told to leave the room; he went staggering from our presence, and then I was interrogated as witness.

I told them all I knew of the affair. There was a short exchange of opinion, and they all unanimously came to the conclusion that the comrade accused was not guilty, that the rumors were false, and spread with provocative intent.

George drew up a verdict exonerating the comrade and condemning those who had spread the provocational rumors.

When the Imperialist war broke out in 1914, I happened to meet George at an illegal meeting, where the Moscow Bolsheviks first formulated their attitude to war, and Romanov, with the rest of us, expressed the hope that the Tsar's army would be defeated. The revolution would soon begin, he said, and we must all prepare for this.

After the October Revolution, an examination of the files of the Department of Police revealed that Romanov had worked for the police under the pseudonym of "Pelagea," and that for no less than ten years he had been one of their most valuable agents, and that he too was paid highly by the Tsarist treasury.

And so, it turned out that it was George who spread the rumors about this worker. It is quite obvious that the spreading of slanderous rumors about a good, faithful revolutionary Bolshevik worker was essential to George in order to divert attention from his own provocative activities; for in those days almost every day Bolshevik organizations were being built and raided. Everybody felt the hovering hand of the provocateur. Many things pointed to George who, trusted by the Central Committee, knew about everything. And so, he had chosen as victim an old, faithful comrade, well-known in Moscow circles, who would also be well – informed about Party work, and had spread all these provocative rumors about him.

We now know also from the report sent in by "Pelagea" that immediately after the meeting held in the summer of 1914, mentioned above, George went to the Moscow police and handed in a complete list and description of all the comrades who were present at that meeting, and the police, of course, made no delay in removing those of us whom they could lay hands on.

"Pelagea" was unfortunate enough to live until the February Revolution, and was then arrested before he could get away. After the October Revolution he was sentenced to death by the Proletarian Court.

Nos. 5 and 6: MALINOVSKY and POSKREBUKHIN.

It was towards the end of the year 1911. I was still attending the Shanyavsky University, always accompanied by spies. They simply swarmed round me. I got no peace because of the spies, and could get no work done. Then my brother arrived from abroad, from Lenin. My brother was a Bolshevik, entrusted with the task of organizing a delegation from Moscow for the general Russian Party Conference which was to take place in Prague. I wanted to help my brother with this

commission, and with the greatest difficulty arranged a meeting for him in the Bacteriological Institute with a metal worker, Malinovsky.

It had not been possible to arrange any real Party meeting to elect Malinovsky to the Prague Conference, because at that time the whole of the Moscow Party organization had been broken up by the gendarmes; consequently, a small group of Bolsheviks decided that Malinovsky, without being elected, should go and represent the Moscow Bolsheviks at the Prague Conference. Who was Malinovsky?

He was a very intelligent, very experienced metal worker, with a good command of language, able to debate; a man of strong temperament, perhaps a little too self-confident, but nevertheless a man who could not fail to attract attention; a commanding personality in all respects, Malinovsky was not a Moscow worker of long standing; he had arrived in Moscow not so very long ago; he had previously been President of the Metal Workers' Union in St. Petersburg, and he was a Pole by birth—had been arrested through his party work, exiled, and so on.

I personally was not closely in touch with Malinovsky at that time, but I heard a lot about him from comrades to the effect that he was a prominent worker in all respects, a popular orator, and I was not surprised that soon afterwards, when the candidature of Malinovsky was put forward in a workers' constituency in the Province for the Fourth State Duma, he was elected.

After the October Revolution documents were found which proved that Malinovsky entered the service of the Tsarist police in 1910; that, as a matter of fact, they had helped him to get elected to the Duma. He betrayed numerous Bolsheviks; he betrayed both Stalin and Sverdlov, who had escaped from Siberian exile, and received at first 500 rubles monthly and then 700 rubles for his "work," besides additional rewards "per capita." The Police Department was so interested that its agent should be elected by the Moscow workers, that it kept out of his personal file the inconvenient circumstance that in his youth Malinovsky had a most prosaic criminal record of the meanest kind of petty theft.

These unpleasant details became known only after the October Revolution.

However, at the time about which I am writing, Malinovsky, having been supplied with addresses and secret meeting places on the frontier by my brother, left for Prague, and two days later my brother was arrested in Moscow in the street. The gendarmes came to my home, made a careful search and, finding nothing, nevertheless left a man on duty, who remained in the house for twelve days in order to trap anyone who came to visit me.

I went to the police station to demand that this state of "martial law" be removed from my home and, in excited tones, said to the police officer: "Do you take us for fools, do you think that if it had been necessary, we wouldn't have found time to warn people that there is a man on duty in our house?" The officer "gently" asked me to calm myself, saying: "Why, you and I should understand each other perfectly well; I am an experienced police officer, and you are an experienced revolutionary and should understand that our man on duty is of use, for people may come to your

house whom you are able to forewarn; for instance, someone might be arriving from abroad, or somebody who has escaped from Siberian exile. We are not touching you, not arresting you; it is not so long since you returned from exile, but we shall watch your extensive connections."

I could only thank the police officer for his frankness, and bearing in mind the words of wisdom of the police, I tried, as far as possible, to write and give the warning that comrades arriving in Moscow should, at any rate, not come direct to my flat.

When I was allowed my first visit to my brother, he managed to whisper to me: "Someone is spying in Moscow; I was sure of it after my first interrogation by the police. They know absolutely everything."

However, there was no one farther from our thoughts in this connection than Malinovsky; anybody but he, our rising star, whose speeches from the Duma tribune later attracted general attention.

In the last two years before the Imperialist war, the revolutionary tide had again turned; at this time the legal Bolshevik press had grown considerably in spite of police restrictions, and the publishers of all these newspapers and periodicals, which were prohibited daily by the Tsarist censor, and which cropped up again under different names every day, were formally members of the Bolshevik fraction of the State Duma. Just about this time, early in the Spring of 1914, Malinovsky, who had arrived in Moscow, asked me to call upon him, and informed me that with the agreement of the Bolshevik center, we were to publish a magazine: *Rabochyi-Put* (The Path of Labor). He said, that if I had no objection, he, Malinovsky, the formal publisher of this magazine would entrust me with the business side of the magazine, since he would have to be in St. Petersburg, and the magazine was to be issued in Moscow.

I naturally welcomed Malinovsky's suggestion. We agreed to meet in a restaurant the next day, so that we could discuss the affair in detail, and then go to a solicitor and draw up the necessary papers.

When I arrived at the restaurant the next day, Malinovsky was already there, seated at a table set for two, and I immediately noticed his frank pleasure at the fact that the eyes of all the diners were directed towards him, for the portraits of the members of the State Duma frequently appeared in the press, and the petty-bourgeoisie were curious to see the Duma deputy.

Malinovsky was simply basking in the attention paid to him. He spoke to me much more loudly than I should have liked, laughed loud a great deal, and in general behaved most unrestrainedly. This was very unpleasant.

When, after dinner, we took a cab and were driving to the solicitor, Malinovsky took a manifesto from his side pocket, which had only just appeared in St. Petersburg, and showed it to me, saying loudly that in Moscow everything was still concealed, but that in St. Petersburg they were carrying on Bolshevik work almost openly. When I asked him not to speak so loudly, since only his person was immune from arrest, as a deputy, and I was very much liable to arrest, he began to tease

me, laughing the while, and to accuse me of cowardice, of being in the habit of hiding underground. All this was most unpleasant to me, but I did not in the least suspect him of treachery. He was just personally unpleasant, I thought, and somewhat conceited.

When we had finished our business with the solicitor, Malinovsky left for St. Petersburg, and I began to prepare for the publication of the magazine, which soon began to appear.

Both the editorial board of the magazine and the principal members of the staff had already been appointed by the Moscow Party organization, and among these was a certain Poskrebukhin, a clerk by profession. At that time, he was known as a member of the illegal Bolshevik fraction of the legal Union of Commercial Employees. I had met him pretty often during the past two years, and as he worked in one of the sick benefit club offices in a very thickly populated working-class district, it had always been possible through him to get into touch with the workers of several factories, which was especially valuable at that time, when the Bolsheviks were being arrested one after the other, and for some time it had been difficult for this reason to keep in touch with the workshops.

Through Poskrebukhin I managed to get two prominent Bolshevik professional revolutionaries, who had escaped from Siberia, into touch with some factory workers; these two revolutionaries had arrived in 1913-1914 to help the work in the Moscow Party organization. True, they stayed in Moscow for a very short time, for they were soon arrested; however, since arrests were an everyday occurrence, there was no question of our suspecting Poskrebukhin, the more so since these comrades were old Bolsheviks, who had frequently been arrested before, so that any police spy could simply recognize them in the street.

On another occasion I introduced Poskrebukhin to a third Bolshevik who had escaped from exile, and when, after a meeting with Poskrebukhin, this comrade left on private business for a few days in St. Petersburg, and was there arrested on the street, again nobody suspected Poskrebukhin, because this comrade had worked in St. Petersburg before; the police knew him there, and again could quite easily have recognised him in the streets. This comrade came to a tragic end – he fell ill and died in prison.

These isolated facts did not rouse any suspicion against Poskrebukhin, who continued to flourish; there is no other word to use in connection with Poskrebukhin this radiant, red-cheeked, tall, deep chested, broad-shouldered young man. He was always cheerful and full of life – full of concentrated vital energy.

Sometime afterwards, when we began to work together, and to meet every day in the editorial office – he to bring out the magazine, and I as publishing agent and editor of the workers' page – I often used to look at Poskrebukhin and wonder how he managed to be so elegantly attired and to lunch on such expensive food, all on his salary of 60 rubles a month. Once I even asked him where he got all his money for the caviar, ham and fruit with which he regaled himself at lunch, and he calmly replied that since I was an intellectual, like all those who come from the intelligentsia, I could not understand the art of living well on little money.

The Russian intellectuals could never make the most of their money, he said to me teasingly, he — a mujik, son of a peasant — a yokel, knew how to make the most of his money, and, therefore, it was always the same, that although we received the same salary, I never had any money and he always had plenty.

For the few months during which our magazine came out (it was closed down by the police on the eve of the declaration of war), Poskrebukhin was most active in distributing confiscated numbers and almost every number of the magazine was confiscated, it was always the same; the other comrades were always caught by the police when attempting to dispatch confiscated numbers to the factories, and Poskrebukhin was the only one who always managed to get past the police, and so on. We always praised him for his dexterity and held him up as an example for other less skillful comrades. Poskrebukhin's success somehow seemed to harmonize with all his out\ -ward appearance of a successful man to such an extent that we trusted him absolutely.

Once Malinovsky arrived from St. Petersburg and called at the editorial office. He praised us highly for managing the work of the magazine so well, and asked me to call a meeting of Bolshevik members of the Tailors' Union and other unions at the Tailors' Union rooms, to hear his report.

I pointed out to him that according to police regulations: only members of the given union were allowed to meet at the premises of that union; and that since the police turned up every evening at the rooms of the Tailors' Union, where we had a fairly strong Bolshevik fraction, we could expect that the meeting would be broken up, those present would be, listed, and since some of them would not be members of the union, there would be sufficient excuse for closing down the union the legal covering for our Bolshevik Party organization in Moscow which we were using so extensively for the purpose of carrying on our illegal work.

Malinovsky made an awful fuss, got very angry, used strong language about the Moscow Party organization and about me personally; but I quite categorically refused to call the meeting in the Tailors' Union rooms, and proposed, that it be called illegally in somebody's flat. Poskrebukhin supported me entirely, and Malinovsky went away in a huff. The next day I came to the office and was told by Poskrebukhin that Malinovsky had nevertheless been able to arrange a meeting the night before in the Tailors' Union rooms, that somebody from the Union had helped him, that the meeting had been closed down by the police and about twenty of our most active Bolsheviks from the Metal Workers' Union, Plumbers Union, and so on, had been arrested. Malinovsky, as a deputy of the Duma, was immune, and therefore let off. Poskrebukhin himself, when he heard quite late in the evening that there was to be a meeting after all, intended going, but at the entrance to the union rooms he saw that there was some trouble and he decided not to enter the house, and so escaped.

Soon our magazine was raided by the police. When the police officers rushed into the printing works where the magazine was printed, Poskrebukhin and I were in the works office. Paying no attention to us, they ordered the printer to remove the issue of the magazine which was being printed from the machines at once. When the owner and the police officers went into the machine department, Poskrebukhin and I hurried out. I intended going straight to the editorial office to

destroy certain material in my desk which should not be allowed to fall into the hands of the police when they came to the office to make a search Poskrebukhin hurried along after me, and on the way tried to persuade me to go home, because he was going to the editorial office all the same, and could destroy the material. Although I did not suspect him of any underhand dealings, nevertheless I refused to go home, because it was most likely that the police were already in the editorial office, and would most probably detain anybody who turned up; thus, Poskrebukhin would run the risk of being arrested because of me, and I did not want this to happen. I decided to take the risk myself. Poskrebukhin then began to express great concern for my safety and to assure me that if there was any risk to be run he would be able to get out of the trouble somehow, for he had never been to prison, and even if they arrested him, they would not detain him long, because it would be his first offence, whereas, if they arrested me, who had been detained by the police so many times, arrested times without number, and sent to exile, they would be sure to detain me for a long time, that this would be extremely inexpedient for our work, and, moreover, there was the small child at home, whereas Poskrebukhin was absolutely free from any ties.

All this he said with his usual vehemence, and I allowed myself to be persuaded and went home, leaving Poskrebukhin to go to the editorial office. Even then I felt no suspicions about him; on the contrary, I was extremely grateful to him, as a good comrade, and when on the following day he called on me with the news that all the material, manuscripts, and so on, had been safely destroyed, that there had been no police raid on the office, I was frankly overjoyed, and we drank tea together like old friends, and talked over our plans for a new magazine with a new name. Rumors of the spying activities of Poskrebukhin began to be heard in party circles only in 1915 and 1916; they were extremely indefinite rumors but nevertheless. people began to avoid him. Only in 1917, after we had obtained access to the archives of the Tsarist Police Department, were the facts about his police activities definitely established. I do not know exactly how long Poskrebukhin carried on his crimes. Both he, and Romanov, as well as Malinovsky, were shot after the October Revolution.

LENIN'S ROAD TO THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION – 1930



PREFACE

"No force can dim the torch which Lenin kindled in the stifling darkness of a crazy world" -
GORKY

In the dark years of Russian life, when autocratic tsars not only stifled all that was vital in their own country, but helped in every way to strangle the revolutionary movements in other lands, earning old Russia the name of the gendarme of Europe, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov-Lenin was born on April 22nd, in the remote town of Simbirsk on the Volga.

He was the great proletarian revolutionary under whose leadership the Russian proletariat overthrew for all time not only the oppressing tsars, but also the exploiting capitalists and landlords, and converted tsarist Russia-the gendarme of Europe into the socialist Land of the Soviets-the country of the toilers of the entire world; and his name has become familiar, near and dear, to all proletarians, whatever their nationality, and whatever the part of the world they live in.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

Lenin's father, Ilya Nikolaevich Ulyanov (1831-96) came from a poor middle-class family in Astrakhan. By hard work he had managed to acquire a higher education. As an eminent educator and social worker, he devoted all his strength to spreading literacy among the people. At that time, only a few years after the emancipation of the peasants from serfdom, this was a crying need in populous and illiterate Russia. When the third child-Vladimir, the future Lenin-was born to the Ulyanov family, Ilya Nikolaevich was inspector of public schools in Simbirsk.

Lenin's mother, Maria Alexandrovna Ulyanova (1835-1916, née Blanc) was a physician's daughter. A highly intelligent and strong-willed woman, she enjoyed great influence on her children. The means of the Ulyanov family afforded a modest but secure and cultured life, and according to his sister, A. A. I. Elizarova, Lenin's childhood was a happy one. He was a healthy, lively boy. For the rest, the atmosphere in the Ulyanov home was such as to encourage rational and useful living.

At the Simbirsk Gymnasium, which he entered at the age of nine and a half, Lenin always stood at the head of his class; in addition to his school work, he read and studied a great deal with his elder brother Alexander. The brothers liked to be alone and undisturbed, and would often rid themselves of unwelcome visitors by jestingly saying: "Kindly favor us with your absence we have to study."

In 1887 Lenin finished the Gymnasium with the highest honors. He scored this success despite the fact that this same year, when he was scarcely seventeen, he had a fearful shock. His brother Alexander, whom he had been so fond of as a child, the idol of his youth, was hanged on May 8th, 1887, for organizing an attempt against the tsar.

Lenin's brother acquired the political views that were to lead him to the tsar's scaffold as a student at the University of St. Petersburg. At the time the scattered Russian revolutionaries did not as yet feel they should look to the working class for support; and though some writings of the great teacher Karl Marx, who first gave the international working-class movement a scientific basis, had already reached them, they had not yet learned to apply the revolutionary theory of Marx to the practical tasks facing the Russian revolutionary movement, as Lenin did somewhat later.

These scattered revolutionaries, including the best of their number-Alexander Ilyich Ulyanov still continued naïvely to believe in the effectiveness of individual terrorism, and hoped to do away with oppression through the physical extermination of individual oppressors. The people's most vicious and most hated oppressor was the tsar, and so it was that the handful of fearless men of Alexander Ulyanov's terrorist group marked the despot Alexander III for destruction. But the attempt failed, and the members of the organization were arrested.

After his arrest, during the examination, Alexander Ulyanov tried to shield his comrades by taking the whole of the blame upon himself; at the trial he made a big revolutionary speech, heard his sentence calmly, and climbed the scaffold with unfaltering step, at the age of barely twenty-one.

The life and death of his brother Alexander had deep influence on the rest of Lenin's life.

In the autumn of 1887, after graduation from the Gymnasium, Lenin entered the law school at the University of Kazan; he did not, however, remain there for long. In December 1887 he was first expelled from the university, and then arrested for taking active part in the expressions of protest on the part of the revolutionary students against the régime of oppression prevailing in the institutions of higher learning as well as in the outside world.

At the time of his arrest, a police officer sought to persuade him by saying: "What are you making a fuss about, young man? You can't tear down a wall with your bare hands." Lenin replied: "It is a wall, but a rotten one; kick it, and it will collapse."

After his release, Lenin was exiled to the village of Kokushkino, near Kazan, where his sister, Anna Ilyinichna Ulyanova (later Elizarova, by marriage) was living under police surveillance. Later Lenin's mother also moved to Kokushkino, bringing the younger children-Olga, who died soon after, and the present Maria Ilyinichna and Dmitri Ilyich Ulyanov, now Old Bolsheviks.

The execution of Alexander and the arrest and exile of Vladimir and Anna placed the Ulyanov family in the extremely difficult position of complete isolation. The circle they had moved in hitherto consisted of the liberal intelligentsia, who naturally were not distinguished by excessive courage. And so it happened that the only visitor to the Ulyanov house in Kokushkino was the police inspector, who came to see whether or not the "criminals," Anna and Vladimir Ulyanov, had escaped.

Isolation from the outside world was hard on the family, but Lenin himself felt in no way oppressed by this solitude. For was utterly plunged in his books and studies. In the autumn 1888, his mother managed to obtain permission for him to return to the town, and the whole family moved to Kazan. Here Lenin used an old kitchen as his den in their new abode, and surrounded by his books and notes, he continued his intensive studies.

It was in this kitchen that Lenin began reading *Capital*, Marx's chief work.

The brilliant disciple and perpetuator of Karl Marx's work, Lenin never tired of reading and re-reading the writings of his great teacher. This is borne out by N. Krupskaya, who, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Marx's death, wrote that always, even in our time, in the days when the Soviet Power was built, at the most critical moments of the revolution's course, Lenin would turn to the works of Marx and would often say, "Let's ask Marx's advice."

Living in Kazan as a student expelled from the university for unreliability and under police surveillance, young Lenin, nevertheless, did not confine himself to the theoretical study of Marx at home. He established contact with the first illegal Marxist circle of revolutionary youth, which already existed in Kazan, and only a lucky accident-the fact that he moved with his family to live in the Samara Gubernia-saved him from again being arrested, along with his comrades in the circle, in the summer of 1889.

Lenin lived in Samara till 1891, spending the winters in town and the summers in the country. In 1891 he was allowed to take the final university examinations, which he passed at the law school of the University of St. Petersburg, after excellent preparatory work at home. Having returned to Samara, in January, 1892, Lenin qualified as assistant barrister however, he practiced law very little. His younger brother, Dmitri Ilyich Ulyanov, tells of how Lenin used his knowledge of law, quoting the following small, but very significant, instance:

In the summer of 1892, Lenin arrived in Syzran, on the Volga, and, wishing to cross the river without waiting for the ferry, he hired a boat. In midstream the boat was stopped by a merchant's retainers, who refused to allow the boat to land, on the pretext that that section of the river had been leased by their master.

Lenin took up the cudgels for the boatman and declared that he would have the merchant prosecuted for arbitrary action-an offence punishable by imprisonment without the option of a fine;

the merchant laughed, feeling sure that no one would dare touch him, the famous merchant Arefyev, for the sake of a mere boatman. Nevertheless, soon afterwards, Lenin brought suit against him.

The hearing of the case was postponed time and again. The judges, who were friends of the merchant's, put off the hearing on various legal pretexts, hoping the restless young lawyer would get fed-up with a case which promised no gain, but involved only travelling expenses and waste of time. Three times Lenin specially made the journey on account of the case, once in foul autumn weather and once on a frozen winter's night. The third time, however, he succeeded in having the merchant Arefyev sentenced to a month's imprisonment. This incident put the cocksure merchant to shame and ridicule, and stirred the stagnant provincial bog.

But Lenin's preparations for the final examinations, the rank of assistant barrister, and his occasional law practice, were all secondary. The chief content of his life was something entirely different. For Lenin, from his youth, already felt and realized that he must train for another vocation that of a revolutionary; and not simply as a rank-and-file soldier of the revolution, but a revolutionary who should have to voice his own opinion on the controversial questions of the content, tasks, and character of the coming Russian Revolution.

This was the time when vast changes were occurring in the economy of Russia, when capitalism and the industrial proletariat were rapidly growing; however, these deep-lying processes were not yet sufficiently apparent on the surface of Russian life. The prestige enjoyed by the revolutionary Narodniki⁴, who asserted that Russia, as an agrarian country, would escape the path of capitalist development, that she would not, as the expression went, stew in the factory boiler, that no class differentiation existed in the countryside, and that the peasantry would prove the chief driving force in the Russian Revolution, though somewhat diminished, was still considerable.

Marx's teaching on the class struggle and the role of the working class in that struggle was regarded by the Narodniki as inapplicable to Russia. The Narodniki affirmed that Russia would never become industrialized to an extent where the Russian workers would play a part of any importance in the coming revolution.

The present-day reader, even though unschooled, requires no proof of the absurdity of such assertions, long since refuted by life. But at the time, Lenin was faced with the extremely complex task of crossing weapons with the recognized theoreticians of revolutionary Narodism and scientifically proving with facts and figures that there was nothing revolutionary in their ideology, based on obscuring the prevalent feudal and capitalist forms of oppression in tsarist Russia, that it was petty-bourgeois to its very core.

Faced with this task, Lenin went still deeper in his study of the works of Marx and Engels, made a careful study of Russian revolutionary literature, examined vast quantities of material in dry Zemstvo⁵ almanacs. He gave lectures before the local Marxists, and established connexions with the Marxists of other towns. He also wrote his first two scientific articles, only one of which "*New*

⁴ Narodniki literally "Populists," the adherents of a social trend which originated in the sixties of the last century. Its most characteristic feature was the belief in the possibility of a non-capitalist development of Russia and of her attaining Socialism without the "sore of proletarianization," and on the basis of the village commune.

⁵ Zemstvo-Organs of local autonomy set up in the 'sixties after the emancipation of the serfs and representing the landowning interests. They appeared at various periods as more or less active though moderate opponents of the autocracy.

Economic Movements in Peasant Life" has come down to us, the other-a review of a book by V. V. entitled *The Destiny of Capitalism in Russia*-is lost.

As his theoretical foundations grew stronger, Lenin began to feel more and more cramped in non-industrial, provincial Samara. He was increasingly attracted to the capital, to St. Petersburg, where revolutionary thought was more active, where the industrial proletariat, even though as yet only in the cases of advanced individual workers, was already waking to political life and political struggle.

REVOLUTIONARY THEORY AND REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICE

To live in St. Petersburg and carry-on revolutionary work without attracting notice, some legal cover was necessary, and so Lenin registered as assistant to a barrister. As in Samara, he devoted very little time to his law practice; it amounted to occasional appearances in court on behalf of plaintiffs from among the city poor.

An old worker, named Knyazev, one of Lenin's many pupils in his St. Petersburg circles, who knew him as a propagandist under the name of Nikolai Petrovich, tells that he came across Lenin as a lawyer in the following manner:

Knyazev's grandmother died after working many years as a servant in the household of a big general. She had accumulated a trunk full of articles which was to be inherited by Knyazev. However, the general himself was not averse to keeping what the old cook had left, and so Knyazev needed legal advice.

Looking for a lawyer who sympathized with the poor and would help him to obtain what his grandmother had left him, from the greedy general, Knyazev was recommended a lawyer named Ulyanov. Knyazev went to the given address, and not finding him in, he decided to wait. He was let into a poorly furnished room, which looked like anything but a lawyer's office; and when the lawyer himself turned up, Knyazev found, to his astonishment and joy, that it was none other than his teacher and propagandist, Nikolai Petrovich.

When Lenin reached St. Petersburg there were already several circles of young Marxists from among the intellectuals, in contact with the workers of the large factories. The most active propaganda work beyond the Nevsky Gate, and in other working-class districts of the tsar's capital, was carried on by a group of Marxists who, for the sake of secrecy, called themselves the "old men".

Among the members of this group Lenin met N. K. Krupskaya, his future wife and comrade, his closest friend in struggle at every stage of the glorious heroic road they travelled in common.

Lenin's first appearance among the "old men" made an enormous impression upon them—this hitherto unknown twenty-three-year-old "Volga man," as his comrades called him, with his mocking, penetrating eyes, pointed speech, and bubbling energy. They were amazed at his erudition, the depth and comprehensiveness of his theoretical knowledge, his maturity and clarity of mind in presenting not only the theoretical, but also the practical tasks of revolutionary struggle, his flexibility in the questions of the strategy and tactics of that struggle.

Hence it naturally followed that it was the "Volga man" who was to head the group of "old men" and help it grow beyond the narrow limits to which its practical revolutionary work had been hitherto confined.

Before Lenin's arrival the "old men" had confined themselves to Marxist propaganda in circles of advanced workers, not yet approaching the broad masses of workers, although, despite the prophecies from the Narodnik camp, industry in Russia was rapidly attaining tremendous growth, and with it the revolutionary movement among the working-class masses. Naturally, Lenin felt this most acutely, and he therefore confronted the "old men" with the need of changing their revolutionary tactics.

Under Lenin's influence and leadership, the "old men" came to realize the necessity of conducting, along with their propaganda, widespread agitation among the masses on the basis of their daily needs, drawing the masses into active economic and political struggle. At the same time

Lenin warned them against one-sidedly overstressing the economic struggle alone in their agitation. He taught them to combine the economic struggle of the working class with the political struggle, the struggle against tsarist autocracy.

The methods used by Lenin this period of practical revolutionary work, when he himself conducted propaganda circles, are characteristic. He did not confine himself to having the workers listen to him, but listened to them himself; he not only taught his pupils, but learned from them, getting to know the conditions of everyday life in the factories, in the shops, and in the narrow quarters of the workers' barracks.

On the basis of material thus collected he drew up agitational leaflets, popular pamphlets, which won the minds and hearts of the workers with their concrete statements, their fighting spirit, and their clear, simple, incontrovertible logic.

Along with intensive practical work of organization, propaganda, and agitation, Lenin was constantly engaged in a profound study of the theory of Marx as applied to Russia, the application of Marx's method to the study of Russian economics, which provided him with a splendid weapon in the struggle against his enemies the theorists of the revolutionary Narodnik movement.

The year of Lenin's arrival in St. Petersburg, 1893, the pillars of Narodism, sensing in the swift growth of Marxism a direct menace to their hitherto unchallenged authority, declared war on the Marxists-the "Marx kids," as they called them-in their legal publications, including the *Russkoye Bogatstvo* magazine, while the Narodnik supporters among the students would compose scurrilous ditties about the Marxists.

In reply to their criticism, Lenin, in 1894, wrote a splendid work against the Narodniki, who, as we pointed out above, regarded the peasantry, taken as a whole, the chief driving force of the revolution; the book was directed against their ignoring the class differentiation among the peasantry, against their short-sighted underestimation of the development of capitalism in Russia and of the importance of the industrial proletariat the leader in the coming revolution.

In that first big work, which he entitled *Who the "Friends of the People" Are, and How they Fight Against the Social-Democrats*, Lenin showed with exceptional clarity the leading role of the working class in the coming Russian Revolution. Twenty-three years before the victory of the October Revolution, in the concluding part of *Who the "Friends of the People" Are*, he drew a clear picture of how the ideas of scientific socialism were spreading in Russia, how working-class organizations were growing and developing, how they were uniting, how a fighting party of the working class was being formed. He further showed how the workers, marching under the leadership of their party to storm autocracy, would draw the democratic elements with them, and how, after the overthrow of the autocracy, when the road was clear, the Russian proletariat, together with the proletariat of other countries, would advance to the Communist revolution. Naturally, such a book could not appear legally under the conditions of censorship prevailing under tsarism. It was issued in the form of "yellow notebooks" a small number of copies crudely reproduced on a hectograph. *Who the "Friends of the People" Are* was put out by a group of Marxist students in a suburb of St. Petersburg.

Lenin's "yellow notebooks" were soon handed out; and as during the searches of Marxists the "notebooks" were confiscated and placed with the tsarist secret police, they very soon disappeared altogether, and only Lenin's closest comrades knew of the existence of this remarkable book. Only in 1923 were the "yellow notebooks" rescued from the archives; and one of them is still missing.

During this period Marxism as a trend was spreading to ever wider circles of the Russian intelligentsia. In fact, Marxism became so much the fashionable tendency in public thought that professors from the camp of the democratic bourgeoisie began to parade in Marxist phraseology as was the case with Peter Struve, then a so-called "Marxist," and now a white émigré and a sworn enemy of Soviet Power. Struve and his group, who were called "legal Marxists," succeeded in legally publishing several books of a Marxist trend. In order to benefit by these legal opportunities, Lenin made connexions with Struve's group, and under the nom-de-plume of Tulin wrote an article in a Marxist collection of articles which was published legally, but was burnt by the organs of tsarist censorship. At the same time, he severely criticized Struve and his friends for distorting Marxism, and labelled their pseudo-democratic ideas a reflection of Marxism in bourgeois literature.

In the spring of 1895 Lenin fell seriously ill with pneumonia. Upon his recovery, he used his period of convalescence for a legal trip abroad to get in touch with the founders of Russian Marxism, the Emancipation of Labor group, which was formed in Switzerland in 1883 and was headed by Plekhanov, whose writings still had influence over Lenin at the time.

The impression Lenin produced on the members of the group was so great that they remarked, "Young Ulyanov is the stuff that leaders are made of."

Having established permanent connexions with the Emancipation of Labor group and travelled through Europe, acquainting himself first hand with the everyday struggle of the Western European working class and with West-European Social-Democratic literature, Lenin returned to St. Petersburg in the autumn of 1895, bringing in a supply of illegal literature in a trunk with a double bottom.

The "old men," who by the end of 1895 had grown from a small group into the biggest Social-Democratic organization of its time, subsequently called the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, were constantly extending their activities. The working-class movement in St. Petersburg was growing, and its leaders now included not only intellectuals, but also new cadres of propagandists, agitators, and organizers from the workers trained by Lenin and his comrades. The influence of the Social-Democrats was also growing in the other proletarian centers. Lenin began preparations for calling a Party Congress, and also started making arrangements for the publication of an illegal paper to be called the *Rabocheye Delo*, for whose first issue he prepared the editorial. In this editorial he especially emphasized the fact that for a successful struggle against the autocracy in order to clear the way for a planned and regular struggle for socialism, an independent party of the proletariat was first required. But the *Rabocheye Delo* never appeared, for all the material intended for the first issue fell into the hands of the gendarmes when Lenin and the whole leading nucleus of the "old men" were arrested on the night of December 9th-10th, 1895.

PRISON AND EXILE

In one of his speeches to Lenin's memory, Comrade Stalin likened Lenin to the mountain eagle. And a mountain eagle Lenin remained, even though caged by the tsarist government. For his mind continued to soar, and the prison cell did not bar from it the questions that engaged it outside. And the thought that both before and after his arrest more and more engaged his mind was the practical possibility of building an illegal proletarian party under the conditions prevailing in tsarist Russia.

In prison Lenin wrote a draft program for that future party, and an extensive explanatory note to the draft, and began to collect the material for an economic statistical investigation which was to form the theoretical basis for the program of the future Party's activities.

Lenin also supplied the comrades outside with the texts of leaflets and agitation pamphlets. "There is no cunning that cannot be outwitted," he used to say; and he himself had to do a good deal of manipulating to get his writings out of the prison. In this work he was helped in every way by his relatives who came to visit him.

The draft program and the explanatory note to it were written with milk between the lines of books which he returned to be exchanged. The same was at first done in the case of drafts of leaflets, which it was necessary to pass on as fast as possible, for they dealt with urgent topics of the day. Thus, for instance, during the well-known St. Petersburg general strike in the summer of 1896, Lenin managed to send out in time the text of an appeal to the workers of the Thornton factory. Strikes in the very capital so frightened the tsar that he and his government adopted the first piece of factory legislation, limiting the working day to eleven and a half hours.

Later, when Lenin began to accumulate large quantities of statistical material, tables, etc., for the investigation he planned, it was sometimes possible to get illegal material in and out of the prison together with these piles of books.

Once, on a hot summer's day, Lenin's cell was raided, as it often was, by the gendarme officer, who began looking through the books. After examining a considerable quantity of tables, he began to pant and asked Lenin how he could worry about statistics on such a hot day. When the gendarme had safely departed, Lenin had to acknowledge that he, too, had been sweating, for among the legal tables there was some illegal material, which the gendarme, fortunately, did not reach.

Lenin was in solitary confinement from December, 1895, to February, 1897, and during this period was so absorbed in his work that the time seemed too short, and when he was told that he would soon be released from prison and exiled to Siberia for three years, he expressed his sorrow to his friends at not having made full use of the libraries of the capital, and his fear that in Siberia it would be difficult to find further material.

Lenin left prison as full of vitality and plans for future work as when he entered it.

He used the three days allowed him in the capital for "putting his personal affairs in order" to consult with his comrades, who, while the "old men" were imprisoned, had continued their work under the name of the "young men." However, at their very first meeting, right after the exchange of warm comradely greetings, Lenin saw that his instructions on the necessity of linking the economic struggle of the proletariat with the political struggle had not been understood by the "young men."

Carried away by the broad strike movement, in their propaganda and agitation they advanced slogans which separated economics from politics and degraded the political struggle of the working

class to the level of the fight for a penny rise. At this "meeting of friends" Lenin severely criticized the tactics of the "young men," the future Economists and Mensheviks.

After the three days had expired, Lenin, after a short stay with relatives in Moscow, travelled to Siberia. He remained for a brief time in Krasnoyarsk, reaching the village of Shushenskoye in the Minusinsk district, where he was assigned for his three-year exile, on May 20th, 1897. Here he lived in a spacious, clean peasant cottage, with rude furniture (which is now in the Lenin Museum in Moscow) and felt splendid. Especially beneficial was the effect of the Siberian landscape, which was a genuine pleasure to him on his hunting walks.

Returning home from the hunt once, in this brisk cheerful frame of mind, to his surprise, he found N. K. Krupskaya and her mother; after Lenin's arrest Krupskaya had been tried as a member of the group of "old men," and had been sentenced to be exiled to Ufa, but she had obtained permission to go to Siberia in order to join Lenin and work with him.

In Shushenskoye Lenin made close connexions with the local peasants, among whom he acquired great popularity, partly through his advice on legal matters.

But naturally all these were matters of third-rate importance. The main thing, as before, was his concern for the fate of the Russian revolution, which Lenin never forgot for a single moment. In exile he continued to work tirelessly, studying the problems of the revolution, as he had done earlier when he was free, and later in prison.

His economic investigation begun in prison went forward at a rapid rate. In it, by means of large quantities of carefully collected statistical material, he scientifically proved the baselessness of the Narodnik assertions that the Russian countryside would follow a special path of economic development, showing with facts and figures that the path of capitalist development was the path the Russian countryside was adopting.

In this work Lenin again brought out the leading role of the working class, proving that its strength, its importance in the revolutionary movement, was out of all proportion to its numerical percentage of the total population. This investigation expanded into a fundamental scientific work, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*.⁶

An incomparable quality of Lenin's, his ability to combine profound revolutionary theory with extensive revolutionary practice, enabled him, thousands of miles from the centers of revolutionary ideas and revolutionary struggle, not only to watch the struggle, but to be its guiding spirit even when exiled to remote Siberia.

In this remote spot, besides *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin wrote a number of articles on the program, strategy, and tactics of revolutionary struggle. In these works, he emphasized the leading role of the proletariat in the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the immediate necessity of meeting the requirements of the proletarian masses awakening to political life, the need to consolidate the revolutionary groups and supply groups scattered over the vast territory of Russia into a single proletarian party.

By various complicated ways Lenin managed to send these articles not only to St. Petersburg, but also abroad, where they were published by the Emancipation of Labor group, and then brought back for illegal distribution in the many proletarian centers of Russia.

⁶ Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. I. In 1898 Lenin succeeded in publishing the book legally under the nom-de-plume of Ilyin.

His ways of keeping in contact with work outside of Russia enabled Lenin to receive timely information of the alarming situation on the theoretical front. This was the time when everywhere, especially in Germany, the native country of Marx, bourgeois degenerates who were formerly Marxists (Eduard Bernstein and others) declared a campaign against the teachings of Marx, openly proposing that Marxism be revised. Their intention to deprive Marxism of its revolutionary essence, their effort to remodel it in conformity with their own bourgeois degeneration, was perfectly clear to Lenin.

These critics of Marx were the progenitors of the German "Social-Democracy" of our time, which worked so hard to pave the way for Hitler.

The criticism of Marx in Germany inspired the Russian Economists, who began to argue even more "convincingly" that the working class does not need a political struggle, that its demands must be purely economic, that to fight against the autocracy was none of its business, and that the Russian workers need no Marxes and Engelses, as a certain imaginary worker once wrote in the illegal paper of the St. Petersburg Economists, *Rabochaya Mysl*.

The revisionist standpoint was expressed most clearly and fully in a document sent to Lenin exile by his sister, A. I. Elizarova, regarding which ironically, she wrote, "I am enclosing a certain *Credo*."

This document, which has gone down in history under the name of the *Credo*, was drawn up by the self-styled Marxists Kuskova and Prokopovich, both of whom are now rank counter-revolutionary émigrés.

To these renegade "articles of faith" Lenin answered with a protest known in Party history as the Protest of the Seventeen,⁷ wherein he declared war on the whole circle of ideas expounded in the *Credo*. In order to give the protest additional weight, Lenin managed to call an illegal meeting of seventeen exiles, who supported him and who signed the protest. The protest was then sent, together with the *Credo*, to various other places of exile, and, covered with new signatures, it was sent abroad, where it was printed and transported for distribution in the cities of Russia.

Lenin's reply to the *Credo* played an important part in exposing Economism, and helped to strengthen revolutionary Marxism, not only in Russia, but also in other countries.

⁷ Selected Works, Vol. I.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY

The three years Lenin spent in exile were years of great growth of the working-class movement in Russia; but the leadership of this movement, its direction along the correct, revolutionary road, was utterly lacking at the time of Lenin's return from exile (February 1900).

True, in the spring of 1898 the First Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party had taken place in Minsk, but the Social-Democratic organizations of only a few towns were represented. No Party program was adopted at this Congress, while the Central Committee it elected was seized by the gendarmes before it could carry out any activity. The same fate soon overtook almost all the delegates to the Congress. Thus, the first Congress accomplished only a formal unification of the Party, which, though in itself of great importance, did not eliminate the lack of unity and the vacillation prevalent in both the theory and in the practice of the revolutionary struggle of Russian Social-Democrats at the time.

Even after the First Congress the local Social-Democratic organizations continued, each in its own way, to flounder ever deeper into the swamp of opportunism, the swamp of Economism. An ideological center of Economism became established abroad, with a magazine entitled *Rabocheye Delo* as its mouth-piece, against which Plekhanov's Emancipation of Labor group conducted an ideological struggle at the time.

While in exile, Lenin was well posted on the difficult internal Party situation in Russia and the struggle among the Russian Social-Democrats in emigration abroad; and then it was he who gave final shape to the plan to establish a central point round which to rally the forces of the Party—a plan formed while he was in prison, and further developed in exile. Lenin's idea was that such a rallying point should take the form of a national political paper. Under the conditions then prevailing in Russia, it was difficult to expect an illegal Party paper to exist for any length of time within Russia, and Lenin, therefore, determined to organize it abroad.

While still in exile, Lenin acquainted his closest comrades with the plan, which met with their approval.

Lenin made arrangements with Martov, then a close friend of his (later his enemy, the most prominent leader of the Mensheviks), and others, to collaborate in the future paper, and received promises of help from several comrades in various towns, and secured a small sum of money and the promise of more from sympathizers (the owner of a bookshop in St. Petersburg who was called Auntie Kalmykova, and others). Then in the summer of 1900 Lenin went abroad to begin immediately putting his plan into practice, jointly with the Emancipation of Labor group.

However, upon his arrival in Switzerland he promptly met with an uncooperative attitude on Plekhanov's part—his first disappointment with the leader of the Emancipation of Labor group, later to be followed by other, more serious, ones. At first the behavior of Plekhanov and his group could be interpreted as caprice and unconscious resentment against young Lenin, who had arrived with his own detailed plan worked out without the help of the older leaders, a complete and daring plan for establishing abroad, a center for the proletarian party. Lenin spent much energy and strength on negotiations with the Emancipation of Labor group, until at last they came to an agreement with regard to publishing abroad two printed organs: the *Iskra* newspaper, and a theoretical magazine entitled the *Zarya*. Lenin devoted his attention chiefly to the *Iskra*, while the *Zarya* remained mainly in Plekhanov's hands.

Since on the one hand it was necessary to organize the *Iskra* as secretly as possible, for there were plenty of the tsar's police spies nosing about abroad, and on the other the tiresome disputes with Plekhanov were no omen of harmonious work in the future, if the *Iskra* were to appear in Geneva, the place of Plekhanov's permanent residence, Lenin moved to Munich, where he could work both more secretly and further removed from the irksome guardianship of the Emancipation of Labor group.

In her reminiscences of Lenin, N. K. Krupskaya, speaking of the *Iskra* period, with a few words gives a remarkably vivid picture of the methods used by Lenin in Munich to secure secrecy and of the way he was living when she joined him in the spring of 1901 after completing her term of exile in Ufa. Krupskaya had always addressed her letters to a certain Medrachek in Prague, and had gone to Prague, expecting to find Lenin living in Medrachek's house. But Medrachek could only tell her that he had been forwarding the letters from Russia to a certain Rittermeyer in Munich; there was, therefore, nothing left for her to do but immediately set out for the address given her in Munich, fully convinced that Lenin must be living in Munich under the name of Rittermeyer. However, when she arrived at the address in Munich, instead of Lenin, she encountered a little tubby innkeeper, who introduced himself as Rittermeyer. An end was put to her perplexity by the innkeeper's wife, who led her to a wing in the back of the yard, where Lenin was living under the name of Meyer. Krupskaya relates that the room in which Lenin was living was small and poorly furnished, while his dinner consisted mainly of gruel, and mornings and evenings he had tea from a tin cup, which he carefully washed and hung on a nail by the tap.

The first issue of the *Iskra* (Spark) appeared in Munich in December, 1900. The front page of the paper bore the motto "The Spark shall Kindle a Flame."

Lenin's *Iskra* defended the purity of revolutionary Marxist principles from all encroachments made upon it. It fought ceaselessly on two fronts, within the Social-Democratic movement: against the Rights-Economism in all its forms as the main danger, and against the "Lefts," who regarded individual terror as a method of everyday Social-Democratic work.

The *Iskra* laid special emphasis on the need to convert the economic struggle of the proletariat into a political struggle; it stressed the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat, its leading role in the bourgeois-democratic revolution, and also the role of open political demonstrations in the streets.

The *Iskra* fought against the revival of Narodism in the form of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, and against the bourgeois trend at that time inspired by Struve, who published a periodical entitled *Osvobozhdeniye* in Stuttgart.

As its arguments, Lenin's *Iskra* used not abstract theoretical formulas, but facts culled from actual everyday life of the revolutionary working-class movement, not only in Russia, but throughout the world, handling these facts in the light of revolutionary Marxist theory. Thus, it was that the *Iskra* struck so unerringly at its ideological enemies, and helped to rally the forces of revolution around Lenin.

Without for a single moment relaxing the ideological struggle on all fronts, Lenin at the time worked to consolidate the *Iskra*, not only as a paper, but also as the organizing center of the Party, by means of which he kept close contact with all the large industrial centers of Russia. The *Iskra* had its representatives and agents in St. Petersburg, Moscow, the Urals, the Caucasus, Orekhovo-Zuyevo, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, and many other places. These constituted the basic Leninist cadres of professional revolutionaries who maintained unbroken contact with Lenin, and carried out locally

the Leninist policy on all the chief questions of the theory, tactics, and strategy of revolutionary struggle.

Gradually not only outstanding individual Social-Democrats, both in Russia and emigrants abroad, but also whole Social-Democratic organizations, began to group themselves around the *Iskra*, officially recognizing the paper as their organ.

This fact wrought confusion among the opportunist Economists, the supporters of the *Rabocheye Delo* and the Bund, while Lenin prepared to deliver them a crushing blow by completing his famous book, *What is to be Done?*⁸ which appeared in 1902. This book was devoted mainly to a detailed plan for building up a centralized fighting proletarian party.

What is to be Done? played a tremendous role. It became the guide to action for the vast majority of Social-Democratic organizations in Russia.

The great difficulties in the way of concretely guiding the movement in Russia from abroad were for Lenin further accentuated during the *Iskra* period by the unfortunate relations which existed from the very first day of publication between the editors of the paper, and especially between Lenin and Plekhanov, with regard to the preparations for the Second Congress of the Party and to drawing up a program of the Party to be adopted by that Congress.

The controversy between Lenin and Plekhanov was wholly one of principle. It was no longer a question of the capriciousness exhibited by Plekhanov immediately after Lenin's arrival. Lenin now fought with all his might against the opportunist vacillations of Plekhanov and his group on such fundamental questions as that of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the attitude towards the peasantry, the bourgeoisie, and the nationalization of the land.

In drawing up the program Lenin succeeded, though with great difficulty, introducing a clear formulation of the fundamental point of the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e. the conquest by the proletariat of such political power as would enable it to crush all resistance on the part of the exploiters. Not merely the conquest of power, as Lenin pointed out, but also the guarantee of its retention. The dictatorship of the proletariat as the weapon of the proletarian revolution for crushing the bourgeoisie after its overthrow. For until the period of transition from capitalism to communism is ended, the exploiters will continue to entertain hopes of restoring the past, and will make attempts to do so. Only a dictatorship of the proletariat is capable of completely thwarting these attempts and safeguarding the conquests of the proletariat.

Thus, at the Second Congress of the Party, held in July-August, 1903, in Brussels and London, the *Iskra* supporters still maintained a united front, and scored a complete victory over the *Rabocheye Delo* and the Bund.

However, when the discussion reached the question of organization, when the time came for passing on Lenin's draft of the Party rules, permeated with the idea of proletarian centralism, of preserving the firmness, consistency, and purity of the Party, of making the title Party member an ever higher one, the "soft" adherents of the *Iskra*, as Lenin called them, the future Mensheviks, failed to support the "firm" ones, the future Bolsheviks, headed by Lenin. Instead, they formed a bloc with the opportunists of the *Rabocheye Delo* and the Bund against Lenin, with the result that the first point

⁸ Selected Works, Vol. II.

of the Party rules, dealing with the Party membership, was adopted by the Congress according to Martov's formulation, which opened wide the doors of the Party to non-proletarian elements.

Lenin aimed at creating a centralized, monolithic fighting proletarian Party relying for support upon the broad masses. He pointed out that a Party built on the principle proposed by the Mensheviks, which admitted to membership every bourgeois democrat who rendered it some slight service and recognized its program verbally, was out of date, and that the working class under the conditions of the new revolutionary epoch needed a new type of party. Such a party was the Bolshevik Party.

By creating the Bolshevik Party, Lenin struck a blow at international opportunism, for this new type of party was in marked contrast to the Second International parties, which expressed the interests of only the well-paid upper stratum of the working class, and not the interests of the working class as a whole, parties opportunist in their very structure, which their "leaders" adapted exclusively to legal conditions and parliamentarism, to a peaceful existence in capitalist society.

"The parties of the Second International, which preach 'tailism,' are the exponents of the bourgeois politics which condemn the proletariat to being a tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie." ⁹

Not without reason were the leaders of the Second International so unanimous in supporting the Mensheviks, and after the split which took place at the Second Congress, they called thunder and lightning down on Lenin, that usurper, as they called him, who took it into his head to create a party like a "mailed fist."

⁹ Stalin, "Foundations of Leninism," *Leninism*, Vol. I, pp. 88-9.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE DECISIVE BATTLES THREE

Years elapsed between Lenin's departure from Russia and the split that occurred at the Second Congress of the R.S.D L.P., and during this time the revolutionary working-class movement assumed unprecedented dimensions. The proletarians of tsarist Russia provided such examples of class battles as the famous general strike in Rostov-on-Don, and a number of impressive political demonstrations in the biggest cities of the vast country. While the masses rapidly developed and the party of the proletariat was faced with tremendously difficult tasks, after the Congress, its leader, Lenin, lost his principal means of addressing the Party-the Party paper.

The Mensheviks usurped the central Party institutions, and together with them all technical means of communication-the Party printshop, the local contacts, and the funds. It was several months before the Bolsheviks, who followed Lenin at the Congress, returned to their organizations, and having succeeded under extremely difficult underground conditions in establishing themselves permanently in their localities, could inform the Party organizations of the true nature of the split, before the differences between Lenin's position and that of the Mensheviks were made clear to all local rank and file Party members. During this time Lenin and a small group of other Bolsheviks stranded in Geneva had virtually no means of communicating with the Party in Russia. Such unaccustomed isolation from Party life, though of short duration, was intolerable, all the more since the Mensheviks abroad ceaselessly engaged in slandering the Bolsheviks, and a persistent struggle had to be waged against them. In May, 1904, Lenin published his book, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* ¹⁰, analyzing the split in detail and describing it as a struggle between the revolutionary and the opportunist wing in the Party.

In order to obtain a short respite from the depressing effects of the split, Lenin determined to take a month's vacation, and together with N. K. Krupskaya set out for a walking tour in the mountains, equipped with knapsacks and with but very slender funds.

Krupskaya relates that at first, having very little money and fearing the prices in the restaurants, they fed mainly on bread and cheese. Later they were told by a worker that they need not give the restaurants a wide berth, provided they ate with the chauffeurs, coachmen, and handymen, for they would then receive a cheap and filling meal. However, he warned them, no self-respecting tourist, however poor, would eat with the "servants." He would rather go hungry, but by all means sit at the "gentlemen's" table. It goes without saying that Lenin with great gusto sat down with the chauffeurs and coachmen, and devoured the cheap and filling "servants" dinner.

Nature always had a beneficial effect on Lenin's state of mind, especially at the most difficult periods in his life; at the end of the month that he spent in the mountains, far from the Menshevik émigré atmosphere, he was completely rested; and, in addition, upon his return to Geneva, found good news from Russia awaiting him. Bolshevik delegates who had returned to their local organizations reported that many Party Committees approved the Bolshevik principles and Lenin's line at the Congress, and condemned the Mensheviks.

Contact with the local organizations was established, and with the help of a small group of Bolshevik journalists who had arrived from Russia, Lenin soon founded a new paper, the *Vperyod*,

¹⁰ Selected Works, Vol. II.

which finally enabled him to conduct a systematic struggle against the Mensheviks. The first issue of the *Vperyod* appeared on January 4th, 1905 (new style).

Lenin subjected to severe criticism the Mensheviks' tendency to allot to the Liberals the leading role in the movement, and the way in which they, together with Trotsky, ignored the peasantry as the ally of the proletariat.

Before the first issue of the *Vperyod* came out, in a pamphlet entitled *The Zemstvo Campaign and the "Iskra" Plan*, Lenin attacked the opportunist principles of the Mensheviks on tactical questions; he ridiculed their plan of a campaign of speeches by Social-Democrats at the meetings of the Zemstvos, which they advocated as the highest form of struggle, thus diverting the attention of the proletariat from a direct offensive on the autocracy by heading a popular uprising.

Because of the abnormal situation existing in the Party with the local committees, based on the broad masses supporting Lenin and the Bolsheviks, while the central institutions attempted to carry out a Menshevik policy, the Bolsheviks began to work for the convocation of a Third Congress, carrying on intensive preparatory work throughout 1904.

Lenin's preparations for the Third Congress likewise prepared the Party for the decisive revolutionary events rapidly approaching in connexion with the Russo-Japanese War.

In July, 1904, in an appeal to the Party on the convocation of the Third-Party Congress entitled *What We Are Fighting For*, Lenin pointed out that the historical moment that Russia was passing through demanded that the Party strain every nerve, and that the revolutionary ferment among the working-class and the unrest among other strata was increasing. War, hunger, and unemployment were undermining the foundations of the autocracy to an ever-greater extent, and the war was doomed to come to a shameful end, all of which would raise the revolutionary movement to an unprecedented level, and would bring the working-class face to face with its enemies. The party of the proletariat must be prepared for that moment.

Revolutionary events within the next few months fully confirmed the analysis of the moment given by Lenin. Comrade Stalin rightly says that at times of revolutionary upheavals Lenin became a prophet, foretelling the moves of the various classes and the probable twists in the course of revolution, seeing them as though they were already real. While the Mensheviks continued to pin all their hopes in the liberal bourgeoisie, which they claimed only needed to be given a shove, when Lenin heard of the events of January 9th in St. Petersburg, of the workers going to the tsar and the way they were shot down on the Palace Square, he immediately and emphatically declared that the *organization of insurrection* must become the slogan of the day.

In an article written on January 25th (12 (12 old style) style) entitled "*The Beginning of the Revolution in Russia*,"¹¹ Lenin hailed the insurgent proletariat of St. Petersburg, and pointed out that the Russian workers must wage the struggle of the whole of the people, that the working class of Russia was the spokesman of the needs and interests of the entire peasantry and all the toiling masses. It is characteristic that Lenin once again emphasized what he had pointed out in *Who the "Friends of the People" Are* in 1894, and formulated distinctly in *What is to be Done?* In 1902-the international character of the Russian revolution.

¹¹ Selected Works, Vol. II, pp. 280-02.

"The eyes of the proletariat of the whole world are turned towards the proletariat of Russia." Lenin wrote in this article: "The overthrow of tsarism in Russia... will be the turning point in the history of all countries, will facilitate the task of the workers of all nations, in all states..."¹²

After January 9th, Lenin seriously studied the technique of armed uprising, as is witnessed, among other instances, by the story told by N. K. Krupskaya of an employee of the Geneva public library, whose attention, he related, was attracted that winter by a Russian revolutionary who daily came to the library early in the morning and continued to study the book of the day before, dealing with barricade fighting or the technique of the offensive.

According to him, the Russian would always sit down in the same place, at a little table by the window, pass his hand over his hair, and become absorbed in his book, only getting up to find some unfamiliar term in a dictionary; afterwards he would walk up and down the room, sitting down to make notes.

Lenin longed to be immediately at the head of the ever-developing revolutionary events in Russia. He was far from being satisfied by the uninterrupted correspondence regularly carried on with all centers of the revolutionary movement with the help of N. K. Krupskaya; but it was impossible to go to Russia, and he had to confine himself to leading the movement from abroad.

On May 10th (April 25th old style) in 1905, the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. met in London. The agenda included the questions of armed uprising, a provisional revolutionary government, and the attitude towards the peasantry. The draft resolutions on all these questions were written by Lenin, and adopted without amendments, for the Congress consisted of Bolsheviks. On the basis of these resolutions Lenin later also wrote his well-known work, *The Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*.¹³ In this work Lenin develops in detail the Bolshevik plan of strategy of the revolution. He advanced the thesis that the proletariat would not stop at democratic conquests—it would go further. After its triumph in the bourgeois revolution, the proletariat would immediately launch the struggle for the socialist revolution.

At the Third Congress Lenin was elected to the Central Committee, at whose first meeting after the Congress he was appointed editor of the *Proletary*, the central organ of the Party, which began to appear in place of the *Vperyod*.¹⁴

As we said above, the Third Congress was completely Bolshevik. It resulted in a considerable consolidation of the Bolshevik Party. However, since part of the workers still followed the Mensheviks, Lenin considered it correct to affect a temporary formal amalgamation with the Mensheviks for the purpose of winning these workers to the side of Bolshevism, provided such forms of organization were recognized as would guarantee the fighting ability of the Party.

Throughout the summer of 1905 Lenin watched events in Russia unceasingly, and gave concrete guidance to the everyday struggles of the Bolsheviks. The Old Bolshevik Vassilyev-Yuzhin relates in his memoirs that in the summer of 1905, Lenin instructed him to set out from Geneva immediately for Odessa, giving him a number of concrete fighting tasks for guiding the mutiny on the *Potemkin*. Lenin also devoted a great deal of attention to organizing the transportation of munitions to Russia.

¹² Loc. cit., p. 292.

¹³ Selected Works, Vol. III.

¹⁴ The first issue of the *Proletary* appeared on May 27th (14 old style), 1905.

In November, 1905, after the October general strike, which compelled Tsar Nicholas to issue his rag-tag manifesto on liberties, Lenin at last succeeded, though with great difficulty, in reaching St. Petersburg. During the period following—that period of personal inviolability's solemnly proclaimed in the manifesto—Lenin, of course, had to live illegally.

Although the Bolsheviks at this time already had their own legal paper, the *Novaya Zhizn* in St. Petersburg, genuine Bolshevik leadership in it was established only after Lenin's arrival. Lenin published an article in the *Novaya Zhizn* dealing with the reorganization of the Party on an elective, democratic basis, and with drawing broad masses of workers into the Party organizations, while at the same time preserving the Party's secret apparatus.

The Soviets of Workers' Deputies, which the Mensheviks considered organs of revolutionary self-government, were regarded by Lenin as organs of insurrection and the embryo of the future organs of power.

Lenin only succeeded once in speaking openly at a meeting of the first St. Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies; it was on November 26th, 1905, when he spoke on the mass lockout resorted to by the employers as a reply to the eight-hour day introduced by the workers by revolutionary means.

At the same time Lenin's attention was centered round questions immediately connected with the preparations for armed insurrection, leadership of Bolshevik work among the troops, the establishment of fighting squads and the arming of the workers.

When the revolution of 1905, after reaching its zenith in the December insurrection in Moscow, suffered temporary defeat, Lenin, confident that the bourgeois-democratic revolution would be carried to completion and foreseeing its growth into the socialist revolution, called for continuation of the struggle, proving that the workers would again rise, drawing with them the peasantry. The enemy, said Lenin, would be finally crushed, the bloody tsar would be wiped off the face of the earth, and the road would be cleared for further struggle, for the victorious proletarian revolution.

How pitiful compared to Lenin's call to battle, sounded the penitent lamentations of the Mensheviks over the fact that in 1905 arms had been resorted to! But the Mensheviks were incapable of reasoning any other way, for they assumed that the revolution, whose highest achievement they considered a bourgeois-democratic republic, was over; they never aspired to anything beyond a bourgeois parliament.

KEEPING UP THE FIGHT

From the very beginning of 1906, the Bolsheviks reorganized their ranks, in the course of their work, going further underground, while continuing to utilize the legal possibilities which still remained at first.

Lenin remained in St. Petersburg. He lived in illegality with a false passport and no permanent address, without a corner of his own to sleep or write in, sometimes having to flee altogether to "near emigration," as Finland was called. Here, too, he continued to give concrete guidance to the everyday struggle of the Party, his energy never flagging for a moment.

Even at this period Lenin wrote many articles, which appeared in those of the legal Party papers that were still in existence, as well as a number of pamphlets on topics of the day. In all this work he continued to base his tactics on the expectation of a new revolutionary upsurge, ruthlessly exposing the Mensheviks and Cadets (Constitutional-Democrats-the party of the liberal bourgeoisie), who asserted, despite the mass executions and punitive expeditions, that with the establishment of the State Duma tsarist Russia had entered on the road of peaceful parliamentary development. Lenin called for a struggle against their constitutional illusions and for an active boycott of the First Duma.

In May, 1906, Lenin spoke under the name of Karpov at a big mass meeting in the People's House in St. Petersburg; and his speech so stirred the audience, that when he ended, one of the workers, who wore a bright red shirt, took it off, tore it up and a Red Flag was made out of the pieces and raised above the people's heads. The workers left the meeting, singing revolutionary songs before the police had a chance to arrive.

At the Party Congress in Stockholm also held in May, 1906, the so-called Unity Congress, which the Bolsheviks afterwards jokingly referred to as the Disunity Congress, Lenin strongly defended nationalization of the land, linking it up with the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, with the slogan for the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry, with the growth of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into the socialist revolution, as against the Menshevik plan of municipalization, which he characterized as something in between real agrarian revolution and bourgeois agrarian reform.

At the Stockholm Party Congress, the Bolsheviks were in the minority and Lenin's proposals were defeated.

"This was the first time I saw Lenin the role of vanquished," Comrade Stalin said in 1924, at a Lenin Memorial Evening of Kremlin Military Students in Moscow. "He did not in the least look like those leaders who snivel and become despondent after defeat. On the contrary, defeat transformed Lenin to a congelation of energy, who inspired his adherents with courage for fresh battles and for future victory." ¹⁵

When in the summer of 1906, the State Duma was dispersed and repressions became still more vicious, the Bolsheviks had to transfer the center of their movement from St. Petersburg to Finland, and Lenin lived in Finland, making secret visits to St. Petersburg to give the organization guidance. In Finland he resumed the publication of the illegal Bolshevik paper, the *Proletary*.

By the spring of 1907, the time when the Second State Duma was opened, a definite ebb of the revolution became apparent. At the same time constitutional illusions were rapidly collapsing as a

¹⁵ Stalin, On Lenin, p. 28.

result of the activities of the First Cadet Duma, while the few worker-delegates who managed to get into the First Duma made effective use of the Duma rostrum to expose the true nature of the bourgeois parties. All these circumstances induced the Bolsheviks to adopt Lenin's proposal to take part in the elections to the Second State Duma.

Lenin criticized the opportunism of the Mensheviks and taught the Party that in using this tribune as a rostrum it must not succumb to constitutional illusions, must not be carried away by the success achieved in the Duma, but

"On the contrary, on the basis of experience already supplied by history... subordinate it to another form of struggle, namely, strikes, uprisings, etc."

Lenin kept in close contact with the Social-Democratic fraction of the Duma, directing its work and even writing the speeches of its members. Lenin demanded that the fraction show its ability to secure the following of all the democratic elements in the Duma.

In May, 1907, the Fifth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. occurred in London. At this Congress the Bolsheviks were in the majority. Lenin severely criticized the Menshevik Central Committee and drew up the Bolshevik resolutions adopted by the Congress.

At the memorial evening already referred to, Comrade Stalin said of his impressions of Lenin at the Fifth Congress:

"I then saw Lenin for the first time in the role of victor. Usually, victory turns some leaders' heads, makes them proud and boastful. Most frequently, in such cases, they begin to celebrate their victory and rest on their laurels. But Lenin was not in the least like such leaders. On the contrary, it is precisely after victory that he became particularly vigilant and on the alert. I remember Lenin at that time earnestly impressing upon the delegates: 'The first thing is, not to be carried away with victory and not to boast; the second thing is, consolidate the victory; the third thing is, crush the opponent, because he is only defeated, but not yet crushed, by a long way. He poured withering ridicule on those delegates who frivolously declared that 'from now on the Mensheviks are finished. It was not difficult for him to prove that the Mensheviks still had roots in the labor movement, that they had to be fought skillfully, and that overestimation of one's own strength, and particularly underestimation of the strength of the enemy, was to be avoided.'" ¹⁶

Profiting by the ebb in the mass working-class movement, the tsarist government hastened to demonstrate before the world that the counter-revolution had triumphed; it dispersed the Second Duma, sent the workers' Social-Democratic Fraction to hard labor, and on June 3rd, 1907, amended the electoral law so as to limit in every possible way the franchise of the peasants and almost completely disfranchise the workers. Tsarism celebrated its triumph. Owing to the changes in the electoral law, some of the Bolsheviks began to advocate a boycott of the elections to the Third Duma. Lenin fought against all such tendencies, teaching that since the tide of revolution was at an ebb, since the mass movement had declined, a boycott of the Duma would only serve to isolate the Party from the masses, that it was necessary to use the rostrum of the Third Duma for the purpose of educating the working-class masses in socialism, of centering their attention on general political tasks, while simultaneously strengthening the illegal Party apparatus and extending and intensifying the illegal work of the Party as the basis of all its work.

¹⁶ Stalin, On Lenin, p. 29.

In August, 1907, Lenin set out for Stuttgart, Germany, where the Congress of the Second International was to be held.

As was pointed out above, the leaders of the Second International at this time already eyed the Russian Bolsheviks askance, regarding them as semi-anarchist, ill-mannered Social-Democrats. The leaders of the Second International, with Bebel at their head, regarded only the Mensheviks as their true Russian comrades.

This fact is corroborated with especial clarity by a characteristic story told by F. J. Kon. Comrade Kon recalls that at a comradesly social affair arranged in the course of the Congress, Bebel, with a whole retinue of big and little leaders of the Second International, was all the time remarkably warm and attentive towards the Mensheviks, and so emphatic in ignoring the Bolsheviks that one of the young Bolsheviks—he believes it was Litvinov came up to him and asked, with Bolshevik candor, why Bebel disliked Bolsheviks. Bebel was greatly confused and did not know what to reply; he tried to pass it off with a joke, but the joke fell flat.

Lenin was a member of the Presidium of the Stuttgart Congress and of the commission to examine the draft of the resolution on militarism presented by Bebel; he subjected this resolution to severe criticism, and with the support of Rosa Luxemburg proposed a number of substantial amendments, the general trend of which was that in the event of a war it was necessary to make use of the economic and political crisis it would cause in order to arouse the political consciousness of the masses of the people and hasten the downfall of capitalism.

The Congress adopted all these amendments introduced by Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg; however, like many other still more solemn resolutions, this resolution was not regarded by the leaders of the Second International as at all binding when in 1914 imperialist war actually materialized.

At the Stuttgart Congress Lenin was elected to the International Socialist Bureau, in which he held an extreme Left position and worked resolutely for a split with the opportunists.

After returning from the Congress, Lenin only remained in the "near emigration"—in Finland—for a few months; for the reaction in Russia was gaining more and more strength, and the Bolshevik center could not be considered outside the reach of the tsar's raging gendarmerie while situated so close to St. Petersburg. It was necessary to move further out, but it was impossible for Lenin to travel in the usual manner, for the spies were right on his heels; he was forced to repair to the depths of Finland and remain there for some time in a safe spot; then he walked three miles over the ice in order to take a ship from an island near the shore. Accompanied by two of the local peasants, Lenin set out over the ice, which cracked under their feet though it was already December; sometimes pieces of ice went adrift and Lenin and his guides risked falling in and drowning.

In Stockholm Lenin met N. K. Krupskaya and together they left for Geneva, where he arrived in January, 1908.

THE FIGHT FOR THE PARTY DURING THE EBB OF THE REVOLUTION

Thus began a new period of remote and protracted emigration. While in distant Russia the proletarian party was persecuted with terror and driven far underground, the tsarist minister Stolypin ruled unchallenged, rearing forests of gallows ("Stolypin's neckties") for the revolutionary workers in the towns, creating kulak households in the villages at the expense of the ruined masses of toiling peasants—a joyless picture. Cause enough for discouragement. But not for Lenin, who knew so amazingly how to think of future victories even in time of defeat.

In his articles in the *Proletary*, which began to appear after his arrival in Geneva, he called on the Party not to lose heart from the failure of the first armed attack, for the proletarian party was marching towards socialism, without staking its goal on the outcome of any given stage of the bourgeois revolutions, the proletarian party was marching to victory.

Lenin carefully examined the experience of the Revolution of 1905, and pointed out that the defeat should teach the way to future victory. In a series of articles analyzing the alignment of class forces resulting in Russia from the amendments introduced to the electoral law on June 3rd, 1907, and the Stolypin agrarian reforms, Lenin stated that the antagonisms between the peasantry and the autocratic landlord régime were growing, that Stolypin could not avert a new revolutionary explosion.

Since he summed up the task of the proletariat in the short but weighty phrase "preparation for a new revolution," Lenin naturally devoted much attention to the fighting capacity of the Party, and in this field, he found a vast quantity of work to be performed.

The fact was that with the onset of reaction not only the Mensheviks succumbed to discouragement, but a certain section of the Bolsheviks was also badly affected. The Mensheviks finally reached the point where they maintained outright that the illegal Party should be liquidated and work carried on within the legal limits permitted by the Stolypin régime. Lenin waged a desperate struggle against these rank Right opportunists and liquidators.

Among certain groups of the Bolsheviks, on the other hand, the discouragement assumed the form of a deviation to the "Left." There were three groups of these "Lefts"—the Boycottists, the Ultimatumists and the Otsovists (the Liquidators on the "Left"), who were in reality only differentiated by their names, for all three proposed that the Bolsheviks should withdraw from the State Duma the Social-Democratic workers who, by using the Duma rostrum, still had the opportunity of openly addressing their class over the heads of the Stolypin Duma.

Lenin ruthlessly combatted this "Left" opportunism, especially when the ideologues of the "Lefts" began to undermine the very foundations of Marxism in the sphere of philosophy, materialism; proposing in its place an idealist obscurantism, which befogged people and distracted them from revolutionary struggle. Lenin pointed out that the preaching of God-building became especially persistent and systematic during times of profound reaction, when the bourgeoisie for its counter-revolutionary purposes sought to kindle religious feeling among the people, and that the advocates of the various ideas of God-seeking and God-building were thus serving the purposes of counter-revolution. In reply to this new philosophy, Lenin wrote a large work—*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*—which supplemented and developed the teachings of Marx and Engels and helped to fight for revolutionary Marxism.

By the end of 1908, Lenin and Krupskaya had to move to Paris, since the center of the emigration was situated there, although Lenin did so very unwillingly as conditions in Geneva were

more favorable to scientific work. "Lenin," says N. K. Krupskaya, "took no interests in the efforts I made to fix up our new quarters in Paris."

In January, 1909, an All-Russian Party Conference was held in Paris, with the Mensheviks, the Bundists and the Poles taking part. As the Bolsheviks were more fully represented at this conference than the rest, Lenin made the main report on the current situation.

In this report and in the resolution which was adopted on it by the Conference Lenin pointed out that the Stolypin agrarian reform was leading to still further impoverishment of the peasant masses, whose discontent was growing in consequence, and rendered a new crisis inevitable; that the logical outcome of the last fact was further struggle against the autocracy, the reaction, the liberals, the fight against deviators from revolutionary Marxism, the struggle for the Party's fighting capacity, for placing the main emphasis on consolidating the illegal Party organization.

However, the opportunists, both Right and "Left," did not regard themselves as obligated to carry out the Leninist resolution unanimously adopted by the Conference. The resolution was left on paper.

In 1910 a plenum of the Central Committee of the Party was held in Paris, where Lenin ruthlessly criticized both the Right and the "Left" opportunists, and also the maneuvers conducted for unification by "the Judas Trotsky" and his fraction of unprincipled conciliators, who by a majority vote rejected Lenin's formulation regarding the fight on two fronts and adopted a number of conciliationist decisions.

Later, in October, 1911, Lenin characterized Trotsky's conciliationism in the following words:

"The very foundation of conciliationism is false. The tendency to base the unity of the party of the proletariat on an alliance of all factions, including the anti-Social-Democratic, non-proletarian factions; false are its un-principled "unity" schemes, which lead to nothing; false are its phrases against 'factions' (when in fact a new faction is formed)-phrases that are powerless to dissolve anti-Party factions, phrases that weaken the Bolshevik fraction, which bore nine-tenths of the brunt of the struggle against liquidationism and Otzovism.

"Trotsky provides us with an abundance of instances of unprincipled unity' scheming." ¹⁷

And further on:

"With immense efforts the Bolsheviks are pulling our Party wagon up a steep slope. The liquidator-*Golosites* are trying with all their might to drag it *downhill* again. *In the wagon* there is a conciliator; he is a picture of tenderness. He has such a sweet, sweet face, like that of Jesus looks the very incarnation of virtue, and modestly dropping his eyes and raising his hands he exclaims: 'I thank thee, Lord, that I am not like one of these'--a nod in the direction of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks -- 'vicious factionalists who hinder all progress!' But the wagon moves slowly forward and the conciliator remains seated in it." ¹⁸

Trotsky and Martov wrote articles in the periodical organ of the German Social-Democrats, *Die Neue Zeit*, representing the struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks as a struggle for influence over a proletariat which was politically immature. These articles called forth from Lenin the

¹⁷"The New Faction of Conciliators or the Virtuous," Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 109.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 113.

reply they merited. Of all the classes in Russian society, Lenin pointed out, it was the proletariat which in 1905-07 showed the greatest political maturity.

Throughout the period between 1908 and 1910, Lenin devoted a great deal of attention to international problems, fighting against revisionism in the Second International.

Taking part in the work of the International Socialist Bureau, he criticized the opportunism of Kautsky, at the time still accepted as an authority; and in 1910, after the Copenhagen Congress of the Second International, he pointed to the crisis among the German Social-Democrats and the ripening of the time for an inevitable decisive break with the opportunists.

THE FIGHT IN THE YEARS OF THE NEW UPSURGE AND THE IMPERIALIST WAR

At the end of 1910, Lenin, who ceaselessly watched the development of the revolutionary movement in Russia, discerned a new upsurge in the form of a number of strikes.

Meanwhile the situation in the Party continued desperate. On top of the squabbling of the émigrés, Lenin was put to the strain of a furious fight against the Menshevik Liquidators, the "Left" opportunists from among the Bolsheviks, and the Trotskyists-Liquidators hiding under the mask of unity. All these groups, though at odds among themselves, were agreed on one point—they all fought Lenin and the Leninists tooth and nail. It was essential to put an end to such an internal Party situation, especially as the symptoms of a new tide of revolution became ever more clearly defined in the course of 1911. By the spring of 1912, when the shooting of the strikers in the Lena gold mines in Siberia, was met with vast protest strikes throughout the country, it was already possible to assert the existence of a great new revolutionary upsurge.

Before the Lena shootings, Lenin, who attributed decisive importance to the organizing role of the Party in the revolution, rallied the Party in spite of the greatest difficulties to expel the Liquidators, as he had done ten years before during the *Iskra* period—with their predecessors. He mobilized all the Bolshevik forces in the Party for a new decisive attack, and made preparations for a new Party conference.

This conference was held in January, 1912, in Prague. Since all the illegal organizations active in Russia were represented, the conference considered itself entitled to be regarded as a congress, the supreme organ of the Party.

The Prague Conference adopted militant Bolshevik resolutions on the appraisal of the current situation, the tasks facing the Party, the elections to the Fourth Duma, and other questions. After expelling the opportunists, it laid down a clearly defined Bolshevik line of leadership of practical revolutionary work in Russia. The Central Committee elected by this Conference, headed by Lenin, soon co-opted two prominent Party organizers, who had made their escape from exile and in whom Lenin placed special hopes: Stalin and Sverdlov.

The decisions of the Prague Conference, which were hailed by all active Bolsheviks in the local organizations in Russia, met with hostility on the part of all vacillating elements in the Party, especially among the émigrés, and this circumstance gave Trotsky the courage to assemble an unprincipled bloc which received the name of the August Bloc.

This bloc was established by Trotsky on a reformist platform, and consisted of the most varied elements--Mensheviks of all kinds and shades. Instead of fighting the autocracy, it advanced the slogan of fighting for the right of coalition; instead of the confiscation of landed estates it advocated a revision of the agrarian legislation passed by the Third State Duma; and instead of the self-determination of nations up to and including the formation of independent states it proposed cultural autonomy.

As might have been expected, the August Bloc very soon fell to pieces. However, Trotsky would not give up; he published an unsigned article in the central organ of the German Social-Democratic Party, the *Vorwärts*, falsely informing the Second International on the internal Party situation, slandering Lenin and the Bolsheviks. The *Vorwärts* refused to print Lenin's answer.

The German Social-Democrats even those of the Left Wing, such as Rosa Luxemburg-generally tried to reconcile the irreconcilable Bolsheviks with the Mensheviks, and somehow it always worked out that according to them, the Bolsheviks and not the Mensheviks should give in.

After the Prague Conference Lenin established still closer contact with the active Bolsheviks working in Russia, and this contact was consolidated through the Bolsheviks who attended the Party school, which Lenin organized near Paris, through the Bolsheviks in the Social-Democratic fraction in the State Duma, who would come for instructions and advice, and, most important of all, through the legal Bolshevik papers that existed in the period 1911-1912, the *Zvezda* and the *Pravda*.

Under the prevailing conditions Lenin attached great importance to the legal Bolshevik press, and decided to leave Paris and move nearer to Russia in order to be closer to the *Pravda* and provide concrete leadership for the paper under the conditions of the rising tide of revolution. Towards the end of 1912, the course of events in Russia led Lenin to characterize the situation as an extreme intensification of the struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie, proved by such undeniable facts as the high cost of living and the mass strikes. The furious competition for markets between the powers, Lenin pointed out, bespoke the proximity of war, but it also indicated the nearness of socialism.

Lenin and Krupskaya chose as their new residence, Cracow, in what was then Austrian Poland; from Cracow, unbroken, almost daily contact would be maintained with St. Petersburg.

Directly before the imperialist war Lenin devoted a great deal of attention to problems connected with the national question, and wrote the "*Critical Notes on the National Question*" and other articles.

Thus, Lenin was especially pleased when Comrade Stalin, in 1913, arrived abroad for a short time, since Stalin was at that time writing an article on the national question. In a letter to M. Gorky, Lenin said:

"We have a marvelous Georgian here writing a long article for the *Prosveshcheniye* with all the Austrian and other material"

The national question was one of the major issues on which Lenin differed with Rosa Luxemburg, whom he valued very highly, but whom he opposed and fought as far back as 1903, when she supported the Mensheviks on their formulation of the first point of the rules, dealing with Party membership, and in 1905, when she underestimated the role of the peasantry as the ally of the proletariat; also with regard to her conciliationist tendencies and a number of other questions. Rosa Luxemburg disapproved of Lenin's way of presenting the question of the self-determination of nations up to an including secession. She considered that national cultural autonomy fully sufficed for the national minorities.

In Cracow, Lenin succeeded in establishing close contact with Russia, where, on the eve of the imperialist war, revolutionary development began to assume tremendous proportions. The strike struggle again flared up in the largest industrial centers of Russia, and in St. Petersburg the struggle sometimes went as far as the erection of barricades in working class districts.

Lenin was tireless; he guided the activity of the six Bolsheviks in the Duma after they had followed his instructions in splitting the Social-Democratic fraction in the Duma, which included both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks; he guided the *Pravda* and gave leadership to all the work of the Central Committee and the St. Petersburg organization.

He had also begun preparations for the convocation of a Party Congress when the war broke out, finding him at Poronino, near Cracow. Contact with Russia was disturbed. Moreover, the local authorities raided Lenin's quarters and, finding a quantity of statistical material on the agrarian problem and not knowing its nature, imprisoned Lenin on suspicion of espionage.

However, after the leader of the Austrian Social-Democrats, Victor Adler, vouched for him, assuring the "Excellency" in question that Lenin could not be regarded a Russian spy, if only because he was a worse enemy of the Russian government than the Austrian "Excellency" himself, Lenin was released and travelled together with Krupskaya to neutral Switzerland.

Upon the outbreak of the war the Bolshevik *Pravda* was closed down, nor had Lenin any illegal Bolshevik press organ; thus, it was only in speeches and reports that he could express his attitude towards the war, his profound indignation at the betrayal perpetrated by the leaders of the Second International, who instead of organizing the general strike of proletarians of all the countries upon the outbreak of the war had officially advocated the defense of their respective bourgeois fatherlands.

In the autumn of 1915 Lenin took a leading part in the Conference of Internationalists, held in Zimmerwald. Heading the Left group at this Conference, he subjected to ruthless criticism the timidity and indecision of its Right wing-the Centrists.

A second international conference took place in the spring of 1916 in Kienthal, where Lenin voiced the demand for a more determined attitude with regard to splitting with the Second International. He himself completely broke with that International and did much to unite the internationalists in the international working-class movement, laying the foundations for the future Third International.

From the very outset Lenin characterized the war as an imperialist war, and advanced the slogan of transforming the imperialist war into civil war and repudiation of the defense of "one's own" country.

During this period, he also wrote his famous book, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, which was, however, printed only after the February Revolution.

Foreseeing great revolutionary events on a European scale in the near future, Lenin this period expounded the idea of the possibility of building socialism in one country, proving with profound scientific arguments, and studying the role and significance of the state in the period of transition from capitalism to communism. He spoke of the significance of the struggles and uprisings in colonial countries and pointed out the need of supporting the national liberation movement in the struggle with imperialism, and the possibility of creating a united front between the proletarian revolution in the advanced and the liberation movement in colonial countries.

TSARISM OVERTHROWN-LENIN BEFORE THE MASSES

As soon as Lenin received the first tidings of the February Revolution, as soon as he heard that hateful tsarism had been overthrown, he made ready to return to Russia. But the problem was how to get there. For the war was still going on. Lenin made all sorts of plans. He even contemplated travelling as a Swede--a deaf and dumb Swede, for then he would not have to talk Swedish. But his enthusiasm was cooled by the laughter of Krupskaya, who pointed out that it would be dangerous for a deaf and dumb Swede to start from his sleep swearing in Russian at Mensheviks he had dreamt of.

Meanwhile, the precious days were passing. Lenin thought continually, night and day, of how to get to Russia, where he knew the masses were impatiently awaiting him.

At last, with the aid of the Swiss Social-Democrats, a way was found of arranging the transit of the group of Russian émigrés through Germany. Lenin cared nothing that the chauvinist Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries would heap calumny upon him and his group for their "unpatriotic" journey through Germany, which was at war with Russia, would pour on them their patriotic indignation. He was burning to be in the midst of the long-awaited Russian Revolution, to assume the leadership of that revolution--he could not and would not wait any longer.

When the news came that the negotiations for the journey through Germany were completed and that transit was allowed, Lenin said to Krupskaya that they must set out at once, although only two hours remained before the train, and the packing had yet to be done. However, their belongings were so few that the two hours were enough.

When, on April 3, Lenin was met by comrades and relations in Belo-Ostrov, near St. Petersburg, he asked whether he and the comrades who came with him were not in danger of arrest on their arrival; however, the comrades around him smiled mysteriously and would not give a definite answer. The secret of their silence was revealed when, alighting from the train at the Finland Station, Lenin heard the mighty strains of the International and saw the thousands of St. Petersburg proletarians and revolutionary soldiers welcome him as their leader.

As Krupskaya relates, this spectacle was totally unexpected for Lenin. Lifted in the air by the jubilant workers and set down on an armored car, he spoke before the masses, casting to them the fighting slogan, "Long live the socialist revolution"--a slogan which the masses caught up and echoed with bound-less enthusiasm.

WINNING THE MASSES

On the following day, April 4, Lenin spoke before his comrades, advancing his famous April Theses, which outlined the path for the revolution's further development and advanced the slogans mobilizing the workers and the poor peasants to fight for the socialist revolution, for the Soviets as the new type of proletarian state.

After the overthrow of tsarism, Lenin said in these theses, the power did not pass to the hands of those who overthrew tsarism, and the war was still an imperialist, predatory war, there could be no question of supporting it, but the war could not be brought to an end without the overthrow of capitalism. Further analyzing the existing political situation, Lenin pointed out its specific form, the fact that two powers had been formed in the country: the Provisional Government on one hand, and the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies on the other. Hence, he drew the conclusion that no support must be given the Provisional Government, all power must belong to the Soviets. However, Lenin warned that it would be premature to speak of an immediate seizure of power, for the Bolsheviks were in a minority in the Soviets. The masses of workers and soldiers had not yet realized that they were being deceived by the petty-bourgeois parties of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and continued to trust them.

In order to win a majority in the Soviets, in order to free the masses as soon as possible from the influence of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, it was necessary to carry on patient and persistent explanatory work which would bring the masses to realize the need for a dictatorship of the proletariat as the only force capable of ending the imperialist war and the state of complete economic chaos within the country.

Lenin's theses further advanced the demand for immediate confiscation of the landlords' estates by the peasants, the nationalization of the land in general, the nationalization of the banks, and the demand for the right of secession for the nationalities oppressed by tsarism.

The theses also stressed the necessity of immediately establishing, in place of the thoroughly rotten Second International, a new revolutionary union of proletarians of all lands, an international organization entrance to which would be barred to both the social-chauvinists and the "unity" Centrists; Lenin demanded the establishment of a Third International. By means of these theses Lenin immediately introduced the clarity which was lacking before his arrival as to the formulation of the tasks which then faced the Bolshevik Party in the immediate struggle for the socialist revolution.

Living in Petrograd semi-legally, Lenin wrote a series of directive articles for the central organ of the Party, the *Pravda*, in the spirit of the April Theses, and spoke at many meetings. At the Petrograd and April All-Russian Party Conferences he fought against the Right and "Leftist" ideas of some of the prominent Bolsheviks--Nogin, Rykov, Pyatakov, and others. He spoke at meetings before the broad masses of proletarians, proving to them that the promises of future gains made by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were a deception, for these parties because of their petty-bourgeois nature were incapable of going beyond verbal promises, that behind their revolutionary talk there were not and could not be any revolutionary deeds.

Under the influence of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the masses were rapidly revolutionized, causing the Kerensky government to seek feverishly for ways of discrediting the Bolsheviks, and primarily Lenin himself in view of his great personal influence on the masses.

Early in July--on the 3rd and 4th--in spite of the warning of Lenin and the Bolsheviks that open action was premature as yet, and that further preparations for it were essential, the masses of

Petrograd workers and soldiers, outraged by the fact that the bourgeoisie was still running the country, spontaneously came out on the streets to demonstrate. The demonstration was brutally suppressed by the Provisional Government, and was used as the grounds to spread the dirtiest of provocations-the rumor that Lenin was a German spy.

The Kerensky government issued an order for Lenin's arrest. The July days had served to alter the situation radically-persecution and repression began, with regard not only to the Bolsheviks, but all who sympathized with them; the printshops and offices of the Bolshevik papers were raided, and workers distributing the Party's central organ, the *Pravda*, beaten and murdered. Lenin was forced to disappear, and lived in hiding,¹⁹ concealed by comrades from the Vyborg district. In reply to the proposal made by some rather naive Bolsheviks that Lenin appear in court to clear his name a proposal opposed with special vigor by comrades Stalin and Sverdlov-Lenin pointed out that such advice was simple to the point of foolishness, for what the Kerensky government wanted was not a trial, but a rabid campaign against the internationalists, their imprisonment, and confinement. Thus, had it been in France and England, and thus would it be in Russia. Let the internationalists work illegally, Lenin said, rather than commit the foolishness of appearing in court. Lenin counselled the Bolsheviks to re-form their ranks on the march, and, while not abandoning legal activities, not to become engrossed in them alone, and to combine them with illegal work, as the Bolsheviks had done in 1912-14, when they had had known how to speak of the overthrow of tsarism by revolutionary means without losing their field of legal action in the State Duma, in the insurance banks and trade unions.

In a series of articles written in hiding and containing an appraisal of the situation after the July days Lenin pointed out that dual power no longer existed, that power in the country was now in the hands of one class the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, the military clique with Kerensky and Co. at its head. The facts now proved that the revolution had been betrayed by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who nevertheless still continued as the formal leaders of the Soviets. For this reason, the slogan "All Power to the Soviets" was at this moment incorrect; a slogan that advocated the transfer of power to the Soviets as they were then, would be a mockery and deception of the people. The people must now know the truth and must harbor no illusions regarding the Soviets as they then were-Soviets which trailed in the wake of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. The slogan of transfer of all power to the Soviets was a slogan of peaceful development of the revolution, and after the July days all thought of a peaceful development of the Russian revolution was out of the question. It was now either victory of the military dictatorship or transfer of power to the proletariat supported by the poor peasantry-there was no other alternative.

Again, and again Lenin emphasized that the victory of the workers is only possible by creating a profound mass sentiment against the government. He never tired of warning against scattered isolated outbreaks, and called for the greatest vigilance in guarding against provocations by the Black Hundreds, and the Cossacks. He called on the Party to gather its forces and reorganize them, thus preparing resolutely for decisive combat when surrounding events offered the possibility on a truly mass, national scale.

The enemy was on guard: Kerensky's police hounds were everywhere, and it was dangerous for Lenin to remain town. It was necessary to leave Petrograd to look for some safe place. And thus began a period during which Lenin was constantly on the move. Finally, he hid for a month and a half in a hut behind a haystack rigged up by a worker Emelyanov at a little place by the name of

¹⁹ For fuller details see *Preparing for October*, Modern Books, Ltd.

Razliv. From behind his haystack Lenin kept constantly in touch with the Central Committee of the Party, continuing to guide its work. Here it was that he drew up the draft of the Party program, and worked out his instructions to Comrade Stalin, whom he entrusted with the leadership of the Sixth Party Congress, which took place semi-legally in August in Petrograd, and where Lenin therefore could not be present.

At the Congress Comrade Stalin had to fight against the Rights, and against Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, who doubted the possibility of Russia's independently advancing towards socialism, just as later, they, together with the counter-revolutionary Trotsky-Zinoviev group, refused to believe in the possibility of building socialism in a single country.

Retorting to Preobrazhensky's arguments, Comrade Stalin pointed out that "Russia was the country to blaze the road to socialism."

Comrade Schotmann, who was at that time the link between Lenin and the Central Committee, tells in his reminiscences how every time he entered Lenin's hut, he invariably found him in a cheerful frame of mind, joking at his own expense with reference to his position, and how Lenin avidly pounced on the piles of newspapers brought him. He also relates how once, when told, among other pieces of news, of the optimism manifested by some comrades, one of whom said, "You'll see, Comrade Lenin will be Prime Minister in September," Lenin replied quite composedly, "That's not surprising," and began to outline in detail the future course of the Russian revolution. With great difficulty and by means of all sorts of disguises, including that of a Finnish stoker, the comrades finally managed to move Lenin from the unhealthy and risky hut to Finland.

While in Finland, Lenin continued to write actively for the central organ of the Party, which continued, despite all the obstacles put in its way by the police, to appear regularly in Petrograd under different names. Here also he completed his work *The State and Revolution*, in which he examines the bourgeois state, including its parliamentary forms, as the product of irreconcilable class contradictions, and points out the ensuing duty of the working class to smash to ash the bourgeois military-bureaucratic state machine and create in its place the state of the proletariat. It is impossible to replace the bourgeois state with the proletarian state by peaceful means; the task must be accomplished by violent revolution, whereby the proletariat creates the state power it requires in order to organize the new system of government, to lead the people to socialism, to teach them to build their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie.

Asserting the necessity of a proletarian dictatorship in the transition period from capitalism to communism, Lenin also pointed out that, since such a dictatorship represents the interests of the vast majority of the people, it is no longer a state in the proper sense of the word, and as the productive forces of society develop and the division into classes disappears, the state becomes unnecessary and withers away. In addition, in this book Lenin goes on to examine the principal features of the future communist society in its two stages of development—its lower stage, socialism (which for us is no longer the future but the present), and its highest stage, communism. This book of Lenin's is not only of great theoretical value, but of immediate practical importance, both for the workers of capitalist countries, fighting for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and for the workers of the Soviet Union, which for seventeen years has been exercising that dictatorship.

Lenin himself attributed to this work exceptional importance for the cause of the proletarian revolution, as may be seen from the fact that from his last hiding place, while in constant danger he warned the comrades to safeguard the manuscript and publish it whatever might happen to him, for, he said, it was a book that would be needed.

PREPARING THE UPRISING AND THE TRIUMPH OF OCTOBER

The war dragged on, economic ruin and famine prevailed in the rear and at the front, repressions were instituted against soldiers who refused to fight, and peasants who seized the landlords' estates. These factors finally exhausted the long-suffering patience of the masses of the people, for time and again they revealed the treacherous character of the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary Parties, which was finally obvious to all.

The masses could see from their own experience that the Bolshevik slogans were correct, that the road along which the Bolsheviks, headed by Lenin, offered to lead them was the right one. By September, the position of the Bolsheviks was so favorable that Lenin wrote letter after letter, to the Central Committee and the Moscow and Leningrad Committees assuring them that, having received a majority in the Soviets of Workers and Soldiers' Deputies in both the capitals, the Bolsheviks could and must seize state power. Throughout this period Lenin bombarded the Central Committee and the Moscow and Leningrad Party Committees with his summonses to insurrection, in which he defined the moment of insurrection, pointed out that insurrection must be treated in the Marxist manner, as an art, that no time must be lost in organizing headquarters for insurgent detachments, disposing forces, drafting reliable troops to the strategic points, and so on.

In these calls to insurrection (reproduced in Vol. VI of the Selected Works), which it is impossible to read without emotion even now, after the lapse of seventeen years, for they bring out in high relief the figure of Lenin as the great strategist of the proletarian revolution, Lenin never tired of stressing the fact that the crisis had matured, that a two or three days' struggle would determine the success of revolution both in Russia and throughout the world. The thought that agitated Lenin most was that the favorable moment for insurrection might slip by. "Procrastination," he wrote, "is fatal."

No longer able to endure being removed from the scene of action, Lenin on October 20th made his way secretly from Vyborg to Petrograd, where he again settled in the Vyborg district, in the empty apartment of the Bolshevik Fafanova, whose family was out of town.

Here Lenin lived "invisibly," as the expression ran regarding illegal workers, the fact of whose residence was unknown to the neighbors, janitors, or any other outsiders, and opened the apartment only at certain previously arranged knocks to comrades who brought him information on the state of affairs and took back his instructions. Lenin's fears of letting slip the favorable moment for insurrection were partly due to the fact that he knew that within the Bolshevik Party there were still some vacillating elements, and even within the Central Committee there were certain members, who along with the Mensheviks, continued to deny that the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia was growing into the proletarian socialist revolution.

It is common knowledge that at the historic meeting of the Central Committee on October 22nd, Lenin's resolution on armed insurrection was adopted with all but two in favor, and a practical center for leading the insurrection appointed, comprising Comrades Stalin, Sverdlov, Dzerzhinsky, Uritsky and Bubnov.

The two members of the Central Committee who at this historic meeting voted against Lenin's resolution were Kamenev and Zinoviev. At decisive moments of the Revolution Kamenev and Zinoviev constantly opposed Lenin; during their membership in the Party, they repeatedly betrayed the cause of the Revolution and then made two-faced declarations of loyalty, and, as everyone knows, as the outcome of their fight against the Party, have finally ended up outright counter-

revolutionaries, training and inspiring the vile murderers of the beloved proletarian leader, Comrade Kirov.

Kamenev and Zinoviev not only voted against the resolution on the armed uprising at the meeting of the Central Committee on October 23rd (10), but even came out against the decision of the C.C. in the non-Party press, treacherously disclosing the plans of our Party at the very last moment of the preparations for the October uprising.

In his letter to the members of the Bolshevik Party, Lenin demanded the expulsion of Zinoviev and Kamenev from the Party for their "unspeakable betrayal" and termed them strikebreakers who had betrayed the decisions of their own Central Committee to the enemy.

At this time Lenin received information regarding the mood of the masses chiefly from a Finnish comrade named Rakhia, who tells in his memoirs how, on Lenin's instructions, he made the rounds of the factories to ascertain the sentiments of the working masses, and how Bolshevik resolutions were adopted at all the many workers' meetings where he was present. Lenin also sent him to the soldiers' barracks, where the reports he received were as joyful as in the factories.

The revolutionary sentiment among the masses of workers and soldiers grew every hour; Lenin kept his ears closely attuned to those sentiments, in order, when the moment should arrive skillfully to apply the main rules of insurrection indicated by Marx, which Lenin set forth in a letter to the Bolshevik delegates to the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region.

The first of these rules is never play with insurrection but once it is begun, be perfectly sure that it must be carried through to the end.

Second- at the decisive place and time, concentrate forces greatly superior to those of the enemy; otherwise, the latter, better prepared and better organized, will defeat and wipe out the insurgents.

Third-once the insurrection has begun, it is necessary to act with the greatest determination, and to take the offensive at all costs. The defensive is the death of every armed insurrection.

Fourth-make sure of taking the enemy by surprise, and seize the moment when his troops are scattered.

Fifth-endeavor to win successes each day, even small ones (one might even say "each hour" in the case of one town), and at all costs maintain the "moral ascendancy."

When on November 7th, Comrade Rakhia told Lenin that Kerensky's troops intended to draw up the bridges on the river and cut off the revolutionary working-class districts from the revolutionary centre, Lenin replied, "Yes, it must start today," and said he wanted to see Comrade Stalin immediately.

To Comrade Rakhia's answer that under the circumstances Comrade Stalin could not come before midnight, Lenin replied that in that case he would go to town himself, and would not be deterred by any statements as to the danger of such a trip and the hopelessness of reaching town and the Smolny safe. Leaving a note for the owner of the apartment stating, "I've gone where you told me not to," Lenin put on an old cap, tied a dirty rag over his cheek, and set out with Comrade Rakhia, armed with two badly faked passes to the Smolny which the latter happened to have on him made out in the name of some non-existent members of the Soviet.

It was eight o'clock. With great difficulty they passed Litany Bridge, with Red Guards at one end and the Guards of the Provisional Government on the other, and made their way to the Smolny, the doors of which they simply forced. Once in the Smolny, Lenin immediately wanted to see Comrade Stalin, and receive the most exhaustive and detailed information on the last hours of preparation and the course of the insurrection.

Towards twelve o'clock the same night a Plenum of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was held, where it was announced that the struggle had resulted in the overthrow of Kerensky's government, that part of the ministers had been arrested and the rest were about to be arrested.

This news was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and Lenin's appearance on the tribune called forth a storm of applause.

Lenin's historic speech on that memorable occasion has only been recorded in a short newspaper report, since naturally no shorthand report could be taken. In this speech he first of all stated the world-historic fact that the workers' and peasants' revolution, the necessity for which the Bolsheviks had stressed all the time, had been accomplished. He went on to say that the importance of the revolution lay in the fact that the oppressed masses themselves would set up their own power. The old state apparatus would be utterly smashed and a new administrative apparatus of the Soviet organizations reared in its place. A new period was opening in the history of Russia which would finally lead to the triumph of socialism.

Lenin also pointed out that the first duty of the new Soviet government was to propose a just peace-which would meet with a warm response among the world proletarian masses, whose confidence would be finally secured by the publication of the secret treaties concluded by the tsarist government-to issue a decree abolishing the landed estates and turning over the land to the peasants, and establish workers' control over production and over the banks. In conclusion Lenin proposed the following resolution, which was adopted amid general acclamation:

"The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies welcomes the victorious revolution accomplished by the proletariat and garrison of Petrograd, and wishes to lay especial emphasis on the unity, organization, discipline and complete unanimity displayed by the masses in this singularly bloodless and successful uprising.

"The Soviet is firmly convinced that the workers' and peasants' government which, as a Soviet government, will be set up by the revolution and will guarantee the urban proletariat the support of the masses of poor peasants will march with firm step towards socialism the only means of saving the country from the incredible calamities and horrors of the war.

"The new workers' and peasants' government will immediately propose a just democratic peace to all the warring peoples. It will immediately abolish the landed estates and hand over the land to the peasants. It will establish workers' control over the production and distribution of goods and general control of the people over the banks, which will be converted into a single state institution.

"The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies calls on all the workers and all the peasants to support the workers' and peasants' revolution self-sacrificingly and to the utmost. The Soviet is convinced that the urban workers, in alliance with the poor peasantry, will display unrelaxing comradely discipline and establish the strict revolutionary order indispensable if the victory of socialism is to be achieved. The Soviet is convinced that the

proletariat of West European countries will help us to carry the cause of socialism to complete and lasting victory."

head. The same night the Council of People's Commissars was established with Lenin at its

IVAN BABUSHKIN: A Short Biography - 1932



This Pamphlet is prepared under the supervision of the Society of Old Bolsheviks, Moscow.

In this series is also published " The Stride of the Dredging Fleet, 1905," by Peter Nikiforov; " Unemployed Councils in St. Petersburg in 1906," by Sergei Malyshev.

"From the February Revolution to the October Revolution," by A. F. Ilyin-Genevsky, and " The Revolt in the Battle Cruiser Potemkin" also deal with aspects of Russian revolutionary history.

"Bolsheviks on Trial" by S. Tchernomordik, and "The Zerno Publishing House" by M. S. Kedrov.

INTRODUCTION.

“When its leading representatives (of the working class. -C.B.) grasp the idea of scientific socialism, the idea of the historical role of the working class; when these ideas become widely circulated, and working class organisations are established, which can transform the present scattered economic battles of the workers into a conscious class struggle, then the Russian workers, assuming the leadership of the democratic elements, will overthrow absolutism and lead the Russian proletariat (together with the world proletariat) along the straight road of open political struggle to the victorious Communist revolution.”²⁰

This is how Lenin clearly and distinctly defined the task in 1894, twenty-three years before it was actually accomplished, in October, 1917, after great sacrifices and magnificent struggles by the Russian proletariat, under the leadership of Lenin.

After the October Revolution, Lenin repeatedly emphasized that the brilliant victory had been achieved only because for decades the Bolsheviks had been successfully linking up revolutionary theory with revolutionary practice; because they were able not only to teach the masses but also to learn from them; because they were able organizationally to consolidate their ideological influences on the masses.

Babushkin, the pupil, companion-in-arms, and personal friend of Lenin, and the first Bolshevik worker-correspondent, was a model of the Bolshevik organizer of the masses.

When Lenin learned that Babushkin had fallen a victim to the tsarist executioners, he wrote :

“The people have their heroes — these are people like Babushkin : the men and women who have dedicated themselves to the struggle for the emancipation of the working class, not for just a year or two but for an entire decade before the revolution; the men and women who have not wasted their energies on useless, individual terrorist activity, but have worked persistently and steadfastly among the proletarian masses, developing their class consciousness, their organisations, and their revolutionary initiative. They are the men and women who led the armed mass struggle against the tsarist autocracy when the crisis came, when the revolution broke out; when millions upon millions began to stir. Whatever was won from the tsarist autocracy was won exclusively through the mass struggle, led by people like Babushkin.

“ Without such men and women, the Russian people would have forever remained a nation of slaves, a nation of serfs. With such people to lead them, the Russian people will win for themselves complete emancipation from every kind of exploitation.”

The story of the life and work of Babushkin is briefly outlined in these pages. This story has been compiled from the following sources: an unfinished autobiography which Babushkin wrote at Lenin's request and which is now kept at the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in Moscow, Lenin's articles

²⁰ V.I. Lenin, *Selected Works Vol. I, II* (International Publishers, 1963).

and correspondence with Babushkin, and the memoirs of Lenin's widow, Comrade Krupskaya and of other Bolsheviks.

CHILDHOOD.

Ivan Vasilyevich Babushkin was born in January, 1873, of a poor peasant family in the Vologda province. The land holding of his parents was so small that his father, Vasily Babushkin, had to work at the salt works, where working conditions were terrible, in order to feed the family.

When Babushkin was five years old, his father died. His mother, Ekaterina Babushkin, had such a difficult time with her three children, of whom Vanya (Ivan) was the eldest, that she was compelled to send the youngster out to beg.

Having lost all hope of freeing herself from the grip of starvation and poverty in her native village, Ekaterina Babushkin went to St. Petersburg with her two younger children in search of work. Vanya, then seven years old, was left in the care of relatives who cruelly abused and exploited him. Young Babushkin lived with them for three years until his mother took him to St. Petersburg where she got him a job in a dairy.

He had to work in the dairy even harder than he had had to work for his relatives in the village. He had to carry heavy loads on his head, which caused the blood to rush to his eyes and they became inflamed. In addition to this he was cruelly treated and beaten by his employer. The work was so hard that he was really glad when he was sent to a hospital to have his eyes treated. In his autobiography, Babushkin says that he was glad to be in hospital because "no one scolded me and I could lie all day long in my cot with my eyes closed, and no one interfered with me."

After this hard bringing-up, Babushkin was apprenticed to the Kronstadt torpedo works at 24 kopeks a day. On this princely wage he managed to eke out a livelihood until he completed his apprenticeship at eighteen.

IN THE FACTORY.

The main struggle of the St. Petersburg factory workers in the middle of the 'nineties was against the length of the working day. This is shown by the demands raised by the workers themselves at that time, enumerated in their strike leaflets, as follows :

"1. We want the working day to be from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. instead of from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. as at present

"2. We want dinner time to last an hour and a half so that the working day will be ten and a half hours instead of thirteen

"3. We want all work to stop on Saturday at 2 p.m. in all factories."

From these demands it is evident that the sorest spot in the workers' life was the excessively long hours they had to work. At that time the workers' ideal was a twelve-hour day, for they worked from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., fourteen hours a day. Babushkin describes the factory life in his autobiography as follows:

"During my first year in the factory I did not live ; I only worked. It was piece-work, and we worked day and night. Occasionally I would remain at the factory for days without going home, which was only twenty minutes' walk from the factory. I remember that once, during a rush, we had to work for sixty hours on end, stopping only to snatch a bite. At such times, dazed from overwork, I would fall asleep on the way home from the factory, bump against a lamp post and wake up, but again fall asleep, and dream that I was rowing on the Neva and the bow of the boat had hit the shore.

"Working so hard, we saw nothing of real life, and our minds were always a blank. All our desires were focused on one thing, the expectation of a holiday. And when the holiday would arrive, we would sleep for half the day, and again there was nothing to see, nothing to hear, and nothing to learn. On the morrow, work again, nothing but deadening, exhausting work, no life, no rest. And with all that work there was no one who would say a word to you, either of praise or blame; no one would suggest a rest. And for whom did we perform this wearisome toil? Only, the capitalists' for profit and our own stupefaction. Our only salvation was the fact that we did not quite understand the situation and did not realize the horror of this terrific oppression.

"This was our joyless life, and this was the life of the majority of the people. Here I end the description of my life up to the time of my conversion from a mere cipher – a man without any convictions – into a socialist human being."

The deplorable conditions of work in the Russian factories had aroused the workers to spontaneous strikes even prior to the time described by Babushkin. Later on, individuals and even whole groups of such "socialist human beings" rose from the ranks of the factory workers and became initiators, organizers and leaders in the class struggles which followed. Young Ivan

Babushkin got in touch with a group of class-conscious workers in his factory and found that they were connected with the revolutionary intelligentsia.

AWAKENING IN THE FACTORY.

Babushkin describes his initiation into the revolutionary movement very picturesquely : we still had about ten to before the whistle, and some looking round, I heard some " One Saturday when fifteen minutes to go of us were cautiously one say, " Let's finish our slaving; there is no end to this job." It was a machinist. called Kostya, a young man like myself, who spoke. I nodded my head and said : 'That's true; only fools love work'.

"‘Tomorrow is Sunday. Is your gang working?’ began Kostya diplomatically, apparently having decided beforehand that I was a suitable subject. ‘What do you do during your spare time at home?’

Why, nothing in particular. We are planning to arrange a dance soon,’ I said haltingly, hoping to induce him to join me in a spree.

"‘Have you any books?’

"I was embarrassed. I had not read a book for a long time, although I possessed a dozen of them. I did not understand them, and they therefore remained untouched on the shelf, the decoration of a young man's room."

On his first free Sunday, Babushkin visited his new acquaintance Kostya, in whose room he found two young workers reading a leaflet. This leaflet was passed on to Babushkin to read, and he says in his autobiography :

"From the very first words, I understood that this was something that I had never seen nor heard of before. The very first words I read aroused a peculiar feeling within me. Involuntarily my thoughts began to run so fast that I read with difficulty. The leaflet spoke against the priests, the Tsar and the government; it was couched in strong language, and as I read, I became more and more convinced that what the leaflet said was true, and that one had to do what the leaflet advised. I could already imagine myself being executed for crimes committed against the powers that be, and I felt that all life was going to rack and ruin. At the same time, I realized with a shock that there is no hereafter and there never was one, that it was all invented to fool the common people.

"I believed everything that was said in the leaflet without any reservation; it had a profound effect on me. I finished reading with difficulty and felt weighed down by the thoughts that the leaflet had aroused. The meaning of the leaflet sank deeply into my brain, and from then on, I became an anti-government element.

"I silently returned the leaflet to Kostya. I understood immediately the purpose of his invitation and decided that for this cause it was worth sacrificing everything, including one's life."

Babushkin's decision — to become an "anti-government element" — changed the course of his entire life. It was not accidental, although it was arrived at after reading a single leaflet. It only

showed how far the ground had already been prepared, to what degree the growth of the capitalism in Russia was being accompanied by the growth of its grave-digger, the working-class, which was beginning to create its own leaders.

After the incident with the leaflet Babushkin began to educate himself; he began to read much and to attend the Sunday school for workers, about which he later wrote in his autobiography as follows:

“Autumn was approaching. We were waiting impatiently for the opening of the Sunday school about which *we* had already heard a great deal. Much had been said in praise of this school : that one could learn to understand people there, and especially that one could gain knowledge there, that all the teachers gave their services free of charge because they wanted to bring knowledge to the people, and that they were ready to suffer oppression and persecution at the hands of the government for the sake of the people.”

These Sunday schools existed legally and were skillfully used by the Marxist revolutionary intelligentsia, who went there as teachers, as a legal cover for their revolutionary propaganda among the factory workers. Instead of the official course of geography, these teachers taught Marxian political economy; instead of the official history which dealt with the heroic exploits of the Tsars, they taught the history of the revolutionary movement, and in a disguised form told how the Russian Tsars played the part of international gendarmes, the suppressors of all emancipation movements, not only in Russia, but in the rest of Europe as well.

Babushkin entered such a school in St. Petersburg where N. K. Krupskaya, and her friend Lydia Knipovich, who later also became a famous Bolshevik, were working. Krupskaya states in her reminiscences that Babushkin did not excel as a conspirator. During one of the lessons in Russian grammar, when he had to give some examples, he wrote on the blackboard : “ There will soon be a strike in our factory.” After the lesson Lydia Knipovich called him aside, chided him for his carelessness, and pointed out to him that one could be a revolutionary without shouting about it. Babushkin blushed and was very much embarrassed, but from that moment very friendly relationships were established between teacher and pupil. Thus from the very beginning the school taught revolutionary endurance. The work of the Sunday school is an illustration of the manner in which even in the restricted circumstances of that time the Bolsheviks were able to take advantage of legal possibilities for illegal revolutionary work.

BABUSHKIN MEETS LENIN.

While studying at the Sunday school, Babushkin began to associate with the St. Petersburg revolutionary Marxist intelligentsia. From the autumn of 1893, this group was led by young Lenin, who came there especially to carry on revolutionary work. Babushkin was fortunate enough to join a circle led by Lenin himself.

The reader will forgive us if we quote at length the part of Babushkin's autobiography where he describes the work of the study circle and of Lenin as a circle leader.

"A new acquaintance of mine, a worker connected with the intelligentsia, organized a circle. It met in my room, which was most convenient because there were no outsiders there. The circle consisted of six people, the lecturer being the seventh. We began our studies with the study of Marxian political economy. The lecturer presented his subject without the use of a text-book. He encouraged us to raise objections to the points he raised and provoked disputes among the students, encouraging us to defend our points of view against one another. Thus, our studies were always interesting and lively and at the same time effective in training us as speakers. "

"We found this method of study the best way of elucidating problems. We were always very much satisfied with the lectures and deeply impressed by the knowledge displayed by our lecturer. The standing joke among us was that he was losing his hair because he had too much brains.

"These lectures also trained us for independent research work. We used to receive lists of questions from the lecturer, which demanded the close study and observation of factory life.

Often during work, we used to go into various departments of the factory on various pretexts in order to collect the necessary information through direct observation and whenever possible through conversation with the workers. My tool box was always full of notes. During my lunch hour I used to re-write these notes, which were about the number of days we worked in our factory and about our earnings. The main obstacle to gathering such information was the lack of leisure time, yet we made some progress.

At that time a proper idea of the working conditions in the factories could be obtained only from the materials gathered illegally "in the tool box," and there was always the danger of falling into the clutches of the gendarmes.

The collection of material about the life of the workers, to be used later in oral and written propaganda in approaching the working masses on the basis of their concrete needs, is the typical Bolshevik method of work which, as we see, was often applied when "firm organisations transforming the present scattered economic struggles into a conscious class struggle" were only just coming into being.

The method of instruction which Lenin used in the Semyannikov circle was no less characteristic — " he encouraged us to raise objections to the points he raised and also provoked

disputes among the students, encouraging us to defend our points of view against one another" . . . , thus making the studies "always interesting and lively, and effective in training us as speakers."

Even at that time Lenin, more than anyone else, realized the significance of the problem of creating a staff of active workers. He realized what part "the leading representatives of the working class who mastered the ideas of scientific socialism" would play in the further development of the revolutionary struggle.

That is why Lenin, occupied though he was with the study of great theoretical problems even at that time, spent much time in personal supervision of the propagandist circles of which, as we know, he conducted several at that time. The members of these circles proved to be worthy pupils of their teacher.

FROM PUPIL TO TEACHER.

Babushkin particularly proved this by his brief but rich life as a proletarian revolutionary. He also proved it by his supreme courage when the time came to give his own life for the revolution.

While diligently training himself, studying at the Sunday school and in Lenin's circle, Babushkin gradually began to occupy himself with practical work. He began to teach others and became an agitator himself.

In the winter of 1894, a spontaneous strike broke out in the Semyannikov factory, during which the factory office was demolished, the factory officials were beaten up, and the factory was set on fire. About the same time another strike broke out in the St. Petersburg port. These events decided the issue in the controversies which were then taking place in Social-Democratic circles. The disputes were about the methods of revolutionary work, that is, whether revolutionary activity should consist only in spreading propaganda among separate circles, or whether the time had already arrived for wide agitation among the workers by spreading literature among them. After the events at the Semyannikov factory and in the port of St. Petersburg, it became obvious that the moment for transferring from circle-leading to mass work had arrived. As the Russian press was completely muddled, the illegal press assumed extreme importance as a means of influencing the working masses through the spreading of leaflets at factories. Babushkin took part in the drawing up of the first leaflet of that type. In his autobiography, when speaking about the method of spreading this leaflet at the Semyannikov factory, he says:

"The occasion was most appropriate (that is, the riot in the factory and its suppression. — C. B.), and therefore it was desirable to try agitation in the factory proper. We composed a long leaflet which was hectographed, folded and made ready for distribution. But the question arose as to how to distribute the leaflets.

"I was appointed to supervise this affair, but I did not even know how to set about it. To distribute the leaflets by placing them in the tool boxes was not expedient because it would be observed. I decided the best place would be the lavatories. I do not remember whether it was on a Saturday or Monday, when I took the leaflets for distribution; I put some in the lavatories, others I left wherever I could, throwing them into shops through broken windows, open doors, etc. At the other end of the factory the same thing was done: some leaflets were left in the tool boxes, others at the machines where the workers were sitting, and still others dropped wherever possible. In one shop the leaflets happened to fall into the hands of the foreman, who accused one of the oldest workers of distributing them. I was sorry for the old man, but could not interfere because that might have hindered the distribution of leaflets in the future. I decided to talk to the old man about it afterwards. The first distribution seemed to be successful, and later on leaflets were distributed in the workshops of the St. Petersburg port in the same manner. There they had an even greater effect than in the Semyannikov factory."

Due to his propaganda work in the circles — always maintaining close contact with the masses, organizing them, setting up a circulating library, composing and distributing leaflets in plants and

factories, and at the same time improving his own education — Babushkin gradually became one of the most outstanding and active members of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, of which Lenin was the leader.

When Lenin and his group were arrested on December 9, 1895, Babushkin temporarily evaded arrest. Regarding the impression these arrests made on him, he writes:

“The arrests were expected, but not so soon and not on such a scale. Naturally, this made a deep impression on me, but not so deep as it would have made had it happened earlier. I had already become accustomed to arrests and got over them quite easily.”

Writing of himself as an active revolutionary at that time, he says:

“A year ago, my whole idea was to grasp high sounding words, and to learn from the intelligentsia and from the teachers in school. At meetings I was shy and retiring. But now I had to carry on independent work and decide all kinds of questions myself : questions which arose in the educational circles, the factories, and at school. Often, I was aware that I was not altogether competent; still, I spoke, explained, advised, only because the better leaders had been deported. And since I was called upon to be a leader, I could not shirk my duty.”

This duty of being a “ leader” inspired Babushkin to write a splendid leaflet entitled *What Is a Socialist and a Political Offender?*

Three weeks after the arrest of Lenin and his group, Babushkin was given a batch of leaflets for distribution, explaining the significance of the arrest. He felt that he was performing this task for the last time because he himself was threatened with arrest. Detectives were already on his trail. After delivering the leaflets to the workers in certain factories, he took some of them to his comrades in the Obukhov Works, and after urging them to continue the work, he left them, with a strong premonition that he would be arrested that very night. And that is what actually happened. Gendarmes raided his lodgings during the night and made a thorough search, and although they found absolutely nothing, they made him dress and go with them.

“Early in the morning,” he writes, “just when the street lamps were being put out in St. Petersburg, I was taken to the jail. From the very first this immense building inspired me with hatred, but I was to become more closely acquainted with it, in adjusting myself to its rules and regulations, and in going through the many disturbances which took place during the thirteen months I was detained there.

“During all that time, I was unable to exchange a word with a single one of the comrades who were imprisoned along with me, and who, like me, were forced for long months to maintain silence, the silence of the grave.”

FURTHER ADVANCE.

During the second half of the 'nineties there was a temporary wave of industrial prosperity in Russia, and simultaneously with this prosperity there was a great growth of the movement, which resulted in the famous St. Petersburg strikes in the summer of 1896. The striking workers in the tsarist capital seriously frightened the government, and as a result, the first Russian labor law was passed, limiting the working day in factories to 11 1/2 hours.

However, this concession, wrung from the government under the pressure of the masses, did not prevent the tsarist gendarmes settling accounts with the most active participants in this struggle. Hundreds of the best workers were imprisoned or exiled to Siberia, and thousands were deported from the capital.

This "wise" policy of the tsarist rulers proved to be a double-edged sword, for the deported workers, carriers of the revolutionary bacillus, scattered the revolutionary infection throughout the country.

The South of Russia at that time was most susceptible to revolutionary infection. The large metallurgical centre of Ekaterinoslav (now Dnipropetrovsk) was a breeding ground for revolutionary ideas and naturally attracted the deported St. Petersburg strikers, who saw in it a fertile field for work. For that reason, Babushkin made for Ekaterinoslav when the sentence of three-year deportation was passed on him.

Solitary confinement for over a year did not break Babushkin's spirit nor paralyze his will to fight, even though he was very young at the time. On the contrary, it steeled him for further revolutionary work. On his arrival at Ekaterinoslav he resumed his revolutionary activity and became completely absorbed in it. Revolutionary work now became his profession. He looked for a job in a factory in order to have contact with the workers. It was hard for him to get a job, and, when he finally did get one, he found that during his imprisonment his hands had become very tender and "genteel," and they were blistered from the work. The thought that he had become lily fingered during his imprisonment depressed him very much. But he soon got over it.

Knowing that many of the comrades deported from St. Petersburg must also have found their way to Ekaterinoslav, he searched for them. In his autobiography he relates how he made his first contacts :

"One morning, during the second month of my stay in Ekaterinoslav, my landlord came home from the night shift accompanied by another worker from the factory. The newcomer introduced himself as a comrade, and getting me out of my bed, which consisted of a thin blanket spread on the floor, he dragged me over to his house. There I met two other comrades who had landed there under the same circumstances as I.

"One of my new acquaintances was a pattern-maker; the other was a young factory lad of about twenty. The latter (we shall call him Matukha for short) particularly pleased me. A simple fellow, he was a typical representative of the masses; he knew nothing at all except the

very elementary things he had learned in the village school. At first, he read with difficulty the leaflets which we distributed at the factories, but later he took an active part in distributing leaflets and in agitating for a strike. When he was arrested his only concern was about the other arrested comrades and the harm it might do to the movement. Matukha was all aflame with enthusiasm over the St. Petersburg strike movement."

In a few months Babushkin succeeded in establishing firm contact with many deported St. Petersburg strikers, as well as with local revolutionary workers who by that time — 1897 and early 1898 — already had their own organisation, the Ekaterinoslav League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class. This organisation was based on groups outside the factories; it had not yet succeeded in penetrating the working masses.

Babushkin directed the work of the organisation into new channels. He was able to put it on a basis of wide mass agitation and propaganda. For instance, early in 1898, the Ekaterinoslav League of Struggle, under the leadership of Babushkin, prepared and distributed eight leaflets, one for each of the eight largest factories in the town, based on definite information about the conditions of the workers in each factory. Besides this, each leaflet linked up the conditions of the workers in each factory with the political exposure of tsarism; it showed that the workers had no rights, pointed the way to liberty, and called upon the workers to take up the organized revolutionary struggle.

How these leaflets were distributed and what impression they made on the workers Babushkin tells us in his autobiography:

"Late at night I went to one of the factories with Matukha. We came to a two-story building, climbed a fence and landed near the building. I lifted Matukha to enable him to open a window, and he threw a batch of leaflets into the shop. In this manner we spread leaflets in three departments. In the morning when the workers came to work, they naturally picked up the leaflets, and in a quarter of an hour everyone was reading them.

"In another factory we had much more difficulty in distributing the leaflets, because it worked twenty-four hours. But Matukha got a job there, and, taking a batch of leaflets with him, he calmly worked through the day and at 7 p.m. when everybody went home, he, too, left the shop, but remained inside the factory gates. He hid himself in a hole where they were digging an artesian well and remained there until midnight.

"When all the machines were stopped for midnight supper, he quietly came out of his hiding-place with his leaflets, and waited for the lights to go out. This was the moment for which he had waited five hours. As soon as the electricity was turned off, he ran into the shop, threw the leaflets about, ran out and jumped over the fence. Five minutes later, when the lights went on, the workers found the leaflets and began reading them. They created a profound impression. All the workers knew about the leaflets, and so did the factory administration, the gendarmerie and the city police, but none of them knew who distributed them. The workers in all the factories were encouraged by this incident; the administration, on the other hand, was forced to loosen its grip."

All the Ekaterinoslav factories were stirred by the distribution of these leaflets. The activity of the organisation greatly increased, and Babushkin, the guiding spirit of these activities, was naturally overwhelmed with work. The right to hold meetings was completely denied the workers, and agitation by hectographed leaflets became more and more unsatisfactory. There was an urgent need for properly printed leaflets and even for a workers' newspaper. For this it was necessary to equip a secret printing shop, and Babushkin enthusiastically took upon himself this new extremely difficult task. After many tribulations and persistent search, Babushkin finally succeeded in getting some type for his future printing shop. With much difficulty he also succeeded in converting an apartment into a printing shop. But everything was held up because of the lack of a printing press. The first of May was approaching, and it was necessary to issue a newspaper, or at least a May Day leaflet. Concerning this Babushkin writes:

"As quickly as possible I made a frame for the type in the factory. The foreman often noticed that I was working on something for myself, but exactly what I was doing he could not guess. Because of the tense situation he did not want to make trouble and, said nothing. After I finished the frame, the problem was how to get it out of the factory. I got one of the other workers to take it out for me, which he did, not knowing what it was for. After this it became necessary to make the ink rollers. The composition was made out of ordinary first-class carpenter's glue and treacle. We had a great deal of trouble with it because it refused to congeal. I went to my comrades and asked them to assist me in making a mold at all costs, even if it were necessary to fight with the factory administration for it. One of the comrades remained at work one whole night, and with no foreman to watch him, the work was begun, and within two hours a well-shaped cylinder was ready to be taken out of the factory.

"I bought three reams of paper and a tin-plate for ink. I went to the apartment, where we set the type for the May Day leaflet. Then we began the printing which consisted in rolling a wooden roller with a linen towel tightly wound around it, over the frame which contained the type. Since the roller was very light, we had to press heavily on it with the whole weight of the body, which was difficult when we tried to work quickly. We worked in this way : one put on the ink and pressed the roller, the other put on and took off the paper, the third spread out the wet and gathered up the dry sheets, the fourth rested or folded the sheets."

Thus was the "conveyor" system of illegal printing introduced under the tsarist regime. It required great patience to spend day and night at such work, but in the end Babushkin succeeded in putting out 3,000 May Day leaflets.

Babushkin worked in Ekaterinoslav under the Party name of "Tramwayny" up to the beginning of 1900, when the secret police began to shadow him persistently. To avoid arrest, he quietly disappeared from Ekaterinoslav.

"The train was speeding along the Nikolayev railway," he writes, "approaching St. Petersburg. Soon I was to see familiar streets and well-known faces. A real passport, belonging

to a person in good standing, was in my side pocket, and with it I could safely appear anywhere.”

The three years of intense revolutionary work in Ekaterinoslav transformed the 27-year-old Babushkin into a mature, hardened fighter, capable of doing responsible, leading Party work. At that time Lenin was in Pskov negotiating the publication of the newspaper *Iskra*. Babushkin participated in these negotiations. From there Lenin sent him to work at the large industrial centers, Orekhovo-Zuyevo. Babushkin established contacts with the comrades working there, and in turn connected those comrades with others abroad, where Lenin went after the expiration of his exile in Siberia. There Lenin soon managed to establish the Russian Party organ *Iskra*, and organized a central Party organisation of the same name. Babushkin was the first worker-correspondent for the newspaper and one of the most active members of the Central Organisation.

A WORKER-CORRESPONDENT FOR ISKRA.

Here are some samples of Babushkin's correspondence to Iskra from Orekhovo-Zuyevo, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Bogorodsk and other textile centers:

Iskra, No. 4, May, 1901 : "Orekhovo-Zuyevo. Before describing the hospital rules and regulations at Morosov's factory (Morosov was a large textile manufacturer.— C.B.), it is necessary to say a few words on the local situation. We Orekhovo-Zuyevo workers would like to inform our own fellow-workers, as well as the workers of other cities and other industries, about the awful conditions in our factory, through the columns of the workers' newspaper, *Iskra*. Despite the efforts of notorious priests who work hand in hand with the capitalists and the government to keep us in ignorance by their cunning sophistries, the workers realize their miserable enslaved conditions.

"The population of Orekhovo-Zuyevo is 40,000, living in an area of nine square versts. Due to this congestion, the labor movement is very sluggish and retarded, chiefly as a result of mental starvation. We lack the literature that one is able to obtain in the capitals and large cities, and since workers from those centers do not come here, we do not know where or how the cause is developing."

Following this there is a description of the provoking rules and regulations at Morosov's hospital.

In issue No. 6 of *Iskra*, Babushkin describes the dreadful conditions of the workers in the factories of Ivanovo-Voznesensk. He dwells in detail on the strike that was then going on at the Kalashnik iron works and reports the following fact, which characterizes the proletarian solidarity of that period :

"Ten workers were imported from Moscow. They were not told that they were being employed as strike breakers. They were promised very good wages: from 78 to 80 or more rubles per month. But when the Moscow workers came to Ivanovo Voznesensk and learned what part they were to play in the strike, they declared to the Ivanovo-Voznesensk workers that they had been deceived and that, had they known about the strike, they would not have come. From that time complete solidarity was established between the workers of the two cities. Soon the Moscow workers went to the factory inspector to complain about the conditions in the factory. The employers, fearing complications, discharged them, the Kalashnik foundry workers made a collection for their fare, and the Moscow workers returned home."

From Shum (Ivanovo-Voznesensk district) Babushkin reports

" Recently night raids and arrests took place here, and the gendarmes have collected a batch of cases. They are arresting people for being in possession of books, even such as are not banned. At the examination the gendarme asks: 'What is this for?' 'I bought it to read,' replies the worker. 'And why did you buy this and not the Bible?' 'And why do you read instead of

sleeping? ' This gendarme and the manufacturer Pavlov are very thick friends and very often get so dead drunk together that they resemble dirty swine more than human beings. Pavlov orders girls for his use as lightly as if he were ordering fried chicken. These representatives of the police and capital strive to keep the masses in darkness. A worker doesn't dare to walk the streets with a book under his arm for fear the police might take it away and question him about it. This often happens near the reading rooms."

Babushkin's correspondence to *Iskra* is not merely an expression of his hatred of the tsarist regime, the capitalists, the priests and the gendarmes. His hatred is always fortified by the violence and oppression perpetrated against the workers in the factories and in their homes by these forces of the ruling class. Reading this correspondence, one gets the impression that the worker-correspondent, Babushkin, was in the very thick of life, that he suffered because of its restriction, that he did not describe it merely as an onlooker, but as an active participant who not only wrote but fought energetically against this consuming evil.

Thirty years ago, Babushkin quite clearly understood the task of a worker-correspondent. Lenin wrote about Babushkin's correspondence and his organisation of worker-correspondents as follows : "As long as Ivan Vasilyevich (Babushkin) remains at liberty, the *Iskra* will not lack real workers' correspondence. Almost all the correspondence from Shum, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Orekhovo-Zuyevo and other parts of Central Russia that was published in the first thirty numbers of the *Iskra* passed through the hands of Ivan Vasilyevich, who tried to establish the closest contact between *Iskra* and the workers. Ivan Vasilyevich was the most ardent correspondent of *Iskra* and its warmest adherent."

To the same Orekhovo-Zuyevo period belongs the very popular illegal pamphlet *In Defense of Ivanovo-Voznesensk Workers*, written by Babushkin. How this came to be written we learn from the memoirs of N. K. Krupskaya and from Lenin's correspondence with the Russian Party organisations during the *Iskra* period. In Ivanovo-Voznesensk there was a factory inspector named Dodonovo, who, "grieving" for the workers, wrote some liberal trash about their lives. His article was published in the journal of the People's Party, *Russkoye Bogatstvo* (*Russian Wealth*). In this article Dodonovo, "commiserating" with the Ivanovo-Voznesensk workers, pictured them as hopeless drunkards and fools who ought to be enlightened through the reading of liberal books.

When Lenin read this article, he was very much perturbed and he asked Babushkin to write a refutation of this liberal inspector. Babushkin's reply to Dodonovo's article, written under the pseudonym of "A Worker for Workers," was replete with sarcasm :

"Mr. Dodonovo's penetrating insight is truly remarkable. He is not like the hero of the story about the man who visited the Zoo and saw numerous insects, but failed to see the elephant. Oh, no! Mr. Dodonovo, arriving at the factories of Ivanovo-Voznesensk, immediately noticed a deep abyss, and what an abyss! All the factories were situated in it. Is not Mr. Dodonovo observant? And looking around, a few more things caught his attention, and he began to turn like the arms of a windmill, round and round and up and down, up and down.

“In going around he noticed that ‘drunkenness’ is worked out to a system, and turning again he saw that the workers sleep as closely packed as sardines, one’s head at the other’s feet; further he observed that the workers (all of them) have not the least desire to read nor any aspiration to study, that vodka is consumed in great quantities, and he saw a detective trying to unravel a brawl in which a torn coat was the only circumstantial evidence. He further observes drunken men, singing and dancing in the streets, loafing crowds and empty theatres, and not a book anywhere. Quite right, Mr. Dodonovo, we do have drinking parties occasionally, and not only in Ivanovo-Voznesensk but also in Moscow, St. Petersburg and South Russia. Every cultured worker is carrying on a persistent struggle against this evil. But we cannot agree that this is “one of the worst evils of factory life.

“When a weaver who has just got a job invites ten or fifteen people and buys a gallon of vodka, to celebrate the occasion they are not having a drinking bout, they are innocently having a drink after work to congratulate their fellow worker on having fortunately found a job. And this does not happen every day. Besides, may I, with your permission, ask this question : Why, when his Royal Highness takes a drink for his health and then a toast for the King and another for the Count, time without end, until he gets blind drunk, why, Mr. Donovan (do you not say that this is drinking ‘worked out to a system’) and why is not this ‘ the worst of evils’ in the life of the highly educated classes?”

Babushkin’s activity in the textile region was not limited to his literary work : the *Iskra* correspondence and the above-mentioned pamphlet. His activity as an agitator and organizer of the textile workers were very varied, and in all this work Babushkin invariably followed the instructions of Lenin, with whom he constantly carried on a personal correspondence.

ARREST, IMPRISONMENT, FLIGHT.

The intense revolutionary work Babushkin carried on in the textile districts inevitably drew the attention of the authorities, and in December, 1901, the gendarmes raided the local organisation and, among others, arrested Babushkin, who was charged as the “unknown.”

For a long time, the gendarmes tried to learn Babushkin’s identity and finally they discovered that he was the man who had slipped through their hands in Ekaterinoslav. They kept him in the textile district for a little while and then sent him to the south, the scene of his previous “crimes.” There Babushkin languished in jail until June, 1902, when after a file had been smuggled in to him from outside, he broke out of jail and escaped.

IN LONDON WITH LENIN.

Not knowing a single word of any language except Russian, Babushkin managed to cross the frontier in September, 1902. He appeared unexpectedly at Lenin's house in London, where the editorial office of the *Iskra* was located at that time.²¹ In her memoirs, N. K. Krupskaya writes about Babushkin's arrival in London as follows:

"At the beginning of September, 1902, Babushkin arrived, after having escaped from Ekaterinoslav prison. His escape from prison and get-away across the frontier was furthered by the assistance of some schoolboys. They dyed his hair, which, after a while, turned crimson and attracted general attention. In Germany he fell into the hands of the commissioners, and only just avoided being deported to America. We fixed him up in the commune, where he lived during the whole of the time of his stay in London. By this time Babushkin had made great strides in his political knowledge. He was now a steeled revolutionary with his own opinions. He had an extensive experience of all kinds of working-class organisations and, being himself a worker, had nothing to learn as to how to approach the workers. When he had first come to the Sunday school some years back, he was quite an inexperienced fellow. I remember one episode. At first, he was in Lydia Mikhailovna Knipovich group. They were learning Russian grammar and going over various examples. Babushkin wrote on the blackboard : 'There will soon be a strike in our factory.' After the lesson, Lydia called him aside and rebuked him : " If you want to be a revolutionist you must not make yourself conspicuous as one, but be able to use self-restraint. . . .' Babushkin blushed, but afterwards came to regard Lydia as his best friend and often consulted her of our activities.

"It was at that time that Plekhanov arrived in London. A joint meeting with Babushkin was arranged. Russian affairs were discussed. Babushkin had his own opinion, which he defended very firmly. He was so tenacious that he began to impress Plekhanov. Georgi Valentinovich certainly began to look at him more attentively. But Babushkin spoke of his future work in Russia only with Vladimir Ilyich, with whom he was particularly intimate. I remember yet another small but characteristic incident. Two or three days after Babushkin arrived, we were astonished, on entering the commune, to find how clean everything was. All the litter was cleared up, newspapers neatly arranged on the table, and the floor swept. It appeared that Babushkin had been putting things in order. ' The Russian intellectual is always dirty,' said Babushkin. ' He needs a servant as he is himself incapable of tidying up.'"²²

About that time, the autumn of 1902, Lenin was very busy enrolling Party workers, professional revolutionaries, for the purpose of sending them throughout Russia as *Iskra* agents. As Lenin wrote later on, *Iskra* fought for the creation of an organisation of professional revolutionaries, and it fought particularly hard in 1901-1902. It finally overcomes the 'economizing' which prevailed at that time and established such an organisation in 1903.

²¹ See footnote on page 75 of Krupskaya's "Memories of Lenin" (Martin Laurence, 2/-).

²² 'Memories of Lenin' by N. Krupskaya. Pages 32-33.

THE ST. PETERSBURG AGENT OF THE ISKRA.

Babushkin was soon dispatched to Russia as one of the agents of *Iskra*. He was given a very responsible post in St. Petersburg, where the Party organisation was carrying out the revolutionary policy of Lenin very badly. The inner Party struggle between the revolutionary Social-Democrats, who later became the Bolsheviki, and the economist-revisionists, who later became the Mensheviki, was most intense.

Lenin characterized the St. Petersburg economist-revisionist as being "flabby and uncertain in theoretical questions, narrow minded, pleading the spontaneity of the masses as a justification for his own sluggishness, resembling a trade union secretary rather than a tribune of the people, unable to put forward a broad and bold plan that would inspire even opponents with respect, inexperienced and clumsy in his professional art, shocked at the very idea of fighting the political police. He is not a revolutionary but a wretched amateur."

The revisionists in the St. Petersburg committee were represented by a person named Tokarev, who threw comrades with *Iskra* sympathies out of the committee, for which he was nicknamed "Vishibalo" (chucker-out) and his followers "Vishibalovtsi." Very characteristic documentary evidence about Babushkin's activity in St. Petersburg in the late autumn of 1902 and in the beginning of 1903 is contained in a letter from Lenin to Babushkin (his Party name was then Novitskaya), from which we take the following extract :

" London, January, 1903. Very glad to hear about the energetic work of Novitskaya : again, we request you to continue in the same spirit, without the slightest hesitation. War on the 'Vishibalovtsi' and to the devil with all conciliators, 'elusive ' opinions and snivellers. It is better to catch a small fish than a big toad. Two or three energetic, devoted people are better than a dozen dawdlers. Write as often as possible, give us immediately all the contacts you have with workers (and their descriptions) so that in case of arrest we will not be left stranded."

As the reader can see, "Novitskaya" did not remain idle in St. Petersburg. It is well known that Lenin was not one to waste compliments on his workers, and if he expressed pleasure at the energetic work " Novitskaya" was doing, we can take it for granted that he was fighting strenuously for Lenin's line in the St. Petersburg organisation, and that was not an easy matter.

Babushkin lived in St. Petersburg as an insurance agent, registered under a fairly good passport. In spite of that, however, the secret police soon got on his track, and his brief but fruitful activity in the St. Petersburg organisation was put to an end.

THIRD ARREST AND EXILE TO SIBERIA.

Towards the end of January, 1903, Babushkin was again arrested. This time he had to spend a year and a half in solitary confinement, and in 1904 he was exiled to the remote Yakutsk district of Siberia.

Despite the difficulties of the long solitary confinement and the hardships of distant Siberian exile, particularly the difficulty of maintaining proper contacts with the Party, Babushkin was not disheartened. He was not that kind of man. Besides, this was not the time to lose heart. In 1904, the stirring breath of the revolution of 1905 could be distinctly felt. Babushkin read a great deal, studied and trained himself, fully conscious that with the further development of the revolutionary events highly qualified workers would be needed, so he diligently equipped himself with theoretical knowledge.

However, after only one year of this strenuous theoretical training, the practical work of the revolution began to call even those tsarist captives who were exiled beyond the Arctic Circle.

THE STRUGGLE OF 1905 AND DEATH AT HIS POST.

In 1905, Siberia, like the rest of boundless Russia, began to stir. The year 1905 had aroused the broad masses to active political struggle. The exiled revolutionaries who were then in Siberia immediately took the lead in the movement. Naturally, a revolutionary like Babushkin would choose a fitting place in the fight as belonging to him by right. We find him at the head of the fighters in the nearest city to his place of exile, the large Siberian centre of Irkutsk.

Sometime later the Siberian Party centre sent him to work in Chita, which at that time was completely in the hands of the rebellious people. Here Babushkin displayed the maximum of revolutionary energy.

But at the end of December, 1905, the armed uprising in Moscow was crushed. The repressive measures of the tsarist government reached all the way to Siberia. During the night of January 1, 1906, the gendarmes of Irkutsk arrested the entire Party committee. In order to re-establish the organisation, help was required from Chita, which was still holding out. Chita sent Babushkin to the assistance of Irkutsk. He went there with five other comrades and a large quantity of arms.

At the Sludyanka station, on the Kruglo-Baikal railroad, Babushkin and his comrades were overtaken by the punitive expedition led by Baron Bellor-Zakomelsky, which was sent by the Tsar to suppress the revolt in Siberia.

The tsarist executioners shot young Babushkin and his comrades on the spot, at the edge of a freshly dug grave. Since Babushkin refused to give his name or to converse with his enemy, he went to his grave unknown.

Regarding this execution Lenin wrote:

“Babushkin fell a victim to the brutal henchmen of the Tsar, but dying, he knew that the cause for which he gave his life will not die, that thousands and millions of other hands will carry on the work, that other comrades will die for the same cause, that they will fight until they conquer.”

In this short sketch of the main periods of Babushkin's life, so rich in revolutionary content, it was not possible to deal with his private life. It is known that Babushkin loved and had compassion for his hard-working mother, but he could do very little for her, and the imprisonment, exile and persecution he had to endure saddened her and still further clouded her weary, unhappy life.

Babushkin was married to a working woman, Praskovya Ribas, a revolutionary, who lived illegally, was persecuted, and imprisoned. There are documents in the archives of the Lenin Institute which show that Praskovya Ribas often found herself in Tver or some other city with a child on her hands, without money, without a passport and expecting arrest any moment. Her husband, Babushkin, in the meantime was either in prison or on his way to exile in Siberia. Years passed, but these loyal devoted people did not see or hear from each other. No one even knew that Babushkin had been murdered during that terrible period of reaction. It only became known in 1910, and Lenin in an obituary on Babushkin wrote:

“We live under such accursed conditions that it is possible for an important Party worker, the pride of the Party, a comrade who had irrevocably given his whole life to the workers’ cause to disappear and leave no trace. And his nearest and dearest, his *wife* and mother and his nearest comrades may not know for years what has happened to him : whether he is languishing in prison, whether he has perished in exile, or has died the death of a hero in battle with the enemy. The last was the fate of Ivan Vasilyevich. We learned about his death only recently.” ²³

Five whole years passed before the news of Babushkin’s death reached his comrades. It is obvious that it is quite out of place to speak of the private personal life of a man like Babushkin. He who so energetically prepared the road to the great October had no personal life, for he devoted himself entirely, without reserve, to the proletarian revolution, the triumph of which, even if only on one-sixth of the globe, he was not destined to see.

²³ V.I. Lenin, *Ivan Vasilyevich Babushkin : An Obituary* (1910).

THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE LABOR REPUBLIC: SHORT
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF Y. M.
SVERDLOV -1932



PREFACE

"There are some people, leaders of the proletariat, about whom the press makes no fuss, perhaps because they do not like to make a fuss about themselves, but who are, nevertheless, the life blood and real leaders of the revolutionary movement. Y. M. Sverdlov was one of these." —J. Stalin, *Proletarian Revolution*, Vol. 11 (34), 1924.

Fifteen years have passed since those epoch-making days when the proletariat of former tsarist Russia began with its toil hardened hands, the construction of the first Soviet republic in the world. Since then, the eyes of the workers of all countries have been firmly fixed upon this first proletarian state; yet few people outside the Soviet Union know of the man who became the first president of that first republic of labor.

Proletarians in capitalist countries still know very little of the life and work of Yakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov who, as Lenin said : " came to the post of first-man in the first Socialist Republic by the path of illegal political circles, underground revolutionary work, and an illegal party." ²⁴

In this book we are using all the available material in Russian — both the statements of people who knew Y. M. Sverdlov personally at various periods of his revolutionary work, and the heritage left by our enemies, documents of the former tsarist police department, in which Sverdlov figures as early as 1902 as a dangerous revolutionary, despite his extreme youth (he was only seventeen at the time). On the basis of these materials, we are attempting a short survey of Sverdlov's difficult yet glorious life ; we shall try to show his untiring revolutionary energy, the tremendous scope of his initiative and his brilliant talent as an organizer of the masses.

²⁴ V. I. Lenin, " Speech in Memory of Sverdlov," Collected Works. Russian edition. Vol. XXIV, p. 81.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

Nizhni-Novgorod, where Yakov Sverdlov was born in May, 1885, stands on the banks of the broad river Volga, “Mother Volga,” the theme of many an old Russian song, of poems by Nekrasov, of famous Russian paintings such as Repin’s “Volga Barge Haulers.” Maxim Gorky too found inspiration for some of his earlier work on the Volga banks, and his book *Mother*, which later became universally known, was written in Sverdlov’s native town, Nizhni-Novgorod, with the revolutionary atmosphere preceding 1905 as a background.

Yakov was the third child in the family and although his father, a Jewish artisan engraver, did not earn very much, the Sverdlov family was never in acute want, and Yakov’s childhood under his mother’s affectionate care was tranquil enough.

From his earliest childhood Yakov showed, as one of his biographers ²⁵ says,

“Unusual vivacity, a tendency towards the wildest pranks and, at the same time, an extraordinary shrewdness and keenness of mind. Even in his childhood he distinguished himself among his comrades by the most daring actions, in his pranks he showed the fearlessness so characteristic of the mature Sverdlov — the revolutionary. At the same time, he displayed a staunchness and patience unusual for his age.”

As a child, he showed such an eagerness to learn, such a thirst for knowledge that when he was ten years old, his father, in spite of his limited means, placed him in the Nizhni-Novgorod high school. Needless to say, the state high school of tsarist times with its stifling atmosphere could not satisfy the boy’s searching mind ; his home background at the same time was more favorable to his development.

The Sverdlov family sympathized with the revolutionaries who often came to Nizhni-Novgorod from the capital whence they had been expelled. In the Sverdlov flat on the Pokrovka one could meet old revolutionaries and young Marxists, conceal illegal revolutionary literature, make a business appointment with an illegal Party worker, and so forth.

Such was the background of Sverdlov’s youth. It was at home and in the books which he read so extensively that he found answers to the poignant questions which the state high school could not and did not answer, so that after finishing four classes, Yakov decided to leave high school, a decision not opposed by his father since his impoverished financial position no longer enabled him to keep his son at school. Thus, Yakov was obliged, at the age of fifteen, to earn his own living, and he became an apprentice in a chemist’s shop.

It was at this time that Sverdlov experienced his first personal grief — the death of his mother, with whom he was in very friendly relations. After that the whole atmosphere of his home changed for the worse. The advent of a stepmother only served to hasten Sverdlov’s removal to the chemist’s shop where he now both worked and lived. He used his own home — his father’s workshop — more

²⁵ Gaysinsky.

for the needs of the revolutionary organisation in which he began to take an active part in spite of his extreme youth.

The proximity of Sormovo, a big proletarian centre which even at that time, in 1900-1, had ten thousand skilled metal workers employed in its plants, was an added factor aiding the development of an intense political life in Nizhni-Novgorod. In other proletarian centers in Russia too, a rapid growth of political activity was evident. The workers' movement had begun to acquire a mass character.

Lenin, in 1901, wrote concerning the ruthless suppression of a workers' revolt at the Obukhov works in Petersburg, that :

"Apparently, we are now passing through a period in which our labor movement will once again lead precipitously to acute conflicts, which terrify the government and the propertied classes, and rejoice and encourage the socialists. Yes, we are rejoiced and encouraged by these conflicts, notwithstanding the numerous victims that fall by the hand of the military, because the working class is proving by its resistance that it is not reconciled to its position, refusing to remain in slavery or to suffer violence and tyranny in silence. Even in the most peaceful times, the present system inevitably imposes endless sacrifices on the working class.

"Thousands and tens of thousands of men and women, toiling all their lives to create wealth for others, perish from starvation and constant underfeeding, prematurely die from diseases caused by the horrible conditions under which they work, and the wretched conditions in which they live and overwork.

"He who prefers death in the open struggle against those who defend and protect this horrible system, rather than the lingering death of a crushed, broken-down and submissive wretch, deserves the title of hero a hundred-fold." ²⁶

The first committee of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in Nizhni-Novgorod was formed in the autumn of 1901. Under its guidance the seventeen-year-old Yakov Sverdlov developed great revolutionary activity in propaganda, agitation and in connection with the organisation of a secret printing shop for Party literature.

Barely a year later we find in the report of the governor of Nizhni-Novgorod, dated April 25, 1902, a bitter complaint that all is not well in the province assigned to him, that the persons under surveillance in this town and " other political persons " took advantage of the sudden death of Rurikov, a student who had been under surveillance, " to attempt to organize an administrative disturbance." It had been noticed that the wreathes placed on Rurikov's grave bore the following inscriptions on their ribbons : " You did not spare your honest efforts in the struggle ; we shall not forget your death, comrade!" " It is vengeance not tears that is needed!" etc. These ribbons afterwards disappeared. Besides wreaths and ribbons, two speeches carrying dangerous messages were made

²⁶ V. I. Lenin, " Another Massacre," *The Iskra Period*. Vol. IV, Book I, p. 117. International Publishers, N.Y.

and all those present sang, to the tune of the Marseillaise, a song beginning with the words: “ Arise ye Russian people, arise, our starving brothers. Forward, forward!” etc.

On the way back from the cemetery “ evil-disposed suspects ” even decided to organize a demonstration march through the town. But the end, so usual in Russia at that time and so familiar to the proletarians of capitalist countries nowadays, quickly arrived. “ Thanks to the energetic action of the police detachment which was at hand, the crowd was surrounded and dispersed in the shortest time and complete order was restored ; the demonstrations of the crowd were checked at the entrance to Vsekhsvyatsky Lane, adjacent to the cemetery.” ²⁷

Yakov Sverdlov was among those arrested and prosecuted for infringement of the rules decreed by this governor of the town of Nizhni-Novgorod. But the authorities could not impose upon him the governor’s order for two weeks’ confinement to prison, for Yakov Sverdlov had disappeared.

From the proceedings following the above report, however, it is clear that Sverdlov, who had good reasons to avoid the police of Nizhni-Novgorod after Rurikov’s funeral, did not, in the end, escape the punishment which his excellency, the governor, had meted out to him and that he had to spend two weeks in prison after all. '

From that time on, that is, from the summer of 1902, the troublesome Sverdlov was watched unceasingly by the police. This “Malish” ²⁸ (the police had given him this nickname) however, did not lose courage; he dexterously avoided the eye of the authorities and continued his energetic underground work in connection with the formation and reinforcement of the local Party organisation. Since objective conditions were favorable, the workers’ movement of 1902 gathered force and culminated in the historic strike of the workers at Rostov-on-Don. This in turn gave considerable momentum to our Party organisation. At that time too, numbers of the *Iskra* containing Lenin’s instructions were arriving regularly from abroad.

At the initiative of the Nizhni-Novgorod Committee, the Sormovo Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party was formed in 1902. It held a demonstration on the first of May in which two thousand workers took part under the slogan : “ Down with Autocracy!” The active workers of this organisation were arrested after the demonstration and young Sverdlov was sent there from Nizhni-Novgorod to reinforce the organisation.

Another of his biographers, N. Nelidov, writes about this period of Comrade Sverdlov’s work, on the basis of data regarding the history of the Nizhni-Novgorod Party organisation : “ The arrest of leaders of the organisation forced the Nizhni-Novgorod Committee to give Sormovo their most serious attention and the months of May and June were a period of strenuous organisational work among the workers of Sormovo. It was this difficult work, involving tremendous strain, that Sverdlov came to do.”

²⁷ From the file of the police department.

²⁸ * Young boy, kid.

In spite of his youth, he took a most active part in the restoration and organisation of the ranks of the Sormovo workers, temporarily disrupted. Yakov possessed an immeasurable store of energy, unusual sincerity, belief in and devotion to the cause, and the ability to approach the working masses; he was therefore absolutely invaluable for the work.

With his direct participation the Sormovo organisation developed mass agitation among the workers to a high degree. A month and a half later, Party activity was restored to its normal condition. A series of strikes took place. From July on, meetings of Sormovo workers occurred almost daily. And at these July meetings it was, that Yakov's extraordinary qualities as an orator came to light. The seventeen-year-old agitator, short, thin, hair black as a raven, drew the working masses by the sincerity and conviction in his speeches. He united these workers in a singleness of purpose; he called upon them to struggle mercilessly against tyranny and violence.

When news came to the Nizhni-Novgorod and Sormovo organisations, in 1903, that during its second congress the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party had split into Bolshevik and Menshevik factions, Sverdlov unhesitatingly and unwaveringly adopted Lenin's position, sided firmly with the Bolsheviks and carried on a determined struggle with the Menshevik and conciliatory tendencies which arose in the Nizhni-Novgorod and Sormovo Party organisations. The young Bolshevik Sverdlov was so active, the workers became so accustomed to hear his powerful voice at workers' meetings that his youth was quite forgotten, and Yakov Sverdlov himself, more than anyone else, was deeply conscious of his responsibility for the work entrusted to him by the Party.

Sverdlov's revolutionary activity was temporarily halted by the Tsar's gendarmes who arrested him again at the end of 1903 for " belonging to the criminal society formed in Nizhni-Novgorod and also for having in his possession and spreading anti-government literature."

We cannot discover precisely how long Sverdlov was kept in prison this time, since the exact date of his arrest is unknown, but file No. 2754 (1904) of the police department contains a document relating to " Myeschanin" ²⁹ Sverdlov who is under the open surveillance of the police of Nizhni-Novgorod I " This document states that Yakov Sverdlov, aged 19, is to be subjected to open police surveillance for two years, from February 11,1904, in accordance with his majesty's orders.

So, by his majesty's orders, Sverdlov was to be restricted in his movements to the town of Nizhni-Novgorod until February, 1906, but he would not stay in Nizhni-Novgorod ; revolutionary energy was surging strongly in him, and his hands would have been tied in that town by the constant surveillance of the police. In order to develop his revolutionary powers freely, he left Nizhni-Novgorod and began his " underground " existence.

²⁹ * Literally, urban dweller: under the tsarist regime the population was divided up into "estates" or " orders" such as nobles, merchants, peasants or urban dwellers, i.e., Myeschanin, etc.

ON ILLEGAL WORK

In order to characterize the work and frame of mind of the nineteen-year-old Sverdlov at a moment crucial for every Party member – the period which saw the start of his underground life, we may cite the archives of the police department which have preserved a splendid illustration – a letter written by Sverdlov himself. This letter which was intercepted by the gendarmes was dated November 22, 1904, and addressed abroad, to Friedberg (Hessen), to a comrade who acted as connecting link between him and the Party centre. So characteristic is this document that we take the liberty of quoting the greater part of it.

“As you probably know, I spent one day in Moscow and left with the evening train for my final destination, Yaroslavl. But I could stay there only three days, after which I went to Kostroma where I am at present. I took up my abode here as a "professional revolutionary" in accordance with the instructions of the Northern Committee which includes Kostroma. There is a lot of work to be done here and hardly anybody to do it – only three or four people except myself, of whom only one can be taken into account. I feel cheerful enough ; true, sometimes I long for Nizhni-Novgorod, but on the whole, I am glad I left, since I could not spread my wings there (and I think I've got wings) ; I learned to work there and I have come here trained, here – where there is ample field for making use of my powers. There are quite a number of spies here too at present (they were introduced here in great numbers after the big disturbances of 1903), but they are not very clever, as I have already had occasion to remark.”

“ I could not spread my wings there and I think I've got wings,” says young Sverdlov modestly, not knowing that thirteen years later, he was to soar on those wings to the highest peak of revolutionary achievement, that those wings would carry him to “ the post of first-man in the first Socialist republic,” to the post of first organizer of the wide proletarian masses. “There is a lot of work to be done here – hardly anybody to do it. Only three or four people except myself, of whom only one can be taken into account.” In order to grasp the full meaning of these words we must know the circumstances of revolutionary work obtaining in the northern weaving district during that period.

This enormous textile centre, since the split in the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, had supported Bolshevism, had supported Lenin. But at the same time, the tremendous discrepancy between the scope of the labor movement and the scarcity of skilled and experienced members of the Party who could help this movement assume the necessary organized forms, was felt in the Northern area more than anywhere else.

Sverdlov was a born Bolshevik organizer and for that reason he was able to use his powers to the fullest extent here; that is why he wrote : “ I learned to work there and I have come here trained, here – where there is ample field for making use of my powers.”

Having intercepted and deciphered Sverdlov's letter, the police department became frightened. On December 18, 1904, a letter was sent to the chief of gendarmes in Kostroma under No. 14806 with instructions to “ find out through secret channels the identity and actions ” of a certain political suspect whose name or surname begins with the letter ‘ Y’ and who arrived recently in

Kostroma, evidently from Nizhni-Novgorod, with secret instructions from the Northern Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party ; also to find out, in the same way, the connections of the said revolutionary worker and to report the results."

But Sverdlov had good reason to smile at the gendarmes of Kostroma in his letter : " there are quite a number of spies here at present, but they are not very clever, as I have already had occasion to remark."

The naivete of these gendarmes was truly astounding. On January 12, 1905, they reported that they had searched in vain for the suspect whose name or surname began with a " Y." On February 8, 1905, they reported that a certain Yakov Sverdlov had come to Kostroma from Nizhni-Novgorod, never for a moment suspecting that the two, the mysterious "Y" and the new arrival from Nizhni-Novgorod, Yakov Sverdlov, might be connected. They were, of course, properly reprimanded afterwards by the police department for their dull-wittedness.

However, in spite of the stupidity of the spies whom Sverdlov ridiculed in his letter, he was not able to work long in Kostroma. Yet two to three months was considered a fair period at that time for an illegal Party member to work in one town. In such a length of time a clever and skillful Party member could do quite a bit.

Sometimes in a one-month period of Party work in a town or even in a whole region, a professional Party worker would succeed in righting the local organisation, in guiding the local workers from his experience, in supplying them with instructions, literature, connections with the Bolshevik centre abroad, etc.

Such was the case with Sverdlov during the short period of his work in the Northern committee.

In an article entitled *First Lessons*, written in February, 1905, V. I. Lenin, in reckoning up some of the results of the years directly preceding the 1905 revolution, says: " 1901 is the year when the worker came to the students' assistance. Demonstration movements arose; the proletariat carried its slogan "down with autocracy" into the street.

"After 1902, after the strike at Rostov, the political movement of the proletariat no longer joins with the students' movement – but grows up itself immediately out of the strike.

"The proletariat as a class, for the first time, opposed itself to the other classes and the Tsar's government." In 1903, strikes merged with political demonstrations on an even wider basis. Strikes spread over whole districts ; over a hundred thousand workers participated in them. Mass political meetings occurred in various towns at the same time as strikes, there was a feeling that we were on the 'eve of barricades,' but the eve was prolonged, as if to accustom us to the fact that powerful classes sometimes store up their forces for months and years, as if to test the incredulous intellectuals."

The eve of the barricades found the young Sverdlov a fully developed Bolshevik organizer, agitator and propagandist. He had developed, grown as it were, together with his revolutionary Party, been forged in the fire of class battles, and he did not in the least resemble an incredulous intellectual although he belonged by birth to the petty-bourgeois class. By that time Yakov Sverdlov already possessed the endurance of a real revolutionary. He knew how to wait notwithstanding the fact that “ the eve of the barricades was somewhat prolonged.”

Lenin writes of 1905 that

“In no capitalist country in the world — not even in advanced countries like England, the United States of America, or Germany, has such a tremendous strike movement been witnessed as that which occurred in Russia in 1905... . It shows that in a revolutionary epoch — I say this without exaggeration on the basis of the most accurate data of Russian history — the proletariat can develop fighting energy a *hundred times greater* than in normal, peaceful times.

“It shows that up to 1905, humanity did not yet know what a great, what a tremendous exertion of effort the proletariat is capable of in a fight for really great aims, and when it fights in a real revolutionary manner!

“The history of the Russian Revolution shows that it is the vanguard, the chosen elements of the wage-workers who fought with the greatest tenacity and the greatest self-sacrifice. The larger the enterprises involved, the more stubborn the strikes were and the more often they repeated themselves during that year.”³⁰

In Kazan (now the capital of the Tartar Republic) where Sverdlov went from Kostroma in February, 1905, to continue his revolutionary work, the largest plant was the Alafuzov, with “select elements of hired workers” numbering four thousand. Sverdlov centered a great deal of attention upon this plant, as well as on many other major and minor enterprises. The shooting of the peaceful workers’ demonstration in Petersburg while on its way to the Palace Square, on January 9, 1905, to beg for the favor of Tsar Nicholas, had aroused great indignation among the working masses. Sverdlov explained to these workers of Kazan, who were angered and aroused by the Petersburg events, the necessity for concretely formulating their political as well as their economic demands. At mass meetings Sverdlov’s resounding voice gave out the Bolshevik slogans to which the workers listened eagerly and which the masses took up.

Sverdlov’s stay in Kazan in the winter of 1905 was the more fortunate in that the social-democratic organisation which existed there at that time was a centrist one, adhering neither to the Bolsheviks nor to the Mensheviks. It was Sverdlov’s difficult task therefore to introduce Bolshevik concreteness from an ideological as well as an organisational point of view.

Sverdlov became a member of the Kazan Party committee, its responsible organizer and propagandist, and he succeeded in doing some important revolutionary work in a short time. He inspired the working masses, the soldiers of the local garrison and the students, aroused them to greater efforts to bolshevize the whole Kazan Party organisation.

But Sverdlov’s work in those months was not limited to Kazan. He went, in accordance with instructions from the Central Committee of the Party, to Nizhni-Novgorod, Sormovo, Samara, Saratov, and in July, 1905, he was already in the Urals, as witnessed by a letter from the gendarmes’

³⁰ V. I. Lenin, *The Revolution of 1905*. Little Lenin Library, p. 37. International Publishers, N.Y.

office of Nizhni-Novgorod, No. 1058, of July 23, 1905, which says that Yakov Sverdlov, known to the police department under the nickname "Malish," was seen in Perm by "an agent of this office who happened to be there at the time and who informed the local secret police."

In the Urals – one of the richest mining centers, among scores of thousands of miners who worked under the worst possible conditions, there was great scope for Sverdlov's creative initiative. There were tremendous possibilities here of utilizing his talent for organizing the masses.

We read about this period of Sverdlov's work in the documents of the Urals' Bolshevik organisation, in an article by Bykov.

"The Revolution of 1905 made it possible to develop agitation to the greatest degree in the districts near Yekaterinburg (now Sverdlovsk) and in other towns in the Urals, the short period of legal existence was used to reinforce the organisations, to establish stable connections with plants and form fighting detachments for defense against the Black Hundreds.

"In all this work Comrade Andrew (Sverdlov's Party name) merits the greatest praise, for he succeeded in a short time in unifying several organisations, in organizing the proper technique and in raising Bolshevik propaganda and agitation to great heights."

In the meantime, the revolutionary movement throughout the enormous country was developing with lightning speed, the frightened Tsar was forced to "grant the people a manifesto" – a pitiful mockery of constitutional guarantees.

In No. 25 of the Bolshevik newspaper *Proletary* of November 3, 1905, V. I. Lenin wrote :

"The denouement approaches. The new political situation is taking shape with the extraordinary speed peculiar to revolutionary epochs only. The government began to make concessions in words and simultaneously commenced to prepare in fact for an attack. The most savage and horrible acts of violence followed upon the promise of a constitution, as if to show the people still more clearly the whole significance of real autocratic power."

A little later in November, when the Soviets of Workers' Deputies had already been formed, Lenin described the situation thus :

"The state in which Russia finds herself at present is often described by the word 'anarchy.' This incorrect and wrong definition in reality expresses the fact that there is no established order in the country. The new, free Russia is waging a war all along the line against the old Russia of serfdom and autocracy. . . .

"The old order is vanquished, but it is not completely destroyed yet and the new, free order exists unrecognized, partly hidden, very often persecuted by the hirelings of the autocratic regime." ³¹

³¹ V. I. Lenin, "In the Balance," Collected Works. Russian edition. Vol. VIII, p. 398.

What part did Sverdlov take at that time in the war between “ the new free Russia and the old Russia of serfdom and autocracy ” ? From the Urals he went to Nizhni-Novgorod and Sormovo where he spoke before the masses, whose revolutionary enthusiasm reached the highest pitch in the three-day fight on the barricades, December 12-15, 1905. Besides this he visited Moscow and spoke at crowded meetings in the Aquarium Theatre in the days directly preceding the revolt. From Moscow Sverdlov returned to the Urals where he found that the heroic attempt at armed fighting on the part of the workers of Perm and Motovilikha of December 9-13, 1905, had been suppressed.

After the suppression of the Moscow revolt, a wave of unprecedented repressions passed over the country, the Tsar’s punitive expeditions were responsible for the bloodshed of the best sons of the revolution.

The Urals workers also paid dearly for their revolutionary daring, but no despondency and depression seized those active Party workers, including Sverdlov who had escaped the slaughter. Very active work was begun under Sverdlov’s direction to restore the Party organisation under the new and much more difficult conditions. “ It was necessary first of all, to restore the disrupted organisations, connections, technique, new workers had to be trained to replace those who were arrested, exiled or in hiding, account had to be taken of existing forces and underground work to be reinforced. “ All this complicated and varied work rested almost entirely on the shoulders of the tireless Mikhalych (Sverdlov’s Party name at the time), who was at the head of the Perm Bolshevik organisations,” says Sverdlov’s biographer, Nelidov. B. Ivanov gives the following particulars from personal reminiscences of his joint work with Sverdlov in the Urals in 1906:

"Sverdlov lived in the Urals on ten or twelve rubles ³² a month. We did not know when he rested. Short and slight, with a shock of thick, raven black hair, wearing coarse boots, ' Mikhalych' went from meeting to meeting and wherever he appeared he imbued everyone with courage and assurance by his sonorous voice so out of keeping with his height.

"Thanks to his untiring energy and organisational ability he succeeded in uniting around the Urals Bolshevik bureau, the biggest Party organisations of Perm, Yekaterinburg and Ufa. Under the firm and skillful hand of Mikhalych, the recently routed and dispersed organisation was fully restored, acquired strength, compactness and stability ; provincial Party committees were formed, the Urals included a multitude of factory organisations of the Party." ³³

At meetings organized by Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Anarchists, the workers invariably elected Sverdlov chairman. “We want Comrade Andrew!” shouted the crowd. The people who had arranged the meeting, embarrassed by this demand, would begin complaining that Sverdlov was their ideological opponent and propose their own candidates for chairman, but the crowd went on shouting : “ Andrew, Andrew!” Andrew was searched for, brought to the meeting and his speech flowed smoothly and convincingly out to the crowd ; they would then refuse to hear any

³² One rouble = two shillings.

³³ B. Ivanov, Symposium of the Perm Organisation on the History of the Party, 1923, p. 22.

speeches from the opponents of bolshevism and would adopt Bolshevik resolutions. In this way Sverdlov broke up many Menshevik, Socialist-Revolutionary and Anarchist meetings.

Although the police dogged his footsteps, Sverdlov succeeded in remaining at liberty for quite a long time by means of various disguises and other tricks. But the gendarmerie, who were becoming more and more active, succeeded in introducing agent provocateurs into the organisation and one of them, a man named Vatinev, gave Sverdlov away by stating that Sverdlov had appointed him to look after the store of arms.

I. Gluchin in his memoirs says that Sverdlov smilingly told his comrades the story of his arrest as follows:

“I was accompanying a woman who was on underground work to the Perm station. We walked along Obkinskaya Street engaged in conversation. Suddenly I came face to face with a police officer of some district of Yekaterinsburg. The officer stopped and looked me in the eye for several seconds. ‘Is it really you, Andrew?’ said the officer, ‘We’ve been at our wits’ ends, looking for you all over Yekaterinsburg, and here you are in Perm.’ He blew his police whistle and that is how I happened to come here before you did.”

Scores of active workers of the Perm Bolshevik organisation were arrested at the same time as Sverdlov — on June 10, 1906 — including K. T. Novgorodseva, Sverdlov’s wife. A sensational case was manufactured, in preparation for which Sverdlov and the rest spent over a year in preliminary confinement, and in September, 1907, the Kazan court sentenced Sverdlov to two years’ confinement in the fortress.

During his preliminary confinement and while serving his term in the fortress, as far as was possible under the prison regime, Sverdlov read a great deal, studied revolutionary theory, and never for a moment abandoned the idea of revolutionary work to be done by him on his release from prison.

PERIOD OF REACTION

In his article *What We Must Struggle For*, written in the beginning of 1910, Lenin worded the problems which faced the Bolsheviks at the time, in the following way :

" By means of the struggle of December (1905) the proletariat left the people one of those heritages which can be ideological and political beacons for the work of several generations. And the darker are the gathering clouds of savage reaction, the greater the brutalities of the counter revolutionary tsarist Black Hundreds the more energetically must the workers' Party recall to the people what they must struggle for.

"We must know how to carry on our line of tactics; we must know how to build our organisation in such a way as to take into account the changed situation, not to lessen the tasks of our struggle — not to reduce them, not to belittle the ideological and political substance of even such work which at first sight seems most ordinary, dull and petty. . . .

"Only by placing the tasks, bequeathed to our generation by the year 1905, in all their plenitude, in all their greatness before the masses, will we actually be in a position to extend the basis of the movement, draw large masses into it, inspire them with the feeling for supreme revolutionary struggle which has always led the oppressed classes to victory over their enemies." ³⁴

Sverdlov could, better than anyone else, build the Bolshevik Party organisation, no matter how difficult were the conditions under which he had to build, and we see that, after three and a half years of prison, without giving himself any time for rest, he came to Moscow illegally, in the capacity of a " fresh man," as it was called then in Bolshevik circles, and began to collect and unite the scattered forces of the Party in Moscow as well as throughout the whole Moscow industrial region which, at that time, included fourteen provinces. Sverdlov tried to restore the Moscow committee and the Moscow regional bureau but Moscow was full of spies and he was not able to work long. He was arrested on December 13, 1909, during a meeting of the Moscow Committee. On being arrested Sverdlov gave a wrong name and presented a passport bearing that name.

In accordance with an order of the Minister of the Interior, Sverdlov was exiled to the Naryn region and the chief of police of Moscow was instructed on March 17th to see that the order was carried out.

Sverdlov was very ill at the time, as is witnessed by the certificate of the medical examination signed by a doctor attached to the Arbat police cells, although the prison doctor, Kolesnikov, purposely tried to make as little as possible of his symptoms : " Sverdlov, aged 25, averagely nourished, somewhat irregular of build (narrow chest), complains of cough, night sweat, hemoptysis; an examination of the left lung shows expiration a dry rattle. On the strength of the aforesaid symptoms, I believe that Sverdlov suffers from a chronic catarrh of the top of the left lung, evidently

³⁴ V. I. Lenin, " What we must Fight for," Collected Works. Russian edition. Vol. XIV, pp. 266-267.

of a tubercular nature." But documents show that, notwithstanding illness and the great distance, Sverdlov succeeded in escaping from exile.

"In their report of October 15th, No. 2277, the authorities of Ketsk informed me (Tomsk district police officer) that Yakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov, who was under open police surveillance, had disappeared from his place of exile in the Ketsk region on July 27th and that his whereabouts are unknown.

"I have sent instructions to the police officer of the fifth section of Tomsk district, under No. 1892, to search for Sverdlov in the Narym region.

"In case the search within the limits of the said region proves fruitless, the search reports will be presented.

"I hereby report to your Excellency to that effect.

"Original duly signed."

It may thus be precisely established that Sverdlov made his first escape from Narym in July, 1910, and from then on, he undertook a series of escapes, the detailed description of which might serve as vivid data for a special book of adventures. In order to acquaint the reader of this short essay with some of the difficulties attending such an undertaking as escape from tsarist exile, we may note a few of the circumstances of the escape made by Y. M. Sverdlov in the autumn of 1912.

In a confidential note of the Petersburg secret police, addressed to the police department, dated November, 14, 1910, No. 15942, only five months after Sverdlov's first escape from Narym, we read as follows :

"In the latter days of this year, this office has had information of the arrival from abroad of an agent of the Central Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, an individual named Mikhail Georguie, vich Permyakov – Party name " Andrew," from the town of Kungur, Province of Perm, with instructions to restore the local Party organisation."

In view of constant failure in Petersburg, the Central Committee advised " Andrew " not to enter into relations with old Party workers in Petersburg and to be as secretive as possible.

On his arrival in Petersburg, he was indeed very careful and was taken under surveillance only in the beginning of November under the alias of " Makhrovyy."

A confidential note, dated November 19th, of the same year, No. 16143, states that "on being questioned in the police office, Permyakov admitted that he was actually a middle-class citizen of the town of Polotsk, Yakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov, was prosecuted by the Perm provincial gendarmerie office under article 126, in 1906, was tried and sentenced to two years' imprisonment in the fortress and served his term. In 1909 he was exiled for three years to the Narym region for belonging to the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party and from there disappeared."

What did Sverdlov do in Leningrad, or Petersburg as it was then called, in those short months from the summer to the autumn of 1910 ? He was first of all busy, as he had been in Moscow in 1909, collecting the forces of the illegal Bolshevik organisation, for the reinforcement of which he had to fight hard in the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party which was formally still a single body. He fought the Menshevik liquidators who considered that the time had come when only legal forms of struggle were possible, that illegal organisations in the Party were an anachronism and ought to be liquidated.

While reinforcing the Petersburg illegal organisation in every possible way, Sverdlov also made use of the legal possibilities extensively.

He led the Bolshevik section of the social-democratic faction in the Duma in the speeches made in the Duma and before the workers' electors at factories ; at the same time, he tried to secure Bolshevik leadership in the legal newspaper which the faction proposed to publish.

After spending a month in prison, he was sent back to his place of exile, but the rebellious spirit of " Makhrov," alias " Malish," gave no rest even then to the " servants of the Tsar," as the following document will show:

"Reference: In his letter of June 15th, 1912, No. 1826, supplementary to the letter of May 15th last. No. 14J4, the governor of Tomsk informed the police department that in connection with the demonstration made on April 18th of this year by the exiles in Narym, the gendarmerie authorities arrested for state custody in accordance with the rules, Yakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov and that, in accordance with the statement of the chief of the Tomsk gendarmerie office, on examination of documents found in the possession of the said individual, sufficient reasons will probably be found for formally prosecuting him in accordance with the rules of act 1035, a crime provided for in article 121 of the criminal code."

But no signs of the crime provided for in article 121 were evidently to be found and the authorities were content with making his exile more severe by sending Sverdlov with two guards to an out-of-the-way Ostyak village called " Maximkin Yar," where the guards themselves became melancholy. Sverdlov immediately took advantage of their depressed state of mind. He succeeded in convincing them that this kind of life was impossible, they harnessed a horse to a cart and drove their prisoner to town. Having safely reached it, they fell on their knees before the local police officer and insisted that " Maximkin Yar " was not a fit place to live in. The police officer relented, at the same time allowing Sverdlov to remain in the town. After many unsuccessful attempts, as we shall see later, he escaped from this town.

PERIOD OF REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE AND WAR

"The three years from 1908 to 1910 were a period of extreme counterrevolutionary activity of the Black Hundred, of liberal bourgeois apostasy, proletarian dejection and disintegration.

"But a noticeable change became evident in 1910. In 1911 the masses began gradually to prepare for the offensive. There were indications on all sides showing that the fatigue and apathy caused by the triumph of counter revolution were almost over, that the masses were again being drawn towards revolution."

So, V. I. Lenin wrote in June, 1912, and even before that, in January, 1912, a Party conference took place in Prague, at Lenin's initiative and under his leadership, at which a final organisational division from the Mensheviks was declared, a clear Bolshevik line worked out on all questions of Party work in Russia and a Bolshevik central committee of the Party was elected. Two of the leading organizers of the Party, Sverdlov and Stalin, who were then exiled to Siberia, but whose escape was expected soon, were elected to this new Central Committee.

Stalin and Sverdlov were the two Bolsheviks in whom Lenin placed particular confidence with regard to carrying out the most important resolutions of the Prague Conference.

From April and May, 1912, the revolutionary upsurge manifested itself in a series of very big strikes and in demonstrations in all the proletarian centers of Russia. That was the time when, in reply to the shooting of strikers at the Lena gold fields in Siberia, the workers of the Dnieper-Petrovsk plant, situated ten thousand kilometers from that place, issued the following splendid expression of the solidarity of the proletariat : " It is our breast, the breast of the whole working class, which was shot through in the distant Siberian Forest."

The development of the movement demanded that the Bolshevik Party exert every effort, strain every nerve, and the forces of Sverdlov and Stalin were, naturally, absolutely necessary at the time ; they escaped from Siberia at about the same time, but by different means.

Sverdlov's first plan of escape was to cross the wide and stormy Ob River in a little canoe, to Novalinsk village, situated at a distance of thirty kilometers from his place of exile, there to board the steamer Tyumen where there were friends in the engine-room, who could conceal him. He undertook this expedition on a cold autumn night ; a storm broke and the canoe was upset by the waves. Sverdlov and the comrades who were with him were thrown out and had to swim for three kilometers, holding to the sides of the boat until they were seen by some fishermen who saved them.

Despite this mishap, however, having dried his clothes and warmed himself, Sverdlov continued on his way and reached the steamer. After a hundred kilometers journey on board, when he thought himself safe, he was recognized by the authorities, taken off the steamer and brought back to his place of exile.

A short time after this unsuccessful attempt to escape, Sverdlov's wife, K. T. Novgorodseva, came to visit him in exile bringing his little son Andrew.

The police felt sure that with his family beside him Sverdlov would become more settled and not make any more attempts to escape for the time being. They therefore relaxed their vigilance. It never occurred to these policemen that Sverdlov's wife had come to bring him all that was necessary for the planned escape. A week after the arrival of his wife and child, Sverdlov succeeded in escaping.

Even now, twenty years afterward, Comrade Novgorodseva Sverdlova laughs as she remembers how, in 1912, when the police raised the alarm on discovering Sverdlov's disappearance, she had to play the difficult role of a duped wife, whom with her child her husband was supposed to have abandoned to their own devices a week after they had with so much difficulty reached distant Siberia.

Comrade Novgorodseva had no intentions of remaining for any length of time in Siberia mourning for her lost family happiness. She hurried back to Petersburg where her supposedly deceitful husband Sverdlov had arrived before her. There he served as member of the Central Committee, in constant communication with Lenin ; he had already accomplished a great deal of work, especially in connection with the legal Bolshevik daily paper *Pravda*, which was then published in Petersburg.

V. I. Lenin attached particular importance to the *Pravda* as his following words testify:

“ By arranging for a daily workers' paper, the Petersburg workers have done a great, and it may be said without exaggeration, a historic thing. . . . The creation of the *Pravda* is an outstanding proof of the class-consciousness, energy and solidarity of the Russian workers.” ³⁵

The *Pravda* on the one hand and the Social-Democratic faction in the fourth Duma on the other, were the two main legal mediums which could be used for carrying on illegal revolutionary Bolshevik work. But at the time Stalin and Sverdlov came to Petersburg, no Bolshevik clarity was evident in the work. Only after Stalin and Sverdlov had come to Petersburg, only with their help was the split of the Social-Democratic parliamentary faction which had first consisted of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, at last accomplished. The Mensheviks stopped using their conciliatory speeches to block the group of Bolsheviks who now acted independently, launching slogans from the parliamentary tribune for the masses. The most popular slogans at the time were the three which the Petersburg workers called the three whales ! — the eight-hour working day, confiscation of landlord's estates and a democratic republic.

Both Stalin and Sverdlov spent much labor and exertion setting the *Pravda* along Bolshevik lines; they carried on an active correspondence with V. I. Lenin, who, until their arrival, had constantly and unceasingly reproached the editors of the *Pravda* for vagueness and lack of concreteness on basic questions of struggle.

All this time Sverdlov lived in the apartment of Badayev, a deputy of the Duma, never leaving it day or night, looking through manuscripts, writing extensively himself, instructing the deputies

³⁵ V. I. Lenin, Collected Works. Russian edition. Vol. XII, p. 241.

who came to see him, directing their speeches, organizing the struggle against Menshevik liquidators, etc.

But this time too, neither Sverdlov nor Stalin got the chance to work long. As is known, the tsarist police department succeeded in getting one of their agents into the Bolshevik parliamentary faction. Malinovsky was an agent provocateur and he did not hesitate to deliver into the enemy's hands the men who were so necessary to the revolutionary cause — he betrayed Stalin and Sverdlov.

We find interesting details of Sverdlov's and Stalin's arrest in the memoirs of Badayev entitled : *Bolsheviks in the Tsarist Duma* ³⁶

The house janitor came one day to Badayev's apartment and having described Sverdlov's appearance, asked whether such a person was not staying in the flat. Badayev naturally answered that there were no strangers at all in his flat. But after that it was not safe for Sverdlov to hide in Badayev's flat. It was decided to transfer him to another house that same day. After plans had been made, that night, Badayev and Malinovsky went out into the street to see that everything was safe. There was no one around, so Badayev and Malinovsky lit a cigarette each, this being the signal agreed upon. Sverdlov answered by putting out the light and letting the window down. After waiting for a few minutes, he came out into the yard. Badayev and Malinovsky helped him over the fence, then Sverdlov climbed another fence and came out on the quay, where a cab hired previously was waiting for him.

Sverdlov went to Malinovsky's flat and from there to Petrovsky's flat. There he was arrested that same night. Malinovsky, who had seemed so " anxious " for Sverdlov's safety, gave the secret police the address of the flat where Sverdlov had found refuge.

It was during that time too that Malinovsky betrayed Stalin who was also in hiding and never appeared in the street. A concert was being arranged in the Kalahnikov stock exchange building, the proceeds of which were to be used for the publication of *Pravda* as well as for other revolutionary purposes. The Sympathetic intelligentsia and workers usually came to these concerts in great numbers. Members of the Party who lived legally came also, and even illegal workers were wont to attend, for there they were able to mingle in the crowd and talk with the people they wanted. Malinovsky knew that Stalin would attend that concert and he informed the police as much. Stalin was arrested by the secret police that very night under his comrades' eyes.

This time Sverdlov was confined to the " Kresty " prison with his wife and son and after a few months they were all sent to the Turukhansk region, whither Stalin also was sent soon after.

This last arrest and exile of Sverdlov occurred in 1913, when the tide of the Russian workers' movement was rising higher and higher, especially in Petersburg. The climax was reached when barricades were erected in the summer of 1914 in the streets of the capital; but war came to

³⁶ Martin Lawrence. Ltd.

overshadow all other things and it temporarily stopped the current of the Russian revolution as well. The struggle and victory of the workers were thus postponed for three years.

Sverdlov's letter to his sister Sarah tells us of the place to which the tsarist's government sent Sverdlov and Stalin after they had fallen into its hands. We quote the whole of it (there is a copy of it in the file). The address on the envelope is St. Petersburg, Ordinarnaya No. 6, Apr. 26, Sarah Nikhailovna Sverdlova, the post-mark – Turukhansk, 13-3-14).

"9-11. Dear Sarah : My next letter will be numbered again. I am writing just a few words now, hastily. Joseph Jugashvili ³⁷ and I are being transferred a hundred versts further north – eighty versts north of the Polar circle. There will only be the two of us in the village and two guards with us. The surveillance is being increased and we are cut off from the post. The latter comes once a month with a messenger on foot, who is generally late. We will get the post approximately eight or nine times a year and not oftener. Still, it is better than it was in 'Maximkin Yar.' Please send everything to the old address, the comrades will forward it. Jugashvili is deprived of his subsidy for four months because he received some money. We both need money. But it cannot be sent in our name. Let our friends know of this. I have a debt and the money can be sent not to me but directly to my creditors. Let me know their address ; Rom (?) also has an address. Only the coupon must be marked ' on account of Y.M.'s debt I am expecting all I asked for. I shall write now from Kurepka. I am not writing to anyone in Petersburg except yourself, assuming they will learn from you.

"With love,

"Your Yak.

"Write more, and oftener. I ask all friends to do the same. I did write to a few people in Petersburg after all. My address is the same."

The reader will easily understand that all this talk of creditors, debts, etc. is only meant to conceal references to the necessity of getting money, passports and addresses for a new escape. But they had both been sent to such a distant place that all attempts at escape ended in failure, and they both had to stay at the edge of the world until the February revolution.

The above letter gives a clear idea of the conditions of life in that distant spot. But Sverdlov as usual, did not lose hope, he had too much to think of, too much to work over theoretically, to prepare himself and others for further struggle in the future. Sverdlov was fond of life, he always remained an optimist, his nature made it impossible for him to lose hope.

Sverdlov was also fond of nature. This may be seen from his description of an early spring in the far north, in one of his letters : " The ice thaw on such a great river as the Yenissei is worth seeing. The ice breaks with a cracking noise, splits into enormous blocks. The blocks are driven against each other by the water; they strike against the bank while the water rises higher and higher. One is loath

³⁷ Stalin

to leave the bank. The north wind rises, the waters of the Yenissei swell, become covered with foam, strike against the high bank on which the village stands, washing it away bit by bit, the earth falls with a great thud and is carried away by the waves."

In another place he says:

" Since yesterday the sun has stopped setting. It shines the whole twenty-four hours round. There has been no darkness for a long time. White nights . . . the sun is always on the horizon. It is strange and unusual. You cannot tell night from day except by the direction of the sun. It is now eleven p.m. and the sun is right before my window. Only it is blood red and hardly gives any warmth. In contrast to this there is a lot of snow around. It melts and disappears with incredible slowness."

In spite of the distance, Sverdlov kept in constant touch not only with exiled Bolsheviks scattered all over Siberia, among whom he was a generally recognized authority, but also with V. I. Lenin, with the centre of the Bolshevik Party abroad and through some comrades, with various local Party organisations, so that he was always in touch with current revolutionary events.

The numerous threads which always bound Sverdlov to the working masses, to the life and thought of the Bolshevik Party and to its leader, V. I. Lenin, never broke, wherever he might be, even were it beyond the Polar circle.

That is why, when the war broke out and so many were poisoned by chauvinism, when the Second International fell to pieces, when leaders engaged in open betrayal, Sverdlov who was many thousands of kilometers away from the centre had no difficulty in summing up the situation and never for a minute abandoned Lenin's position. He read several lectures on war to the other exiles, wrote articles on international Social Democracy, and when he received news of the conferences of Zimmerwald and Kienthal on the first unification of internationalists he carried out in his lectures and articles the ideas of the Zimmerwald Lefts : the transformation of imperialist war into class war, and he set forth the tactics and strategy of civil war and dictatorship of the proletariat.

The great year 1917 came. News of the downfall of the autocratic tsarist regime came to Sverdlov in his exile.

FROM THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION TO THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

The great year 1917 came.

The Tsar's throne fell under the impact of the uprisen proletariat, supported by the masses of the soldiers ; but the proletariat had not yet come to power. The most peculiar feature of our revolution which commands the most insistent attention is the duality of power which obtained in the very first days after the victory of the revolution.

This duality of power consisted in the existence of two governments, the main, real and actual government of the bourgeoisie, in the " Provisional Government " of Lvov and Co., which held all the organs of power, and a supplementary " controlling " government of workers represented by the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies which did not hold the organs of state power, but was supported by the recognized majority of the people, by the armed workers and soldiers.

Thousands of kilometers away from the Party centre though he was, Sverdlov still kept a watchful eye on, a " thoughtful attitude " towards the revolutionary situation as it was then.

As soon as the joyful news of the fall of the monarchy reached Sverdlov in exile, he started off – to dive into the vivifying revolutionary waves ; but, to his great disappointment, waves of another kind, occasioned by the Siberian Spring flood, obstructed his passage. He had to hurry to leave Turukhansk, as the spring floods might otherwise cut him off from the centre of revolutionary events for some months.

In danger of being caught in the ice drifts, Sverdlov with a group of exiles travelled two thousand kilometers in sleighs over the ice of the Yenissei which was ready to break at any moment. And so, he came to Krasnoyarsk.

In Krasnoyarsk, which is a large Siberian centre, the local Bolsheviks did not at once grasp the revolutionary situation fully and Sverdlov was the first to make matters quite clear, with a Bolshevik concreteness, in his speech at the meeting of the plenum of the Krasnoyarsk Soviet, where leaders of all parties made speeches.

Such Bolshevik precision does this speech typify; the questions are formulated with such concreteness that we cite the entire contents :

"Step by step," writes Comrade Shumiatsky in his reminiscences about Sverdlov, " Comrade Sverdlov lifted the flimsy decorations and unmasked the squalid pseudo-revolutionary ideology of the speech of the Socialist-Revolutionary Koloskov, saying that the people whose name the Socialist-Revolutionaries like so much to use in vain, had so far gotten nothing from the revolution, except the soft-sounding speeches of men like Kerensky and Koloskov, that the Mensheviks put the workers and soldiers off with promises of to-morrow, thereby lowering the interest of the wide masses of the people in the progress of the revolutionary struggle. The revolution is the most acute moment of class struggle, in the course of which the socially oppressed classes want the ruling classes to make concessions and if they don't get them they take them by force. If the ruling class is not vanquished, then the revolution will be

vanquished. That is why we Bolsheviks are against the slogan of civil peace of the revolutionary democracy, that is why we advance the slogan of irreconcilable class struggle, in the process of which the classes and groups which are interested in the victorious issue of the revolution will join it, while many of those called the best representatives of revolutionary democracy by the speaker for the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries will oppose the revolution.

“Experience shows that soviets constitute the best and only form of organisation for the victorious struggle of the working class and revolutionary peasantry. They are the headquarters of the army of the proletarian revolution, whereas the idea of civil peace, which Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries advocate is an attempt to hinder the successful development of the victorious revolution of the working class and revolutionary peasantry. Every coalition is the expression of this idea of civil peace, and is therefore an attempt to restore the forces of the bourgeoisie by deceit and thereby strengthen them.

“ That is why we, Bolsheviks, are against all coalitions and in favor of power passing into the hands of the working class and revolutionary peasantry represented by the soviets.”

On returning from Siberia, Sverdlov went off to his beloved Urals and at the very first regional Party Congress, he, who used to be known as Comrade Andrew, collected around him his old Urals comrades with whom he had worked in underground Bolshevik work, and became the central figure of the congress and of the whole Urals regional Party organisation. In April he went to Leningrad as delegate of the Urals region to the All-Russian April Conference at which he was elected member of the Central Committee. The latter body would not allow Sverdlov to return to the Urals, but made him remain in Leningrad to work directly in the secretariat of the Central Committee.

From the time of the publication of the famous April theses of Lenin, Sverdlov centered his entire and tremendous revolutionary energy, his whole and extensive experience as organizer, on the question of winning the masses over and liberating them from the influence of conciliatory ideas.

Factory and works committees were suggested at that time as one of the organisational forms by means of which the masses in the factories might be brought under Bolshevik influence. Sverdlov organized the first Leningrad conference of factory and works committees, was elected to the presidium and directed the work of the conference.

The masses were turning to the Bolsheviks more and more. “ Excitement in Petersburg has reached the greatest height, it is sufficient for a single shop in one of the big factories to make a demonstration and the whole population of workers and soldiers in the capital is roused. All we have been doing lately is to quench the rising flames since we do not believe direct action expedient at the present moment.” ³⁸

³⁸ From Sverdlov's correspondence, *The Press and Revolution*, 1924.

When the masses did come out into the streets in the days of July, Sverdlov was the first among them, at their head, although he thought such action premature. It was in those days that the bourgeoisie of all colors gave Sverdlov the nickname of “ Black Devil.”

The campaign which the bourgeoisie organized against the Bolsheviks after the days of July, went to such preposterous lengths that Lenin was declared to be a German spy.

When Lenin had to hide and lead an illegal existence the Bolsheviks were of different minds as to whether he should not go before the Provisional Government to rehabilitate himself. Lenin himself wished to do so. Sverdlov and Stalin saved the situation ; with great difficulty they persuaded Lenin not to do it. Thus, they saved him for the cause of the proletarian revolution, for otherwise the bourgeoisie would have dealt with Lenin as it did with Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg.

In the second half of July, Sverdlov was busy preparing for the VI Congress of the Party, which had to be carried out partly illegally. At the Congress he made a report on organisation on behalf of the Central Committee. The Congress took place in Lenin’s absence and the task of leading the conference and carrying out Lenin’s line fell upon Sverdlov’s and Stalin’s shoulders.

After the VI Congress, Sverdlov gave a great deal of his attention to mass work in the army and the Central Committee appointed him to direct the work of the military organisation.

October was near at hand. On October 8th (old style), Lenin wrote in an article entitled *The Crisis Has Matured* : “ The whole future of the international workers’ revolution for socialism is at stake. The crisis is ripe.” ³⁹

On October 10th, the Central Committee met with Sverdlov as chairman and an armed uprising and seizure of power was voted unanimously by all the members except Kamenev and Zinoviev.

Sverdlov, Stalin, Dzerzhinsky, Bubnov and Uritsky were elected for the practical centre in the organisational direction of the revolt. In the days of the revolution itself Sverdlov worked on liaison service, was a member of the insurrectional commission of the Central Committee, watched the Provisional Government and its decrees, kept in constant communication with the Peter and Paul Fortress, sent coded telegrams, instructions, etc.

Full of revolutionary energy and fearlessness, Yakov Sverdlov brought a cheerful and hopeful feeling everywhere. “ Kerensky will be beaten, we shall meet in the Republic of Soviets,” wrote Sverdlov in his orders and appeals.

The victory was won. Kerensky’s government was destroyed. On November 8th, Sverdlov was elected the chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets.

³⁹ V. I. Lenin, Collected Works. Russian edition. Vol. XXI, p. 239.

AFTER THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

Comrade Stalin describes Sverdlov's work from 1917 to 1918 in the following way :

“ The period of 1917-18 was a crucial one for the Party and the State. The Party at that time became for the first time a ruling force. The new power — the power of the Soviets, the power of workers and peasants arose for the first time in the history of mankind. To transfer the Party, which had been until then illegal, to new rails, create the organisational basis of the new proletarian state, find the organisational forms of inter-relations between the Party and the Soviets, secure leadership for the Party and the normal development of the Soviets — these were the complicated organisational problems which then faced the Party.

“ No one in the Party would have the courage to deny that Y. M. Sverdlov was one of the first, if not the first, who skillfully solved these organisational problems, essential to the construction of a new Russia.

“The ideologists and agents of the bourgeoisie are fond of repeating trite phrases to the effect that Bolsheviks do not know how to build, that they can only destroy. Y. M. Sverdlov and his whole work are a living refutation of these stories. Y. M. Sverdlov — his work in our Party is not accidental, the Party which has produced such a great builder as Y. M. Sverdlov can safely say that it knows how to build the new as well as destroy the old.” ⁴⁰

From March, 1917, when Sverdlov, full of strength and energy, hurried from his exile in Siberia to the centre, up to March, 1919, when, during his last journey from Kharkov to Moscow, he caught a severe cold which caused his death, only two years went by, but such years as those can be compared to decades.

The shortness of this essay does not allow us to give even the most general outline of the varied creative work which Sverdlov did at the time under Lenin's direct guidance, on the reinforcement of the ranks of the Bolshevik Party, creating and reinforcing Soviet Power in the centre and different localities, fighting against inner counter-revolution, organizing the defense of the achievements of the revolution from the interventionists of all denominations, from inner and international white guards.

Sverdlov's activity, such as his historic speech at the Constituent Assembly on January 5, 1918, the whole part he played in the Soviet period, demands special independent research and we shall close our essay with the words of Lenin from his speech over the grave of Y. M. Sverdlov:

"The proletarian revolution is as strong as the strength of its sources. In the place of those people who have given up their lives to the revolution in an act of supreme fidelity and fallen in the struggle, it advances whole ranks of others, perhaps less experienced, less prepared, but people who are connected with the wide masses and who are able to continue their work in place of the great talents which are gone.

⁴⁰ Symposium in Memory of Sverdlov, p. 58.

" In this sense, I firmly believe that the proletarian revolution in Russia and in the whole world will bring forward group after group of people, will bring forward many sections of the proletariat and toiling peasantry, who will give that practical knowledge of life, that both individual and collective talent for organisation without which the vast army of proletarians cannot achieve their victory." ⁴¹

⁴¹ Lenin, Collected Works. Russian edition. Vol. XXIV, p. 83.

THE COMRADES-IN-ARMS OF THÄLMANN – 1936



At the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, Comrade Dimitroff pointed to the extremely great importance of the problem of cadres for the international movement, and stressed the point that this problem is of especially great importance in fascist countries, where the active members of the Party are constantly in the firing line, where the hunt by the enemy after just these foremost comrades is particularly violent, and where they are hurled into prison, into concentration camps, and are cruelly tortured and killed.

The figures of these foremost comrades, of these unbending fighters for the proletarian revolution, cannot and must not be forgotten. We must make known the lives of these people who incessantly, day after day, are fighting for Communism, carrying on stubborn work in the deeply illegal conditions, in spite of all the obstacles in their way and of the snares of the enemy.

We must make known their wonderful staunchness while held prisoners by the enemy; we must make known their heroic behavior in prison, under examination, while being tortured, before the fascist court, under the axe of the executioner.

Among this gallery of heroes, friends and comrades-in-arms of Comrade Thälmann, whose splendid lives have been cut off by fascist bullets or by the axe of the fascist executioner, there stand out most clearly before our eyes, first and foremost, the shining figures of Comrades John Scheer and Fiete Schultz.

Comrade John Scheer, member of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party, and member of the Political Bureau, closest friend and comrade-in-arms of Comrade Thälmann, was born in a working-class family in 1894 in Alton, near Hamburg. In this working-class center, with its gloomy houses thickly populated with the poor, he spent his cheerless childhood. It was here that he learned the trade of fitter, and it was here that from his early years he joined the working-class movement, taking a most active part in the incessant revolutionary struggle which the glorious proletarians of Hamburg and its environs were waging.

The qualities possessed by Comrade Scheer which won the profound sympathy of the workers of Alton, and which made him a leader of the masses can be summed up as follows: a fiery, revolutionary temperament, talent as an agitator, and a broad political outlook, combined with proletarian modesty.

Scheer joined the ranks of the Communist Party of Germany together with Comrade Thälmann, and was one of the outstanding Party leaders in Hamburg, Hanover and the Ruhr. Comrade Scheer together with Comrade Thälmann devoted special attention to the proletarians of the coastal region, where they both worked for a number of years.

October 1923:

“Impelled by the poverty of the period of inflation, driven by the unprecedented need of the toiling masses, inspired with the spirit of Bolshevism, the best, most revolutionary section of the workers of Hamburg took up arms to fight against their capitalist oppressors.” (Ernst Thälmann.)

For two days the fighting continued on the streets of Hamburg. And if the uprising could not spread beyond the bounds of Hamburg, and was so easily suppressed, the blame lies not with the best and most revolutionary section of the proletarians of Hamburg, not upon Comrade Scheer, but with the cowardly opportunist group of Brandler, which at that time headed the Communist Party of Germany, and which capitulated before the class enemy, in spite of the fact that a revolutionary situation was present at that time.

After the Hamburg uprising, Comrade Scheer had temporarily to work illegally, which in fact did not, however, make him lag in his energetic activities, Comrade Scheer was one of the most active fighters for the ideological and organizational consolidation of the Communist Party of Germany. Every time conflicts arose inside the Party between its firm Bolshevik cadres and the elements which swung now to the Left and now to the Right, Comrade Scheer was unerringly in the ranks of those who fought determinedly to Bolshevize the Party.

During the years 1924 and 1925, Comrade Scheer carried on an active struggle against the remains of Brandlerism, and in 1927, at the Essen Party Conference, he fought against the counter-revolutionary Trotskyists of the Ruth Fischer type.

In 1929, at the Wedding Party Conference, where Comrade Scheer was elected to the Central Committee, he spoke of culminating the struggle against the group of conciliators, of the need to liquidate this anti-Party group, which, in its actions against the general line of the Party, resorted to its favorite method of discrediting the leaders of the Party, and tried to discredit Comrade Thälmann in the eyes of the masses.

It was precisely during these days that Comrade Scheer undertook a passionate defense of Comrade Thälmann.

Comrade John Scheer also played no small part in the struggle against the Neumann-Remmele group, and facilitated their removal from the Party leadership. This anti-Party group caused the Party no little harm precisely at the moment when the Party had to wage a desperate struggle to win the masses, the most backward of whom had already begun to fall victims to the hypnosis of fascist demagoguery.

In the years 1930 and 1931, Comrade Scheer was the political leader of the Braunschweig Party organization. There he set a fine example of the practical application of the united working-class front tactics, by organizing and leading a political protest strike of the Braunschweig proletariat against an attack made by a fascist band upon a group of workers, which ended in the murder of a worker, a member of the Social Democratic Party.

In this first political strike, so impressive in its scope, all the workers of Braunschweig took part, irrespective of the parties to which they belonged. The strike was distinguished for its high political level, and it was led by Communists, and first and foremost by Comrade Scheer.

After the Braunschweig' events, Comrade Scheer was arrested. And with what joy his release was welcomed in the autumn of 1932 by a meeting of workers, twenty thousand strong, in the Palace

of Sport in Berlin! And it was with a similar display of enthusiasm, that, only a few days before the fascist coup d'état, in January, 1933, he was greeted as the staunch comrade-in-arms of Thälmann together with the other members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany by a tremendous Communist demonstration held near the Karl Liebknecht House.

In connection with the advent to power of Hitler and the arrest of the leader of the Party, Comrade Thälmann, great responsibilities fell to the lot of Comrade Scheer: he had to take Comrade Thälmann's place in the days when the entire Party – a legal, mass Party – had to be transferred without delay on to illegal conditions.

Comrade Scheer threw himself head and shoulders into the work in conditions of the most ferocious fascist dictatorship, in conditions of raging fascist terror.

Comrade Scheer did a tremendous amount of work to build up and strengthen the illegal Party apparatus, to find new, fearless cadres to take the places of those Communists who were arrested, and tortured in fascist dungeons, and to give them instruction and training.

Comrade Scheer fought mercilessly, in his speeches and in his articles, against the fascist demagoguery which in the first day began to affect the consciousness of the backward masses in a menacing manner. By way of example, we give here only one excerpt from his article written during that period, an article which came to hand after his death, and which was published in No. 12 of The Communist International in the year 1934.

In this article, point by point, Comrade Scheer patiently smashed to bits the "ideology" of the fascists. Comrade Scheer quotes the following part of Hitler's speech:

" ... 'To order' and 'to obey' acquire an absolutely different and compulsory sense, when people of different worth clash, or come into contact with one another. ... In the most primitive sense of this word, it takes place at the time when man subjects animals to his power ... without asking the consent of his assistants from the animal kingdom,"

This is how Comrade Scheer replies to this:

"Our nature philosopher reduces human society and the relations between men from the relations of man to domestic animals..."

"... the Nazis borrow the basic concepts of their philosophy from the ideology of slavery. This is by no means accidental, for modern capitalist exploitation is striving, under the scourge of fascist dictatorship, to transform fifty million German workers, peasants and toilers into slaves devoid of all rights, into cannon fodder for an anti-Soviet war, for the sake of the profits of monopolist capital."

Comrade Scheer was only able to carry on his work in the profoundly illegal conditions for nine months. In the autumn of 1933, the fascist bloodhounds got on his track. The comrades insisted upon his hiding for a time, but severe with himself as always, and knowing that the work would suffer even if he left it for a time, he delayed. Soon he was seized by the enemy. The enemy knew

how important Comrade Scheer was for the Communist Party, and consequently literally threw themselves upon him in sadistic ecstasy.

From the very first days of his arrest there were no insults, no tortures which Comrade Scheer did not suffer at the hands of his jailers.

They flogged him until he lost consciousness, they made him run the gauntlet, they stood him up against a red-hot stove, and all this to make him speak; but his answer to the butchers was ever the silence of the grave.

By his stoicism in Hitler's dungeons, by his staunchness, Comrade Scheer filled even some of his tormentors with respect.

When the Hitlerites understood that people like Comrade Scheer would never speak, that they could get nothing out of him either about the illegal work or about the strength of the Communist Party, they decided to get rid of him.

On the fatal night of February 2, 1934, Comrade Scheer, together with three other comrades, were taken out into the forest, a volley rang out and all four fell dead. The next day, the fascists announced: "Shot, while attempting to escape... ."

On March 18, 1934, on the day when the workers of all countries lower their banners in memory of the heroes of the Paris Commune, another of Comrade Thälmann's comrades-in-arms, a glorious son of the working class, a worker from Hamburg, Fiete Schultz, listened, his head held high, to the death sentence pronounced against him by the fascist judges.

This is how Comrade Schultz was described by the State Prosecutor in his speech on the indictment:

"A man who takes the road of a Communist, who takes it without hesitating, a man full of energy, who unfailingly follows only his own Communist interests, a man whose tongue is more dangerous than the bullets of those who shot at his instigation — such a man must die. I demand his death, and may Communism, the downright expression of which is Fiete Schultz, perish with this accused."

Undoubtedly Comrade Schultz deserved this magnificent testimonial from the mouth of the enemy, although he had nothing whatever to do with the accusation levelled against him of 16 crimes against the state, for the sum total of which he was given a three-fold death sentence and, in addition, 260 years' imprisonment.

The reference was to conflicts between groups of workers and fascist bands who had attacked them, and had operated in all the workers' districts long before Hitler came to power.

Fiete Schultz, like John Scheer, was also born in 1894 at Schiefbecke, a suburb of Hamburg, in a working-class family. He took an active part in the working-class movement in Hamburg, but at the beginning of the imperialist war was forced to leave his native town and become acquainted with all

the joys of barracks drills in the army of Kaiser Wilhelm, so that he could be sent to the front and be seriously wounded in 1917.

On returning to his native town, after having somewhat recovered, Comrade Schultz under the leadership of Comrades Thälmann and Scheer, again took up the struggle, and, in 1923, during the days of the Hamburg barricades, he took up the rifle and took his stand with those of whom Comrade Thälmann said:

“The revolutionary fighters on the barricades saved the honor of the Communist Party of Germany with their bodies and their lives.”

The Hamburg uprising was suppressed. Comrade Schultz, together with other active comrades, escaped arrest, worked underground, and soon emigrated. He went to distant lands, to South America, where he starved, met with many homeless proletarians like himself, and together with others experienced the burden of the struggle against the exploiters, the weight of unemployment. Not a few severe lessons life gave him, but he always remained an optimist, and became strong for further battles.

He wandered about the world in this way for three years, and then found his way to the Soviet Union, which he had always wanted to see.

He spent five years there – from 1927 to 1932 – in the homeland of the international proletariat.

While working in Soviet factories, it became possible for him to take a direct part in socialist construction.

During the years of his sojourn in the U.S.S.R., Comrade Schultz saw how industrial giants grew up on barren lands, how entire socialist towns were built. He also saw how the reconstruction of the Russian villages, many millions in number, took place according to the brilliant plan drawn up by Comrade Stalin. Comrade Schultz made full use of his opportunity to raise his theoretical knowledge, to equip himself with the theory of Marxism-Leninism.

All that he lived through, experienced, pondered over and read made of Fiete Schultz a proletarian revolutionary of whom it was said, in the address of the Brussels Party Conference of the Communist Party of Germany to Comrade Dimitroff:

“With the image of you in their hearts, never-to-be-forgotten heroes like Fiete Schultz went to the scaffold.”

On his return to Hamburg, not long before Hitler came to power, and living illegally, but always surrounded and protected by hundreds of thousands of true proletarians of Hamburg, Fiete Schultz fought desperately against the fascist danger which was approaching. With all the ardor of his revolutionary temperament, he stood up before the masses and exposed all the poison of the fascist demagogy. In particular, he carried on great work to explain to the masses and keep them informed of the achievements in the Land of Soviets.

“I was astounded on my arrival in Hamburg”, said Comrade Schultz in court, “at the degree to which knowledge, concerning the true state of affairs in the Soviet Union, and its tremendous achievements, is distorted here.”

When the judges thereupon asked him questions about work in the Soviet factories, and what class he belonged to there, Comrade Schultz pretended that he did not understand that it was a question of what class, category, of worker he belonged to and replied: “In the Soviet Union there are no classes.” This reply infuriated the prosecutor.

After seizing power, the Hitler gang hunted high and low for Comrade Fiete Schultz and in April, 1938, he fell into their hands; he was seized, moreover, for purposes of provocation, so that other arrested comrades, considering him to be dead, would throw all the blame on to him during the examination. It was rumored that soon after his arrest, Fiete Schultz hanged himself in his cell. However, there were very few who fell for this provocation although for many long months the comrades thought that Fiete Schultz had really committed suicide in prison.

The floggings, insults, and hard labor, which he endured in the fascist prison over a period of two years, did not break the fighting spirit of Comrade Schultz, but on the contrary, steeled him still more.

The days of the trial came at last.

Replying to the judges on the accusation leveled against him, Comrade Schultz said:

“I know what kind of a court I am facing. I am responsible only to my Party and the working class. I have nothing to say in my favor before a court which is the court of the government of the people’s enemies. I know that the Prosecutor wants to have my head, but he will have to hurry. Come what may, we shall be the victors.”

For twenty-three days the proceedings of the bloody fascist court dragged on, the Berlin fascist newspapers- keeping strict silence concerning it. For the obtaining of fragments of news about the heroic behavior of Comrade Schultz during these days, we have to thank the indignation of the Hamburg proletarians, which, despite the desperate fascist terror, made itself felt in different forms during the whole of the trial. By virtue of this fact, the fascist newspapers in Hamburg did not dare to ignore entirely what was going on in the court, and were compelled to give some information, on the basis of which we can build up a picture of the trial, although not a complete one.

The rage of Comrade Fiete Schultz’ class and Party comrades found expression in the fact that every morning the judges received leaflets containing protests, threats and curses, which the judges cynically referred to as “our usual breakfast”, and attached to the files on the case. Comrade Schultz most energetically protested against the State Counsel forced upon him, a fascist called Weischneider.

“I protest against the fact that I have not been allowed to put my own case in court”, said Comrade Schultz, deeply indignant at the behavior of the official lawyer, whose “speech in defense” he indignantly interrupted several times, especially when that individual mumbled about “mercy”.

Here is an excerpt from the speech of the "Counsel for the Defense'", as it appeared in the Hamburger Tagesblatt of March 15, 1938:

"Although the Counsel is far from possessing the political theories of the accused, it is his task ... to defend the rights of the accused. ... The defense admits that the examination in court has been conducted fundamentally and seriously. ... The decisive question in this trial is whether the accused deserves to die. Not out of humanitarian feelings or liberal weakness, does he (Weischneider) ask that the death sentence not be passed, but because the state today is stronger than any Communist fanaticism."

"After an exchange of words between the Prosecutor and the Defense", the paper continues, "the accused emphasized in his last speech that any pleas for mercy are unworthy of a Communist. The president had to interrupt the accused several times, because he went beyond the bounds of a concluding speech, and entered into Communist arguments."

During the whole of the 23 days' trial, Comrade Fiete Schultz showed tremendous activity, colossal stoicism and thus there were times when he succeeded in speaking, but the reports of his speeches in the fascist newspapers unfailingly run as follows: "The accused again delivered a confused Communist speech for almost an hour", or "the accused once more tried to use fantastic Communist arguments, etc."

Fiete Schultz was firm to the last. A short time before the sentence was brought in against him, he said: "There will be one fighter less, but we shall be the victors all the same."

And after the sentence was announced, he shouted out in court "Come all of you to the execution, and you will see how a Communist can die!"

The police hurled themselves upon Comrade Schultz. The fascists present in the court cried out: "Long live Hitler!" But among the shouting there was heard the single voice of a woman who cried out: "Long live Fiete Schultz!" and the police fell upon her as well.

On June 6, 1935, at dawn, Comrade Fiete Schultz had to lower his proud head, before the axe of the fascist executioners.

"We must understand once and for all that of all the valuable capital in the world, the most valuable, the most decisive capital is people, cadres."

These words of Stalin, in the light of the tasks which confront all the Communist Parties in the lands of fascist dictatorship today, where the executioners are physically annihilating the revolutionary leaders of the proletariat, imply that it is necessary, side by side with the maximum attention devoted to our cadres, who are living and carrying on the struggle, to popularize, especially among the youth, the names of those who have already perished, who were tortured to death in fascist dungeons, and the glorious road taken by those who teach us how to live and act, teach us how to continue the work they began and bring it to its victorious conclusion.

The lives and struggle of such comrades as John Scheer and Fiete Schultz are most valuable weapons in our hands of training and hammering out new cadres, new fighters for Communism, fighters and victors, for Comrade Schultz was right when he said in court: "We shall be the victors!"

TWO BOLSHEVIK HEROINES – ANNA MAI AND ANNA PAUKER - 1937



Every day new reinforcements come to swell the ranks of the Communist Parties. These are the best elements of the proletariat and of the great army of working people, who have come to the fore in the day-to-day struggles and are drawn to its vanguard, the “new type” of party. They learn by their own experience, they are educated and trained by the Party, and they strive to emulate the foremost fighters in all the detachments of the international working-class movement. We all remember the words of Comrade Dimitroff at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International:

“Cadres receive their best training in the process of struggle, in surmounting difficulties and withstanding tests, in studying favorable and unfavorable examples of conduct. We have hundreds of examples of splendid conduct in times of strikes, during demonstrations, in jail, in court. We have thousands of instances of heroism, but unfortunately also not a few cases of faintheartedness, lack of firmness, and even desertion. We often forget these examples, both good and bad. We do not teach people to benefit by these examples. We do not show them what should be emulated and what rejected....

“... the worthiest examples of proletarian heroism must be popularized, must be contrasted with the manifestations of faintheartedness, philistinism, and every kind of rot and frailty in our ranks and the ranks of the working class. These examples must be used most extensively in educating the cadres of the labor movement.”

Among the heroic figures of those proletarian revolutionaries who serve as an example to all by their indefatigable activity and their perseverance in the struggle to their very last breath and to the last drop of their blood, many are women.

“The experience of all liberation movements has shown that the success of a revolution depends on the extent to which women take part in it.”

So, Lenin said at the first congress of working women, held in Moscow in November, 1918.

We give here two examples of heroines of the proletarian cause, the Bulgarian, Anna Mai, and the Rumanian, Anna Pauker.

Anna Mai, Bulgarian Communist, was the delegate on whose initiative the Second International Working Women’s Conference (Moscow, 1921), decided to set aside March 8 as International Women’s Day, in commemoration of the historic date when the working women of Leningrad came out in action.

All her life this proletarian revolutionary fought for the cause of the working class. Cruel tortures in fascist dungeons were not able to break her militant spirit. She preferred to die on the rack rather than give in.

It was in her early youth that Anna Mai had cut herself off from the bourgeois home of her parents, and, becoming an elementary school teacher, linked her life forever with the struggle of the proletariat.

A true pupil of Blagoyev, the founder and leader of the Social-Democratic Party of Bulgaria, she followed her teacher, and after the split took place, she belonged to the ranks of the Bulgarian Tesnyaki Party, which later became the Communist Party.

In 1906, when abroad in Belgium, Anna Mai not only studied, but took part in the active struggle of the Belgian workers among whom at that time, under the influence of the first Russian revolution, great strikes were taking place. Here Anna Mai was in the midst of the masses. On her return to her native Bulgaria, Anna threw herself heart and soul into Party work, conducting propaganda and agitation among the workers of town and country, and telling them of the revolutionary movement of the West European proletariat. Living always among the working people, studying, and enlarging her experience, Anna Mai rapidly advanced to the forefront among the Party workers, became secretary of the big Plovdiva Party organization, and delegate to all Party congresses.

Anna Mai paid particular attention to work among the most backward section of the working people – the women. When in 1913, during the Balkan war, women's protest meetings began to be held under the leadership of the Tesnyaki Party, Anna Mai was the chief organizer and moving spirit of them.

In 1915, when Bulgaria entered the world imperialist war, the Bulgarian peasant women began to agitate for peace and bread, chiefly in the province where Anna Mai was directly engaged in work. These demonstrations of the peasant women found an echo in the demonstrations of working women in the towns and in the unrest among the soldiers.

In 1919, when the Tesnyaki Party became the Bulgarian section of the Communist International, Anna Mai became editor of the women's Communist paper, *Equality*, became a member of the women's committee of the Central Committee of the Party, and conducted study courses for Party workers. At the same time, she organized big strikes in factories where women were chiefly employed.

During the glorious uprising of the Bulgarian workers and peasants in September, 1923, many women – workers, peasants, and teachers – pupils of Anna Mai – fought heroically and risked their lives on communications' service.

The September uprising was ruthlessly suppressed. A White terror raged in the country, but Anna Mai remained at her post and continued to work underground.

Then came fascist provocation – the Sophia Cathedral was blown up in April, 1925 – and Anna Mai along with hundreds of other Communists fell into the hands of the brutal fascist band. She was asked to confess, was subjected to inhuman tortures, but she bore all with clenched teeth, and not a word passed her lips.

To what excesses the fascist brutes went in their treatment of Anna Mai is proved by the fact that one of the prison warders, horrified by her appearance after the torture, called upon another

prisoner to the corridor, and pointing to Anna's cell said: "Go and give her some water, she looks ghastly." No one ever saw Anna again, dead or alive.

Anna Pauker, Rumanian Communist, was sentenced in 1936 by a military tribunal to ten years' penal servitude.

Anna Pauker was born and reared in poverty in an obscure little provincial town in Rumania. While still a child Anna started to work. When still a thirteen-year-old school girl, she had to coach her stupid and lazy classmates, the children of better-off parents. At seventeen Anna was teaching in the Jewish High School in Bucharest. At this time, she was already connected with the Socialist Party of Rumania, was a constant visitor at workers' clubs and distributed the Party paper, the Rumanian Worker.

In 1918, illegal Communist groups were formed within the Socialist Party which waged a struggle against the opportunist party leaders. Anna was one of the most energetic members of these groups, which afterwards became the Communist Party of Rumania. Under the pressure of the Communists the Socialist Party of Rumania called a congress in 1921 to decide on joining the Communist International. All the congress delegates were arrested by the police. To those Communists who had escaped arrest fell the heavy task of rallying the forces of the newly formed young Communist Party. And it was here that Anna Pauker's rich revolutionary activity developed to its full extent. While working as an organizer, a propagandist, and a mass agitator, she waged a tireless struggle at the same time against the opportunistic elements within the Party. The struggle reached its height in 1923/1924, when the Rumanian liquidators began to oppose the existence of the illegal Party organizations, tried to carry through an anti-Party line on the agrarian and national questions, and finally went so far as to defend those who through cowardice in face of the Rumanian Siguranza (secret police), gave away Party secrets under interrogation, and betrayed their comrades.

During the whole course of her militant activity Anna Pauker was subjected to constant persecution – searches, interrogations, imprisonment, and enforced banishment. But whatever country she sought refuge in she studied the experience of the revolutionary movement of that country, learned the language, and steadily enriched her theoretical knowledge. In this way she became one of the foremost revolutionary leaders of Rumania.

Anna Pauker's popularity among the proletarian masses was so great that the fascists, the last time they arrested her, were afraid to bring her to trial in the capital, Bucharest, but chose instead a quieter spot – the provincial town of Craiova. Eighteen other anti-fascists were tried along with Anna.

On her first appearance in the court Anna Pauker firmly declared:

"Our trial is the trial of anti-fascism. We here pronounce the most severe condemnation of fascism."

Anna's passionate and militant speech at the trial was continuously interrupted by the fascist judges and by the hooting of the court which was packed with secret police.

"I see that I am denied the right to defend myself. You will send me to penal servitude. But the masses of the workers are with me," said Anna quietly in conclusion.

Her courageous behavior was an example to the other prisoners on trial. One of those who were being tried along with Anna, a girl student named Rodoshevskaya, whose physical strength was so undermined by beatings and starvation that she was carried into the court on a stretcher, declared from where she lay:

"The secret police beat me, beat me brutally. They dashed my head against the wall, but no matter what tortures they may inflict on me, I will never do the bidding of the secret police, the worst enemy of the working class."

While the sentence of ten years' penal servitude was being passed on all nineteen accused, they sang the International. Thus, do many, many Communist women live and fight to the death against fascism for the cause of the working class.

EXPOSE THE DARK MACHINATIONS OF THE FASCIST SECRET
SERVICE – 1938



The sharper the struggle between the two worlds, the wider the scale on which the viper of provocation sets its nests, and the more refined are the methods with which the hell's kitchens of the fascist secret services concoct their poisonous fare. The secret police employ the services of traitors, degenerate Trotskyite elements, and systematically attempt to disrupt the struggle of the Communists and anti-fascists. A tense daily struggle is necessary against this cankerous evil.

A careful study must be made of every link in the foul chain of provocations whereby the fascist secret services endeavor to enmesh entire organizations of Communists and anti-fascists, as well as individual active members of these organizations. We must learn to uncover the cunning methods of work of the enemy, using concrete examples to expose every attempt at provocation.

THE GESTAPO

This "firm," which has its branches all over, carries on its work on an extensive scale. Here they "work" without regard to means, expenditure, time or distance and, as is clear from the facts quoted below, pay great attention to enabling Gestapo agents to penetrate among German political émigrés in different countries. Use is made for provocative ends of the desire of all antifascists for the united fighting front against fascism.

First example. The Gestapo makes an agreement with its kindred fascist organization, the Henlein Party in Czechoslovakia. A member of this organization, T., is given the task of "moving to the Left," organizing an opposition, and refusing to obey discipline so as to get expelled from the Henlein Party.

After the "expulsion" the "victim," in fulfilment of the task set by the Gestapo, links up with Czech Social-Democrats. He convinces them that he has completely broken with Henlein, that he completely accepts the program and tactics of the Social-Democratic Party, with which henceforth he has everything in common, and that therefore he would like formally to enter its ranks.

Shortly afterwards he is accepted into the Socialist Party. This new-fangled "Social-Democrat" displays great interest in questions of the united front, and seems to be particularly active in this regard. After a time, he insists on the need for establishing contacts primarily with German Communists, who are "more decent than the Czechs" and secures that the united front negotiations with the German Communists are entrusted to him.

During the negotiations with the Communists, this "representative" of the Social-Democratic Party informs them that he is in addition in contact with certain Catholics living in Germany, who are also interested in united front questions, and that this work could be developed, etc.

The "representative" of the Social-Democratic Party displays an absolutely extraordinary anxiety to secure the joint organization of the transport of literature of the border. It turns out "quite accidentally" that he has a woman friend who lives in an isolated cottage right close to the border, that it ought to be possible for messengers engaged in the transport of literature to stop at this

secluded spot, that in case of need the messengers could wait there, stop the night, etc. In a word, everything seems to fit in automatically.

This inordinate readiness, excessive haste could not fail to arouse a certain suspicion among the comrades, who began to make an attentive examination of this individual. They asked him searching questions and when he lost his patience, this luckless agent of the Gestapo in reply to a blunt question put to him as to whether he was still a supporter of Henlein, suddenly burst out: "Go to the devil, I don't want to be anything at all."

It goes without saying that the cottage on the border so kindly offered by the provocateur was supplied with both radio and telephone, had long been a favored haunt of the Gestapo, that the owner of this house was a Gestapo agent, and that altogether the Gestapo ruled the roost there.

A second example shows another type of the Gestapo's work, calculated for a longer period of time.

The Gestapo sends a certain G., expelled from the Communist Party of Germany in 1933, abroad. It sets him the task of linking up with German Communist émigrés, leading officials living abroad. By reason of his past, G. finds it difficult to establish immediate contact with the Communists, and so he is instructed to go a round-about way, to take time about it.

On his arrival abroad, he passes himself off as an anti-fascist who has been through the mill in Germany and has been compelled to emigrate because of Gestapo persecution. He appeals to the Matteotti Fund for help. He receives this aid and as a fully-fledged political émigré begins to interest himself in the trade union movement of the country in question, makes fiery revolutionary speeches at general trade union meetings, makes personal contacts with leading trade union officials, and gradually worms his way into the trade union leadership.

Thus, step by step, over a period of eighteen months, this Gestapo agent makes his way into the leadership.

Having become an important figure, the provocateur is already approaching the fulfilment of the mission allotted to him by the Gestapo. The trade unions empower him to undertake united front negotiations with leading officials of the German Communist Party. Unexpectedly for himself, however, the provocateur was recognized and the "whole affair" fell through not only as far as he himself was concerned, but also as far as concerned two other provocateurs connected with him, of whom one was operating in the Ruhr basin, and the other in another big industrial center.

Third example. The Gestapo dispatches three of its young hirelings abroad, and instructs one of them to worm his way into the confidence of Catholic émigrés, the second to win the confidence of the Social-Democrats, and the third, of the Communists. Each of them is to make use for espionage and provocative purposes of the strivings of the anti-fascists for the united front.

The provocateur sent to the Catholics succeeds without any particular difficulty in getting himself established among them. The second Gestapo agent meets with some difficulties, but still is

not without success in penetrating among the Social-Democrats. He mentions the names of several people with whom he was supposed to be connected in Germany, and is believed.

The third provocateur meets with defeat. As soon as he comes to the Communists, he immediately demands that he be given Party materials allegedly for dispatch to Germany. In reply to a question as to the name of the person whom he wants to supply with these materials, he gives a fictitious address. After a careful check is made, it becomes possible to expose the provocative role of the united front "enthusiast" in question, and through him the two provocateurs who have crept into the ranks of the Catholics and Social-Democrats.

The following fact is also not without interest as an illustration of how carefully the Gestapo guards its agents against discovery.

On one occasion the Gestapo succeeded, after beating up an arrested Communist in jail for five months, in forcing him to agree to become a Gestapo agent. During the whole of this time, he was kept in the strictest isolation. The Party organization knew nothing of his arrest and only presumed that he had been arrested.

The Gestapo on enrolling an agent is interested in his appearing to be "pure" to those who know him, for if he emerges from prison, his friends will be afraid to make immediate use of him. And so, in this case the Gestapo resorted to the following trickery. Before releasing him, they dispatched the prisoner for several days to a tuberculosis sanatorium, and introduced him to the head doctor, a fascist. This individual acquainted him with the routine and the locality of the sanatorium, after which he was released with a document stating that "Mr. N. (name, etc., according to his passport) received treatment in the above sanatorium between May and September for two broken ribs and injured lungs following on an automobile accident. The expenses for treatment have been covered by the head doctor, the one to blame for the motor accident." The signature of the head doctor, and the seal of the sanatorium follow.

However fine, at first glance, the trickery of the Gestapo, the Party soon exposed this agent as well, because from the very first steps of his provocative activity, he began to display great nervousness, get mixed up in his stories about his stay in the sanatorium, so that in the long run the only thing that could be believed about him was that he had a broken rib, But neither the automobile nor Hitler's jail thugs had broken the ribs of their future colleague.

In all the examples above quoted the provocateurs were in the last analysis exposed, thanks to the vigilance displayed by the Communists. Nor were these provocateurs helped by the Gestapo instructions for agents sent abroad. Among other things these instructions contain the following: "On your arrival abroad you must count on not being immediately accepted by your people, and on having to hang around for weeks and perhaps months.

"You must pay careful attention to ensure that there are no contradictions in the statements you make; you must not display any signs of being upset, even when you see that things are not going well. You must not pester people, must not hurry to be given work to do, etc.

The Gestapo has need of many “cadres” as the following little table shows.

In a period of three months, Gestapo agents were exposed as follows: Prague, 17; Zurich, 5; Belgium, 10; Amsterdam, 6; Copenhagen, 3. In all a total of 41.

They were all sent by the Gestapo to establish contacts with leading officials of the Communist Party of Germany; they all of them made efforts to be sent back to Germany as Party instructors.

Not only does the Gestapo supply its “cadres” with instructions, not only are the most qualified of them given a theoretical examination in schools specially designed for provocateurs, but they also undergo “practical training.” Thus, for instance, an individual makes his appearance abroad from Germany, having crossed the border illegally; he comes to the house of some comrades living in emigration and informs them that he has made a successful escape from Gestapo persecution, gives some general information about himself, and makes an arrangement to meet the comrades the next day so as to have a more detailed conversation with them. When the “next day” comes, there is no trace left of this “emigre.” He was simply a Gestapo agent on trial, undergoing a practical examination, and had returned to the lap of the Gestapo.

Of the foul methods employed by the Gestapo to force arrested people to make treacherous admissions, we will draw attention here to a case, exceptional for its effrontery, that took place recently.

After several months of severe prison treatment, beatings up and savage ribaldry over the enfeebled body and spirit of a prisoner, they resorted to the following experiment. They called in his fiancée and told her that the prisoner would be released if he gave a certain address, that there was no “compromise” in this, that in any case the Gestapo knew it but that all that was important for the Gestapo was to establish “how far this person is capable of speaking the truth,” etc.

Having thus entangled the girl and received her agreement to persuade her fiancé to make this “compromise,” they arranged a meeting between them. But this was no ordinary prison visit with witnesses present. She was admitted to the prison cell. The meeting lasted two hours.

The aim of the Gestapo was achieved; the required address was secured; the treachery was accomplished.

Vigilance on the part of Communists is necessary in any sphere of activity, and in every situation.

The methods of provocation employed by the doomed enemy are very dangerous weapons drawn from the arsenal of extreme measures. It must be borne in mind that the more hopeless the position of the enemy, the more eagerly “will they seize hold of the most desperate methods of struggle, as the last resort of people doomed to destruction.”

Unflagging attention, a sharp eye, complete calm without excessive nervousness and suspicion, ever on guard – such are the qualities which will enable the Communist and anti-fascist to recognize and expose provocation in good time, however cunningly it is concocted.

KNOW YOUR ENEMIES! THE INSIDIOUS METHODS OF WORK OF THE
FASCIST SECRET POLICE – 1938

An effective struggle against the enemy demands a knowledge of the methods and tricks employed by them in their wrecking work.

In his report at the February-March Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. (1937), Comrade Stalin said that “the necessary measures must be taken to enable our comrades, both Party and non-Party Bolsheviks, to become familiar with the aims and objects, with the practice and technique of the wrecking, diversionist and espionage work of the foreign intelligence services.” This advice of Comrade Stalin also fully applies to all the sections of the Communist International, to throughout the world.

In order to introduce the poison of disintegration among anti-fascist fighters and fighters for Communism, the fascist secret services resort to the most brazen, most subtle methods of provocation.

Foreign intelligence services have sent and still send fascist-Trotskyist spies, diversionists, wreckers and assassins to the Soviet Union, the country which the working people of the world regard with such joy, pride and hope.

These secret services do not stop at any crime, and incessantly and systematically recruit and place their agents provocateurs inside the Communist Party organizations which are compelled in the countries of fascist dictatorship to work underground under difficult conditions.

Of the extensive documentary material concerning the insidious methods of work of the secret police in capitalist countries, we give, in the present short sketch, only individual cases of the wrecking work done by the German, Italian and Polish secret police; but even these cases characterize convincingly enough the methods employed by the enemy in order to deliver blows at the Communist Party, the foremost detachment of the working class.

THE GERMAN SECRET POLICE – THE GESTAPO

I

G., an unstable member of the German Communist Party, is arrested in the street and is undergoing examination. At first, he tries to give evasive answers, but the guard shouts out: “We’ll teach you to tell the truth, we’ll grind you down to powder.” They begin to flog the arrested man and the “faint-hearted Communist” declares: “I will give truthful testimony.”

“Here’s a pencil and paper,” says the Gestapo interrogator, “sit down and write all you know about your comrades; in a couple of days, you will be released.”

Incarcerated in his cell G. thinks over the situation and decides: “I hold a trump card – deception. I shall use every possibility of deceiving the Gestapo by telling them the most insignificant facts, mingle truth with fiction, so that it all looks like the truth.”

In his testimony to the Gestapo G. plays his “trump card,” the result of which, as might have been expected, was betrayal, for he mentioned forthcoming meetings with his comrades working

underground, etc. The newly-fledged secret police agent, traitor to the Party, is given a job by the Gestapo:

"This evening when it is dark, you will go to Lena C. and try to discover whether other Communists still visit her, - whether they know you have been arrested, and tell them some story about why you have been missing. Understand? Only don't try to get away or talk about your being arrested; you'd better remember that we'll get you from the bottom of the sea, you're in our hands. Two of our people will accompany you and wait for you in a car. Stop in a street close by, go to Lena C., spend no more than an hour with her, return here, and report everything to me."

When G. went to Lena C., she asked in astonishment where he had been; to which G. replied that he had been trailed during the last few days and had been compelled to stop at home; and when she said in alarm that in that case he should not have come to her because she had noticed that they were on her heels as well, he replied that he had only dropped in for a minute. He then returned to the men in the waiting car, and reported to the Gestapo commissar that the organization knew nothing about his arrest, to which the latter replied with satisfaction: "'That's the chief thing.'"

The next day G. was warned that he would have to have an interview with yet another chief and take the oath before being released. "So, raise your hand and repeat after me: 'I swear to remain loyal to my fatherland, never to betray, to be a true subject of the Fuehrer, Adolph Hitler.' "

After taking the oath, G. was led to the chief, from whom he received a number of other jobs.

On parting, the chief made the following speech: "I tell you now that if you try to tell anybody that you have been under arrest, or attempt to flee abroad, we shall hear of it all in good time and you will find no peace anywhere in the whole world. For you know that we destroy those who betray us; we shall unmask you to your former comrades, so that there, also, your goose will be cooked. Of course, you understand all that."

"I understand," replied G., "having said 'a' I must say 'b'."

G. kept his word to the secret police and continued his work of provocation and betrayal of his party and class.

II

The Gestapo frequently instructs recruited agents to "confess" to the Party organization that they became agents of the secret police in order to "deceive" the Gestapo. Thus, for example, one such recruited traitor related how, having been tricked into meeting a Gestapo agent in a cafe, he agreed, at the first meeting with a "solid gentleman about fifty years old.x" to become an agent, but "conditionally": as he was in opposition to the central institutions of the Party, he was prepared to give everything away to the Gestapo concerning the center, but was unwilling to betray the Communists of his native town. The "solid gentleman" accepted this proposal, noting, incidentally, that he was well-informed about the Communist activities of the workers of the town in question, even without the newly-recruited agent.

“For me,” said he demagogically, “it is most important to have contact with the center ... which demands greater and greater sacrifices from the little people living and working in the country.”

At the next meeting, the newly recruited agent asked the secret service agent as to what the prospects were regarding their future relations; to which he received the reply that he – the “solid gentleman” – was entrusted with the task of “destroying Marxism” by all means possible, and that, on the basis of experience, he had come to the conclusion that this question could not be solved by terror alone; “it is necessary,” he said, “to get into the leadership and so break up the Communist organizations.”

III

The agents of the fascist secret police strain every effort to get into the Party leadership, while at the same time spreading all kinds of stories about the Party’s tactical line being incorrect, being either too Left, or too Right.

“The Central Committee drives you into strikes, demonstrations, to get you all cut about,” says the secret police agent, who has wormed his way into the Party organization of some outlying locality; in some other place, also far away in the provinces, another secret agent provocatively declared: “It is high time we stopped all the humdrum everyday work; the feeling everywhere is: ‘give us arms.’”

Though the Gestapo discredits the central institutions and individual leading workers of the Communist Party, this does not prevent it from utilizing, for its own purposes, the efforts of the local Party groups, isolated from the center, to unite on a district scale and establish contacts with the Central Committee. For example, in the Ruhr, Gestapo agents, pretending to be representatives of the Central Committee, at one time “worked” hard to unite the local Party groups, in order later, through this district unity, to open up a way to the Central Committee of the Party.

IV

The Gestapo also tries to make use of the workers’ desire for the united front. It instructs its agents to conduct “agitation” for the united front, reckoning thus to penetrate easily into the Social-Democratic and Catholic organizations, and then, through these organizations, into the Communist Party.

Not so long ago, the following incident took place in B. The Communist Party organization entered into an agreement with the Social-Democrats and Catholics to render aid to political prisoners. A short time later it was discovered that the “representative” of the Social-Democrats was a Gestapo agent. With his assistance, the whole organization was smashed and all its members arrested.

V

The Gestapo spreads its network of spies far and wide over the border localities, and for its own purposes, of course, “permits” the import of Communist literature into the country. For example, in Upper Silesia, a Communist received information from a comrade whom he had till then

fully trusted that an opportunity had arisen for passing literature over a certain point of the frontier. The Communist organized the delivery of a large quantity of literature to the given point of the frontier, but on the German side it was not comrades who came for the literature, but Gestapo agents; and so, the literature was confiscated.

Once the Communist literature is in its dirty hands, the Gestapo resorts to new acts of provocation with it, as was the case in B., when all the inhabitants of two densely populated tenements in a working-class district suddenly received issues of the Rote Fahne. Soon afterwards, all those who failed to bring the newspaper to the police were searched and arrested. This piece of provocation was planned to stop workers in general from taking Communist literature for fear that it came from the Gestapo.

The Gestapo instructs its agents, recruited from among the workers, to give the Communists information regarding the situation in the factories, regarding conflicts arising in connection with wages, etc.; and all is done for purposes of provocation, it being calculated that the provocateur, once having won the confidence of the Communists, will be able to worm his way into the Party organization, or remain a “sympathizer” and be to some extent “in the know” about the illegal work of the Party organization.

In an extensive network of special schools, Gestapo agents study the documents of the Communist Party, Party tactics, the structure of the Party organizations, and learn to write articles “on the line of the Party,” etc.

From among these more cunning agents with special qualifications, the Gestapo recruits cadres for more “responsible” provocation. In particular, the Gestapo sends these qualified provocateurs, masked as trusted men of the Central Committee of the Party, into districts in which, after mass arrests, the Communist Party organizations are smashed up and connections with the center temporarily lost. The “trusted men of the Central Committee restore” the local Party organization and in a number of cases, as shown by documents, these foul provocateurs remain unmasked for quite a long time.

THE OVRA, ITALIAN SECRET POLICE

The Ovra, the Italian fascist secret police, resorts to no less subtle provocation for the purpose of destroying all revolutionary, and particularly Communist, organizations.

I

Communist V. set out for a business interview with R., a woman member of the Party, but R. did not put in an appearance at the stipulated time — she had been arrested.

Two days later V. also disappeared. There was no doubt left in the minds of the comrades but that he had been arrested. However, a fortnight had hardly passed before a letter was received from abroad, from V., asking the comrades to send him money. He gave the following version of his sudden disappearance:

“On his return from the meeting with R. which had not taken place, he set off for his apartment, but on seeing a light in the window of his room, and supposing the police to be in possession, he did not go home, or to any of his comrades, for fear of compromising them, but left the town and made his way across the frontier without outside help.”

The comrades felt doubts about V.’s letter, for it was difficult to imagine that the police, having made a raid, would leave a light shining in the window. It also seemed improbable that V. would have set off on a long journey without any help from comrades, without money, or contacts.

The Party organization set about an investigation of this puzzling affair. It was established beyond all possible doubt that V. had been arrested on the evening on which he had allegedly managed to avoid arrest and get abroad, and had then become an Ovra agent. The letter to the comrades had not been written from abroad, but from prison at the dictation of the secret police. The police had seen to it that the letter was sent from abroad. It was also established that on agreeing to collaborate in the Ovra, V. was given the job of getting close to the center of the Italian Communist Party.

Holding such high hopes concerning the recruited agent, the Ovra did its utmost to cover up all traces of him. Thus, contrary to custom, the newspapers received a detailed list of arrested Communists through the Stefani official telegraph agency, containing fantastic versions of the circumstances of their arrest. (Actually, it was established that it was V. who betrayed the arrested comrades.) As for V. himself, who was called by his real name, the report stated that he was a very responsible official whom unfortunately “it had not been possible to catch,” having “fled abroad.”

And when all this cunningly woven maneuver of the secret police collapsed, when V. was unmasked by the Party, a Trotskyite sheet hurried to the help of the secret police provocateur by supporting in its columns the rumors spread by the secret police that not V. was the betrayer, but those accusing him of being one.

By these methods, police agents are sometimes successful in temporarily paralyzing Party work in one locality or another and in concealing real agents provocateurs. In the given case, not even the support of the Trotskyite sheet was of help to the Ovra in its attempt to preserve its agent-provocateur.

II.

Here is another similar case from the “work” of the Italian “Ovra.” A certain member of the Party, J., was arrested. Months went by and J. suddenly turned up at the apartment which served for special conspirative purposes. Prior to this the address of this apartment had not been known to J., and when he arrived there, he told of how he had been arrested, and taken to another town, to the P. prison. He had been interrogated, he said, several times by the chief of the political department of the Ministry for Home Affairs. That official had told him a number of facts allegedly reported by other arrested Communists, one of whom he, J., afterwards met in the secret department. This comrade, he stated, had advised him to “compromise” with the secret police.

A few days later J. was sent by train to Rome. Before arriving at one of the stations, before which there is a steep incline and the train moves very slowly, J. jumped through the carriage window. His flight, his tale ran, was a complete success. For several days he had had to hide in the home of a priest, and then, after obtaining money from comrades, he had managed to get back to Rome by roundabout means.

As for the address of the conspirative apartment, he had obtained that in prison from the comrade who had recommended him, in the interests of the Party, to “compromise” with the secret police.

J.’s story of his flight might have seemed feasible, the more so since on investigation it turned out that the priest who had allegedly given him refuge really did exist; moreover, on the itinerary sheet of the train indicated, the stops on the way had been registered in connection with the flight of the prisoner. The itinerary sheet, of course, had been fabricated by the secret police interested in covering up their agent.

However, despite the apparent likelihood of the escape, the comrades nevertheless did not believe in the truth of J.’s tale, and made further investigations into the circumstances of the escape. Then J. the traitor and double-dealer resorted to the following trick: he admitted that he had told a false-story and asked to be heard by two leading comrades to whom he would tell the whole truth. The new story was that he had really made an attempt to escape, but that it had been unsuccessful and then, seeing that his position was hopeless, he remembered the advice of the comrade he had met in jail about compromising with the secret police, and agreed to become their agent, desiring at the same time to help the Party. The secret police had proposed that he do his utmost to penetrate into the apparatus of the Central Committee of the Party and provide political information, in exchange for which J. would be released, without being asked to give away his comrades.

In order to convince the comrades of the sincerity of his story, that he, J., had not openly betrayed, but had made a “compromise” with the secret police in the interests of the Party, J. named two Party members, agents of the secret police, about whom an official had told him. Moreover, he reported that the secret police had obtained information from some source or other concerning a number of facts about the activities of some more comrades.

In both the first and the second story, J. played a foul double-dealing game in the attempt to mislead the Party. But he was unsuccessful. The Party organization established the point beyond all shadow of doubt that J. was an agent provocateur, recruited by the secret police without any “compromise” being made. As for the facts he reported allegedly to the advantage of the Party organization, the names of the two-Party members, secret police agents, were already known to the Party organizations, and investigations had been made concerning them. As to the facts concerning the activities of a number of comrades, they had been given to the secret police by J. himself, as well as the address of the conspirative apartment, which the secret police were able then to watch.

THE POLISH SECRET POLICE – THE DEFENZIVA

The methods of provocation and espionage resorted to by the Gestapo and Ovra are not unknown to the Polish secret police – the Defenziva. For almost twenty years the Polish “Defo” has been trying by all means to demoralize the revolutionary organizations of Poland, to crush the courageous fighters of the working class – the Polish Communists. Hundreds of provocateurs, under different guises, have penetrated into the ranks of the Polish Communist Party in order to betray people loyal to the working-class cause, to get into the U.S.S.R. as political emigrants and there carry on spying and diversionist work. In addition, the Polish “Defo” has made wide use of the method of discrediting honest Communists, in order to spread suspicions about them and crush the revolutionary organizations. Here are some examples:

I

An active Communist was arrested in a certain district; he was cruelly tortured and told to give away his comrades and enter the service of the “Defo.”

The comrade courageously suffered the torture, and made no surrender to the enemy; then the “Defo,” losing hope of making him an agent, discredited him in the eyes of his Party organization by spreading persistent rumors that he was a “Defo” agent.

In its efforts to compromise another popular Communist, the “Defo” planted a receipt, faked by themselves, for money allegedly received by the comrade from the “Defo,” in the office of the local trade union.

II

In the little town of B., the “Defo” marked down as their victims three Communist railway-men who enjoyed the confidence of the working people of the locality. Not hoping to break down the will of these people by threats, the “Defo” instructed its own obvious spies, who were known by all in the town as serving in that abominable institution, to approach these railway-men on crowded streets, to greet them profusely like good acquaintances, and even to visit them in their homes, in such a way that everybody could see and then spread rumors that the railway-men had entered the service of the “Defo.”

The local Party organization indicated, failed to see through the insidious designs of the enemy, and made the mistake of declaring these honest comrades to be “Defo” agents. As a result, there was great confusion among the railway-men of the district: “If people like that,” it was said, “turn out to be provocateurs, then we can’t trust anybody.”

The insidious designs of the secret police were on this occasion successful.

Conclusion

It can be seen from the examples given above how serious today for all Communists, for all anti-fascists, is the task of raising revolutionary vigilance, how serious is the task of combatting the “idiotic disease of complacency.” (Stalin.) ;

The sooner all sections of the Communist International, anti-fascists of the whole world, make themselves acquainted with the insidious methods of the enemy, the sooner will they be able to unmask the provocateurs, spies and assassins sent by fascist intelligence services into anti-fascist organizations and the land of socialism, the U.S.S.R., the sooner will they be able, with a firm hand, ruthlessly to purge their ranks of fascist-Trotskyite provocateurs and spies, enemies of the working class and of the whole of progressive mankind.

