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**LENIN**

**By JOSEPH STALIN**

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JOSEPH STALIN: LENIN

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# LENIN

THREE SPEECHES ABOUT V. I. LENIN,  
ONE DELIVERED DURING HIS LIFETIME,  
THE OTHERS SOON AFTER HIS DEATH

by Joseph Stalin



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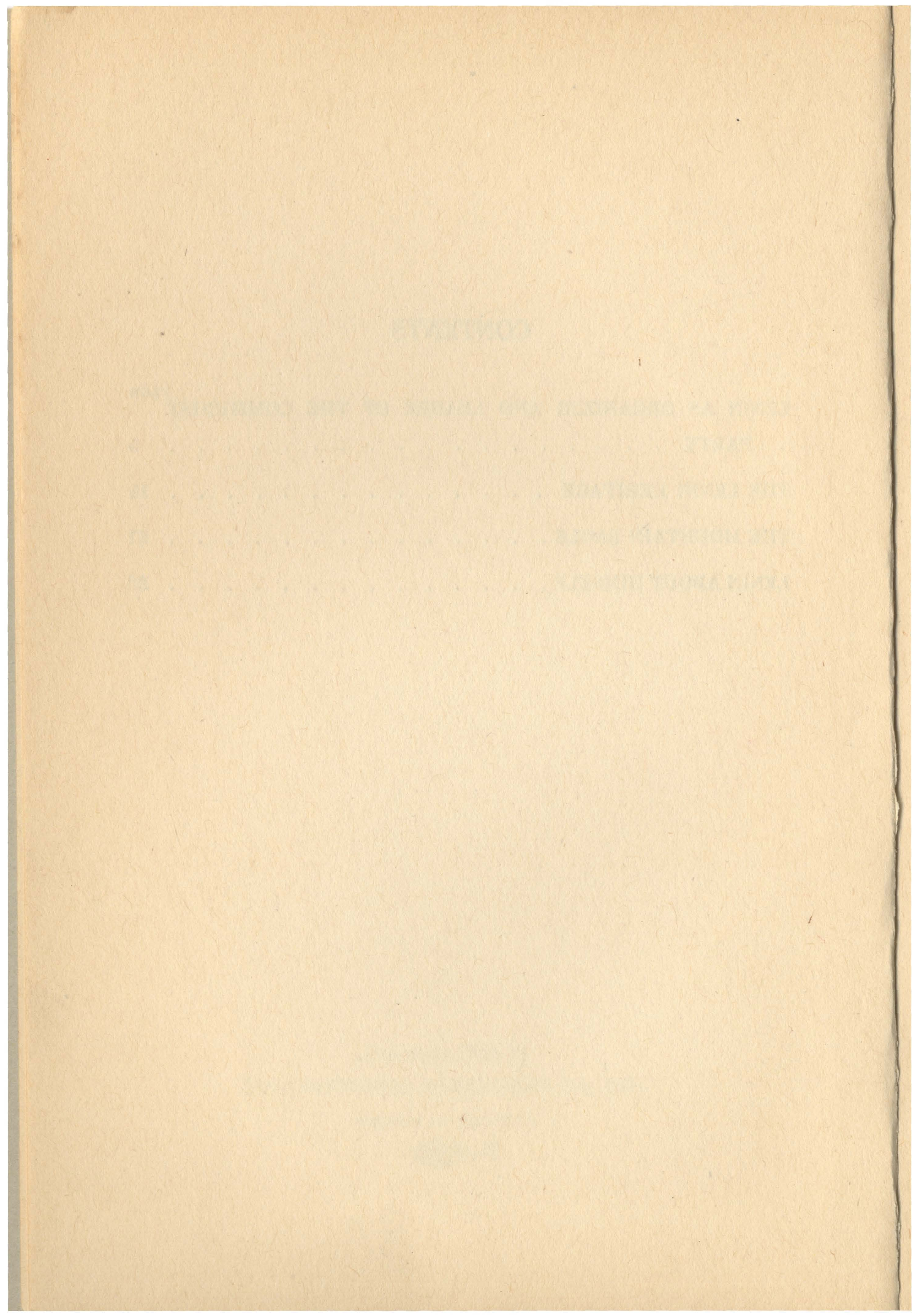
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## LENIN AS ORGANIZER AND LEADER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY \*

THERE are two groups of Marxists. Both are working under the flag of Marxism, consider themselves "genuine Marxists." Nevertheless, they are far from being identical. More than that. A complete gulf divides them, for their respective methods of work are diametrically opposed to each other.

The first group usually confines itself to the superficial recognition of Marxism, to solemnly proclaiming it. Unable, or not wishing to study the essence of Marxism, unable, or not wishing to apply it in practical life, it transforms the living revolutionary propositions of Marxism into dead, meaningless formulae. It bases its activities, not on experience, not on the results of practical work, but on quotations from Marx. It takes its guiding lines and directives, not from an analysis of living reality, but from analogies and historical parallels. Discrepancy between word and deed—such is the principal disease from which this group suffers. Hence its disappointment and its constant discontent with its fate, which often misleads it and leaves it "fooled." The name of this group is Menshevism (in Russia), opportunism (in Europe). At the London Congress,\*\* Comrade Tyshko (Yogisches) rather aptly characterized this group by saying that it does not stand, but lies on the Marxian point of view.

\* Article written on the Fiftieth Anniversary of Lenin's birth, celebrated while Lenin was still alive, *Pravda*, No. 86, April 1920.—*Ed.*

\*\* The Fifth Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party held in London in 1907.—*Ed.*

The second group on the other hand transforms the centre of gravity of the question from the superficial recognition of Marxism to its realization, to its application in practical life. Indicating the path and means of realizing Marxism for various situations, changing the path and means when the situation changes—this is what this group concentrates its attention upon mainly. It takes its directives and guiding lines not from historical analogies and parallels, but from the study of surrounding conditions. In its activities it relies, not on quotations and aphorisms but on practical experience, testing every step it takes by experience, learning from its mistakes and teaching others to build a new life. This, properly speaking, explains why in the activities of this group there is no discrepancy between word and deed, and why the teachings of Marx fully preserve their living, revolutionary force. To this group can be fully applied the words of Marx that: Marxists cannot rest content with explaining the world, they must go farther, and change it. The name of this group is Bolshevism, Communism.

The organizer and leader of this group is V. I. Lenin.

### 1. LENIN AS THE ORGANIZER OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

The formation of the proletarian party in Russia proceeded in special conditions, which differed from the conditions prevailing in the West at the time the workers' parties were organized there. While in the West, in France, in Germany, the workers' party emerged from the trade unions, in conditions in which the trade unions and the parties existed legally, in the conditions that prevailed after a bourgeois revolution, when the bourgeois parliament existed, when the bourgeoisie, having got into power, stood confronting the proletariat, in Russia, on the other



hand, the formation of the proletarian party proceeded under the rule of ferocious absolutism, in the expectation of a bourgeois-democratic revolution; when, on the one hand, the Party organizations were filled to overflowing with bourgeois "legal Marxist" elements who were thirsting to utilize the working class for the bourgeois revolution, and when, on the other hand, the best Party workers were being torn out of the ranks of the Party by the tsarist gendarmerie at a time when the growing spontaneous revolutionary movement called for the existence of a steadfast, compact and sufficiently secret fighting unit of revolutionaries, that would be able to lead the movement to the overthrow of absolutism.

The task was to separate the sheep from the goats, to separate alien elements, to organize cadres of experienced revolutionaries in the localities, to give them a clear program and definite tactics, and finally to gather these cadres into a single militant organization of professional revolutionaries sufficiently secret to be able to withstand the raids of the gendarmes, but at the same time sufficiently connected with the masses to be able to lead them into the struggle at the required moment.

The Mensheviks, *i.e.*, those who "lie" on the Marxian point of view, solved this problem very simply; they argued as follows: in view of the fact that in the West the workers' party emerged from non-party trade unions which fight for the improvement of the economic conditions of the working class, then, as far as possible, the same thing should be done in Russia, *i.e.*, for the time being to keep strictly to the "economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government" in the localities without creating an all-Russian militant organization and later . . . later, if trade unions do not arise by that time, to convene a non-party workers' congress and declare that to be the party.

The fact that this "Marxian plan" of the Mensheviks, which was utopian in Russian conditions, nevertheless presupposed extensive agitational work directed towards degrading the idea of a party, towards destroying the Party cadres, towards leaving the proletariat without a party and surrendering the working class to the mercy of the liberals—the Mensheviks, and perhaps even many Bolsheviks, hardly suspected at that time.

The great service Lenin rendered to the Russian proletariat and its Party was that he revealed the danger of the Menshevik organization "plan" even at the time when this "plan" was as yet in its embryonic stage, when even the authors of this "plan" were able to perceive its outlines only with difficulty, and that, having revealed this danger, he commenced a furious attack against the organizational slovenliness of the Mensheviks and concentrated the whole of the attention of the practical workers on this question. For this was a matter that affected the very existence of the Party, the life or death of the Party.

To establish an all-Russian political newspaper, which was to serve as the centre of attraction of Party forces, to organize steadfast, Party cadres in the localities as "regular units" of the Party, to gather these cadres into a single whole through the medium of a newspaper, and to unite them into an all-Russian militant party with strictly defined limits, with a clear program, firm tactics and a single will—this was the plan that Lenin developed in his celebrated pamphlets: *What Is To Be Done?* and *One Step Forward Two Steps Back*. The merit of this plan lay in the fact that it fully answered the requirements of Russian conditions, and that, in a masterful manner, it generalized the organizational experience of the best practical workers. In the struggle for this plan, the majority of the Russian practical workers resolutely followed Lenin and were not dis-

mayed by the prospect of a split. The victory of this plan laid the foundation for the compact and steeled Communist Party, which has no equal in the world.

Very often our comrades (not only the Mensheviks!) accused Lenin of having excessive inclinations for polemics, for splits, for irreconcilable struggle against conciliators, etc. Undoubtedly, both the one and the other was the case at one time. It is not difficult to understand, however, that our Party could not have rid itself of internal weakness and diffusiveness, it could not have reached its inherent power and strength had it not expelled the non-proletarian opportunist elements from its midst. In the epoch of bourgeois rule the proletarian party can grow and become strong only to the extent that it wages a struggle against the opportunist, anti-revolutionary and anti-Party elements in its own midst, as well as in the midst of the working class. Lassalle was right when he said: "A party strengthens itself by purging itself." The accusers usually refer to the German Party in which "unity" flourished at that time. But in the first place, not all unity is a symptom of strength, and secondly, it is sufficient to glance now at the late German Party, which is now rent into three parties, in order to realize that the "unity" between Scheidemann and Noske on the one hand and Liebknecht and Luxemburg on the other was false and a sham. Who knows, perhaps it would have been better for the German proletariat had the revolutionary elements of the German Party split from the anti-revolutionary elements in time . . . No, Lenin was a thousand times right in leading the Party along the path of irreconcilable struggle against the anti-Party and anti-revolutionary elements. For it was only as a result of such an organizational policy that our Party was able to create that internal unity and astonishing compactness with which it was able painlessly to emerge from the July crisis under

Kerensky, carry through on its own shoulders the October uprising, to pass through the crisis of the Brest-Litovsk period \* without shocks, organize the victory over the Entente and finally acquire that unparalleled flexibility, thanks to which it is able at any moment to reform its ranks and concentrate hundreds of thousands of its members on any great work that has to be undertaken, without causing confusion in its midst.

## 2. LENIN AS THE LEADER OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

But the organizational merits of the Russian Communist Party represent only one aspect of the matter. The Party could not have grown and become strong so quickly had not the political content of its work and its program and tactics corresponded to Russian conditions, had not its slogans inflamed the masses of the workers and pushed forward the revolutionary movement. We will now pass to this aspect of the matter.

The Russian bourgeois-democratic revolution (1905) proceeded under conditions that differed from those prevailing in the West during revolutionary upheavals, for example, in France and Germany.

Whereas the revolution in the West developed in the conditions of the period of manufacture and of undeveloped class struggle, when the proletariat was weak and numerically small and did not have its own party able to formulate its demands, and when the bourgeoisie was sufficiently revolutionary for the purpose of imbuing the workers and peasants with confidence in itself and to lead them in the struggle against the aristocracy—in Russia, the

\* Reference is here made to the differences among leading Bolsheviks on the question of accepting the terms of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty which was advocated by Lenin.—*Ed.*

revolution began (1905) in the conditions of the machine period and developed class struggle, when the Russian proletariat, relatively numerous and rendered compact by capitalism, had already waged a number of battles against the bourgeoisie, had its own Party, which was more compact than the bourgeois party, had its own class demands, and when the Russian bourgeoisie, which, in addition, was living on the contracts it received from the government, was sufficiently frightened by the revolutionary temper of the proletariat to seek an alliance with the government and the landlords against the workers and peasants. The fact that the Russian revolution flared up as a result of the military defeats suffered on the fields of Manchuria merely accelerated events, but did not make any material difference.

The situation demanded that the proletariat should take the leadership of the revolution, rally around itself the revolutionary peasants and conduct a determined fight simultaneously against Tsarism and the bourgeoisie with a view to the complete democratization of the country and the protection of its own class interests.

The Mensheviks, however, those very Mensheviks who "lay" on the Marxian point of view, solved the problem in their own way; they argued as follows: as the Russian revolution is a bourgeois revolution, and as in bourgeois revolutions the representatives of the bourgeoisie lead (compare the history of the French and German revolutions), the proletariat cannot win the hegemony in the Russian revolution; leadership must be left to the Russian bourgeoisie (the very bourgeoisie which betrays the revolution), the peasantry also should be left to the care of the bourgeoisie, while the proletariat should remain in the position of an extreme Left opposition. And these vulgar refrains from bad liberal songs were presented by the Mensheviks as the last word of "genuine" Marxism! . . .

The great service Lenin rendered to the Russian revolution was that he exposed the very roots of the futility of the historical parallels which the Mensheviks drew, and exposed the danger of the Menshevik "scheme of the revolution" which surrendered the cause of the workers to the mercy of the bourgeoisie. The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, instead of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie; boycott of the Bulygin Duma \* and armed uprising, instead of going into the Duma and participating in its work; the idea of forming a "Left bloc" when the Duma was after all convened, and the utilization of the Duma tribune for the purpose of carrying on the struggle outside of the Duma, instead of a Cadet Ministry \*\* and the reactionary "saving" of the Duma; the fight against the Cadet Party as a counter-revolutionary force, instead of entering into a bloc with it—such was the tactical plan that Lenin developed in his celebrated pamphlets: *Two Tactics* and *The Victory of the Cadets*.

The merit of this plan was that it frankly and resolutely formulated the class demands of the proletariat in the epoch of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia, facilitated the transition to the socialist revolution, and bore within itself the embryo of the idea of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. In the struggle for this tactical plan the majority of the Russian practical workers resolutely and irrevocably followed Lenin. The victory of this plan laid the foundation for the revolutionary tactics by which our

\* So called because it was to be convened by Bulygin, then Minister for Interior. This Duma was to be a purely consultative body selected on a restricted suffrage that practically excluded the workers. The upsurge of the Revolution of 1905 swept away the plan and its author.—*Ed.*

\*\* A Cabinet consisting of members of the Constitutional-Democratic Party—the party of the bourgeoisie.—*Ed.*

Party is now shaking the foundations of world imperialism.

The further development of events, the four years of imperialist war and the shattering of the whole of national economy, the February Revolution and the celebrated diarchy,\* the Provisional Government as the hotbed of bourgeois counter-revolution and the Petrograd Soviet as the form of the incipient proletarian dictatorship, the October uprising and the dispersion of the Constituent Assembly, the abolition of bourgeois parliamentarism and the proclamation of the Soviet republic, the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war and the attack of world imperialism in conjunction with the "Marxists"-in-words against the proletarian revolution, and finally, the wretched position of the Mensheviks who clung to the Constituent Assembly and who were thrown overboard by the proletariat and washed by the waves of the revolution to the shores of capitalism—all this merely confirmed the correctness of the principles of the revolutionary tactics formulated by Lenin in his *Two Tactics*. The party which possessed such a heritage could boldly sail forth without fearing the rocks.

In our time of proletarian revolution, when every Party slogan and every phrase uttered by a leader is tested by deeds, the proletariat makes special demands of its leaders. History knows proletarian leaders, leaders in stormy times, practical leaders, leaders who are self-sacrificing and bold, but who are weak in theory. The masses do not soon forget the names of such leaders. But the movement as a whole cannot live merely on reminiscences: it must have

\* The dual government that existed in the form of the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet after the February Revolution of 1917, in which, at that time, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries predominated.—*Ed.*

a clear goal (program), a firm line (tactics). Such, for example, are Lassalle in Germany, Blanqui in France. There is also another type of leader. Peace time leaders who are strong in theory, but weak in organizational matters and in practical work. Such leaders are popular only among the upper stratum of the proletariat, and then only for a certain time; when the revolutionary epoch is ushered in, when revolutionary, practical slogans are demanded from leaders, the theoreticians leave the stage and give way to new men. Such, for example, were Plekhanov in Russia and Kautsky in Germany.

In order to retain the post of leader of the proletarian revolution and of the proletarian party, one must combine theoretical power with practical organizational experience of the proletarian movement. P. Axelrod, when he was a Marxist, wrote about Lenin that he "happily combined within himself the experience of a good practical worker, a theoretical education and a wide political outlook." (See P. Axelrod's preface to Lenin's pamphlet, *The Tasks of Russian Social-Democrats*.) What Mr. Axelrod, the ideologist of "cultured" capitalism, would now say about Lenin, it is not difficult to guess. But for us who know Lenin intimately, and who are able to look at the matter objectively, there can be no doubt that Lenin has fully retained these old qualities. Incidentally, it is in this that one must seek an explanation for the fact that it is Lenin, and precisely Lenin, who is today the leader of the most powerful and most steeled proletarian party in the world.



## THE LENIN HERITAGE \*

WE Communists are people of a special mould. We are made of special material. We are those who comprise the army of the great proletarian strategist, the army of Comrade Lenin. There is nothing higher than the honour to belong to this army. There is nothing higher than the title of member of the Party founded and led by Comrade Lenin. It is not given to all to be members of such a Party. It is not given to all to withstand the stress and storm that accompanies membership in such a Party. Sons of the working class, sons of poverty and struggle, sons of incredible deprivation and heroic effort—these are the ones who must first of all be members of such a Party. That is why the Leninist Party, the Communist Party, at the same time calls itself the Party of the working class.

In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of holding aloft and guarding the purity of the great title of member of the Party. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will fulfill your bequest with honour.

For twenty-five years Comrade Lenin reared our Party and finally reared it into the strongest and most steeled workers' party in the world.

The blows of Tsarism and its agents, the fury of the bourgeoisie and the landlords, the armed attacks of Kolchak and Denikin, the armed intervention of England and France, the lies and slander of the hundred-mouthed bourgeois press—all these scorpions persistently hurled them-

\* Speech delivered at the Second Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R., January 26, 1924, five days after Lenin's death.—*Ed.*

selves at our Party during the course of a quarter of a century. But our Party stood firm as a rock, repelled the innumerable blows of its enemies and led the working class forward to victory. In the midst of fierce battles our Party forged the unity and compactness of its ranks. And by its unity and compactness it achieved victory over the enemies of the working class.

In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of guarding the unity of our Party like the apple of our eye. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will also fulfil this bequest of yours with honour.

Heavy and unbearable is the lot of the working class. Painful and burdensome are the sufferings of the toilers. Slaves and slave-owners, serfs and feudal lords, peasants and landlords, workers and capitalists, oppressed and oppressors—such has been the structure of the world for ages, and such it remains today in the overwhelming majority of countries.

Scores and hundreds of times in the course of centuries have the toilers tried to throw their oppressors off their backs and become masters of their own conditions. But every time, defeated and disgraced, they were compelled to retreat, their hearts burning with shame and degradation, anger and despair, and they turned their eyes to the unknown, to the heavens, where they hoped to find salvation. The chains of slavery remained intact, or else the old chains were exchanged for new ones equally burdensome and degrading. Only in our country have the oppressed and suppressed masses of toilers succeeded in throwing off the rule of the landlords and capitalists and in putting in its place the rule of the workers and peasants.

You know, comrades, and now the whole world admits this, that this gigantic struggle was led by Comrade Lenin

and his Party. The greatness of Lenin lies first of all in the fact that he, by creating the republic of Soviets, showed by deeds, to the oppressed masses of the whole world, that hope of salvation is not lost, that the rule of the landlords and capitalists will not last long, that the kingdom of labor *can* be created by the efforts of the toilers themselves, that the kingdom of labor must be created on *earth* and not in heaven. By that he inflamed the hearts of the workers and peasants of the whole world with the hope of liberation. This explains the fact that the name of Lenin has become a name most beloved to the toilers and the exploited masses.

In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of guarding and strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will spare no effort to fulfil also this bequest of yours with honour

The dictatorship of the proletariat was created in our country on the basis of the alliance between the workers and the peasants. This is the first and fundamental basis of the republic of Soviets. The workers and peasants could not have vanquished the capitalists and the landlords without such an alliance.

In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of strengthening with all our might the alliance between the workers and the peasants. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will fulfil also this bequest of yours with honour.

The second foundation of the republic of Soviets is the alliance of the toiling nationalities of our country. Russians and Ukrainians, Bashkirs and White Russians, Georgians and Azerbaijanians, Armenians and Daghestans, Tartars and Kirghiz, Uzbeks and Turkomans—all are

equally interested in strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat. Not only does the dictatorship of the proletariat release these peoples from their chains and oppression, but these peoples, by their unbounded loyalty to the republic of Soviets and their readiness to make sacrifices for it, release our republic of Soviets from the designs and attacks of the enemies of the working class. That is why Comrade Lenin untiringly urged upon us the necessity for establishing a voluntary alliance of the nations of our country, the necessity for fraternal co-operation within the framework of a Union of Republics.

In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of consolidating and expanding the Union of Republics. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will also carry out this bequest of yours with honour.

The third foundation of the dictatorship of the proletariat is our Red Army and our Red Navy. Lenin told us more than once that the respite we have gained from the capitalist states may be a short one. More than once Lenin pointed out to us that the strengthening of the Red Army and the improvement of its condition is one of the most important tasks of our Party. The events connected with Curzon's ultimatum and the crisis in Germany once again confirmed the fact that Lenin, as always, was right. Let us vow then, comrades, that we will spare no effort to strengthen our Red Army and our Red Navy.

Our country stands like a huge rock surrounded by the ocean of bourgeois states. Wave after wave hurls itself against it, threatening to submerge it and sweep it away. But the rock stands unshakable. Wherein lies its strength? Not only in the fact that our country is based on the alliance between the workers and peasants, that it is the personifica-

tion of the alliance of free nationalities, that it is protected by the strong arm of the Red Army and the Red Navy. The strength of our country, its firmness, its durability lies in the fact that it finds profound sympathy and unshakable support in the hearts of the workers and peasants of the world.

The workers and peasants of the whole world want to preserve the republic of Soviets as an arrow shot by the sure hand of Comrade Lenin into the camp of the enemy, as a bulwark of their hope for emancipation from oppression and exploitation, as a faithful lighthouse lighting up their path to liberation. They want to preserve it and they will not permit the landlords and the capitalists to destroy it. This is where our strength lies. Herein lies the strength of the toilers of all countries. And herein lies the weakness of the bourgeoisie of the whole world.

Lenin never regarded the republic of Soviets as an end in itself. He always regarded it as a necessary link for strengthening the revolutionary movements in the lands of the West and the East, as a necessary link for facilitating the victory of the toilers of the whole world over capital. Lenin knew that only such an interpretation is the correct one, not only from the international point of view, but also from the point of view of preserving the republic of Soviets itself. Lenin knew that only in this way is it possible to inflame the hearts of the toilers of all countries for the decisive battles for emancipation. That is why this genius among the great leaders of the proletariat, on the very morrow of the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship, laid the foundation of the workers' International. That is why he never tired of expanding and consolidating the union of the toilers of the whole world, the Communist International.

You have seen during the past few days the pilgrimage

of tens and hundreds of thousands of toilers to the coffin of Comrade Lenin. Very soon you will see the pilgrimage of representatives of millions of toilers to Comrade Lenin's tomb. You need have no doubt that later these representatives of millions will be followed by representatives of tens and hundreds of millions from all corners of the earth, in order to testify that Comrade Lenin was the leader not only of the Russian proletariat, not only of the European workers, not only of the colonial East, but of all the toilers of the globe.

In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of remaining loyal to the principles of the Communist International. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will not spare our lives to strengthen and expand the union of the toilers of the whole world—the Communist International.

## THE MOUNTAIN EAGLE \*

COMRADES, I was told that you here have arranged an evening of reminiscences of Lenin, and that I have been invited as one of the speakers. I assume that there is no need to deliver a set speech on Lenin's activities. I think it would be better for me to confine myself to communicating a few facts which indicate certain of Lenin's peculiarities as a man and public worker. Perhaps these facts will not be interconnected, but this will not interfere seriously with presenting a general picture of Lenin. At all events, I am unable at present to do more than what I have just promised.

I first made the acquaintance of Lenin in 1903. It is true that this was not a personal acquaintance, it was an acquaintance established by correspondence. But this made an ineradicable impression upon me which has never left me all the time I have been working for the Party. At that time I was in exile in Siberia. My introduction to the revolutionary activity of Lenin at the end of the 'nineties, and especially after 1901, after the publication of *Iskra*, convinced me that Lenin was a man out of the ordinary. At that time I did not regard him merely as the leader of the Party, but as, practically, its creator, because he alone understood the internal substance and the urgent needs of the Party. Whenever I compared him with the other leaders of our Party it always seemed to me that Lenin's comrades-in-arms—Plekhanov, Martov, Axelrod and others—were a head shorter than Lenin, that compared

\* Speech delivered at a Memorial Evening of Kremlin Military Students, January 28, 1924, seven days after Lenin's death.—*Ed.*

with them Lenin was not merely one of the leaders, but a leader of a superior type, a mountain eagle, who knew no fear in the struggle, and who boldly led the Party forward along the unexplored paths of the Russian revolutionary movement. This impression was so deeply ingrained in my mind that I felt that I must write about him to one of my intimate friends who was then in exile abroad, and to ask him to give me his opinion of Lenin. After a short time, when I was already in exile in Siberia, this was at the end of 1903, I received an enthusiastic letter from my friend and a simple, but very profound letter from Lenin, to whom it appears, my friend had communicated my letter. Lenin's letter was relatively a short one, but it contained a bold, fearless criticism of the practical work of our Party, and a remarkably clear and concise outline of a whole plan of work of the Party for the immediate period. Lenin alone was able to write about the most complicated things so simply and clearly, so concisely and boldly—so that every sentence seems, not to speak, but to ring out like a shot. This simple and bold letter still more strengthened me in my opinion that in Lenin we had the mountain eagle of our Party. I cannot forgive myself for having burnt Lenin's letter as I did many others, as is the habit of an old underground worker.

From that time my acquaintance with Lenin began.

#### MODESTY

I met Lenin for the first time in December, 1905, at a conference of Bolsheviks in Tammerfors (Finland). I was looking forward to seeing the mountain eagle of our Party, the great man, great, not only politically, but, if you will, physically, because in my imagination I pictured Lenin as a giant, well built and imposing. Imagine my disappointment when I saw an ordinary man, below average



height, in no way, literally in no way, to be distinguished from ordinary mortals. . . .

It is the accepted thing for a "great man" to come late to meetings so that the other people gathered at the meeting should wait on the tenterhooks of expectation for his appearance; and just before the appearance of the great man, the people at the meeting say, "Sh. . . . Silence. . . . He is coming." This rite seemed to me necessary because it makes an impression, it imbues one with respect. Imagine my disappointment when I learned that Lenin had arrived at the meeting before the delegates, and having ensconced himself in a corner was conversing, holding an ordinary conversation, with the ordinary delegates to the conference. I will not conceal from you that then this seemed to me somewhat of a violation of certain necessary rules.

Only later did I realize that this simplicity and modesty of Lenin, this striving to remain unobserved, or at all events, not to make himself prominent, not to emphasize his high position—this feature was one of Lenin's strongest sides as a new leader of new masses, of simple and ordinary masses, of the very "rank and file" of humanity.

### STRENGTH OF LOGIC

The two speeches that Lenin delivered at this conference on the political situation and on the agrarian question were most remarkable. Unfortunately, the reports of them have not been preserved. These were inspired speeches, which roused the whole conference to an outburst of enthusiasm. Extraordinary power of conviction, simplicity and clarity in argumentation, short sentences intelligible to all, the absence of posing, the absence of violent gesticulations and high-sounding phrases playing for effect—all this favourably distinguished Lenin's speeches from the speeches of ordinary, "parliamentary" orators.

But it was not this aspect of Lenin's speeches that captivated me at the time. I was captivated by the invincible power of logic in Lenin's speeches which, though somewhat dry, nevertheless completely overcomes the audience, gradually electrifies it, and then holds the whole audience captive. I remember many of the delegates saying: "The logic in Lenin's speeches can be compared to all-powerful tentacles which seize one in their grip on all sides and from the embrace of which it is impossible to release oneself: either surrender or make up your mind to be utterly crushed."

I think that this peculiar feature of Lenin's speeches represents the strongest side of this oratorical art.

#### NO SNIVELLING

I met Lenin the second time in 1906, at the Stockholm Congress of our Party. It is well known that at this Congress the Bolsheviks were in the minority, they were defeated. This was the first time I saw Lenin in the rôle of the vanquished. He did not in the least look like those leaders who snivel and become despondent after defeat. On the contrary, defeat transformed Lenin into a congelation of energy, who inspired his adherents with courage for fresh battles and for future victory. I said that Lenin was defeated. But what sort of a defeat was it? You should have seen Lenin's opponents, the victors of Stockholm—Plekhanov, Axelrod, Martov and the others; they did not in the least look like real victors because, in his ruthless criticism of Menshevism, Lenin, so to speak, did not leave a sound place on their bodies. I remember the Bolshevik delegates gathering together in a small crowd gazing at Lenin and asking him for advice. In the conversation of some of the delegates one detected a note of weariness and depression. I remember Lenin, in reply to

such talk, sharply saying through his clenched teeth: "No snivelling, Comrades, we shall certainly win, because we are right." Hatred for snivelling intellectuals, confidence in one's own strength, confidence in victory—that is what Lenin talked to us about at that time. One felt that the defeat of the Bolsheviks was a temporary one, that the Bolsheviks must be victorious in the near future.

"No snivelling in the event of defeat." This is the peculiar feature in the activities of Lenin that helped him to rally around himself an army that was faithful to the last and had confidence in its strength.

### NO BOASTING

At the next Congress, in 1907, in London, the Bolsheviks were the victors. I then saw Lenin for the first time in the rôle of victor. Usually, victory turns ordinary 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, 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 over-estimation of one's own strength, and particularly under-estimation of the strength of the enemy, was to be avoided.

"Not boasting of victory"—this is the peculiar feature

in Lenin's character that helped him soberly to weigh the forces of the enemy and to ensure the Party against possible surprises.

### PRINCIPLE

Party leaders cannot but prize the opinion of the majority of their party. The majority is a power, which a leader cannot but take into account. Lenin understood this not less than any other Party leader. But Lenin never allowed himself to become the captive of the majority, especially when that majority did not have a basis of principle. There have been moments in the history of our Party when the opinion of the majority, or the transient interests of the Party, came into conflict with the fundamental interests of the proletariat. In such cases Lenin without hesitation took determinedly his stand on the side of principle against the majority of the Party. Moreover, in such cases, he did not fear to come out literally alone against all, calculating, as he often said, that "a policy based on principle is the only correct policy."

The two following facts are particularly characteristic in this respect.

*First fact.* The period of 1909-11, when the Party, defeated by the counter-revolution, was undergoing complete disintegration. This was the period of complete lack of faith in the Party, the period of the wholesale desertion of the Party, not only by the intellectuals, but partly also by the workers, the period when underground work was repudiated, the period of liquidationism and collapse. Not only Mensheviks but also Bolsheviks at that time represented a number of factions and trends, for the most part divorced from the labor movement. It is well known that it was precisely at this time that the idea arose of completely liquidating the underground organization and of

organizing the workers in a legal, liberal, Stolypin party.\* At that time Lenin was the only one who did not give way to the general mood and who held aloft the Party banner, rallied the scattered and defeated forces of the Party with astonishing patience and unparalleled persistence, fought against all and sundry anti-Party trends in the labor movement and defended the Party principle with unparalleled courage and unprecedented persistence.

It is well known that in this fight for the Party principles Lenin later proved victorious.

*Second fact.* The period of 1914-17, the period when the imperialist war was at its height, when all, or nearly all, the Social-Democratic and Socialist parties, giving way to the universal patriotic intoxication, went into the service of the imperialism of their respective countries. That was the period when the Second International lowered its flag to capital, when even people like Plekhanov, Kautsky, Guesde and others failed to withstand the wave of chauvinism. Lenin at that time was the only one, or almost the only one, who commenced a determined struggle against social-chauvinism and social-pacifism, who exposed the treachery of the Guesdes and Kautskys and condemned the half-heartedness of intermediary "revolutionaries." Lenin realized that he had an insignificant minority behind him; but he did not regard this as a matter of decisive importance, for he knew that the only correct policy which had a future before it was the policy of consistent internationalism, for he knew that a policy based on principle was the only correct policy.

It is well known that in this contest for a new International Lenin turned out to be the victor.

"A policy based on principle is the only correct

\* Parties that would be permitted by Stolypin, the reactionary Prime Minister of Russia in 1906-11.—*Ed.*

policy"—this is the formula with which Lenin stormed new "invincible" positions and won over the best elements of the proletariat to the side of revolutionary Marxism.

### CONFIDENCE IN THE MASSES

Theoreticians and leaders of parties who know the history of nations, who have studied the history of revolutions from beginning to end, are sometimes afflicted with an unpleasant disease. This disease is known as fear of the masses, lack of confidence in the creative ability of the masses. Sometimes on this ground a certain aristocratic pose is displayed by leaders towards the masses who, although not versed in the history of revolutions, are destined to break up the old and build the new. The fear that the elements may break forth, that the masses may "break up too much," the desire to play the rôle of nurses who try to teach the masses from books but who refuse to learn from the masses—such is the basis of this sort of aristocratic attitude.

Lenin represented the very opposite of such leaders. I do not know another revolutionary who had such profound confidence in the creative strength of the proletariat and in the revolutionary expediency of its class instincts as Lenin did. I do not know another revolutionary who was so able to ruthlessly scourge the smug critics of the "chaos of revolution" and the "bacchanalia of irresponsible actions of the masses" as Lenin was. I remember during a conversation, in reply to a remark made by a comrade that "after revolution normal order must be established," Lenin sarcastically remarked: "It is a pity that people who want to be revolutionaries forget that the most normal kind of order in history is revolutionary order."

Hence Lenin's contempt for all those who tried superciliously to look down upon the masses and to teach them

from books. Hence Lenin's constant urging that we must learn from the masses, try to understand their actions and carefully study the practical experience of the struggle of the masses.

Confidence in the creative power of the masses—this is the peculiar feature in the activities of Lenin which enabled him to understand the spontaneous movement and direct it into the channels of the proletarian revolution.

### THE GENIUS OF REVOLUTION

Lenin was born for revolution. He was, in truth, the genius of revolutionary outbreaks and a great master in the art of revolutionary leadership. Never did he feel so free and happy as in the epoch of revolutionary shocks. By that I do not want to say that Lenin equally approved of all revolutionary shocks, or that he advocated revolutionary outbreaks at all times and under all conditions. Not in the least. I want merely to say that never was the profound foresight of Lenin revealed so fully and distinctly as during revolutionary outbreaks. In the days of revolutionary uprisings he blossomed out, as it were, became a prophet, foresaw the movement of classes and the probable zigzags of the revolution, saw them like the lines on the palm of his hand. It was not for nothing that it used to be said in our Party circles that "Ilyich is able to swim in the waves of revolution like a fish in water."

Hence the "astonishing" *clarity* of Lenin's tactical slogans, the "breathless" *audacity* of his revolutionary designs.

I remember two particularly characteristic facts which revealed this peculiar feature of Lenin's.

*First fact.* The period before the October uprising, when millions of workers, peasants and soldiers, lashed by the crisis in the rear and at the front, demanded peace and

liberty; when the militarists and the bourgeoisie were preparing for a military dictatorship in order to pursue the "war to the bitter end"; when the whole of so-called "public opinion," all the so-called "Socialist parties" were opposed to the Bolsheviki, charged them with being "German spies"; when Kerensky tried, and to some extent succeeded, in driving the Bolshevik Party underground; when the still powerful, disciplined army of the Austro-German coalition stood confronting our weary and disintegrating armies, and when the West European "Socialists" lived in happy alliance with their governments for the purpose of pursuing the "war to final victory" . . .

What did raising a rebellion mean at that time? Raising rebellion in such circumstances meant staking everything on this one card. But Lenin did not fear to take the risk, because he knew, he saw with his prophetic eye, that rebellion was inevitable, that rebellion would be victorious, that rebellion in Russia would prepare for the end of the imperialist war, that rebellion in Russia would rouse the tortured masses of the West, that rebellion in Russia would transform the imperialist war into civil war, that rebellion would give rise to a republic of Soviets, that a republic of Soviets would serve as a bulwark for the revolutionary movement of the whole world.

It is well known that Lenin's revolutionary foresight was afterwards confirmed with unprecedented precision.

*Second fact.* During the first days after the October Revolution, when the Council of People's Commissars tried to compel the mutinous general, Commander-in-Chief Dukhonin, to cease military operations and open negotiations for a truce with the Germans, I remember that Lenin, Krylenko (the future Commander-in-Chief) and I went to General Military Headquarters in Petrograd to speak on the direct wire to Dukhonin. The situation was very



tense. Dukhonin and the General Staff categorically refused to carry out the orders of the Council of People's Commissars. The army officers were entirely in the hands of the General Staff. As for the soldiers, it was impossible to foretell what the twelve million army, which was subordinate to the so-called army organizations which were hostile to the Soviet government, would say. In Petrograd itself, as is well known, the mutiny of the *Junkers* was maturing. Moreover, Kerensky was marching on Petrograd. I remember that after a slight pause at the telegraph wire Lenin's face lit up with an extraordinary light. It was evident that he had come to some decision. "Come to the radio station," he said, "it will render us a service: we will issue a special order dismissing General Dukhonin and appoint Krylenko in his place as Commander-in-Chief and appeal to the soldiers over the heads of the officers—to surround the generals, stop military operations, establish contact with the Austro-German soldiers and take the cause of peace into their own hands."

This was a "leap into the unknown." But Lenin was not afraid to take this leap; he went out to meet it, for he knew that the army wanted peace, that it would win peace and sweep every obstacle from its path to peace; for he knew that such a method of establishing peace must have an effect upon the Austro-German soldiery, that it would release the desire for peace on all fronts without exception.

It is well known that Lenin's revolutionary foresight on this occasion was also confirmed later with the utmost precision.

Brilliant foresight, the ability rapidly to catch and appreciate the inner sense of impending events—this is the feature of Lenin that enabled him to outline the correct strategy and a clear line of conduct at the turning points of the revolutionary movement.

## LENIN ABOUT HIMSELF

(A Questionnaire for Delegates filled out by Lenin at the Tenth Congress of the Communist Party, 1921.)

Date of birth—*1870.*

Condition of health—*Well.*

What languages do you know?—*English; German; French poorly; Italian very poorly.*

What localities in Russia do you know well and how long did you live there?—*I know the Volga region, where I was born and raised until 17 years of age.*

What All-Russian Congresses did you attend?—*All except the July or August, 1917.*

Were you abroad?—*In a number of countries of Western Europe in 1895, 1900-1905, 1908-1917.*

Military training—*None.*

Education—*Graduated in 1891 from the Law Faculty of Petersburg University.*

Basic occupation up to 1917—*Literary.*

What are your specialties?—*None.*

What did you do after 1917 outside of Party, Trade Union, Soviet, etc., work?—*In addition to the above, only literary work.*

What Union are you a member of at the present time?—*The Union of Journalists.*

Work from 1917—*Chairman of the Council of Peoples' Commissars and of the Council of Labor and Defense.*

How long were you a member of the Communist Party?—*Since 1894.*

Did you belong to other Parties and to which ones?—*No.*

Participation in the revolutionary movement—

WHEN	WHERE	IN WHAT ORGANIZATION
<i>1892-1893</i>	<i>Samara</i>	
<i>1894-1895</i>	<i>Petersburg</i>	
<i>1895-1897</i>	<i>Prison</i>	
<i>1898-1900</i>	<i>Yenisey Province (Exiled in Siberia.—Ed.)</i>	<i>Illegal circles of Social-Democrats and a member of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party from its foundation.</i>
<i>1900-1905</i>	<i>Abroad</i>	
<i>1905-1907</i>	<i>Petersburg</i>	
<i>1908-1917</i>	<i>Abroad</i>	

Were you persecuted for revolutionary activity?—*Arrested, 1887; arrested, 1895-1897; Siberia, 1898-1900; arrested, 1900.*

How long were you in prison?—*14 months and a few days.*

Penal servitude or exile—*3 years.*

In immigration—*9-10 years.*



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