Alexander Berkman

The Bolshevik Myth

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About this edition

The Bolshevik Myth

Alexander Berkman

EDITION BASIS

Alexander Berkman, The Bolshevik Myth (Diary 1920–1922) (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1925), with its original preface and 39 diary chapters, followed by the author's concluding chapter, first published separately as The "Anti-Climax" (Berlin: Maurer and Dimmick, 1925). The concluding chapter is numbered XL in the selected Standard Ebooks transcription.

PAMPHLETS EDITION

Pamphlets reading edition, November 2026. Complete diary and its separately published concluding chapter, with new typography and pagination.

TEXT AND REUSE

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EDITORIAL TREATMENT

The original preface, 39 diary chapters and historical notes are preserved, followed by Berkman's concluding chapter, which appeared separately in 1925 as The "Anti-Climax." This supplementary chapter is included as chapter XL in the source transcription; its absence from the original diary volume is not treated as damage to that first edition. The Standard Ebooks transcription's spelling and punctuation conventions are retained. Modern cover artwork, provider title furniture and boilerplate are replaced with Pamphlets design.

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Preface

Revolution breaks the social forms grown too narrow for man. It bursts the molds which constrict him the more solidified they become, and the more Life ever striving forward leaves them. In this dynamic process the Russian Revolution has gone further than any previous revolution.

The abolition of the established —politically and economically, socially and ethically —the attempt to replace it with something different, is the reflex of man's changed needs, of the awakened consciousness of the people. Back of revolution are the millions of living humans who embody its inner spirit, who feel, think, and have their being in it. To them revolution is not a mere change of externals: it implies the complete dislocation of life, the shattering of dominant traditions, the annulment of accepted standards. The habitual, measured step of existence is interrupted, accustomed criterions become inoperative, former precedents are void. Existence is forced into uncharted channels; every action demands self-reliance; every detail calls for new, independent decision. The typical, the familiar, have disappeared; dissolved is the coherence and interrelation of the parts that formerly constituted one whole. New values are to be created.

This *inner* life of revolution, which is its sole meaning, has almost entirely been neglected by writers on the Russian Revolution. Many books have been published about that tremendous social upheaval, but seldom do they strike its true keynote. They treat of the fall and rise of institutions, of the new State and its structure, of constitutions and laws —of the exclusively *external* manifestations, which nearly make one forget the living millions who continue to exist, to be, under all changing conditions.

Justly Taine said that in studying the French Revolution he found statistics and data, official documents and edicts least illuminative of the real character of the period. Its significant expression, its deeper sense, he discovered in the lives, thoughts, and feelings of the people, in their personal reactions as portrayed in the memoirs, journals, and letters of contemporaries.

The present work is compiled from the Diary which I kept during my two years' stay in Russia. It is the chronicle of an intense experience, of impressions and observations noted down day by day, in different parts of the country, among various walks of life. Most of the names are deleted, for the obvious reason of protecting the persons in question.

So far as I know it is the only journal kept in Russia during those momentous years (1920 – 1922). It was a rather difficult task, as those familiar with Russian conditions will understand. But long practice in such matters —keeping memoranda even in prison —enabled me to preserve my Diary through many vicissitudes and searches, and get it safely out of the country. Its Odyssey was adventurous and eventful. After having journeyed through Russia for two years, the Diary succeeded in crossing the border, only to be lost before it could join me. There followed an anxious hunt through several European lands, and when hope of locating my notebooks was almost given up, they were discovered in the attic of a very much frightened old lady in Germany. But that is another story.

Sufficient that the manuscript was finally found and can now be presented to the public in the present volume. If it will aid in visualizing the inner life of the Revolution during the period described, if it will bring the reader closer to the Russian people and their great martyrdom, the mission of my Diary will be accomplished and my efforts well repaid.

Alexander Berkman.

I
The Log of the Transport *Buford*

On Board the U.S.T. *Buford*.

December 23, 1919. —We are somewhere near the Azores, already three days at sea. No one seems to know whither we are bound. The captain claims he is sailing under sealed orders. The men are nearly crazy with the uncertainty and worry over the women and children left behind. What if we are to be landed on Denikin territory? …

We were kidnapped, literally kidnapped out of bed in the dead of night.

It was late in the evening, December 20, when the prison keepers entered our cell at Ellis Island and ordered us to "get ready at once." I was just undressing; the others were in their bunks, asleep. We were taken completely by surprise. Some of us expected to be deported, but we had been promised several days' notice; while a number were to be released on bail, their cases not having been finally passed upon by the courts.

We were led into a large, bare room in the upper part of the building. Helter-skelter the men crowded in, dragging their things with them, badly packed in the haste and confusion. At four in the morning the order was given to start. In silence we filed into the prison yard, led by the guards and flanked on each side by city and Federal detectives. It was dark and cold; the night air chilled me to the bone. Scattered lights in the distance hinted of the huge city asleep.

Like shadows we passed through the yard toward the ferry, stumbling on the uneven ground. We did not speak; the prison keepers also were quiet. But the detectives laughed boisterously, and swore and sneered at the silent line. "Don't like this country, damn you! Now you'll get out, ye sons of b ——."

At last we reached the steamer. I caught sight of three women, our fellow prisoners, being taken aboard. Stealthily, her sirens dumb, the vessel got under way. Within half an hour we boarded the *Buford*, awaiting us in the Bay.

At 6 a.m., Sunday, December 21, we started on our journey. Slowly the big city receded, wrapped in a milky veil. The tall skyscrapers, their outlines dimmed, looked like fairy castles lit by winking stars —and then all was swallowed in the distance.

December 24. —The *Buford* is an old boat built in 1885. She was used as a military transport during the Philippine War, and is not seaworthy any more. We ship sea constantly, and it pours through the hatches. Two inches of water cover the floor; our things are wet, and there is no steam heat.

Our three women companions occupy a separate cabin. The men are cooped up in crowded, ill-smelling steerage quarters. We sleep in bunks built three tiers high. The loose wire netting of the one above me bulges so low with the weight of its occupant, it scratches my face whenever the man moves.

We are prisoners. Armed sentinels on deck, in the gangways, and at every door. They are silent and sullen; strict orders not to talk to us. Yesterday I offered one of them an orange —I thought he looked sick. But he refused it.

We caught a radio today about wholesale arrests of the radicals throughout the United States. Probably in connection with protests against our deportation.

There is much resentment among our men at the brutality that accompanied the deportation, and at the suddenness of the proceedings. They were given no time to get their money or clothing. Some of the boys were arrested at their workbenches, placed in jail, and deported without a chance to collect their pay checks. I am sure that the American people, if informed, would not stand for another boatload of deportees being set adrift in the Atlantic without enough clothes to keep them warm. I have faith in the American people, but American officialdom is ruthlessly bureaucratic.

Love of native soil, of home, is manifesting itself. I notice it especially among those who spent only a few years in America. More frequently the men of Southern Russia speak the Ukrainian language. All long to get to Russia quickly, to behold the land they had left in the clutches of Tsarism and which is now the freest on earth.

We have organized a committee to take a census. There are 246 of us, besides the three women. Various types and nationalities: Great Russians from New York and Baltimore; Ukrainian miners from Virginia; Letts, Lithuanians, and one Tartar. The majority are members of the Union of Russian Workers, an Anarchist organization with branches throughout the United States and Canada. About eleven belong to the Socialist Party in the United States, while some are nonpartisan. There are editors, lecturers, and manual workers of every kind among us. Some are bewhiskered, looking typically Russian; others smooth-shaven, American in appearance. Most of the men are of decided Slavic countenance, with broad face and high cheekbones.

"We'll work like devils for the Revolution," Big Samuel, the West Virginia miner, announces to the group gathered around him. He talks Russian.

"You bet we will," comes from a corner bunk in English. It's the mascot of our cabin, a red-cheeked youth, a six-footer, whom we have christened the "Baby."

"Me for Baku," an older man joins in. "I'm an oil driller. They'll need *me* all right."

I ponder over Russia, a country in revolution, a social revolution which has uprooted the very foundations, political, economical, ethical. There are the Allied invasion, the blockade, and internal counterrevolution. All forces must be bent, first of all, to secure the complete victory of the workers. Bourgeois resistance within must be crushed; interference from without defeated. Everything else will come later. To think that it was given to Russia, enslaved and tyrannized over for centuries, to usher in the New Day! It is almost beyond belief, past comprehension. Yesterday the most backward country; today in the vanguard. Nothing short of a miracle.

Unreservedly shall the remaining years of my life be consecrated to the service of the wonderful Russian people.

December 25. —The military force of the *Buford* is in command of a Colonel of the United States Army, tall and severe-looking, about fifty. In his charge are a number of officers and a very considerable body of soldiers, most of them of the regular army. Direct supervision over the deportees is given to the representative of the Federal Government, Mr. Berkshire, who is here with a number of Secret Service men. The Captain of the *Buford* takes his orders from the Colonel, who is the supreme authority on board.

The deportees want exercise on deck and free association with our women comrades. As their chosen spokesman I submitted their demands to Berkshire, but he referred me to the Colonel. I refused to apply to the latter, on the ground that we are political, not military, prisoners. Later the Federal man informed me that "the higher authorities" had granted us exercise, but association with the women was refused. Permission, however, would be given me to convince myself that "the ladies are receiving humane treatment."

Accompanied by Berkshire and one of his assistants, I was allowed to visit Emma Goldman, Dora Lipkin-Perkus, and Ethel Bernstein. I found them on the upper deck, Dora and Ethel bundled up and much the worse for seasickness, the motherly nurse ministering to them. They looked forlorn, those "dangerous enemies" of the

United States. The powerful American Government never appeared to me in a more ridiculous light.

The women made no complaints: they are treated well and receive good food. But all three are penned in a small cabin intended for one person only; day and night armed sentinels guard their door.

No trace of Christ appeared anywhere on the ship this Christmas Day. The usual espionage and surveillance, the same discipline and severity. But in the general messroom, at dinner, there was an addition to the regular meal: currant bread and cranberries. More than half of the tables were vacant, however: most of the men are in their bunks, sick.

December 26. —Rough sea, and more men "laid out." The six-foot "Baby" is the sickest of them all. The hatches have been closed to keep the sea out, and it is suffocating below deck. There are forty-nine men in our compartment; the rest are in the two adjoining ones.

The ship physician has asked me to assist him on his daily rounds, as interpreter and nurse. The men suffer mostly from stomach and bowel complaints; but there are also cases of rheumatism, sciatica, and heart-disease. The Boris brothers are in a precarious condition; young John Birk is growing very weak; a number of others are in bad shape.

December 27. —The Boston deportee, a former sailor, claims the course of the *Buford* was changed twice during the night. "Perhaps making for the Portugal Coast," he said. It is rumored we may be turned over to Denikin. The men are much worried.

Human psychology everywhere has a basic kinship. Even in prison I found the deepest tragedies lit up by a touch of humor. In spite of the great anxiety regarding our destination, there is much laughter and joking in our cabin. Some wit among the boys has christened the *Buford* the "Mystery Ship."

In the afternoon Berkshire informed me that the Colonel wished to see me. His cabin, not large, but light and dry, is quite different from our steerage quarters. The Colonel asked me what part of Russia we were "expecting to go to." The Soviet part, of course, I said. He began a discussion of the Bolsheviki. The Socialists, he insisted, wanted to "take away the hard-earned wealth of the rich, and divide it among the lazy and the shiftless." Everyone willing to work could succeed in the world, he assured me; at least America —the freest country on earth —gives all an equal opportunity.

I had to explain to him the A.B.C. of social science, pointing out that no wealth can be created except by labor; and that by complex juggling —legal, financial, economic —the producer is robbed of his product. The Colonel admitted defects and imperfections in our system —even in "the best system of the world, the American." But they are human failings; we need improvement, not revolution, he thought. He listened with unconcealed impatience when I spoke of the crime of punishing men for their opinions and the folly of deporting ideas. He believes "the government must protect its people," and that "these foreign agitators have no business in America, anyhow."

I saw the futility of discussing with a person of such infantile mentality, and closed the argument by inquiring the exact point of our destination. "Sailing under sealed orders," was all the information the Colonel would vouchsafe.

New Year's Day, 1920. —We are getting friendly with the soldiers. They are selling us their extra clothing, shoes, and everything else they can lay their hands on. Our boys are discussing war, government, and Anarchism with the sentinels. Some of the latter are much interested, and they are noting down addresses in New York where they can get our literature. One of the soldiers —Long Sam, they call him —is especially outspoken against his superiors. He is "sore as hell," he says. He was to be married on Christmas, but he got orders to report for duty on the *Buford*. "I'm no damn tin soldier like them Nationals" (National Guard), he says; "I'm sev'n years a reg'lar, an' them's the thanks I get. 'Stead of bein' with me goil I'm in this floatin' dump, between Hell an' nowhere."

We have organized a committee to assess every "possessing" member of our group for the benefit of the deportees that lack warm clothing. The men from Pittsburgh, Erie, and Madison had been shipped to Ellis Island in their working clothes. Many others had also been given no time to take their trunks along.

A large pile of the collected apparel —suits, hats, shoes, winter underwear, hosiery, etc. —lies in the center of our cabin, and the committee is distributing the things. There is much shouting, laughing, and joking. It's our first attempt at practical communism. The crowd surrounding the committee passes upon the claims of each applicant and immediately acts upon its verdict. A vital sense of social justice is manifested.

January 2, 1920. —In Bisay Bay. Rolling badly. The sailors say last night's storm threw us out of our course. Some ship, apparently Japanese, was signaling for help. We ourselves were in such a plight that we could not aid.

At noon the Captain sent for me. The *Buford* is not a modern ship —he spoke guardedly —and we are in difficult waters. Bad time of the year, too; storm season. No particular danger, but it is always well to be prepared. He would assign twelve lifeboats in my charge, and I should instruct the men what to do should the contingency arise.

I have divided the 246 male deportees into a number of groups, putting at the head of each one of the older comrades. (The three women are assigned to the sailors' boat.) We are to have several trial alarms to teach the men how to handle the life belts, take their place in line, and get without confusion to their respective boats. The first test, this afternoon, was a bit lame. Another trial, by surprise, is to take place soon.

January 3. —Rumors that we are bound for Danzig. It is certain now we are making for the English Channel and expect to reach it tomorrow. We feel greatly relieved.

January 4. —No channel. No land. Very bad night. The old tub has been dancing up and down like a rubber shoe thrown into the ocean by vacationists at Coney Island. Been busy all night with the sick.

Everyone except Bianki and myself is keeping to his bunk. Some are seriously ill. Bianki's nephew, the young schoolboy, has lost his hearing. John Birk is very low. Novikov, former editor of the New York Anarchist weekly, *Golos Truda*, hasn't touched food for days. In Ellis Island he spent most of his time in the hospital. He refused to accept bail as long as the others arrested with him remained in prison. He consented only when almost at the point of death, and then he was dragged to the boat to be deported.

It is hard to be torn out of the soil one has rooted in for over thirty years, and to leave the labors of a lifetime behind. Yet I am glad: I face the future, not the past. Already in 1917, at the outbreak of the Revolution, I longed to go to Russia. Shatov, my close friend and comrade, was about to leave, and I hoped to join him. But the Mooney case and the needs of the antiwar movement kept me in the United States. Then came my arrest for opposing the world slaughter, and my two years' imprisonment in Atlanta.

But soon I shall be in Russia. What joy to behold the Revolution with my own eyes, to become part of it, to aid the great people that are transforming the world!

January 5. —Pilot boat! Great rejoicing! Sent wire to our friends in New York to allay the anxiety they must feel because of our mysterious disappearance.

January 7. —We're in the North Sea. Clear, quiet, cool. In the afternoon a bit rolling.

The singing of the boys reaches me from the deck. I hear the strong baritone of Alyosha, the *zapevalo*, who begins every stanza, the whole crowd joining in the chorus. Old Russian folk songs with their mournful refrain, dripping quiet resignation and the suffering of centuries. Songs palpitating with the frank hatred of the *bourzhooi* and the militancy of impending struggle. Church hymns with their crescendo recitative, paraphrased by revolutionary words. The soldiers and sailors stand about wrapt in the weird, heart-gripping melodies. Yesterday I heard our guard absentmindedly humming "Stenka Razin."

We've gotten so friendly with our guards now that we do as we please below deck. It has become the established rule for soldiers and deportees never to appeal to the officers in the case of dispute. All such matters are referred to me, and my judgment is respected. Berkshire has repeatedly hinted his displeasure at the influence I have gained. He feels himself entirely ignored.

The sameness of the food is disgusting. The bread is stale and doughy. We have made several protests, and at last the chief steward agreed to my proposition to put two men of our group in charge of the bakery.

January 8. —At anchor in the Kiel Canal. Leaks in the boiler —repairs begun. The men are chafing —the accident may cause much delay. We're sick of the journey. Eighteen days at sea already.

Most of the deportees left their money and effects in the United States. Many have bank deposits which they could not draw because of the suddenness of their arrest and deportation. I have prepared a list of the funds and things owned by our group. The total amounts to over $45,000. I turned the list over to Berkshire today, who promised to "attend to the matter in Washington." But few of the boys have any hope of ever receiving their clothes or money.

January 9. —Much excitement. For two days we've had no fresh air. Orders are not to permit us on deck as long as we remain in German waters. They are afraid we might communicate with the outside or "jump overboard," as Berkshire jocosely said. I told him the only place we want to jump off at is Soviet Russia.

I sent word to the Colonel that the men demand daily exercise. The atmosphere in the steerage is beastly: the hatches are shut, and we are almost suffocating. Berkshire resented the manner in which I addressed "the Chief."

"The Colonel is the highest authority on the *Buford*," he shouted.

The group of deportees about me grinned in his face. “Berkman is the only ‘Colonel’ we recognize,” they laughed.

I told Berkshire to repeat our message to the Colonel: we insist on fresh air; in case of refusal we will go on deck by force. The men are prepared to carry out their threat.

In the afternoon the hatches were opened, and we were permitted on deck. We noticed that the destroyer *Ballard*, U.S.S. 267, is alongside of us.

January 10. —We are in the Bay, opposite the City of Kiel. On either side of us stretches of land with beautiful villas and clean-looking farmhouses, the stillness of death over all. Five years of carnage have left their indelible mark. The blood has been washed away, but the hand of destruction is still visible.

The German Quartermaster came on board. “You are surprised at the stillness?” he said. “We are being starved to death by the kindly powers that set out to make the world safe for democracy. We are not yet dead, but we are so faint we cannot cry out.”

January 11. —We got in touch with the German sailors of the *Wasserversorger*, which brought us fresh water. Our bakers gave them food. Through the portholes we fired bread balls, oranges, and potatoes onto the boat. Her crew picked up the things, and read the notes hidden in them. One of the messages was a “Greeting of the American Political Deportees to the Proletariat of Germany.”

Later. —Most of the convoy and several officers are drunk. The sailors got schnapps from the Germans and have been selling it on board. “Long Sam” went “gunning” for his first lieutenant. Several soldiers called me for a secret confab and proposed that I take charge of the ship. They would arrest their officers, turn the boat over to me, and come with us to Russia. “Damn the United States Army, we’re with the Bolsheviks!” they shouted.

January 12. —At noon Berkshire called me to the Colonel. Both looked nervous and worried. The Colonel regarded me with distrust and hatred. He had been informed that I was “inciting mutiny” among his men. “You’ve been fraternizing with the soldiers and weakening the discipline,” he said. He declared that guns, ammunition, and officers’ apparel were missing, and instructed Berkshire to have the effects of the deportees searched. I protested: the men would not submit to such an indignity.

Returning below deck I learned that several soldiers were under arrest for insubordination and drunkenness. The guards have been doubled at our door, and the convoy officers are much in evidence.

We passed the day in anxious suspense, but no attempt to search us was made.

January 13. —We got under way again at 1:40 p.m. Making for the Baltic. I wonder how this leaky boat will navigate the North Sea and fight the ice there. The boys, including the soldiers, are very nervous: we are on a dangerous road, full of war mines.

Two of the ship's crew are in the "cooler" for having overstayed their shore-leave. I withdrew our men from the bakery in protest against the arrest of the sailors and soldiers.

January 15. —The 25th day at sea. We all feel worn out, tired of the long journey. In constant fear lest we strike some mine.

Our course has been changed again. Berkshire hinted this morning that conditions at Libau will not permit our going there. I gathered from his talk that the United States Government has so far failed to make arrangements for our landing in any country.

Sailors have overheard the Colonel, the Captain, and Berkshire discussing our going to Finland. The scheme is to send me, in company with Berkshire, with a white flag, 70 miles inland, to come to some understanding with the authorities about our landing. If we are successful, I am to remain there, while Berkshire is to return to our people.

The deportees are opposed to the plan. Finland is dangerous for us —the Mannheimer reaction is slaughtering the Finnish revolutionists. The men refuse to let me go. "We'll all go together, or no one shall," they declare.

Evening. —This afternoon two American press correspondents boarded us, near Hango, and the Colonel gave them permission to interview me. American Consul from Helsingfors is also on board with his secretary. He is trying to get power of attorney from the deportees to collect their money in the United States. Many of the boys are transferring their bank accounts to relatives.

January 16. —4:25 p.m. Reached Hango, Finland. Helsingfors inaccessible, they say.

January 17. —Landed, 2 p.m. Sent radios to Chicherin (Moscow) and Shatov (Petrograd) notifying them of the arrival of the first group of political deportees from America.

We are to travel in sealed cars through Finland to the Russian border. The Captain of the *Buford* allowed us three days' rations for the journey.

The leave-taking of the crew and soldiers touched me deeply. Many of them have become attached to us, and they have "treated us white," to use their own expression. They made us promise to write them from Russia.

January 18. —Crossing snow-clad country. Cars cold, unheated. The compartments are locked, with Finnish guards on every platform. Even within are the White soldiers, at every door. Silent, forbidding looking. They refuse to enter into conversation.

2 p.m. —In Viborg. We are practically without food. The Finnish soldiers have stolen most of the products given us by the *Buford*.

Through our car windows we noticed a Finnish worker standing on the platform and surreptitiously signaling us with a miniature red flag. We waved recognition. Half an hour later the doors of our car were unlocked, and the workman entered to "fix the lights," as he announced. "Fearful reaction here," he whispered; "White terror against the workers. We need the help of revolutionary Russia."

Wired again today to Chicherin and Shatov, urging haste in sending a committee to meet the deportees on the Russian border.

January 19. —In Teryoki, near the border. No reply from Russia yet. The Finnish military authorities demand we should cross the frontier at once. We have refused because the Russian border guard, not informed of our identity, might regard us as invading Finns and shoot, thus giving Finland a pretext for war. A sort of armed truce exists now between the two countries, and feeling is very tense.

Noon. —The Finns are worried about our continued presence. We refuse to leave the train.

Representatives of the Finnish Foreign Office agreed to permit a Committee of the Deportees to go to the Russian frontier to explain the situation to the Soviet outpost. Our party selected three persons, but the Finnish military would consent only to one.

In company with a Finnish Officer, soldier, and interpreter, and trailed by several correspondents (among them, needless to say, an American press man) I advanced to the border, walking in deep snow through the sparse forest west of the destroyed frontier railroad bridge. Not without trepidation did we trudge through those white woods, fearing possible attack from the one side or the other.

After a quarter of an hour we reached the border. Opposite us were drawn up the Bolshevik guards —tall, strapping fellows in strange fur attire, with a black-bearded officer in charge.

"*Tovarish!*" I shouted in Russian across the frozen creek, "permit speech with you."

The officer motioned me to step nearer, his soldiers standing back as I approached. In a few words I explained the situation to him and our predicament at Chicherin's failure to reply to our repeated radios. He listened imperturbably, then said: "The Soviet Committee has just arrived."

It was happy news. The Finnish authorities consented to permit the Russian Committee to come on Finnish soil as far as the train, to meet the deportees. Zorin and Feinberg, representing the Soviet Government, and Mme. Andreyeva, Gorky's wife, who came with them unofficially, accompanied us to the railroad station.

"Kolchak has been arrested and his White Army broken up," Zorin announced, and the deportees greeted the news with enthusiastic shouts and hurrahs. Presently arrangements were completed to transport the men and their luggage to the other side, and at last we crossed the border of revolutionary Russia.

II
On Soviet Soil

January 20, 1920. —Late in the afternoon yesterday we touched the soil of Soviet Russia.

Driven out from the United States like criminals, we were received at Beloostrov with open arms. The revolutionary hymn, played by the military Red Band, greeted us as we crossed the frontier. The hurrahs of the red-capped soldiers, mixed with the cheers of the deportees, echoed through the woods, rolling into the distance like a challenge of joy and defiance. With bared head I stood in the presence of the visible symbols of the Revolution Triumphant.

A feeling of solemnity, of awe overwhelmed me. Thus my pious old forefathers must have felt on first entering the Holy of Holies. A strong desire was upon me to kneel down and kiss the ground —the ground consecrated by the lifeblood of generations of suffering and martyrdom, consecrated anew by the revolutionists of my own day. Never before, not even at the first caress of freedom on that glorious May day, 1906 —after fourteen years in the Pennsylvania prison —had I been stirred so profoundly. I longed to embrace humanity, to lay my heart at its feet, to give my life a thousand times to the service of the Social Revolution.

It was the most sublime day of my life.

At Beloostrov a mass meeting was held to welcome us. The large hall was filled with soldiers and peasants come to greet their comrades from America. They looked at us with large, wondering eyes, and asked many strange questions. “Are the workers starving in America? —Is the revolution about to break out? How soon shall we get help for Russia?”

The crowded place was heavy with the human smell and the fumes of tobacco. There was much pushing and jostling, and loud shouting in rough border speech. Darkness had fallen, but the hall remained unlit. I felt a peculiar sensation in being swayed here and there by the noisy human billows, without being able to distinguish any faces. Then the voices and the motion ceased. My eyes turned toward the platform. It was lit by a few tallow candles, and in their dim light I could make out the figures of several women clad in black. They looked like nuns just out of the cloister, their countenances severe, forbidding. Then one of them stepped to the edge of the platform.

"*Tovarishi*," she began, and the significant word vibrated through my whole being with the intensity of the speaker's ardor. She spoke passionately, vehemently, with a note of bitter defiance at the antagonistic world at large. She told of the high heroism of the revolutionary people, of their sacrifices and struggles, of the great work still to be done in Russia. She castigated the crimes of counterrevolutionists, the Allied invasion and murderous blockade. In fiery words she forecast the approach of the great world revolution, which is to destroy capitalism and the bourgeoisie throughout Europe and America, as Russia has done, and give the earth and the fullness thereof into the hands of the international proletariat.

Tumultuously the audience applauded. I felt the atmosphere charged with the spirit of revolutionary struggle, symbolic of the titanic war of two worlds —the new breaking violent path for itself amid the confusion and chaos of conflicting passions. I was conscious of a world in the making, of the all-uprooting Social Revolution in action, and myself in the midst of it.

Zorin followed the woman in black, welcoming the arrivals in the name of Soviet Russia, and bespeaking their cooperation in the work of the Revolution. Then several of the deportees appeared on the rostrum. They were deeply moved by the wonderful reception, they said, and filled with admiration for the great Russian people, the first to throw off the yoke of capitalism and establish liberty and brotherhood upon the earth.

I was stirred to the depths of my being, too profoundly for words. Presently I became aware of people nudging me and whispering, "Speak, Berkman, speak! Answer him!" I had become absorbed in my emotion and did not listen to the man on the platform. I looked up. Bianki was speaking, the young Russian of Italian descent. I stood aghast as his words slowly carried comprehension to my mind. "We Anarchists," he was saying, "are willing to work with the Bolsheviki if they will treat us right. But I warn you that we won't stand for suppression. If you attempt it, it will mean war between us."

I jumped on the platform. "Let not this great hour be debased by unworthy thoughts," I cried. "From now on we are all one —one in the sacred work of the Revolution, one in its defense, one in our common aim for the freedom and welfare of the people. Socialists or Anarchists —our theoretical differences are left behind. We are all revolutionists now, and shoulder to shoulder we'll stand, together to fight and to work for the liberating Revolution. Comrades, heroes of the great revolutionary struggles of Russia, in the name of the American deportees I greet you. In their name I say to you: We've come to learn, not to teach. To learn and to help!"

The deportees applauded, other speeches followed, and soon the unpleasant Bianki incident was forgotten. Amid great enthusiasm the meeting closed late in the evening, the whole audience joining in the singing of “The Internationale.”

On the way to the station, where a train was waiting to take us to Petrograd, a large box of American crackers fell off the sleigh. The accompanying soldiers hungrily pounced upon it, but when told that the provisions were for the children of Petrograd, they immediately returned the box to us. “Quite right,” they said, “the little ones need it most.”

Another ovation awaited us in Petrograd, followed by a demonstration to the Tauride Palace and a large meeting. Then we marched to the Smolny, where the deportees were quartered for the night.

III
In Petrograd

January 21, 1920. —The bright winter sun shines upon the broad white bosom of the Neva. Stately buildings on either side of the river, with the Admiralty rearing its slender peak on high, foppishly graceful. Majestic edifices as far as the eye can reach, the Winter Palace towering in their midst in cold tranquillity. The brass rider on the trembling steed is poised on the rough Finnish rock,[1] about to leap over the tall spire of the Petropavlovskaya guarding the city of his dream.

Familiar sight of my youth passed in the Tsar's capital. But gone are the gilded glory of the past, the royal splendor, the gay banquets of nobles, and the iron columns of the slavish military marching to the thunder of drums. The hand of Revolution has turned the city of luxurious idleness into the home of labor. The spirit of revolt has changed even the names of the streets. The Nevsky, immortalized by Gogol, Pushkin, and Dostoyevsky, has become the Prospect of October 25th; the square in front of the Winter Palace is now named in honor of Uritsky; the Kamenovstrovsky is called the Red Dawn. At the Duma the heroic bust of Lassale faces the passersby as the symbol of the New Day; on the Konoguardeisky Boulevard stands the statue of Volodarsky, arm outstretched, addressing the people.

Almost every street reminds me of the past struggles. There, in front of the Winter Palace, stood the priest Gapon in the midst of the thousands that had come to beg the "Little Father" for mercy and bread. The square ran crimson with the blood of the workers on that fateful January day in 1905. Out of their graves, a year later, rose the first Revolution, and again the cries of the oppressed were drowned by the crack of artillery. A reign of terror followed, and many perished on the scaffold and in the prisons. But again and again rose the specter of revolt, and at last Tsarism gave way, powerless to defend itself, forsaken by all, regretted by none. Then came the great October Revolution and the triumph of the people —and Petrograd ever in the first line of battle.

The city looks deserted. Its population, nearly 3,000,000 in 1917, is now reduced to 500,000. War and pestilence have almost decimated Petrograd. In the fights against Kaledin, Denikin, Kolchak, and other White forces, the workers of the Red City lost heavily. Its best proletarian element died for the Revolution.

The streets are empty; the people are in the factories, at work. On the corner the young woman *militsioner*, rifle in hand, walks to and fro, stamping with her booted

feet on the ground to keep warm. Now and then a solitary figure passes, all wrapped up and bent, dragging a heavy load on a sleigh.

The stores are closed, their shutters on. The signs still hang in their accustomed places —painted fruit and vegetables advertising the wares no more to be found within. Doors and windows are locked and barred, and everything is silent about.

The famous Apraksin Dvor is no more. All the wealth of the country, bought or stolen, used to be paraded there to tempt the passerby. Highborn *barinya* and chambermaid, good-natured blond peasant and sullen Tartar, absentminded student and crafty thief, mingled here in the free democracy of the marketplace. All things were to be had in the Dvor; human bodies were bought and sold, and souls bartered for money.

It is all changed now. At the entrance of the Labor Temple flames the legend: "Who does not work shall not eat."

In the public *stolovaya* (dining room) vegetable soup and kasha (gruel) are served. The diners bring with them their own bread, issued at the distributing points. The large room is unheated, and the people sit with their hats and coats on. They look cold and pale, pitifully emaciated. "If only the blockade were taken off," my neighbor at the table says, "we might be saved."

Some parts of the city bear evidence of the recent Yudenich campaign. Here and there are remnants of barricades, piles of sandbags, and artillery trained upon the railroad station. The story of that fight is still on everybody's lips. "It was a superhuman effort," little Vera enthusiastically related. "The enemy was five times our number and at our very gates —on Krasnaya Gorka —seven miles from the City. Men and women, even children, turned out to build barricades, carry munitions to the fighters, and prepare to defend our homes to the last hand-to-hand struggle." Vera is only eighteen, fair and delicate as a lily, but she operated a machine gun.

"So sure were the Whites of their victory," Vera continued, "they had already distributed the ministerial portfolios and appointed the military governor of Petrograd. Yudenich officials with their staffs were secretly in the city, waiting only for the triumphant entry of their Chief. We were in desperate straits; it seemed that all was lost. Our soldiers, reduced in numbers and exhausted, were disheartened. It was just then that Bill Shatov rushed to the scene. He gathered the little army about him, and addressed them in the name of the Revolution. His powerful voice reached the furthest lines; his passionate eloquence lit the embers of revolutionary zeal, inspiring new strength and faith."

“Forward, boys! For the Revolution!” Shatov thundered, and like desperate furies the workers threw themselves upon the Yudenich army. The flower of the Petrograd proletariat perished in that struggle, but the Red City and the Revolution were saved.

With justified pride Shatov showed me the order of the Red Banner pinned on his breast. “For Krasnaya Gorka,” he said, with a happy smile.

He has remained the jovial good fellow I knew him in America, made riper and more earnest by his experience in the Revolution. He has held many important positions, and has won a reputation as an efficient worker and successful organizer. He has not joined the Communist Party; on many vital points, he says, he disagrees with the Bolsheviki. He has remained an Anarchist, believing in the ultimate abolition of political government as the only sure road to individual liberty and general well-being.

“Just now we are passing through the difficult stage of violent social revolution,” Shatov said. “Several fronts are to be defended, and we need a strong, well-disciplined army. There are counterrevolutionary plots to be guarded against and the Cheka must keep a watchful eye on the conspirators. Of course, the Bolsheviki have committed many errors; that’s because they are human. We live in the period of transition, of much confusion, constant danger, and anxiety. It is the hour of travail, and men are needed to help in the work of defense and reconstruction. We Anarchists should remain true to our ideals, but we should not criticize at this time. We must work and help to build.”

The *Buford* deportees are quartered in the Smolny. By Zorin’s invitation I am staying at the Hotel Astoria, now known as the First House of the Soviet. Zorin, who was employed in America as a millman, is now Secretary of the Petrograd Section of the Communist Party, and the editor of the *Krasnaya Gazetta*, the official daily of the Soviet. He impresses me as a most devoted Communist and indefatigable worker. His wife, Liza, also an American emigrant, is the typical I.W.W. Though very feminine in figure, she is rough and ready of speech, and an enthusiastic Bolshevik.

Together we visited the Smolny. Formerly the exclusive home of highborn young ladies, it is now the busy seat of the Petrograd Government. The quarters of the Third International are also located here, and the sanctum of Zinoviev, its secretary, a large chamber sumptuously furnished and decorated with potted flowers and plants. On his desk I noticed a leather portfolio of huge size, the gift of his co-workers.

In the Smolny dining room I met a number of prominent Communists and Soviet officials. Some were in military uniform, others in corduroys and black student shirts belted at the waist, the tails on the outside. All looked pale, with sunken eyes and high cheekbones, the result of systematic undernourishment, overwork, and worry.

The dinner was much superior to the meals served in the public *stolovaya*. "Only the 'responsible workers,' Communists holding important positions, dine here," Zorin remarked. There are several gradations of *pyock* (rations), he explained. Soldiers and sailors receive one and a half pounds of bread per day; also sugar, salt, tobacco, and meat when possible. The factory workers get one pound, while the non-producers —most of them intelligentsia —receive half a pound and even less. There is no discrimination about this system, Zorin believes; it is just division, according to the value of one's work.

I remember Vera's remark. "Russia is very poor," she said; "but whatever there is, all should share alike. That would be justice, and no one could complain."

In the evening I attended the anniversary celebration of Alexander Herzen. For the first time I found myself within the walls of the Tsar's Palace, whose very mention had filled me with awe in my childhood. Never had I dreamed then that the forbidden name of Herzen, the feared Nihilist and enemy of the Romanovs, would some day be glorified there.

Red flags and bunting decorated the plaform. With interest I read the inscriptions:

> "Socialism is the religion of Man;
> A religion not of heaven but of the earth."
>
> "The reign of the workers and peasants forever."

A large crimson banner represented a bell (*Kolokol*), the name of the famous paper published by Herzen in exile. On its side was stamped: "1870 – 1920," and beneath, the words:

> "Not in vain have you died;
> What you have sown will grow."

After the meeting the audience marched to the home of Herzen, still preserved on the Nevsky. The demonstration through the dark streets, lit only by the torches of the participants, the strains of revolutionary music and song, the enthusiasm of the men and women indifferent to the bitter cold —all impressed me deeply. The moving silhouettes seemed the shades of the past come to life, the martyrs of Tsardom risen to avenge the injustice of the ages.

How true is the Herzen motto:

> "Not in vain have you died;
> What you have sown will grow."

The assembly hall of the Tauride Palace was filled with Soviet deputies and invited guests. A special session had been called to consider the difficult situation created by the severe winter, and the growing scarcity of food and fuel.

Row above row stretched before me, occupied by men and women in grimy working clothes, their faces pale, their bodies emaciated. Here and there were men in peasant garb. They sat quietly, conversing little, as if exhausted by the day's toil.

The military band struck up "The Internationale," and the audience rose to their feet. Then Zinoviev ascended the platform. The winter had caused much suffering, he said; heavy snowfall impedes railroad traffic, and Petrograd is almost isolated. A further reduction of the *pyock* (ration) has unfortunately become necessary. He expressed confidence that the workers of Petrograd —the most revolutionary, the advance-guard of Communism —would understand that the Government is compelled to take this step, and would approve its action.

The measure is temporary, Zinoviev continued. The Revolution is achieving success on all fronts —the glorious Red Army is winning great victories, the White forces will soon be entirely defeated, the country will get on its feet economically, and the workers will reap the fruit of their long martyrdom. The imperialists and capitalists of the whole world are against Russia, but the proletariat everywhere is with the Revolution. Soon the Social Revolution will break out in Europe and America —it cannot be far off now, for capitalism is crumbling to earth everywhere. Then there will be an end to war and fratricidal bloodshed, and Russia will receive help from the workers of other countries.

Radek, recently returned from Germany where he was a prisoner, followed Zinoviev. He gave an interesting account of his experience, lashing the German "social patriots" with biting sarcasm. A psuedo Socalist Party, he said, now in power, but too cowardly to introduce Socialism; traitors to the Revolution they are, those Scheidemanns, Bernsteins, et al., bourgeois reformists, agents of Allied militarism and international capital. The only hope is in the Communist Party of Germany which is growing by leaps and bounds, and is supported by the proletariat of Germany. Soon that country will be swept by revolution —not a make-believe Social Democratic one, but a Communist revolution, such as that of Russia, and then the workers of Germany will come to the aid of their brothers in Russia, and the world will learn what the revolutionary proletariat can accomplish.

Joffe was the next speaker. Of aristocratic appearance, well dressed, his beard neatly trimmed, he seemed strangely out of place in the assembly of ill-clad workers. As Chairman of the Peace Committee he reported on the conditions of the treaty just concluded with Latvia, receiving the applause of the assembly. The people are evidently eager for peace, whatever the conditions.

I had hoped to hear the deputies speak, and to learn the views and sentiments of the masses they represent. But the members of the Soviet took no active part in the proceedings. They listened quietly to the speakers, and voted mechanically on the resolutions presented by the Presidium. There was no discussion; the proceedings lacked vitality.

Some friction has developed among the *Buford* deportees. The Anarchists complain of discrimination in favor of the Communist members of the group, and I have been repeatedly called to the Smolny to smooth out difficulties.

The boys chafe at the delay in assigning them to work. I have prepared the *enquetes* of the group, classifying the deportees according to trade and ability, to aid in placing them to best advantage. But two weeks have passed, and the men are still haunting the Soviet departments, standing in line by the hour, seeking to be supplied with the necessary *propuski* and documents admitting them to work.

I have pointed out to Zorin what a valuable asset these deportees are to Russia: there are mechanics, miners, printers among them, needed in the present scarcity of skilled labor. Why waste their time and energy? I cited the matter of exchanging American currency. Most of the deportees brought some money with them. Their *pyock* is insufficient, but certain necessaries can be bought: bread, butter, and tobacco, even meat, are offered on the markets. At least a hundred of our boys have exchanged their American cash for Soviet money. Considering that each one had to find out for himself where the exchange could be made, often being directed wrongly, and the time each had to spend in the Soviet financial departments, it can be safely assumed that on the average each man required three hours for the transaction. If the deportees had a responsible committee, the whole matter could have been managed in less than a day. “Such a committee could attend to all their affairs, and save time,” I urged.

Zorin agreed with me. “It ought to be tried,” he said.

I proposed to go over to the Smolny, call the men together, explain my proposition to them, and have the committee elected. “It would be well to assign a little room as the Committee’s office, with a telephone to transact business,” I suggested.

“You are very American,” Zorin smiled. “You want it done on the spot. But that isn’t the way,” he added dryly. “I’ll submit your plan to the proper authorities, and then we’ll see.”

“At any rate,” I said, “I hope it can be done soon. And you may always call on me, for I am anxious to help.”

“By the way,” Zorin remarked, looking at me quizzically, “trading is forbidden. Buying and selling is speculation. Your people should not do such things.” He spoke severely.

“You cannot call buying a pound of bread speculation,” I replied. “Besides, the difference in the *pyock* encourages trade. The Government still issues money —it is legally in circulation.”

“Y-e-s,” Zorin said, displeased. “But better tell your friends not to speculate any more. Only *shkurniki*, self-seeking skinners, do that.”

“You are unjust, Zorin. The *Buford* men have donated the greater part of their money, the provisions and medicines they brought, to the children of Petrograd. They have even deprived themselves of necessities, and the little cash they have kept the Government itself has turned into Soviet money for them.”

“Better warn the men,” Zorin repeated.

IV
Moscow

February 10, 1920. —The opportunity to visit the capital came unexpectedly: Lansbury and Barry, of the London *Daily Herald*, were in Petrograd, and I was asked to accompany them to Moscow as interpreter. Though not entirely recovered from my recent illness, I accepted the rare chance, travel between Petrograd and Moscow being limited to absolute necessity.

The railroad conditions between the two capitals (both cities are so considered) are deplorable. The engines are old and weak, the road in need of repair. Several times we ran short of fuel, and our engineer left the train to go off into the woods for a fresh supply of wood. Some of the passengers accompanied the crew to help with the loading.

The cars were crowded with soldiers and Soviet officials. During the night many travelers boarded our train. There was much shouting and cursing, and the plaintive cries of children. Then sudden silence, and an imperious command, "Get off, you devils. You don't belong here."

"The railroad Cheka," the *provodnik* (car porter) came into the coupé to warn us. "Get your papers ready, *tovarishi*."

A dark, stocky man entered. My eye caught the gleam of a big Colt in his belt, without holster. Behind him stood two soldiers, with bayoneted rifles. "Your papers!" he demanded.

"English travelers," I explained, showing our documents.

"Oh, pardon, *tovarishi*," —his manner changed instantly, as he caught sight of Lansbury, wrapped in his great fur coat, tall and side-whiskered, the typical British *bourzhooi*.

"Pardon," the Chekist repeated, and without looking at our documents he stepped into the next coupé.

We were in the special coach reserved for high Bolshevik officials and foreign guests. It was lit by candles, had upholstered couches, and was comparatively clean. The rest of the train consisted of third-class cars, containing double tiers of wooden benches, and of some *teplushki* (freight cars) used for passenger traffic, without light or heat, incredibly crowded and filthy.

At every station we were besieged by crowds clamoring for admission. "*N'yet mesta, N'yet mesta!*" (No room!) the militiamen accompanying the train kept shouting, repeatedly drawing their guns. I called the attention of the officers to the vacant places in our compartment, but they waved me aside. " 'Tis not for them," they said.

Arriving at the Moscow depot we found platform and waiting room a dense mass, almost everyone with a heavy load on his back, pushing and shouting, those in front trying to get past the armed guards at the gates. The people looked worn and begrimed, most of them having spent several days at the station, sleeping at night on the floor, and waiting their turn to be let through.

With difficulty we made our way to the street. There scores of women and children fell upon our things, each trying to drag them to his little sleigh and assuring us he'll carry our effects anywhere for a small price. "A bit of bread, little father," the children begged; "just a little, for Christ's sake."

It was bitterly cold, deep snow on the ground. The children stood shivering, knocking one foot against the other for warmth. Their emaciated little faces were blue and pinched, some of the boys barefoot on the frozen steps.

"How starved they look, and how poorly clad," I remarked.

"No worse than you see at the London stations," Lansbury replied curtly. "You're hypercritical, Berkman."

In an automobile of the Foreign Office we were driven to a large house, with high iron fence and guard at the gate, the former residence of Y ——, the Sugar King of Russia, now occupied by Karakhan.

A palatial home, with costly carpets, rare tapestries, and paintings. The young man who met us and who introduced himself as Chicherin's secretary, assigned Lansbury and Barry to the guest wing. "I regret we have no spare room for you," he said to me; "we didn't expect you. But I shall send you to the Kharitonensky."

The latter proved to be a Soviet guest house, on the street of the same name. Formerly owned by a German merchant, it is now nationalized and serves to house delegates and visitors from other parts of the country.

In the Kharitonensky I was informed that the commandant of the house was absent, and that nothing could be done without his orders. I waited two hours, and when the commandant finally appeared he said that he had not been notified of my coming, had received no instructions to prepare a room for me, and that, moreover, no rooms were vacant.

Here was a dilemma. A stranger in a city without hotels or boarding houses, and no lodgings to be had except by order of one or the other of the Soviet institutions. As I had not been invited or sent to Moscow by any of its government branches, I could not count upon them to secure a room for me. Moscow is fearfully overcrowded, and the multiplying Government departments constantly need new quarters. Visitors who cannot find a place often pass the night at the railroad station, the commandant suggested. I was about to take the hint, when we were approached by a man wearing a white fur cap with ear pieces reaching to his knees. A Siberian, I thought, from his dress.

“If the commandant does not object, perhaps you will share my room till another is vacant?” he said pleasantly, speaking good English.

The commandant, having examined my papers, consented, and presently I was installed in my friend’s large and pleasantly warm room.

He looked at me carefully, then asked:

“Are you from San Francisco?”

“Yes, I used to live there. Why do you ask?”

“Is your name Berkman?”

“Yes.”

“Alexander Berkman?” he persisted.

“Yes.”

He embraced me, kissing me thrice in Russian fashion. “Why,” he said, “I know you. I used to live in Frisco myself. Saw you many a time —at meetings and lectures. Don’t you remember me? I’m Sergei. I lived on the Russian Hill. No, of course, you wouldn’t remember me,” he ran on. “Well, I returned to Russia at the outbreak of the February Revolution, by way of Japan. Been to Siberia, in Sakhalin and the East, and now I have brought our report to the Party.”

“Are you a Communist?” I inquired.

“A Bolshevik,” he smiled, “though not a Party member. I used to be a Left Social Revolutionist, but I’m close to the Communists now, and have been working with them since the Revolution.”

Again he embraced me.

V
The Guest House

February 25. —Life in the Kharitonensky is interesting. It is an *ossobniak* (private house), large and roomy, and contains a number of delegates and guests. At meal time we gather in the common dining room, furnished in the bourgeois taste of the typical German merchant. The house has weathered the Revolution without any change. Nothing has been touched in it; even the oil painting of the former owner, life-size, flanked by those of his wife and children, still hangs in its accustomed place. One feels the atmosphere of respectability and correctness.

But at meals a different spirit prevails. The head of the table is occupied by V ——, a Red Army officer in military uniform of English cut. He is the chief of the Ukrainian delegation come for an important conference to "the center." A tall, strapping fellow, not over thirty, of military bearing and commanding manner. He has been in many fights against Kaledin and Denikin, and was repeatedly wounded. When still an officer in the Tsar's army he became a revolutionist. Later his party, the Left Social Revolutionists of the South, joined the Communists of the Ukraine.

Next to him sits K ——, black-haired and black-bearded, member of the Central Rada when it was broken up by Skoropadsky with the aid of German bayonets. To his right is another delegate from the Ukraine, a student with soft black beard, the only one who understands English. The editor of the Communist paper of Kiev and two young women are also in this party.

One of the foreign visitors is "Herman," a middle-aged German grown gray and old in the revolutionary struggle. He was sent by the minority of the Spartacus Party to enlist the moral and financial support of the Bolsheviki; but Radek, he complains, refuses to recognize the rebellious minority. Near Herman sits young L ——, an American I.W.W., who hoboed his way to Russia without pass or money. There are also several correspondents from Sweden, Holland, and Italy, two Japanese, and a Korean Communist who was brought a prisoner from Siberia because of some peculiar misunderstanding.

The steaming samovar is on the table, and a buxom young woman is serving us. She is red-cheeked and country-like, but her demeanor is free and unforced, and she uses *tovarish* with an ease indicating a full-grown sense of equality. From snatches of her conversation with the diners I gather that she had been working in a shoe factory till she entered the service of the former owner of the house, before the Revolution, and has remained in the *ossobniak* after it was nationalized. She calls

herself a Bolshevik, and speaks familiarly about the proceedings at the meetings of the women Communist circle, at which she often presides.

She seems to personify the great revolutionary upheaval: the master driven from the house, the servant become the equal of the guests, all *tovarishi* in a common cause.

Surrogat tea or coffee is served in the morning —one cannot tell the difference. Breakfast consists of several small slices of black bread, a bit of butter and occasionally an attenuated layer of cheese. At dinner we receive a thin soup of fish or vegetables; sometimes there is also a piece of meat, cooked or fried. Supper is usually the same as breakfast. I always feel hungry after meals, but fortunately I still have some American crackers. Everyone watches anxiously if there is an unoccupied seat at the table. In their eyes I read the frank hope that the missing one may not come: there will be a little more soup left for the others.

The Ukrainians bring "private packages" to the table —chunks of *salo* (fat) or pork sausage, wrapped in pieces of paper written on both sides. Yesterday I casually glanced at one of these wrappers. It was a circular letter of the Tsarist police, descriptive of a man charged with the murder of his brother. It was evidently torn out of an office file. Paper is scarce, and even old newspapers are too valuable to be used as wrappers.

The Ukrainians never offer their delicacies to their neighbors at table. Today at dinner I placed my can of condensed milk before the man at my side, but he needed urging before he dared use some in his coffee. I asked him to pass it around. In consternation he protested, "*Tovarish*, keep it for yourself, you'll need it." All the others declined at first, but their eyes burned with desire for the "American product." The can was emptied quickly amid the general smacking of lips and words of admiration in Slavic superlatives. "Miraculous, worshipful," they cried.

I spend considerable time with the Ukrainians, learning much about their country, its history, language, and its long revolutionary struggle. Most of the delegates, though young in years, are old in the revolutionary movement. They worked "underground" under the Tsar, took part in numerous strikes and uprisings, and fought against the Provisional Government. Later, about the end of 1917, when the Rada turned reactionary and made common cause with Kaledin and Krasnov, the notorious White generals, these delegates helped the Bolsheviki to fight them. Then came the German invasion and Hetman Skoropadsky. Again these men fought the Directorium and Petlura, its dictator, after the latter had upset the Hetman. Finally they joined the Communist Party in waging war against Denikin and his counterrevolutionary forces.

A long and desperate struggle, full of suffering and misery. Most of them have lost near and dear ones at the hands of the Whites. The three brothers of the Rada member perished in the various fights. The young wife of the student was outraged and killed by a Denikin officer, while her husband was awaiting execution. Later he succeeded in escaping from prison. He showed me her picture, standing on the desk in his room. A beautiful, radiant creature. His eyes grew moist as he narrated the sad story.

Many visitors call on the Ukrainians. There is no *propusk* system in the Kharitonensky, and people come and go freely. I have made interesting acquaintances, and spent many hours listening to the Ukrainian delegates exchanging experiences with their Russian friends. Some days are like a kaleidoscope of the Revolution, every turn tossing up new facets of variegated hue and brilliancy: stirring incidents of struggle and strife, stories of martyrdom and heroic exploit. They visualize the darkness of the Tsarist dungeons suddenly lit up by the flames of the February Revolution, and the glorious enthusiasm of the liberation. Surpassing joy of freedom, and then the sadness of great hopes unfulfilled, and liberty remaining an empty sound. Again the rising waves of protest; the soldiers fraternizing with the enemy; and then the great October days that sweep capitalism and the bourgeoisie out of Russia, and usher in the new world and the new Humanity.

These men fill me with wonder and admiration. Common workers and soldiers, but yesterday mute slaves, they are today the masters of their fate, the rulers of Russia. There is dignity in their bearing, self-reliance and determination —the spirit of assurance that comes with struggle and the exercise of initiative. The fires of Revolution have forged new men, new personalities.

VI
Chicherin and Karakhan

February 24. —It was 3 a.m. In the Foreign Office correspondents were about and visitors come by appointment with Chicherin. The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs has turned night into day.

I found Chicherin at a desk in a large, cold office, an old shawl wrapped around his neck. Almost his first question was "how soon the revolution could be expected in the States." When I replied that the American workers were still too much under the influence of the reactionary leaders, he called me pessimistic. In a revolutionary time like the present, he thought, even the Federation of Labor must quickly change to a more radical attitude. He was very hopeful of revolutionary developments in England and America in the near future.

We discussed the Industrial Workers of the World, Chicherin saying that he believed I exaggerated their importance as the only revolutionary proletarian movement in America. He considered the Communist Party in that country of far greater influence and significance. He had recently seen several American Communists, he explained, and they informed him on the labor and revolutionary situation in the States.

A clerk entered with a typed sheet. Chicherin scanned it carefully, and began making corrections. His neck shawl kept sliding down on the paper, and impatiently he would throw it back over his shoulder. He read the document again, made more corrections, and looked displeased. "Terribly confused," he muttered irritably.

"I'll have it retyped at once," the clerk said, picking up the paper.

Chicherin impatiently snatched it out of his hand, and without another word his lean, bent figure disappeared through the door. I heard his short, nervous step in the corridor.

"We are used to his ways," the clerk remarked apologetically.

"I met him on the stairs without hat or coat when I came up," I said.

"He is all the time between the second and the fourth floor," the clerk laughed. "He insists on taking every paper to the radio room himself."

Chicherin returned all out of breath, and took up the conversation again. Messengers and telephone kept interrupting us, Chicherin personally answering

every call. He looked worried and preoccupied, with difficulty picking up the thread of our talk.

“We must bend every effort toward recognition,” be said presently, “and especially to lift the blockade.” He hoped much in that direction from the friendly attitude of the workers abroad, and he was pleased to hear of the growing sentiment in the United States for the recall of American troops from Siberia.

“No one wants peace so much as Russia,” he said emphatically. “If the Allies would come to their senses, we would soon enter into commerce with them. We know that business in England and America is eager for such an opportunity.”

“The trouble with the Allies,” he continued, “is that they don’t want to realize that we have the country back of us. They still cling to the hope of some White general rallying the people to his banner. A vain and stupid hope, for Russia is solidly for the Soviet Government.”

I related to Chicherin the experience of the *Buford* deportees on the Finnish border, and repeated to him the request of a certain American correspondent I had met there to be admitted to Russia.

“He is from a bourgeois newspaper,” Chicherin remarked, recalling that the man had been refused a Soviet visa. “On what ground does he apply again?”

“He asked me to tell you that his newspaper was the first in America to take a friendly attitude to the Bolsheviki.”

Chicherin became interested, and promised to consider the application.

“I also need some ‘paper’ from you,” I remarked jestingly, explaining that I was probably the only person in Soviet Russia without “documents,” as I had left Petrograd before they were issued to the *Buford* deportees. He laughed at my being “unidentified,” and recalled the mass meeting of Kronstadt sailors and workers in the Tshinizelli Circus in Petrograd, in 1917, to protest against my being “identified” with the Mooney case and extradited to California.

He ordered the clerk to prepare a “little paper” for me, and he signed it, remarking that there was much work in the Foreign Office, and that he hoped I would help with translations.

When I looked at the document I saw that it referred in very favorable terms to the “well-known American revolutionist,” but that there was no mention of my being an Anarchist. Was that term avoided purposely, I wondered? What cause would there be for it in Soviet Russia? I felt as if a veil were stealthily drawn over my personality.

Later in the day I visited Karakhan. Tall, good-looking, and well-groomed, he sat leisurely in a sumptuous office, his feet resting on a fine tiger skin. His appearance justified the humorous characterization I heard of him in the anteroom. “A Bolshevik who can wear white gloves gracefully,” someone had said.

Karakhan asked me to converse in Russian. “Nature has given me no talent for languages,” he remarked. We discussed the labor situation abroad, and he expressed himself confident of the speedy bankruptcy of international capitalism. He was enthusiastic about the “growing influence of the Communist Party in England and America,” and seemed much displeased when I pointed out that his optimism was entirely unjustified by the actual state of affairs. He listened with a smile of well-bred incredulity as I spoke of the reaction following the war and the persecution of radicalism, in the States. “But the workers of England and America, inspired by the Communists, will presently force their governments to lift the blockade,” he insisted. I sought to impress him that Russia must make up her mind to rely upon herself for the reconstruction of her economic life. “Of course, of course,” he assented, but there was no conviction in his tone.

“Our hope is in the lifting of the blockade,” he said again, “and then our industries will develop quickly. At present we are handicapped by the lack of machinery and skilled labor.”

Referring to the peasantry, Karakhan asserted that the farmer profited by the Revolution more than any other part of the population. “Why,” he exclaimed, “in the villages you will find upholstered furniture, French mirrors, graphophones, and pianos, all given to them by the city in exchange for food. The luxuries of the mansion have been transferred to the hovel,” he laughed, pleased with his bon mot and gracefully stroking his well-trimmed black beard. “We have declared ‘war to the palaces, peace to the huts,’ ” he continued, “and the *muzhik* lives like a *barin*[2] now. But the Russian peasant is backward and deeply imbued with the petty bourgeois spirit of ownership. The *kulaki*[3] often refuse to contribute of their surplus, but the Army and the city proletariat must be fed, of course. We have therefore been compelled to resort to the *razvyorstka*[4] —an unpleasant system, forced upon us by the Allied blockade. The peasants must do their share to sustain the soldiers and the workers who are the vanguard of the Revolution, and on the whole they do so. Occasionally the *muzhiki* resist requisition, and in such cases the military is called upon. Unfortunate occurrences, but not very frequent. They usually happen in the Ukraine, our richest wheat and corn region —the peasants are mostly *kulaki* there.”

Karakhan lit a cigar and continued: “Of course, when requisition is made, the Government pays. That is, it gives the peasant its written obligation, as proof of its good faith. Those ‘papers’ will be honored as soon as civil war is over, and our economic life put in order.”

The conversation turned to the recent arrests in Moscow in connection with a counterrevolutionary conspiracy unearthed by the Cheka. “Oh, yes,” Karakhan smiled, “they are still plotting.” He grew thoughtful for a moment, then added: “We abolished capital punishment, but in certain cases exceptions have to be made.”

He leaned comfortably back in his armchair and continued:

“One mustn’t be sentimental. I remember how hard it was for me, way back in 1917, when I myself had to arrest my former college chums. Yes, with my own hands” —he held out both hands, white and well-cared for —“but what will you? The Revolution imposes stern duties upon us. We mustn’t be sentimental,” he repeated.

The subject changed to India, Karakhan remarking that a delegate had just arrived from that country. The movement there was revolutionary, though of nationalistic character, he thought, and could be exploited to keep England in check. Learning that while in California I was in touch with Hindu revolutionists and Anarchists of the Hindustan Gadar organization, he suggested the advisability of getting in communication with them. I promised to look after the matter.

VII
The Market

I like the feel of the hard snow singing under my feet. The streets are alive with people —a striking contrast to Petrograd, which gave me the impression of a graveyard. The narrow sidewalks are crooked and slippery, and everybody walks in the middle of the street. Rarely does a streetcar pass, though an auto creaks by occasionally. The people are better dressed than in Petrograd and do not look so pale and exhausted. More soldiers are about and persons clad in leather. Cheka men, I am told. Almost everybody carries a bundle on his back or pulls a little sleigh loaded with a bag of potatoes dripping a blackish fluid. They walk with a preoccupied air and roughly push their way ahead.

Turning the corner into the Miasnitskaya Street, I noticed a large yellow poster on the wall. My eye caught the word *Prikaz* in big red letters. *Prikaz* —order —instinctively the expression associated itself in my mind with the old regime. The poster was couched in the familiar style, “I command,” “I order,” repeating themselves with the frequency usual in the old police proclamations. “I command the citizens of Moscow,” I read. Citizens? I sought the date. It was marked January 15, 1920, and was signed by the Commissar of Militia. The *Prikaz* vividly recalled the gendarmes and the Cossack order of things, and I resented it. The Revolution should find another language, I thought.

I passed the Red Square where the heroes of the Revolution are buried along the Kremlin wall. Thousands of others, as devoted and heroic, lie in unknown graves throughout the country and on the fronts. A new world is not born without pain. Much hunger and misery Russia is suffering still, the heritage of the past which the Revolution has come to abolish forever.

On the wall of the old Duma, near the Iverskaya Gate, I read the legend cut into the stone: “Religion is opium for the people.” But in the chapel nearby services were being held and the place was crowded. The cassocked priest, long hair down his back, was musically reciting the Greek-Catholic litany. The worshipers, mostly women, knelt on the cold floor, continuously crossing themselves. Several men, shabbily dressed and carrying portfolios, came in quietly, bowed low and crossed themselves reverently.

A little further I came upon a marketplace, the historic Okhotny Ryad, opposite the Hotel National. Rows of little stalls on one side, the more pretentious stores on the other, the sidewalk between them —it has all remained as in the time past. Fish

and butter were offered, bread and eggs, meat, candy, and cosmetics —a living page from the life the Revolution has abolished. An old lady with finely chiseled features, in a threadbare coat, stood quietly holding a Japanese vase. Near her was another woman, younger and intellectual looking, with a basket containing crystal wine glasses of rare workmanship. On the corner little boys and girls were selling cigarettes and *lepyoshki*, a kind of potato pancake, and further I saw a crowd surrounding an old woman busily dishing out *tshtchi* (cabbage soup).

"A fiver, a fiver!" she cried in a hoarse, cracked voice. "Delicious *tshtchi*, only five kopeks!"

The steaming pot breathed an appetizing odor. "Give me a plate," I said, handing the woman a rouble.

"God be with you, little uncle," she eyed me suspiciously, "a fiver it costs, five kopeks."

"Here's a whole rouble," I replied.

The crowd laughed good-humoredly. "She means five roubles," someone explained, "a rouble is only a kopeck."

"It ain't worth that, either," a little urchin chimed in.

The hot liquid sent a pleasing warmth through my body, but the taste of *voblia* (fish) was insufferable. I made a motion to return the dish.

"Please permit me," a man at my elbow addressed me. He was of middle age, evidently of the intelligentsia, and spoke in accents of the cultured Russian. His shiny dark eyes lit up features of a sickly pallor. "Your permission," he repeated, indicating the dish.

I handed him the plate. Avidly, like a starved man, he swallowed the hot *tshtchi*, gleaning the last shred of cabbage. Then he thanked me profusely.

I noticed a thick volume under his arm. "Bought it here?" I asked.

"Ah, no, how is it possible! I have been trying to sell it since morning. I'm a civil engineer, and this is one of my last," he patted the book affectionately. "But excuse me, I must hurry to the store before it is too late. They haven't given any bread out for two days. Extremely obliged to you."

I felt a tug at my elbow. "Buy some cigarettes, little uncle," —a young girl, extremely emaciated, held her hand out to me. Her fingers, stiff with cold, were insecurely clutching the cigarettes lying loose in her palm. She was without hat or coat, an old shawl wrapped tightly about her slender form.

"Buy, *barin*," she pleaded in a thin voice.

"What *barin*," a girl nearby resented. "No more *barin*,[5] we're all *tovarishi* now. Don't you know," she gently chided.

She was comely, not over seventeen, her red lips strongly contrasting with the paleness of her face. Her voice was soft and musical, her speech pleasing.

For a moment her eyes were full upon me, then she motioned me aside.

"Buy me a little white bread," she said modestly, yet not in the least shamefaced; "for my sick mother."

"You don't work?" I asked.

"Don't work!" she exclaimed, with a touch of resentment. "I'm typing in the *sovnarkhoz*, but we get only one-half pound of bread now, and little of anything else."

"*Oblava!*[6] *militsioneri*!" There were loud cries and shouts, and I heard the clanking of sabres. The market was surrounded by armed men.

The people were terror-stricken. Some sought to escape, but the military circle was complete; no one was permitted to leave without showing his papers. The soldiers were gruff and imperious, swearing coarse oaths and treating the crowd with roughness.

A *militsioner* had kicked over the *tshtchi* pot, and was dragging the old woman by the arm. "Let me get my pot, little father, my pot," she pleaded.

"We'll show you pots, you cursed speculator," the man threatened, pulling her along.

"Don't maltreat the woman," I protested.

"Who are you? How dare you interfere!" a man in a leather cap shouted at me. "Your papers!"

I produced my identification document. The Chekist glanced at it, and his eye quickly caught the stamp of the Foreign Office and Chicherin's signature. His manner changed. "Pardon me," he said. "Pass the foreign *tovarish*," he ordered the soldiers.

On the street the *militsioneri* were leading off their prisoners. Front and rear marched the soldiers with bayoneted rifles held horizontally, ready for action. On either flank were Cheka men, their revolvers pointed at the backs of the prisoners. I caught sight of the *tshtchi* woman and the tall engineer, the thick volume still under

his arm; I saw the aristocratic old lady in the rear, the two girls I had spoken to, and several boys, some of them barefoot.

I turned toward the market. Broken china and torn lace littered the ground; cigarettes and *lepyoshki* lay in the snow, stamped down by dirty boots, and dogs rapaciously fought for the bits of food. Children and women cowered in the doorways on the opposite side, their eyes following the soldiers left on guard at the market. The booty taken from the traders was being piled on a cart by Chekists.

I looked at the stores. They remained open; they had not been raided.

In the evening I dined at the Hotel National with several Communist friends who had known me in America. I used the occasion to call their attention to the scene I had witnessed on the marketplace. Instead of being indignant, as I expected, they chided me for my "sentimentality." No mercy should be shown the speculators, they said. Trade must be rooted out: buying and selling cultivates petty middle-class psychology. It should be suppressed.

"Do you call those barefoot boys and old women speculators?" I protested.

"The worst kind," replied R ——, formerly member of the Socialist Labor Party of America. "They live better than we do, eat white bread, and have money hidden away."

"And the stores? Why are they permitted to continue?" I asked.

"We closed most of them," put in K ——, Commissar of a Soviet House. "Soon there will not be any of them left open."

"Listen, Berkman," said D ——, an influential leader of the labor unions, in a leather coat, "you don't know those 'poor old men and women,' as you call them. By day they sell *lepyoshki*, but at night they deal in diamonds and valuta. Every time their homes are searched we find valuables and money. Believe me, I know what I'm talking about. I have had charge of such searching parties myself."

He looked severely at me, then continued: "I tell you, those, people are inveterate speculators, and there is no way of stopping them. The best thing is to put them to the wall, *razstrelyat* —shoot them," he raised his voice in growing irritation.

"Not seriously?" I protested.

"No? Eh?" he shouted in a rage. "We're doing it every day."

"But capital punishment is abolished."

"It's rarely resorted to now," R —— tried to smooth matters, "and that only in the military zone."

The labor Chekist eyed me with cold, inimical gaze, “Defending speculation is counterrevolutionary,” he said, leaving the table.

VIII
In the Moskkommune

The Commissar of our *ossobniak*, having to lay in provisions, invited me to accompany him to the Moskkommune. It is the great food supply center, a tremendous organization that feeds Moscow and its environs. Its trains have the right of way on all lines and carry food from parts as distant as Siberia and Turkestan. Not a pound of flour can be issued by any of the "stores" —the distributing points scattered throughout the city —without a written order signed and countersigned by the various bureaus of the Commune. From this center each "distributor" receives the amount necessary to supply the demands of the given district, according to the norm allowed on the bread and other cards.

The Moskkommune is the most popular and active institution; it is a beehive swarming with thousands of employees, busy determining the different categories of *pyock* and issuing "authorizations." Besides the bread rations, sugar, tea, etc., given to the citizen by the "store" of his district, he also receives his ration in the institution that employs him. The *pyock* differs according to the "quality" of the citizen and the position he occupies. At present soldiers and sailors receive 2½ lbs. of bread per day; Soviet employees 3 lbs. every two days; those not working —because of age, sickness or disability other than military —receive ¾ lb. There are special categories of "preferred" *pyock*; the academical for old scientists and professors whose merits are recognized by the State, and also for old revolutionists not actively opposed to the Communists. There are "preferred" *pyocks* in important institutions, such as the Comintern (the Third International), the Narkominodel (Foreign Office), Narkomput (Commissariat of Railways), Sovnarkhoz (Soviet of Public Economy), and others. Members of the Communist Party have the opportunity of receiving extra rations through their Communist organizations, and preference is given them in the departments issuing clothing. There is also a Sovnarkom *pyock*, the best to be had, for important Communist officials, Commissars, their first assistants, and other high-placed functionaries. The Soviet Houses, where foreign visitors and influential delegates are quartered, such as Karakhan's *ossobniak* and the Hotel Lux, receive special food supplies. These include fats and starches (butter, cheese, meat, sugar, candy, etc.), of which the average citizen receives very little.

I discussed the matter with our House Commissar, who is a devoted Party man. "The essence of Communism is equality," I said; "there should be only one kind of *pyock*, so that all will share equally."

"The Er-Kah-Peh[7] decided the matter long ago, and it is right so," he replied.

"But how can it be right?" I protested. "One person receives a generous *pyock*, more than enough to live on; another gets less than enough; a third almost nothing. You have endless categories."

"Well," he said, "the Red Army men at the front must get more than the city man; they do the hardest fighting. The soldier at home also must be encouraged, as well as the sailor; they are the backbone of the Revolution. Then the responsible officers deserve a little better food. Look how they work, sixteen hours a day and more, giving all their time and energy to the cause. The employees of such important institutions as Narkomput and Narkominodel must be shown some preference. Besides, a great deal depends on how well a certain institution is organized. Many of the big ones procure most of their supplies directly from the peasantry, through special representatives and the cooperatives."

"If anyone is to receive preference, I think it should be the workers," I replied. "But they get almost the worst *pyock*."

"What can we do, *tovarish*! If it were not for the cursed Allies and the blockade, we'd have food enough for all," he said sadly. "But it won't last long now. Did you read in the *Izvestia* that a revolution is to break out soon in Germany and Italy? The proletariat of Europe will then come to our aid."

"I doubt it, but let's hope so. In the meantime we can't be sitting and waiting for revolutions to happen somewhere. We must exert our own efforts to put the country on its feet."

The Commissar's turn in line came, and he was called into an inner office. We had been waiting several hours in the corridors of the various bureaus. It seemed that almost every door had to be entered before a sufficient number of *resolutsyi* (endorsements) were secured, and the final "order" for supplies obtained. There was a continuous movement of applicants and clerks from office to office, everyone scolding and pushing toward the head of the line. The waiting men watched closely that no one got ahead of his proper place. Frequently someone would march straight to the office door and try to enter, ignoring the queue.

"Into the line, into the line!" the cry would be raised at once. "The sly one! Here we've been standing for hours, and he's just come and wants to enter already."

"I'm *vne otcheredi*" (not to wait in line), the man would answer disdainfully.

"Show your authorization!"

One after another came these men and women *vne otcheredi*, with slips of paper securing immediate admission, while "the tail" was steadily growing longer. "I'm standing three hours already," an old man complained; "in my bureau people are waiting for me on important business."

"Learn patience, little father," a workman replied good-humoredly. "Look at me, I've been in line all day yesterday since early morning, and all the time these *vne otcheredi* kept coming, and it was 2 p.m. when I got through the door. But the chief there, he looks at the clock and says to me, says he, 'No more today; no orders issued after 2 p.m. Come tomorrow.' 'Have mercy, dear one,' I plead. 'I live seven versts away and I got up at five this morning to come here. Do me the favor, *golubtshik*, just a stroke of your pen and it's done.' 'Go, go now,' the cruel one says, 'I haven't time. Come tomorrow,' and he pushed me out of the room."

"True, true," a woman back of him corroborated, "I was right behind you, and he wouldn't let me in either, the hard-hearted one."

The Commissar came out of the office. "Ready?" I asked.

"No, not yet," he smiled wearily. "But you'd better go home, or you'll lose your dinner."

In the Kharitonensky Sergei was waiting for me.

"Berkman," he said, as I entered, "will you let me share your room with you?"

"What do you mean?"

"I've been ordered to vacate. My time's up, they say. But I have nowhere to go. I'll look in the morning for another place, but meantime —?"

"You'll stay with me."

"But if the House Commissar should object?"

"Are you to be driven into the street in this frost? Remain on my responsibility."

IX
The Club on the Tverskaya

In the "Universalist" Club on Tverskaya Street I was surprised to meet a number of the *Buford* deportees. They had grown tired waiting to be assigned to work in Petrograd, they said, and had decided to come to Moscow. They are quartered in the Third Soviet House, where they receive less than a pound of bread and a plate of soup as their daily ration. Their American money is spent: the Petrograd authorities had paid them 18 roubles for the dollar, but in Moscow they learned that the rate is 500. "Robbed by the great revolutionary Government," Alyosha, the ship *zapevalo*, commented bitterly.

"We are selling our last American things," Vladimir remarked. "It's lucky some markets are open yet."

"Trading is forbidden," I warned him.

"Forbidden!" he laughed scornfully. "Only to the peasant women and the kids peddling cigarettes. But look at the stores —if they pay enough graft they can keep open all they want. You've never seen such corruption; America ain't in it. Most of the Chekists are from the old police and gendarmery, and they graft to the limit. The militiamen are thieves and highwaymen that escaped being shot by joining the new police force. I had a few dollars when I came to Moscow; a Chekist changed them for me."

People of every revolutionary tendency gather in the Club: moderate Left Social Revolutionists and the more extreme adherents of Spiridonova; Maximalists, Individualists, and Anarchists of various factions. There are old *katorzhane* among them who had passed years in prison and in Siberia under the old regime. Liberated by the February Revolution, they have since participated in all the great struggles. One of the most prominent is Barmash, who had been sentenced to death by the Tsar, somehow escaped execution, and later played a prominent role in the events of February and October, 1917. Askarev, for many years active in the Anarchist movement abroad, is now a member of the Moscow Soviet. B —— was a labor deputy in Petrograd during Kerensky's time. Many others I have met at the "Universalist" headquarters, men and women grown gray and old in the revolutionary struggle.

There is great divergency of opinion in the Club about the character and role of the Bolsheviki. Some defend the Communist regime as an inevitable stage of the

"transitional period." Proletarian dictatorship is necessary to secure the complete triumph of the Revolution. The Bolsheviki were compelled to resort to the *razvyorstka* and confiscation, because the peasants refused to support the Red Army and the workers. The Cheka is needed to suppress speculation and counterrevolution. But for the constant danger of conspiracies and armed rebellion, incited by the Allies, the Communists would abolish the severe restrictions and permit greater liberty.

The more extreme elements condemn the Bolshevik State as the most unmitigated tyranny, as a dictatorship over the proletariat. Terrorism and the centralization of power in the exclusive hands of the Communist Party, they charge, have alienated the masses, limited revolutionary growth, and paralyzed constructive activity. They denounce the Cheka as counterrevolutionary, and call the *razvyorstka* downright robbery, responsible for the multiplying peasant insurrections.

Bolshevik policies and methods are the inexhaustible subjects of discussion at the Club. Little groups stand about in animated conversation, and K ——, the well-known former Schlüsselburgets,[8] is haranguing some workers and soldiers in the corner. "The safety of the Revolution is in the masses being vitally interested in it," he is saying. "There was no counterrevolution when we had free Soviets; every man stood on guard of the Revolution then, and we needed no Cheka. Its terrorism has cowed the workers, and driven the peasantry to revolt."

"But if the peasants refuse to give us food, how are we going to live?" a soldier demands.

"The peasants never refused as long as their Soviets could deal directly with the soldiers and workers," K —— replies. "But the Bolsheviki have taken the power away from the Soviets, and of course the peasants don't want their food to go to the Commissars or to the markets where no worker can afford to buy it. 'The Commissars are fat, but the workers starve,' the peasants say."

"The peasants are up in rebellion in our parts," a tall man in fur cap puts in. "I'm from the Ural. The *razvyorstka* has taken everything from the farmers there. They haven't even enough seed left for the next spring sowing. In one village they refused to give up and killed a Commissar, and then the punitive expedition came. They flogged the peasants, and many were shot."

In the evening I attended the Anarchist Conference at the Club. First *dokladi* were read, reports of activities of an educational and propagandistic character; then speeches were delivered by Anarchists of various schools, all critical of the existing regime. Some were very outspoken, in spite of the presence of several

"suspicious ones," Chekists, evidently. The Universalists, a new, distinctively Russian current, took a Center position, not so fully in accord with the Bolsheviki as the Anarchists of the moderate Golos Truda Group, but less antagonistic than the extreme wing. The most interesting talk was an impromptu speech by Rostchin, a popular university lecturer and old Anarchist. With biting irony he castigated the Left and Center for their lukewarm, almost antagonistic, attitude to the Bolsheviki. He eulogized the revolutionary role of the Communist Party, and called Lenin the greatest man of the age. He dwelt on the historic mission of the Bolsheviki, and asserted that they are directing the Revolution toward the Anarchist society, which will secure full individual liberty and social well-being. "It is the duty of every Anarchist to work wholeheartedly with the Communists, who are the advance guard of the Revolution," he declared. "Leave your theories alone, and do practical work for the reconstruction of Russia. The need is great, and the Bolsheviki welcome you."

"He's a Sovietsky Anarchist," came sarcastically from the audience.

Most of those present resented Rostchin's attitude, but his appeal stirred me. I felt that he suggested the only way, under the circumstances, of aiding the Revolution and preparing the masses for libertarian, nongovernmental Communism.

The Conference proceeded with the main questions at issue —the growing persecution of Left elements and the multiplying arrests of Anarchists. I learned that already in 1918 the Bolsheviki had practically declared war against all non-Communist revolutionary bodies. The Left Social Revolutionists, who had opposed the Brest-Litovsk peace and killed Mirbach in protest, were outlawed, and many of them executed or imprisoned. In April of that year Trotsky also ordered the suppression of the Moscow Anarchist Club, a powerful organization which had its own military units, known as the Black Guard. The Anarchist headquarters were attacked without warning by Bolshevik artillery and machine guns, and the Club dissolved. Since then persecution of the Left parties has continued intermittently, in spite of the fact that many of their members are at the front, while others are cooperating with the Communists in various Government institutions.

"We fought side by side with the Bolsheviki on the barricades," the Schlüsselburgets declared; "thousands of our comrades died for the Revolution. Now most of our people are in prison, and we ourselves live in constant dread of the Cheka."

"Rostchin says we ought to be thankful to the Bolsheviki," someone sneered.

The Resolution passed by the Conference emphasized its devotion to the Revolution, but protested against the persecution of Left elements, and demanded the legalization of Anarchist cultural and educational work.

“It may seem strange to you that Anarchists should apply to the Government to be legalized,” the Universalist Askarev said to me. “As a matter of fact, we do not regard the Bolsheviki as an ordinary government. They are still revolutionary, and we recognize and give them credit for what they have accomplished. Some of us disagree with them fundamentally and disapprove of their methods and tactics, but we can speak to them as comrades.”

I consented to join the Committee chosen to present the Resolution of the Conference to Krestinsky, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

The anteroom of Krestinsky’s office was crowded with Communist delegates and committees from various parts of the country. Some of them had come from points as distant as Turkestan and Siberia, to report to “the center” or have some weighty problem decided by the Party. The delegates, with thick portfolios under their arms, looked conscious of the important missions entrusted to them. Almost everyone sought a personal interview with Lenin, or expected to make a verbal *doklad* to the full session of the Central Committee. But I understand that they seldom get further than the secretary’s office.

Almost two hours passed before we were admitted to Krestinsky, who received us in a businesslike, almost brusque, manner. The secretary of the all-powerful Communist Party is a man of middle age, short, and of dark complexion, in his whole appearance the typical Russian intellectual of the pre-Revolution days. He is very nearsighted and nervous, and speaks in a hasty, abrupt way.

Having explained the purpose of our call, we discussed the resolution of the Conference, and I expressed my surprise and sorrow at finding Anarchists and other Left elements imprisoned in the Soviet Republic. American radicals would not believe such a state of affairs in Russia, I remarked; a friendlier attitude on the part of the Communists, sympathy and understanding brought to bear on the situation, and the well-disposed Left element could be of the greatest service to our common cause. Some way should be found, I urged, to bridge the rupture and to bring all revolutionary elements into closer contact and cooperation.

“You think it possible?” Krestinsky asked dryly.

Askarev reminded him of the October days, when the Anarchists so effectively aided the Bolsheviki, and referred to the fact that most of them are still working

together with the Communists in various fields of activity, in spite of the suppressive policies of the Government. Revolutionary ethics demand the liberation of the imprisoned Anarchists, he emphasized. They had been arrested without cause, and no charges have been brought against them.

“It’s solely a question of serving our purpose,” Krestinsky remarked. “Some of the prisoners may be dangerous. Perhaps the Cheka has something against them.”

“They have been in prison for months, yet not a single one of them has been tried or even received a hearing,” Askarev retorted.

“What guarantee have we that if released they will not continue their opposition to us?” Krestinsky demanded.

“We claim the right to carry on our educational work unhindered,” Askarev replied.

Krestinsky promised to submit the matter to the Central Committee of the Party, and the audience was over.

X
A Visit to Peter Kropotkin

Kropotkin lives in Dmitrov, a small town sixty versts from Moscow. Owing to the deplorable railroad conditions, traveling from Petrograd to Dmitrov was not to be thought of. But recently I learned that the Government had made special arrangements to enable Lansbury to visit Kropotkin, and with two other friends I took advantage of the opportunity.

Since my arrival in Russia I have been hearing the most conflicting rumors about Old Peter. Some claim that he is favorable to the Bolsheviki; others, that he is opposed to them; it is reported that he is living in satisfactory material circumstances, and again that he is practically starving. I have been anxious to learn the truth of the matter and to meet my old teacher personally. In the years past I had had a sporadic correspondence with him, but we never met. I have admired Kropotkin since my early youth, when I had first heard his name and become acquainted with his writings. One incident, in particular, had left a deep impression on me.

It was about 1890, when the Anarchist movement was still in its infancy in America. We were just a handful then, young men and women fired by the enthusiasm of a sublime ideal, and passionately spreading the new faith among the population of the New York Ghetto. We held our gatherings in an obscure hall in Orchard Street, but we regarded our work as highly successful: every week greater numbers attended our meetings, much interest was manifested in the revolutionary teachings, and vital questions were discussed late into the night, with deep conviction and youthful vision. To most of us it then seemed that capitalism had almost reached the limit of its fiendish possibilities, and that the Social Revolution was not far off. But there were many difficult questions and knotty problems involved in the growing movement, which we ourselves could not solve satisfactorily. We longed to have our great teacher Kropotkin among us, if only for a short visit, to have him clear up many complex points and to give us the benefit of his intellectual aid and inspiration. And then, what a stimulus his presence would be for the movement!

We decided to reduce our living expenses to the minimum and devote our earnings, to defray the expense involved in our invitation to Kropotkin to visit America. Enthusiastically the matter was discussed in the group meetings of our most active and devoted comrades; all were unanimous in the great plan. A long letter was sent

to our teacher, asking him to come for a lecture tour to America and emphasizing our need of him.

His negative reply gave us a shock: we were so sure of his acceptance, so convinced of the necessity of his coming. But the admiration we felt for him was even increased when we learned the motives of his refusal. He would very much like to come —Kropotkin wrote —and he deeply appreciated the spirit of our invitation. He hoped to visit the United States sometime in the future, and it would give him great joy to be among such good comrades. But just now he could not afford to come at his own expense, and he would not use the money of the movement even for such a purpose.

I pondered over his words. His viewpoint was just, I thought, but it could apply only under ordinary circumstances. His case, however, I considered exceptional, and I deeply regretted his decision not to come. But his motives epitomized to me the man and the grandeur of his nature. I visioned him as my ideal of revolutionist and Anarchist.

Meeting "celebrities" is generally disappointing: rarely does reality tally with the picture of our imagination. But it was not so in the case of Kropotkin; both physically and spiritually he corresponds almost exactly to the mental portrait I had made of him. He looks remarkably like his photographs, with his kindly eyes, sweet smile, and generous beard. Every time Kropotkin entered the room it seemed to light up by his presence. The stamp of the idealist is so strikingly upon him, the spirituality of his personality can almost be sensed. But I was shocked at the sight of his emaciation and feebleness.

Kropotkin receives the academic *pyock* which is considerably better than the ration issued to the ordinary citizen. But it is far from sufficient to support life, and it has been a struggle to keep the wolf from the door. The question of fuel and lighting is also a matter of constant worry. The winters are severe, and wood very scarce; kerosene is difficult to procure, and it is considered a luxury to burn more than one lamp at a time. This lack is particularly felt by Kropotkin; it greatly handicaps his literary labors.

Several times the Kropotkin family had been dispossessed of their home in Moscow, their quarters being requisitioned for government purposes. Then they decided to move to Dmitrov. It is only about half a hundred versts from the capital, but it might as well be a thousand miles away, so completely is Kropotkin isolated. His friends can rarely visit him; news from the Western world, scientific works, or foreign publications are unattainable. Naturally Kropotkin feels deeply the lack of intellectual companionship and mental relaxation.

I was eager to learn his views on the situation in Russia, but I soon realized that Peter did not feel free to express himself in the presence of the English visitors. The conversation was therefore of a general character. But one of his remarks was very significant, and gave me the key to his attitude. “They have shown,” he said, referring to the Bolsheviki, “how the Revolution is *not* to be made.” I knew, of course, that as an Anarchist Kropotkin would not accept any Government position, but I wanted to learn why he is not participating in the economic upbuilding of Russia. Though old and physically weak, his advice and suggestions would be most valuable to the Revolution, and his influence of great advantage and encouragement to the Anarchist movement. Above all, I was interested to hear his positive ideas on the conduct of the Revolution. What I have heard so far from the revolutionary opposition is mostly critical, lacking helpful constructiveness.

The evening passed in desultory talk about the activities on the front, the crime of the Allied blockade in refusing even medicine to the sick, and the spread of disease resulting from lack of food and unhygienic conditions. Kropotkin looked tired, apparently exhausted by the mere presence of visitors. He is old and weak; I fear he may not live much longer under present conditions. He is evidently undernourished, though he said that the Anarchists of the Ukraine have been trying to make his life easier by supplying him with flour and other products. Makhno, also, when still friendly with the Bolsheviki, had sent him provisions.

We left early, spending the night in the train which did not start till morning for lack of an engine. Arriving in Moscow about noon, we found the station swarming with men and women loaded with bundles and waiting for an opportunity to get out of the hungry city. Scores of little children were about, clad in rags and begging bread.

“How pinched and frozen they look,” I remarked to my companions.

“Not so bad as the children of Austria,” Lansbury returned, drawing his big fur coat closer about him.

XI
Bolshevik Activities

March 1, 1920. —The first All-Russian Conference of Cossacks is in session at the Labor Temple. Some interesting faces and picturesque uniforms are there, Caucasian dress is much in evidence; camelhair capes reaching to the ground, cartridges across the chest, heavy sheepskin caps, red-topped. Several women are among the delegates.

A mixture of uncertain origin, half wild and warlike, these Cossacks of the Don, Ural, and Kuban were used by the Tsars as a military police force, and were kept loyal by special privileges. More Asiatic than Russian, almost untouched by civilization, they had nothing in common with the people and their interests. Stanch supporters of the autocracy, they were the scourge of labor strikes and revolutionary demonstrations, with fiendish brutality suppressing every popular uprising. Unspeakably cruel they were in the days of the Revolution of 1905.

Now these traditional enemies of the workers and peasants side with the Bolsheviki. What great change has taken place in their psychology?

The delegates I conversed with seemed awed by their new role; the unfamiliar environment made them timid. The splendid Temple, formerly the sacred precinct of the nobility, the grand hall of marble columns, the crimson banners and flaming posters, the portraits of Lenin and Trotsky looming large on the platform, the huge candelabras brilliantly illuminated, all tremendously impressed the children of the wild steppes. The presence of the many notables obviously cowed them. The bright lights, the color and movement of the large gathering were to them the symbols of the great power of the Bolsheviki, convincing, imposing.

Kamenev was Chairman, and he apparently transacted all the business himself, the Cossacks taking almost no part in the proceedings. They kept very quiet, not even conversing among themselves, as is customary in Russia at such gatherings. Too well-behaved, I thought. Now and then a delegate would leave the hall to light a cigarette in the corridor. None dared to smoke in his seat, till someone on the platform lit a cigarette. It was the Chairman himself. A few of the bolder ones presently followed his example, and soon the whole assembly was smoking.

Kalinin, President of the R.S.F.S.R., greeted the Conference in the name of the Soviet Republic. He characterized the occasion as a great historic event, and prophesied that the Cossacks, having made common cause with the proletariat and

the peasantry, would speed the triumph of the Revolution. Unimpressive in appearance and lacking personality, he failed to arouse a response. The applause was perfunctory.

Kamenev was more effective. He dwelt on the historic bravery of the Cossacks and their fighting spirit, reminded them of their glorious past services in defense of the country against foreign enemies, and expressed the assurance that with such champions the Revolution was safe.

Lenin was expected to attend the opening, but he failed to come, and there was much disappointment at his absence. Communists from various parts of the country —from Turkestan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Far Eastern Republic —and several foreign delegates addressed the Cossacks, and sought to impress upon them the mighty spread of Bolshevism throughout the world and the great power of the Communist Party in all the Soviet Republics. All spoke confidently of the approaching world revolution, and "The Internationale" was struck up by the Red Band after every important speaker.

Finally a Cossack delegate was called to the platform. He delivered the greetings of his people and their solemn assurances to "do their duty by the Communist Party." It was a set speech, pale and spiritless. Other delegates followed with eulogies of Lenin that sounded like the traditional addresses presented to the Tsar of All the Russias by his most loyal subjects. The Communist notables on the rostrum led the applause.

March 6. —At the first session of the newly elected Moscow Soviet, Kamenev was in the chair. He reported on the critical food and fuel situation, denounced the Mensheviki and Social Revolutionists as the counterrevolutionary aids of the Allies, and closed by voicing his conviction about the near outbreak of the social revolution abroad.

A Menshevik deputy ascended the rostrum and attempted to refute the charges brought against his party, but the other Soviet members interrupted and hissed so violently he could not proceed. Communist speakers followed, in essence repeating the words of Kamenev. The exhibition of intolerance, so unworthy of a revolutionary assembly, depressed me. I felt that it grossly offended against the spirit and purpose of the august body, the Moscow Soviet, whose work should express the best thought and ideas of its members and crystallize them in effective and wise action.

After the close of the Soviet session began the first anniversary meeting of the Third International, in the Bolshoi Theater. It was attended by practically the same

audience, and Kamenev was again Chairman. It was a most significant event to me, this gathering of the proletariat of all countries, in the persons of its delegates, in the capital of the great Revolution. I saw in it the symbol of the coming daybreak. But the entire absence of enthusiasm saddened me. The audience was official and stiff, as if on parade; the proceedings mechanical, lacking all spontaneity. Kamenev, Radek, and other Communists spoke. Radek thundered against the scoundrelism of the world bourgeoisie, vilified the social patriots of all countries, and enlarged upon the coming revolutions. His long and tedious speech tired me.

Many lectures take place in the city, all of them well attended. The classes of Lunacharsky are especially popular. I admired the simplicity of his manner and the clarity with which he treated such subjects as the origin and development of religion, of social institutions, art, and music. His large audiences of soldiers and workers seem to feel at home with him, discussing at ease and asking questions. Lunacharsky answers in a patient, kindly way, with appreciative understanding of the honest thirst for knowledge which prompts even the often ludicrous queries.

Later I visited Lunacharsky at his offices in the Kremlin. He spoke enthusiastically of his success in eradicating illiteracy, and explained to me the system of education made accessible to the great proletarian masses. In the villages also much work is being done, he said; but the lack of able and dependable teachers greatly hampers his efforts. Formerly the majority of the intelligentsia were bitterly opposed to the new regime, and sabotaged the work. They hoped the Communists would not last long. Now they are gradually returning to their professions, but even in the educational institutions political commissars had to be introduced, as in all other Soviet organizations. They have to guard against sabotage and counterrevolutionary tendencies.

The new schools and universities are training Communist teachers to take the place of the old pedagogues. Most of the latter are not in sympathy with the Bolshevik regime and cling to the former methods of education. Lunacharsky is waging a severe struggle against the clique that favors the reactionary system and the punishment of backward children.

He introduced me to Mme. Lunacharskaya, and I passed the greater part of a day with her, visiting the schools and colonies in her charge. On the bright side of middle age, she is energetic, loves her work, and holds modern ideas on education. “The children must be allowed opportunity for free development,” she emphasized, “and of course we give them the best we have.”

The several schools we visited were clean and warm, though I found very few children in them, mostly boys and girls under twelve years of age. They danced and

sang for us, and showed their pen and ink sketches, some of them very creditable. The children were warmly dressed and looked clean and well fed.

“Our main handicap is lack of the right teachers,” Mme. Lunacharskaya said. “There is also great scarcity of paper, pencils, and other school necessaries. The blockade prevents our getting books and materials from abroad.”

In one school we found a dozen children at dinner, and we were invited to partake of the meal. It consisted of very palatable kasha and chicken.

“It is much worse in some other schools,” Mme. Lunacharskaya remarked, noticing my surprise at seeing fowl served. “They lack fuel and food. Our school is better off in this regard. But much depends on the management. There is bad economy and even stealing in some institutions.”

“I have seen children begging and peddling,” I observed.

“A very unfortunate situation, and a difficult one. Many youngsters refuse to go to school or run away from it.”

“I can’t imagine any child running away from your school to go begging in this cold,” I said.

“Of course not,” she smiled, “but all schools are not like mine. Besides, the Russian children of today are different from others. They are not quite normal —the products of long years of war, revolution, and hunger. The fact is, we have many defectives and much juvenile prostitution. Our terrible heritage,” she added sadly.

The boys and girls crowded about Mme. Lunacharskaya, and seemed happy to be petted by her. Bending over to kiss one of them, she noticed on the child’s neck a tiny silver chain to which was attached a cross. “What is it you wear? Let me see it, dear,” she said kindly. The girl grew shamefaced and hid the cross. Mme. Lunacharskaya did not insist.

XII
Sights and Views

I walked to the Hotel Savoy to meet a friend whom I expected from Petrograd. Nearing the Okhotny Ryad I was surprised to find the raided market in full operation again. All day long women and children are huckstering their wares there, and great crowds are about, trading and bargaining. One cannot tell buyer from seller. Everyone seems to have something for sale, and everyone is pricing things. An old Jew is offering to exchange secondhand trousers for bread; a soldier is trading a new pair of high boots for a watch. Colored kerchiefs and laces, an antique brass candlestick, kitchen utensils, chairs —every imaginable object is collected there, awaiting a buyer. In the store windows meat, butter, fish, and flour, even wheat, are exposed for sale. I know that soldiers and sailors sell their surplus, but the quantities to be seen on the Okhotny, the Sukharevka, and other markets are very large. Could the rumors be true that trainloads of provisions often disappear? I have heard it whispered about that some commissars in charge of food supplies are in league with the traders. But such commissars are always Bolsheviki, members of the Party. Is it possible that the Communists themselves, rob the people: secretly aid speculation while officialy punishing it?

Passing the corner where I fell into the raid last week, I was hailed by a young voice:

"*Zdrasmuite, tovarish!* Don't you know me?"

It was the girl with the red lips that I had seen arrested.

"You're quick to recognize me," I remarked.

"No wonder —those big heavy glasses you wear —I'd know you anywhere. You must be American, aren't you?"

"I came from there."

"Oh, I thought so the first time I spoke to you."

"Where is the other girl that was selling cigarettes?" I inquired.

"Oh, Masha? That's my cousin. She's sick at home. Came back sick from the camp."

"What camp?"

"The camp for forced labor. The judge gave her two weeks for speculation."

"And you?"

"I gave up all the money I had, and they let me go. They took my last rouble."

"Aren't you afraid you'll be arrested again?" I asked, glancing at the package of cigarettes in her hand.

"What can I do? We've sold everything else we had. I must help feed the children at home."

Her big black eyes looked honest. "I'm going to see a friend," I said, "but I'll return in two hours. Will you wait for me?"

"Of course, *tovarish*!"

In the Savoy the admission ceremony proved a complicated matter. I spent half an hour in line, and when I finally got to the little window behind which sat the *barishnya*, she began asking about my identity, occupation, place of residence, and the purpose of my visit. Her supply of questions apparently inexhaustible, I urged speed. "What difference does it make why I want to see the man?" I remarked; "he's my friend. Isn't that enough?"

"That's our orders," the girl said curtly.

"Stupid orders," I retorted.

She motioned to the armed guard nearby. "You'll be sent to the Cheka if you talk like that," she warned me.

"*Ne razsuzhdait!*" (no argument) the *militzioner* ordered.

My friend K —— came down the stairs, carrying his suitcase. The Savoy was crowded, and he was asked to leave, he explained; but he had secured a room in a private house, and he proceeded there.

We entered a large, beautiful apartment containing fine furniture, china, and paintings. One person occupied the five rooms, the smallest of which, of comfortable size, my friend had secured by recommendation. "A big speculator with powerful connections," he remarked.

An appetizing odor of things frying and baking pervaded the house. From the adjoining room the sound of voices reached us, loud and hilarious. I heard the clatter of dishes and clinking of wine glasses.

"*Na vashe zdorovie*,[9] Piotr Ivanovitch!"

"*Na zdorovie! Na zdorovie!*" half a dozen voices shouted.

“Did you hear?” my friend whispered, as there came the popping of a cork. “Champagne!”

There was another pop, and then another. The talking grew louder, the laughter more boisterous, and then someone began reciting in a hoarse, hiccupy voice.

“Demian Bedni,” K —— exclaimed. “I know his voice well.”

“Demian Bedni, the popular poet the Communist papers eulogize?”

“The same. Drunk most of the time.”

We went out into the street.

Fresh snow had fallen. On the slippery sidewalk people were jostling and pushing about, walking hunched up to keep out the bitter cold. At the Theatralnaia Square, near the railway ticket office, dark shadows stood in a long queue, some leaning against the wall, as if asleep. The office was closed, but they would remain on the street all night to guard their place in line, on the chance of securing a ticket.

On the corner stood a little boy. “Who’ll buy, who’ll buy?” he mumbled mechanically, offering cigarettes for sale. An old man of lean, ascetic face, was heavily pulling a small log tied to his arm with a string. The wood slid from side to side on the uneven ground, now striking against the sidewalk, now getting caught in a hole. Presently the cord broke. With numbed fingers the man tried to tie the pieces, but the string kept falling from his hands. People hurried by with rarely a glance at the old figure in the frayed summer coat bending over his treasure. “May I help you?” I asked. He gave me a suspicious, frightened look, putting his foot on the wood. “Have no fear,” I reassured him, as I knotted the string and stepped back.

“How can I thank you, dear man, how can I thank you!” he murmured.

The girl was waiting for me, and I accompanied her home, on the other side of the Moskva River. Up a dark, crooked stairway that creaked piteously under our feet, she led me to her room. She lit a sputtering candle, and I gradually began to discern things. The place was entirely bare, save for two small cots, the space between them and the opposite wall just big enough for a person to pass through. Seeing no chair about, I sat down on the bed. Something moved under the rags that covered it, and I quickly jumped up. “Don’t mind,” the girl said; “it’s mother and baby brother.” From the other bed rose a curly head. “Lena, did you bring me something?” a boyish voice asked.

The girl took a chunk of black bread from her coat pocket, broke off a small piece and gave it to the boy. “Mother is paralyzed,” she turned to me, “and Masha is now

also sick." She pointed to the cot where the curly-headed boy lay. I saw that two were there.

"Does he go to school?" I asked, not knowing what else to say.

"No, Yasha can't go. He has no shoes. They're all in tatters."

I told her of the fine schools I had visited in the morning, and of the chicken dinner served to the children. "Oh, yes," she said bitterly, "they are *pokazatelniya*.[10] What chance has Yasha to go there? There are several like that in the city, and they are warm, and the children well fed. But the others are different. Yasha has frozen his fingers in his school. It's better at home for him. It's not heated here, either; we've had no wood all winter. But he can stay in bed; it's warmer so."

I thought of the big apartment I had left an hour before; of the appetizing odors, the popping of champagne corks, and Demian Bedni reciting in drunken voice.

"Why so silent?" Lena asked. "Tell me something about America. I have a brother there, and maybe you know some way I could get to him. We've been living like this two years now. I can't stand it any longer."

She sat by me, the picture of despair. "I can't go on like this," she repeated. "I can't steal. Must I sell my body to live?"

March 5. —My friend Sergei was ordered out of the Kharitonensky and spent two nights in the street. Today I found him in a small unheated room at the lodgings of the Central Cooperative Union. He lay in bed, feverish, covered with his Siberian fur. "Malaria," he whispered hoarsely, "caught in the taiga[11] hiding from the Whites. I often get these relapses." He had seen no doctor, and received no medical attention.

I discovered the *dvornik* (house porter) and several girls amusing themselves in the basement kitchen. They were busy, they said. Nothing could be done, anyway. A special order must be procured to get a physician, and who's to attend to that? It's no simple matter.

Their indifference appalled me. The Russian, the common man of the people, had never been callous to misery and misfortune. His sympathies were always with the weak and the underdog. In the popular mouth the criminal was "the unfortunate," and the peasants were ever responsive to a cry for help. In Siberia they used to place food outside their huts, in order that escaped prisoners might appease their hunger.

Starvation and misery seem to have hardened the Russian and stifled his native generosity. The tears he has shed have dried up the wells of sympathy.

"The House Committee is the one to see to the matter," the porter said; "it's their business, and they don't like us folks to interfere."

He refused to let me use the telephone. "You must ask permission of the house commissar," he said.

"Where can I find him?"

"He'll return in the evening."

But my American cigarettes persuaded him. I telephoned to Karakhan, who promised to send a physician.

March 6. —Mrs. Harrison, my neighbor in the Kharitonensky, accompanied me to Sergei's room, taking some of her American delicacies along. She is the correspondent of the Associated Press, and seems very clever. Her entry to Russia was adventurous, involving arrest and difficulties with the Cheka.

We found Sergei still very ill; no physician had called. Mrs. Harrison promised to send the woman doctor with whom she shares her room at the *ossobniak*.

On our return we passed the Lubianka, the headquarters of the Cheka. Groups of people, mostly women and girls, stood near the big iron gates. Some prisoners were to be led out for distribution to various camps, and the people hoped to catch a glimpse of arrested friends and relatives. Suddenly there was a commotion, and frightened cries pierced the air. I saw leather-coated men rushing into the street toward the little groups. Revolvers in hand, they threatened the women, ordering them to "go about their business." With Mrs. Harrison I stepped into a hallway, but Chekists followed us there with drawn guns.

Russia, the Revolution, seemed to disappear. I felt myself in America again, in the midst of workers attacked by the police. Mrs. Harrison spoke to me, and the sound of English strengthened the reality of the illusion.

Coarse Russian oaths assailed my ears. Am I in old Russia? I wondered. The Russia of the Cossack and the knout?

XIII
Lenin

March 9. —Yesterday Lenin sent his auto for me, and I drove to the Kremlin. Times have changed, indeed: the old stronghold of the Romanovs is now the home of "Ilyitch,"[12] of Trotsky, Lunacharsky, and other prominent Communists. The place is guarded as in the days of the Tsar; armed soldiers at the gates, at every building and entrance, scrutinize those entering and carefully examine their "documents." Externally everything seems as before, yet I felt something different in the atmosphere, something symbolic of the great change that has taken place. I sensed a new spirit in the bearing and looks of the people, a new will and huge energy tumultuously seeking an outlet, yet ineffectively exhausting themselves in a chaotic struggle against multiplying barriers.

Like the living sentinels about me, thoughts crowded my mind as the machine sped toward the quarters of the great man of Russia. In bold relief stood out my experiences in the country of the Revolution: I saw much that was wrong and evil, the dangerous tendency to bureaucracy, the inequality and injustice. But Russia —I am convinced —would outgrow these evils with the return of a more ordered life, if the Allies would cease their interference and lift the blockade. The important thing is, the Revolution has not been merely political, but deeply social and economical. Some private ownership still exists, it is true, but its extent is insignificant. As a system, Capitalism has been uprooted —that is the great achievement of the Revolution. But Russia must learn to work, to apply her energies, to be effective. She should not wait for miraculous aid from beyond, for revolutions in the West: with her own strength she must organize her resources, increase production, and satisfy the fundamental needs of her people. Above all, opportunity to exercise popular initiative and creativeness will be vitally stimulating.

Lenin greeted me warmly. He is below medium height and bald; his narrow blue eyes have a steady look, a sly twinkle in their corners. Typically the Great Russian in appearance, he speaks with a peculiar, almost Jewish, accent.

We talked in Russian, Lenin asserting that he could read but not speak English, though I had heard that he conversed with American delegates without an interpreter. I liked his face —it is open and honest, and there is not the least pose about him. His manner is free and confident; he gave me the impression of a man so convinced of the justice of his cause that doubt can find no place in his

reactions. If there is any trace of Hamlet in him, it is reduced to passivity by logic and cold reasoning.

Lenin's strength is intellectual, that of the profound conviction of an unimaginative nature. Trotsky is different. I remember our first meeting in America: it was in New York, in the days of the Kerensky regime. He impressed me as a character strong by nature rather than by conviction, one who could remain unbending even if he felt himself in the wrong.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is vital, Lenin emphasized. It is the sine qua non of the revolutionary period, and must be furthered by all and every means. To my contention that popular initiative and active interest are essential to the success of the Revolution, he replied that only the Communist Party could lead Russia out of the chaos of conflicting tendencies and interests. Liberty, he said, is a luxury not to be permitted at the present stage of development. When the Revolution is out of danger, external and domestic, then free speech might be indulged in. The current conception of liberty is a bourgeois prejudice, to say the least. Petty middle-class ideology confuses revolution with liberty; in reality, the Revolution is a matter of securing the supremacy of the proletariat. Its enemies must be crushed, and all power centralized in the Communist State. In this process the Government is often compelled to resort to unpleasant means; but that is the imperative of the situation, from which there can be no shrinking. In the course of time these methods will be abolished, when they have become unnecessary.

"The peasant doesn't like us," Lenin chuckled, as if at some pleasantry. "They are backward and strongly imbued with the sense of private ownership. That spirit must be discouraged and eradicated. Besides, the great majority are illiterate, though we have been making educational progress in the village. They don't understand us. When we shall be able to satisfy their demands for farm implements, salt, nails, and other necessaries, then they will be on our side. More work and greater production —that's our pressing need."

Referring to the Resolution of the Moscow Anarchists, Lenin said that the Executive Committee had discussed the matter, and would soon take action upon it. "We do not persecute Anarchists of ideas," he emphasized, "but we will not tolerate armed resistance or agitation of that character."

I suggested the organization of a bureau for the reception, classification, and distribution of political exiles expected from America, and Lenin approved my plan and welcomed my services in the work. Emma Goldman had proposed the founding of a League of Russian Friends of American Freedom to aid the revolutionary movement in America, and thus repay the debt Russia owed to the

American Friends of Russian Freedom, which in years past had given great moral and material support to the Russian revolutionary cause. Lenin said that such a society in Russia should work under the auspices of the Third International.

The total impression I carried away was that of a man of clarity of view and set purpose. Not necessarily a big man, but one of strong mind and unbending will. An unemotional logician, intellectually flexible and courageous enough to mold his methods to the requirements of the moment, but always keeping his final objective in clear sight. “A practical idealist” bent upon the realization of his Communist dream by whatever means, and subordinating to it every ethical and humanitarian consideration. A man sincerely convinced that evil methods may serve a good purpose and be justified by it. A Jesuit of the Revolution who would force mankind to become free in accordance with his interpretation of Marx. In short, a thoroughgoing revolutionist in the sense of Netchayev, one who would sacrifice the greater part of mankind —if need be —to secure the triumph of the Social Revolution.

A fanatic? Most certainly. What is a fanatic but a man whose faith is impregnable to doubt? It is the faith that moves mountains, the faith that accomplishes. Revolutions are not made by Hamlets. The traditional “great” man, the “big personality” of current conception, may give to the world new thoughts, noble vision, inspiration. But the man that “sees every side” cannot lead, cannot control. He is too conscious of the fallibility of all theories, even of thought itself, to be a fighter in any cause.

Lenin is a fighter —revolutionary leaders must be such. In this sense Lenin is great —in his oneness with himself, in his single-mindedness; in his psychic positiveness that is as self-sacrificial as it is ruthless to others, in the full assurance that only his plan can save mankind.

XIV
On the Latvian Border

I

Petrograd, March 15. —I received a message from Chicherin, informing me that a thousand American deportees had arrived in Libau and were to reach Russia on March 22. A committee was to be formed, and arrangements made for their reception.

I had long ago suggested the necessity of a permanent organization for this purpose, because exiles were expected from different countries. So far nothing had been done, but now instructions from Moscow hastened matters. Mme. Ravitch, Commissar of Public Safety in the Petrograd District, called a conference at which a Deportees' Commission was decided upon. I was appointed Chairman of the Reception Committee, and on March 19 we left Petrograd for the Lettish frontier. Sanitary Train No. 81, splendidly equipped, was placed at my disposal; two more trains were to follow in case the deportees' group proved larger than expected.

In the dining-room, on the first day of our journey, a stranger introduced himself as "*Tovarish* Karus from Petrograd," a middle-aged man with yellow face and furtive eyes. Presently another man joined us, younger and sociable.

"My name is Pashkevitch," the young man announced. "*Tovarishi* from America," he continued in an official tone. "I greet you on this mission in the name of the Ispolkom: I am the representative of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet. May our mission be successful, and the American deportees prove of service to the Revolution."

He looked around to observe the effect of his words. His eyes rested on me as if expecting a reply. I presented the other members of our Committee, Novikov and Miss Ethel Bernstein, the Ispolkom man acknowledging the introduction with an expansive *etchen rad* (very pleased), while Karus clicked his heels under the table in military fashion.

"And the other *tovarish*?" Novikov asked, looking at the silent Karus.

"Just an observer," the latter replied. The train physician gave us a significant look.

"It would be interesting to hear our American comrades tell us something about the United States," Pashkevitch remarked. "I have also been in America and in

England," he continued, "but it's many years ago, though I still speak the language. Conditions there must have greatly changed since then. Will the American workers rise soon in revolution, I wonder? What is your opinion, Comrade Berkman?"

"Hardly a day passes," I replied, smiling, "but I am asked that question. I don't think that a revolution can be expected so soon in America because —"

"But in England?" he interrupted.

"Nor in England, I regret to say. Conditions and the proletarian psychology there seem to be entirely misunderstood in Russia."

"You are pessimistic, *tovarish*," Pashkevitch protested. "The war and our Revolution must have certainly had a great effect upon the proletariat abroad. We may expect revolutions there very soon, I am sure; especially in America, where capitalism has developed to the bursting point. Don't you think so, Comrade Novikov?" he appealed to my assistant.

"I cannot agree with you, Comrade," Novikov replied. "I am afraid your hope will not be realized so soon."

"How you people talk!" Pashkevitch exclaimed, somewhat irritated. "Hope! It's a certainty. We have faith in the workers. Revolutions abroad will be the salvation of Russia, and we depend on them."

"Russia must learn to depend on herself," I observed. "By our own efforts we must defeat our enemies and bring economic well-being to the people."

"As for that, we are doing all that is possible," Pashkevitch retorted hotly. "We Communists have the greatest and most difficult task that ever fell to any political party and we have accomplished wonders. But the cursed Allies will not leave us in peace; and the blockade is starving us. When I address the workers I always impress upon them the fact that their brothers abroad are about to come to the aid of Soviet Russia by making a Communist Revolution in their countries. That gives the people new courage and strengthens their faith in our success."

"But when your promises fail to materialize, the disappointment of the masses will have a bad effect on the Revolution," I remarked.

"They will materialize, they will," Pashkevitch insisted.

"I see you comrades will not agree," Karus spoke for the first time. "Perhaps the American *tovarishi* will tell us what they think of our Revolution." His manner was quiet, but his look held something insistent in it. Later I learned that he was an examining magistrate of the Petrograd Cheka.

"We've been too short a time in Russia to form an opinion," I replied.

"But you must have received some impressions," Karus persisted.

"We have received many impressions. But we have not had time to organize them, so to speak, to clarify them into a definite view. Is it not also your feeling in the matter?" I asked, turning to the other members of the Committee.

They agreed with me, and Karus did not pursue the subject.

The country we traveled through was flat and swampy, with scattered villages in the distance, but no sign of life about. Flocks of crows hovered over our train, their shrill cawing echoing through the woods. We proceeded at a snail's pace; the road was badly out of repair, our engine old and weak. Every few miles we stopped for wood and water, the logs being passed by the living chain stretching from woodpile to caboose. At the stations we were met by women and children selling milk, cheese, and butter at prices one-third lower than those in Moscow and Petrograd. But they refused to accept Soviet roubles or *Kerenki* (Kerensky money). "Whole *izba*[13] plastered with them," an old woman said scornfully; "just colored paper —what good is it? Give us salt, little uncle; we can't live without salt."

We offered soap —a rare luxury in the cities —to a girl selling rye bread, but she disdainfully declined it. "Can I eat it, what?" she demanded.

"You can wash yourself with it."

"There's plenty of snow for that."

"But in the summer?"

"I'll scrub the dirt off with sand. Ain't got no use for soap at any time."

Communication between Petrograd and the Western border is reduced to a minimum. We met no train in our three days' journey till we reached Novo-Sokolniki, formerly an important railroad center. There we were joined by two representatives of the Central Plenbezh (Department of War Prisoners). With them was a youngish man dressed from head to foot in shining black leather, with a huge *nagan* (Russian army gun) attached to his belt by a stout crimson cord. He introduced himself as "*Tovarish* Drozdov of the Veh-Cheka," informing us that he was to examine and photograph the deportees and to detain such of them as may appear suspicious. The train crew regarded the Chekist with unfriendly eyes. "From the center," I heard them whisper, distrust and antagonism in their manner.

"You will pardon a small but necessary preliminary," I said to Drozdov; "as the *predsedatel*[14] of the Commission I am compelled to fulfill a certain formality and must trouble you for your identification papers."

I showed him my credentials, issued by the Executive Department of the Petro-Soviet, whereupon he handed me his documents. They were stamped and signed by the All-Russian Commission Waging War against Counterrevolution and Speculation (the Veh-Cheka) and vested its bearer with exceptional powers.

During the journey I became better acquainted with the young Chekist. He proved of pleasant disposition, very sociable and an inveterate talker. But coolness developed between him and Karus. The latter also evinced much antagonism toward the Jewish boys of the Plenbezh, never missing an opportunity to sneer at their organization and even threatening to arrest them for sabotage.

But whenever Karus was not about, the dining-room of our car was filled with the strong young voice of Drozdov. His stories dealt mostly with the activities of the Cheka, sudden raids, arrests and executions. He impressed me as a convinced and sincere Communist, ready to lay down his life for the Revolution. But he thought of the latter as a simple matter of extermination, with the Cheka as the ruthless sword. He had no conception of revolutionary ethics or spiritual values. Force and violence were to him the acme of revolutionary activity, the alpha and omega of the proletarian dictatorship. “Revolution is a prize fight,” he would say, “either we win or lose. We must destroy every enemy, root every counterrevolutionist out of his lair. Sentimentalism, bosh! Every means and method is good to accomplish our purpose. What’s the use of having a Revolution unless you use your best effort to make a success of it? The Revolution would be dead long ago if not for us. The Cheka is the very soul of the Revolution.”

He loved to talk of the methods the Cheka employs to unearth counterrevolutionary plots, and he would grow eloquent about the cleverness of some “agents” in trapping speculators and forcing them to reveal the hiding places of their diamonds and gold; promising them immunity for “confessing” and then leading them to execution in the company of a betrayed wife or brother. With admiration he spoke of the ingenuity of the Cheka in collaring the *bourzhooi*, tricking them into voicing anti-Bolshevik sentiments, and then sending them to their death. His favorite expression was *razstreliat* —to shoot summarily; it repeated itself in every story and was the refrain of every experience. The non-Communist intelligentsia was especially hateful to him. “*Sabotazhniki* and counterrevolutionists, all of them,” he insisted; “they are a menace, and it is a waste of food to feed them. They should be shot.”

“You don’t realize what you are saying,” I would protest. “The stories you tell are enormous, impossible. You’re just romancing.”

"My dear *tovarish*," he would reply condescendingly, "you may be old in the movement, but you are young in Russia. You speak of atrocity, of brutality! Why, man, you don't know what a vile enemy we have to deal with. Those counterrevolutionists would cut our throats; they'd flood the streets of Moscow with our blood, if they once got the upper hand. And as for romancing, why, I haven't told you half the story yet."

"There may be some individuals in the Cheka guilty of the acts you relate. But I hope such methods are not part of the system."

"There is a Left element among us that favors even more drastic methods," Drozdov laughed.

"What methods?"

"Torture to extort confessions."

"You must be crazy, Drozdov."

He laughed boyishly. "It's true, though," he kept repeating.

II

In Sebezh our train was held up. We could not proceed further, the authorities informed us, because of military activities on the border, about twenty-five versts distant.

It was the 22nd of March, the day the American deportees were to reach the frontier. Fortunately a supply train was leaving for Rozanovskaia, the Russian border town, and several members of our group succeeded in catching a *teplushka* —an old cattle car. We were congratulating ourselves on our good fortune, when suddenly the train began to slow up and soon came to a halt. It was too dangerous to advance, the conductor announced. The train could go no further, but he had "no objections to our risking our lives" if we could induce the engineer to take us to the frontier in the tender.

Several soldiers who had come with us from Sebezh were anxious to reach their regiment, and together we succeeded in persuading the engine driver to attempt the ten-mile run. My American cigarettes proved the most convincing argument.

"First thing we'll do is to search and photograph the deportees," Drozdov began as we started. He was sure there were spies among them; but they couldn't fool him, he boasted. In a friendly way I suggested the inadvisability of being too hasty: our action would impress the men unfavorably. They are revolutionists; they had

defended Russia in America, for which they brought down upon themselves the persecution of the government. It would be stupid to subject them to insult by searching them the moment they step on Soviet soil. Surely they expect and are entitled to a different reception, one due to brothers and comrades. “Look here, Drozdov,” I said confidentially, “in Petrograd we have made all preparations to take the deportees’ *enquetes,* photograph and examine them. It would be useless work to do it here; there are no proper facilities for it, either. I think you can entrust the matter to me, as the Chairman of the Reception Commission of the Petro-Soviet.”

Drozdov hesitated. “But I have orders,” he said.

“Your orders will be carried out, of course,” I assured him. “But it will be done in Petrograd instead of on the border, in the open field. You understand yourself that it is the more practical way.”

“What you say is reasonable,” he admitted. “I would agree on one condition. You must immediately supply the Veh-Cheka with complete sets of the men’s photographs.”

Half frozen by the long ride on the tender, we at last reached Rosanovskaia. Through deep snow we waded till we came to the Siniukha, the little creek which divides Latvia from Soviet Russia. Groups of soldiers stood on either side of the border, and I saw a big crowd of men in civilian dress crossing the ice toward us. I rejoiced that we arrived just in time to meet the deportees.

“Hello, comrades!” I greeted them in English. “Welcome to Soviet Russia.”

There was no response.

“How do you do, comrades!” I called louder. To my unspeakable astonishment the men remained silent.

The arrivals proved to be Russian soldiers taken prisoners by Germany on the Polish front in 1916. Badly treated and insufficiently fed, they had escaped to Denmark, where they were interned until arrangements were made for their return home. They had sent a radio to Chicherin, and it was probably owing to their message being misread that the misundertanding as to their identity resulted.

Two British army officers accompanied the men to the border, and from them I learned that America had not deported any more radicals since the previous December. But another group of war prisoners was on the way to Russia, and I decided to await them.

Difficulty arose about the disposition to be made of the war prisoners, aggregating 1,043 persons, as we had no means of quartering and feeding such a large number in Sebezh. I proposed transporting them to Petrograd: two trains could be used for that purpose, while I would keep the third for the next group of arrivals who might prove to be the American political deportees. But my plan was opposed by the local officials and the Bolsheviki who declared that "without orders from the center" nothing could be done. Chicherin was expecting American deportees, and the Petrograd trains were sent for that purpose, they insisted. The war prisoners would have to wait till instructions for their disposition were received from Moscow.

All my arguments received the same imperturbable, characteristically Russian, reply: "*Nitchevo ne podelayesh!*" (It can't be helped!)

"But we can't have the men starve to death on the border," I appealed to the station master.

"My orders are to return the trains to Petrograd with the American deportees," he said. "What if they come and the trains are gone? I'll be shot for sabotage. No, *golubtchik, nitchevo ne podelayesh*."

Urgent telegrams sent to Chicherin and to Petrograd remained unanswered. The long distance telephone worked badly and failed to connect with the Foreign Office.

In the afternoon a military detachment arrived at the station, rough-looking border men with rifles across the saddle, and huge revolvers in homemade wooden holsters dangling from their belts. Their leader announced himself as Prehde, Chief of the Ossobiy Otdel of the 48th Division of the 15th Army —the dreaded military Cheka of the war zone. He came to arrest two of the war prisoners as "Allied spies," he said, having received information to that effect.

Prehde, a tall, slender young man with student face, proved sociable, and we were soon engaged in friendly conversation. A Lettish revolutionist, he had been condemned to death by the Tsar, but because of his youth the sentence was commuted to Siberian exile for life. The February Revolution freed him and he returned home. "How times change," he remarked; "it's only a few years ago that I was opposed to capital punishment, and now I myself carry out death sentences. *Nitchevo ne podelayesh*," he sighed; "we must stand on guard of the Revolution. There are those two men, for instance. Allied spies, and they must be shot."

"Are you sure they are spies?" I asked.

"Quite sure. A friendly Lett soldier on the other side denounced them to me." He gave a little chuckle. "I handed that fellow a thousand Tsarsky roubles for a fine

new Browning," he continued. "I could have gotten the gun cheaper, but I had to reciprocate the favor, you know."

"Have you any proof that the men are spies?"

"Proof?" he repeated sternly; "they have been denounced to me. We are in the war zone and we can't take any chances on innocence." With a deprecating gesture he added: "Of course, I'll examine their documents first."

He was much interested in America, where his brother lives, and he eagerly listened to my description of conditions in the States. His face bore the stolid expression of his race, but his intelligent eyes blazed with indignation at the story of the persecution of Russians in America since the Bolshevik Revolution. "They'll soon learn differently," he kept repeating.

As head of the Ossobiy Otdel, Prehde's authority is absolute in the district under his charge, covering 108 versts of the border. Life and death are in his hands, and there is no appeal from his judgment. With his aid I finally persuaded the railroad authorities to comply with my directions, and the war prisoners were sent in two trains to Petrograd.

I then wired to Moscow about the disposition made of the returned soldiers, adding that I shall remain on the border and hold Sanitary Train No. 81 ready for the possible arrival of American deportees. My dispatch apparently did not arrive, but forty-eight hours later came a telegram from Chicherin, instructing me to "send the war prisoners in two trains to Petrograd" and to "await the American emigrants."

III

Like most Russian provincial towns, Sebezh lies several miles distant from the railroad station. It is the county seat, beautifully situated in a valley nestling in the bosom of rolling country —a pretentious place, with several brick buildings two stories high. The town has lived in the shadow of many struggles, their evidence still to be seen on every hand. Shell holes spot the hills and the fields are cut by barbed wire entanglements. But the city itself has suffered little.

At the marketplace I met several members of our medical staff and train crew, Karus among them, all looking for provisions to take back to Petrograd. But the stores were closed and the market empty; trade was apparently entirely suppressed in the little town. The strangers standing about attracted attention, and soon a little crowd gathered about us —elderly men and women, with a generous sprinkling of dark-skinned children. They kept at a distance, gazing at us with timid eyes: the

arrival of so many “outsiders” might portend evil. I glanced at Karus, and I was relieved to notice that his revolver was not in evidence.

We began to make, inquiries: could bread be bought, perhaps a little white flour, butter, eggs, or anything in the way of food?

The men shook their heads with a sad smile; the women spread out their arms in distress. “Good people,” they said, “we have nothing at all; and trade was forbidden long ago.”

“How do you live here?” I asked.

“How should we live? We live!” a young peasant answered enigmatically.

“Are you not from foreign parts?” a man addressed me with a pronounced Jewish accent.

“I came from America.”

“Oh, from America!” Wonderment and wistfulness were in his voice. “Listen, children,” he turned to the people nearby. “This man came all the way from America.”

Eager faces were about me. “How is it in America? Do they live well there? Maybe you know my brother?” All spoke at once, each trying to, secure my attention.

Their hunger for news of America was pathetic, their conception of the country infantile. Surprise and incredulousness were in their eyes on hearing that I had not met their folks “in Nai Ork.” “Didn’t you hear of my son Moishe,” an old woman persisted; “everyone knows him there.”

It was growing dark, and I was about to turn back to the station when someone brushed against me. “Come with me, I live nearby,” a young peasant whispered. I followed him as he crossed the square, strode into a dark, unpaved street, and soon disappeared behind the gate of a yard.

I joined him, and he paused to assure himself that we were not followed. We entered an outhouse dimly lit by a kerosene lamp.

“I live in the next village,” the peasant explained, “but when I am in the city I stay here. Moishe!” he called into the next room, “are you there?”

A middle-aged Jew with flaming red hair and beard stepped toward us. Behind him came a woman, a peruke (wig) on her head, with two small children clinging to her skirts.

They greeted me cordially and invited me to a seat in the kitchen, large but untidy, where the whole family gathered. A samovar was on the table, and I was offered a

glass of tea, the housewife apologizing for the absence of sugar. Presently they began questioning me, diplomatically at first, hinting about the strangeness of so many people "from the center" coming to a provincial town like Sebezh. They spoke casually, as if not really interested, but I felt them scrutinizing me. At last they seemed satisfied that I was not a Communist or a Government official, and they grew communicative.

My hostess was frankly critical, referring to the Bolsheviki as "those madmen." She bitterly resented the quartering of soldiers in her house: her oldest boy had to share his bed with one of the goyim (gentiles); they made all her dishes *treif* (unclean) and she was being crowded out of her own home. How could she live and feed her family? It was actual starvation; "the evil ones" had taken away everything. "Look at this," she said, pointing to a vacant place on the wall, "my fine large mirror was there, and they robbed me even of that."

The red-bearded Jew sat in silence, with gentle motion lulling one of the children to sleep in his lap. The young peasant complained of the *razsvyorstka*, which had taken everything from his village; his last horse was gone. Spring was at the door, and how should he plow or sow with no cattle in the whole place? His three brothers were drafted, and he remained alone, a widower, with two small children to feed. But for the kindness of his neighbor's wife, the little ones would have perished long ago. "There's much injustice in the world," he sighed, "and peasants are treated badly. What can they do? They have no control of the village Soviet: the *kombed*[15] carries on with a merciless hand, and the common *muzhik* is afraid to speak his mind, for he'd be reported by some Communist and dragged off to prison."

"Seeing you are not a Communist I can tell you how we suffer," he continued. "The peasants are worse off now than before; they live in constant dread lest a Communist come and take away their last loaf. Chekists of the Ossobiy Otdel enter a house and order the women to put everything on the table, and then they ride away with it. They don't care if the children go hungry. Who would plant under such masters? But the peasant has learned something; he must bury in the ground what he wants to save from the robbers."

Several peasants entered. They looked at Moishe in silence, and he nodded reassuringly. From scraps of their conversation I learned that they supplied the Jew with products, he acting as middleman in the trade. One must be careful not to deal indiscriminately with strangers, Moishe remarked; some of those he saw in the market looked suspicious. But he would supply me with provisions, and he named prices much below those of the Moscow market: herrings, which cost 1,000 roubles

in the capital, at 400; a pound of beans or peas at 120; flour, half wheat, at 250; eggs at 60 roubles apiece.

The peasants agreed with Moishe that "the times are worse than under the Tsar." The Communists are just robbers, and there is no justice to be had nowadays. They fear the Commissars more than the old *tchinovniki*. They resented my question whether they would prefer the monarchy. No, they do not want the *pomeshtchiki* (landlords) again, nor the Tsar, but they don't want the Bolsheviki, either.

"We were treated like cattle before," said a flaxen-haired peasant with blue eyes, "and it was in the name of the Little Father. Now they speak to us in the name of the Party and the proletariat, but we are treated like cattle, the same as before."

"Lenin is a good man," one of the peasants put in.

"We say nothing against him," another remarked, "but his Commissars, they are hard and cruel."

"God is high above and Ilytch[16] far away," the blue-eyed peasant said, paraphrasing a popular old saying.

"But the Bolsheviki gave you the land," I remonstrated.

He slowly scratched his head and a sly smile came into his eyes. "No, *golubtchik*," he replied, "the land we took ourselves. Isn't it so, little brothers?" he turned to the others.

"He speaks the truth," they assented.

"Will it go on like this much longer?" they asked, as I was departing. "Maybe something will change?"

Returning to the station I met the members of our train crew straggling up the hill, weighted down with sacks of provisions. The young student of our medical staff carried a squealing hog. "How happy little old mother will be," he said; "this porker will keep the family alive for a long time."

"If they hide it well enough," someone suggested.

A soldier drove by, and we asked for a ride to the station. Without answering he passed on. Presently another cart overtook us. We repeated our request. "Why not?" the young peasant exclaimed cheerfully, "jump in, all of you." He was jolly and talkative, his "soul ajar," as the student characterized him, and his conversation was entertaining. He liked the Bolsheviki, he said, but he had no use for the Communists. The Bolsheviki were good men, friends of the people: they had demanded the land for the farmer and all the power for the Soviets. But the

Communists are bad: they rob and flog the peasants; they have put their own kind into the Soviets, and a non-Communist has no say there. The *kombed* is full of idle good-for-nothings; they are the bosses of the village, and the peasant who refuses to bow down before them is "in hard luck." He had been on the Denikin front and there it was the same thing: the Communists and Commissars had everything their own way and lorded it over the drafted men. It was different when the soldiers could speak their minds and decide everything in their Company Committee: that was liberty and everyone felt himself a part of the Revolution. But now it is all changed. One is afraid to speak honestly —there's always a Communist about, and you are in danger of being denounced. That's why he deserted; yes, deserted twice. He had heard that everything had been taken from his folks on the farm, and he decided to come home to see if it was true. Well, it was true; worse than what he had been told. Even his youngest brother, just past sixteen, had been drafted into the Army. No one remained at home but his mother and father, too old to work their piece of land without help, and all the cattle were gone. The Commissars had left almost no horses in his village and only one cow to each family of five persons, and if a peasant had only two little children his last cow was taken away. He decided to stay and help his folks —it was spring, and planting had to be done. But he had a narrow escape. One day the whole village was surrounded by the Commissar and his men. He ran out of his hut and made for the woods. Bad luck, he was still in his soldier uniform, and they shot at him from all sides. He succeeded in reaching the nearest bushes, but he was exhausted and fell, rolling down the hill into a hollow. His pursuers must have thought him dead. Late in the night he stole back to the village, but he did not go to his people; a friendly neighbor hid him in his house. The next day he put on peasant clothes, and all spring and summer he helped his "old man" in the fields. Then he went back to the Army of his own accord: he wanted to serve the Revolution as long as the folks at home did not need him. But he was treated badly, food was scarce in his regiment, and he deserted again. "I would stay in the Army," he concluded, "but I can't see the old people starve to death."

"Are you not afraid to talk so freely?" I warned him.

"Oh, who cares!" he laughed. "Let 'em shoot me. Am I a dog to wear a muzzle on my snout?"

IV

Three days later Prelide notified me at Sebezh of the arrival of a new group of emigrants. Hoping they might be the long expected political deportees from America, I hastened to the border. To our great disappointment the men proved to be war prisoners returning from England. There were 108 in the group, captured the previous year in the Archangel district and still clad in their Red Guard uniforms. Among them were also five Russian workers, who had for years resided in England and who were now deported under the Alien Act. They were in civilian attire, and Prehde immediately decided that they were "suspicious," and ordered them arrested as British spies. The deportees took the matter lightly, not realizing that it might mean a perfunctory field court-martial and immediate execution.

I had become friendly with Prehde, and grown to like his simplicity and sincerity. Entirely unsophisticated, he knows no consideration save his duty to the Revolution; his treatment of alleged counterrevolutionaries is no more severe than his personal asceticism. The taking of human life he considers a personal tragedy, a harsh ordeal his conscience is subjected to by revolutionary exigency. "It would be treachery to evade it," he had said to me.

I decided to appeal to him in behalf of the arrested civilians. They should be informed of the suspicion against them, I urged, and be given an opportunity to clear themselves. Prehde consented to let me talk with the men and promised to be guided by my impressions.

"Just walk a bit with them and examine them," he directed.

"Out here in the open?" I asked in surprise.

"Certainly. If they attempt to run, they are guilty. I'm a dead shot."

Half an hour's conversation with the "suspects" convinced me of their inoffensiveness. One of them, a half-witted young fellow, was deported from England as a public nuisance; another for refusing to pay his wife alimony; the third had been convicted of operating a gambling resort, and two were radical workingmen arrested at a Bolshevik meeting in Edinburgh. Prehde agreed to put them in my care till I returned to Petrograd, where they could be further examined and proper disposition made of them.

From the British officers accompanying the war prisoners I learned that no politicals had been deported from the United States since the *Buford* group. The Major in charge of the convoy is American born; his assistant, a lieutenant, a Russian Jew from Petrograd. Both asserted that Europe is tired of war, and they

spoke sympathetically of the Soviet Republic. “It ought to be given a fair chance,” the Major said.

I wired to Chicherin about the arrival of the second group and the certainty that no American deportees are en route. At the same time I informed him that I would use Sanitary Train 81, the only one remaining on the border, to take the men to Petrograd.

By long distance telephone and by telegram came Chicherin’s order to “wait till the Foreign Office learns the date of arrival of the American emigrants.” We had already spent over a week on the border, and our provisions were running low, Petrograd having supplied us with only three days’ rations. What was to be done with over a hundred men, some of them ill? Feeling certain that Chicherin was misinformed about the “American emigrants,” I decided to ignore directions from “the center” and return to Petrograd.

But the local officials resented such defiance of authority and refused to act, and we were compelled to remain. Two more days passed, the famished war prisoners grew threatening, and at last the authorities consented to permit our train to depart.

Returning with Karus and Ethel that evening from the village to make final preparations for leaving, we were surprised not to find our train at the station. For hours we searched in every direction till a passing soldier informed us that heavy firing had been heard on the border, and as a precaution our white-painted train was moved out of range.

The night was pitch black. Leaving Ethel on the station platform I walked along the railroad track till I stumbled against a wall of cars. Someone hailed me and I recognized the voice of Karus. He lit his portable lamp and we tried to enter a car, but the doors were locked and sealed. Suddenly we felt the air hissing, and bullets began to pelt about us. “They are shooting at my light,” Karus cried, throwing his lamp down. We slowly followed the tracks till we came to a car emitting sounds of snoring, and we entered.

The smell of unclean human bodies hung heavily in the heated air, assailing us with suffocating force. We felt our way in the darkness along the aisle between double rows of booted feet when a gruff voice shouted:

“*Dezhurney*,[17] who’s there?”

From one of the benches a soldier rose, fully clad and with gun in hand.

“Who goes there?” he challenged sleepily.

“How dare you let anyone into this car, you scoundrel, you!” another shouted.

"They just came in, *tovarish*."

"You're a liar, you've been sleeping on duty." A string of curses poured forth upon the soldier, involving his mother and her alleged lovers in the picturesque vocabulary of the Russian oath.

The cursing voice sounded near. I saw a huge red star, five-pointed, with hammer and sickle in the center, pinned on the man's breast.

"Get out of here, you devils," the man shouted, "or I'll fill you full of lead."

"Easy, *tovarish*," Karus warned him, "and be a bit more polite."

"Get out!" the Commissar roared. "You don't know to whom you're talking. We're the *boyevaia*[18] Cheka."

"There may be others such," Karus replied significantly. "We can't find our car and we'd like to pass the night here."

"But you can't remain here," the man remonstrated in a quieter tone, "we may be called for action any moment."

"My *tovarish* is from the Petro-Soviet," Karus declared, indicating me; "we can't remain in the open."

"Well, stay then." The Commissar yawned and stretched himself on the bench.

I called Ethel into the car. She looked cold and tired, and hardly able to stand. In the dark I felt for a vacant place, but everywhere my hands touched human bodies. The men snored to various tunes, some cursing in their sleep.

I heard Karus climb up to the second tier and a woman's angry voice, "Quit your pushing, devil." "Make room, you heifer," came from Karus, "fine fighting men these, with a car full of whores."

In a corner we found a bench piled with rifles, dishes, and old clothes. No sooner did we sit down than we became conscious of vermin crawling upon us. "I hope we don't catch typhus," Ethel whispered fearfully. In the distance guns were being fired; now and then shots sounded nearby. Outside on the tracks two men were quarreling.

"You leave my woman be," a drunken voice threatened.

"Your woman!" the other sneered. "Why not mine?"

"I'll show you, you bastard son of your mother's lovers!" There came a dull thud, and all was quiet again.

Ethel shuddered. “If it were only daylight,” she murmured. Her head fell heavily on my shoulder and she slept.

March 27. —Arrived in Petrograd today. To my consternation I found the returned war prisoners still at the railroad station. No steps had been taken to quarter and feed them because they “were not expected” and no “orders” had yet come from Moscow.

XV
Back in Petrograd

April 2, 1920. —I found Zinoviev very ill; his condition —it is rumored —is due to mistreatment at the hands of workers. The story goes that several factories had passed resolutions criticizing the administration for corruption and inefficiency, and that subsequently some of the men were arrested. When Zinoviev later visited the mill, he was assaulted.

Nothing of such matters is to be found in the *Pravda* or *Krasnaya Gazetta*, the official dailies. They contain little news of any kind, being almost exclusively devoted to agitation and to appeals to the people to stand by the Government and the Communist Party in saving the country from counterrevolution and economic ruin.

Bill Shatov is expected back from Siberia. His wife Nunya is in the hospital, at the point of death, it is feared, and Bill has been wired for. With surprise I have learned that Shatov failed to reply to our radios or to meet the *Buford* group at the border because he was forbidden to do so by "higher authorities." It also explains why Zorin pretended that Shatov had gone East when as a matter of fact he was still in Petrograd.

It appears that Bill, in spite of his great services to the Revolution, had fallen into disfavor; grave charges were made against him, and he was even in danger of his life. Lenin saved Shatov because he was a good organizer and "could still be useful." Bill was virtually exiled to Siberia, and it is believed that he will not be permitted to return to Petrograd to see his dying wife.

Most of the *Buford* deportees are still idle. The data I prepared for Zorin, and the plans I worked out for the employment of the men, have not been acted upon. The former enthusiasm of the boys has turned to discouragement. "Bolshevik red tape," S —— remarked to me, "is wasting our time and energies. I've worn out my last pair of shoes running about trying to get work. They discriminate against the non-Communists. The Bolsheviki claim they need good workers, but if you are not a Communist they don't want you. We've been called counterrevolutionists, and the Chief of the Cheka has even threatened to send us to prison."

At the home of my friend M ——, on the Vassilevsky Ostrov, I met several men and women, sitting in their overcoats around the *bourzhuika*, the little iron stove which they kept feeding with old newspapers and magazines.

"Doesn't it seem incredible," the host was saying, "that Petrograd, with great forests in its vicinity, should freeze for lack of fuel? We'd get the wood if they'd only let us. You remember those barges on the Neva? They had been neglected, and they were falling to pieces. The workers of the N —— factory wanted to take them apart and use the lumber for fuel. But the Government refused. 'We'll attend to it ourselves,' they said. Well, what happened? Nothing was done, of course, and the tide didn't wait for official routine. The barges were swept out to sea and lost."

"The Communists won't stand for independent initiative," one of the women remarked; "it's dangerous for their regime."

"No, my friends, it's no use deluding yourselves," a tall, bearded man retorted. "Russia is not ripe for Communism. Social revolution is possible only in a country with the highest industrial development. It was the greatest crime of the Bolsheviki that they forcibly suspended the Constituent Assembly. They usurped governmental power, but the whole country is against them. What can you expect under such circumstances? They have to resort to terror to force the people to do their bidding, and of course everything goes to ruin."

"That's a good Marxist talking," a Left Socialist Revolutionist rejoined, good humoredly; "but you forget that Russia is an agrarian, not an industrial country, and will always remain such. You Social Democrats don't understand the peasant; the Bolsheviki distrust him and discriminate against him. Their proletarian dictatorship is an insult and an injury to the peasantry. Dictatorship must be that of Toil, to be exercised by the peasants and the workers together. Without the cooperation of the peasantry the country is doomed."

"As long as you'll have dictatorship, you'll have present conditions," the Anarchist host replied. "The centralized State, that is the great evil. It does not permit the creative impulses of the people to express themselves. Give the people a chance, let them exercise their initiative and constructive energies —only that will save the Revolution."

"You fellows don't realize the great role the Bolsheviki have played," a slender, nervous man spoke up. "They have made mistakes, of course, but they were not those of timidity or cowardice. They dispersed the Constituent Assembly? The more power to them! They did no more than Cromwell did to the Long Parliament: they sent the idle talkers away. And, incidentally, it was an Anarchist, Anton Zhelezniakov, on duty that night with his sailors at the palace, who ordered the Assembly to go home. You talk of violence and terror —do you imagine a Revolution is a drawing-room affair? The Revolution must be sustained at all costs; the more drastic the measures, the more humanitarian in the long run. The

Bolsheviki are Statists, extreme governmentalists, and their ruthless centralization holds danger. But a revolutionary period, such as we are going through, is not possible without dictatorship. It is a necessary evil that will be outlived only with the full victory of the Revolution. If the left political opponents would join hands with the Bolsheviki and help in the great work, the evils of the present regime would be mitigated and constructive effort hastened."

"You're a Sovietski Anarchist," the others teased him.

Almost every *otvetstvenny* (responsible) Communist is gone to Moscow to attend the Ninth Congress of the Party. Grave questions are at issue, and Lenin and Trotsky have sounded the keynote —militarization of labor. The papers are filled with the discussion of the proposed introduction of *yedinolitchiye* (one-man industrial management) to take the place of the present collegiate form. "We must learn from the bourgeoisie," Lenin says, "and use them for our purposes."

Among the labor elements there is strong opposition to the new plan, but Trotsky contends that the unions have failed in the management of industry: the proposed system is to organize production more efficiently. The labor men, on the contrary, say that the workers had not been given the opportunity, extreme State centralization having taken over the functions of the unions. *Yedinolitchiye*, they claim, means complete charge of factory and shop by one man, the so-called *spets* (specialists), to the exclusion of the workers from management.

"Step by step we are losing everything we've gained by the Revolution," a shop committeeman said to me. "The new plan means the return of the former master. The *spets* is the old *bourzhooi*, and now he is coming back to whip us to work again. But last year Lenin himself denounced the plan as counterrevolutionary, when the Mensheviki advocated it. They are still in prison for it."

Others are less outspoken. This morning I met N ——, of the *Buford* group, a man of intellectual attainment and much political acumen. "What do you think of it?" I asked, anxious to know his view of the proposed changes.

"I can't afford the luxury of expressing an opinion," he replied with a sad smile. "I have been promised a place on a commission to be sent to Europe. It's my only chance of joining my wife and children."

April 4. —A beautiful, bright Sunday. In the morning I attended the burial of Semyon Voskov, a prominent Communist agitator killed on the front by typhus. I had met him in the States, and he impressed me as a fine type of revolutionist and enthusiastic devotee of the Bolsheviki. Now his body lay in state in the Uritsky Palace, and high tribute was paid the dead as an heroic victim of the Revolution.

Along the Nevsky the funeral procession wended its way to the Field of Mars, marching to the strains of music and the singing of a choir from Archangel. Thousands of workers followed the hearse, line after line of men and women from shop and factory, tired toilers, in a spiritless, mechanical way. Military salutes were fired at the grave, and eulogies pronounced by several speakers —rather official, I thought; all too partisan, lacking the warm personal note.

The huge demonstration, arranged by the Petrograd Soviet of labor unions within twenty-four hours, as I was informed, seemed a striking proof of organization. I congratulated the chief Committee man on the quick and efficient work.

"Done without my leaving the office," he said proudly. "The Soviet decision was wired to every mill and factory, ordering each to send a certain contingent of its employees to the demonstration. And the thing was ready."

"It was not left to the choice of the men?" I asked in surprise.

"Well," he smiled, "we leave nothing to chance."

Returning from the Voskov funeral I met another procession. Two men and a woman walked behind a pushcart on which stood a rough, unpainted pine coffin, holding the dead body of their brother. A young girl, leading a little child by the hand, was wearily following the remains to its last resting place. Three men on the sidewalk stopped to watch the tragic sight. The mourners passed in silence, the picture of misery and friendlessness —black cameos sharply etched on the bright day. In the distance crashed the martial music of the Bolshevik funeral and long lines of soldiers in parade dress, their bayoneted guns glistening in the sun, marched to the Field of Mars to pay honor to Voskov, Communist martyr.

Easter Week. —No newspapers have appeared for several days. There have been rumors of possible excesses by the religious element, but the city is quiet.

At midnight (April 10) I attended mass at St. Isaac's Cathedral. The huge edifice was cold and vault-like; the deep bass of the priest sounded like a requiem of his faith. The flock, mostly men and women of the former middle class, looked depressed, as if by thoughts of a glory past forever.

After services the worshipers formed in procession on the street, thrice circling the Cathedral. They walked slowly, in silence, no joy in the traditional greeting, "Christ is risen!" "Indeed he is risen," came spiritlessly in reply. Scattered shots were heard in the distance. Two women embraced on the steps of the church and sobbed aloud.

In the Kazan Cathedral the attendance was predominately proletarian. I felt the same suppressed atmosphere, as if some vague fear possessed the people. The procession in the dark streets was mournful, funereal. The little wax candles resembled will-o'-the-wisps blown about by the breeze, their unsteady flicker faintly suggesting the icons and banners fluttering above the heads of the worshipers. Faith is still alive, but the power of the Church is broken.

Bieland arrived from America bringing the first direct news I have had from the States. Reaction is rampant, he relates; 100% Americanism is celebrating its bloody victory. The wartime laws passed as measures of temporary necessity remain in operation and are applied with greater severity than before. The prisons are filled with politicals; most of the active I.W.W. are in jail, and draft evaders and conscientious objectors are still being arrested. Radicalism is outlawed; independent opinion a crime. The militaristic humanitarianism of Wilson has become a war against progress. The heritage of "war against war" is more deadly than the slaughter itself.

Bill Haywood, released on bail, has again been arrested. Rose Pastor Stokes was extradited to Illinois for a speech that displeased some officials; Larkin is about to be put on trial, and Gitlow was condemned to fifteen years.

A similar spirit of reaction is manifest all through Europe. White Terror is in the saddle. Jack Reed has been arrested in Finland en route to America.

"Only here we can breathe freely," Bieland remarked fervently. I did not gainsay it. Notwithstanding all the faults and shortcomings of the Bolsheviki, I feel that Russia is still the hearth of the Revolution. It is the torch whose light is visible throughout the world, and proletarian hearts in every land are warmed by its glow.

April 12. —A gloomy day; cloudy, with slight rain —very oppressive after the springlike weather we have been having. It remains light now till 10 p.m. —the clocks had been turned back two hours and recently again another hour.

Liza Zorin was taken to the hospital today, suffering much pain: her child is expected in a few days. Liza refused a private room, even objecting to being treated by a doctor instead of a midwife, like any other proletarian mother. Of delicate physique and suffering from a weak heart, she is strong in spirit: a true Communist who refuses to accept special privileges. She has nothing for her baby, but "other mothers have no more, and why should I?" she says.

Moscow has refused Bill Shatov permission to leave Siberia to visit his sick wife. Though Commissar of Railroads in the Far Eastern Republic, Bill is virtually in exile.

Disclosures in the *Pravda* about the Petrograd reformatories for children have stirred the city. A Committee of the Communist Youth had been investigating the institutions, and now its report has uncovered a most deplorable state of affairs. The "reformatories" are charged with being veritable prisons in which the young inmates are regarded as criminals. Defective children are subject to severe punishment, and boyish pranks are treated as serious offenses. The general management has been found permeated with bureaucracy and corruption. A favorite mode of punishment is to deprive the children of their meals, and the food thus saved is appropriated by the managers of the institution. By corrupt methods the Commissars procure supplies on padded lists for purposes of speculation. Nepotism prevails, the number of employees often equaling that of the children.

I had been considering for some time taking up educational work, and I used the opportunity to discuss the matter with Zorin. He was greatly displeased at the revelations and inclined to consider the school situation exaggerated by the youthful investigators. He insisted that existing evils are due chiefly to the lack of Bolshevik teachers. Only Communists can be trusted in responsible positions, he asserted. Where nonpartisans hold high office, it has become necessary to put a *politkom* (political commissar) at the head of the institution to guard against sabotage. This system, though uneconomical, is imperative in view of the scarcity of Communist organizers and workers. Evils and abuses in Soviet institutions are almost wholly due to this situation, Zorin claims. The average man is a Philistine, whose sole thought is to exploit every opportunity to secure greater advantages for himself, his family, and friends. It is bourgeois human nature, *nitcheve ne podelayesh*. It is true, of course, that most Soviet employees steal and speculate. But the Government is fighting these evils with merciless hand. Such men are often shot as guilty of crime against the Revolution. But the hunger is so great that even communists, those not sufficiently grounded in the ideas and discipline of the Party, often fall victims to temptation. Such receive even less shrift than others. To them the Government is ruthless and justly so: Communists are the advance guard of the Revolution —they should show an example of devotion, honesty, and self-sacrifice.

We discussed means of eradicating the evils in the children's institutions, and Zorin welcomed my practical suggestions based on educational experience in America. I offered to devote myself to the work, but I felt compelled to make the condition that I be relieved of *politkoms* and be given opportunity to carry out my ideas in the treatment of backward and so-called morally defective children. Zorin referred me to Lilina, Zinoviev's wife, who is at the head of the educational

institutions of Petrograd, and playfully warned me not to repeat the faux pas I had made when I first met the lady.

On that occasion, when I called at Zinoviev's rooms in the Astoria, a comely young woman answered the bell. "Are you Mme. Zinoviev?" I inquired, unconscious of the fact act that I was committing an unpardonable breach of Bolshevik etiquette; in fact, a double breach in employing the bourgeois expression "Madame" and in failing to address her by her own name, which I could not remember at the moment.

"I'll call *tovarish* Lilina," she said censoriously, and the next instant I faced an irate, middle-aged woman with the face of a disgruntled spinster. She had evidently heard my question, and her reception was ungracious.

"*Tovarish* Zinoviev does not receive here. Go to the Smolny," she said, without permitting me to enter.

"I should like to use the direct wire to the Foreign Office, on business with Chicherin," I explained.

"You can't do it, and I don't know who you are," she replied curtly, closing the door.

On the present occasion Lilina was more gracious. We spoke of the conditions in the reformatories and she admitted that certain evils existed there, but protested that the published report was grossly exaggerated. We discussed modern methods of education and I explained the system followed by the Ferrer School in New York. She was inclined to agree in theory, "but we must fit our youth," she remarked, "to continue the work of our Revolution." "Surely," I assented, "but is that to be done by the conventional methods which stultify and cripple the young mind by imposing upon it predigested views and dogmas?" I emphasized that the true aim of education is to aid the harmonious development of the child's physical and mental qualities, to encourage independence of thought and inspire creative effort.

Lilina thought my views too Anarchistic.

XVI
Rest Homes for Workers

For months Zorin had been thinking of a project to afford the toilers of Petrograd an opportunity to recuperate during the summer. The workers are systematically undernourished and exhausted —a few weeks' rest and an improved *pyock* would give them new strength, and would at the same time be a demonstration of the interest the Communist Party is taking in their welfare.

After protracted discussion Zorin's idea was approved by the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, and he received authority to put his cherished dream in operation. The former villas of the Russian nobility in the environs of the city were to be turned into proletarian "rest homes" and rebuilt to hold fifty thousand workers, who will spend two weeks there in groups of five thousand.

Zorin enlisted my cooperation, and I have enthusiastically accepted. We have paid several visits to Kameny Island, where the most beautiful villas and palaces are situated, and I have worked out a detailed plan for transforming them into homes for small families of workers, providing also for dining-rooms, libraries, and recreation places. Zorin has appointed me general manager and requested that the work be rushed "in hurry-up American style," as he expressed himself, in order that everything be completed by the 1st of May, which is to be celebrated on a large scale as a revolutionary holiday.

The island has been neglected since the Revolution; most of the villas need thorough renovating and even the roads are badly out of repair. We mean to create an artistic summer resort, with modern improvements and comforts for the benefit of the proletarians. Surely no government has ever undertaken such work before.

Architects and civil engineers are on hand, but we find great difficulty in procuring building material and efficient labor. The Petrograd warehouses are stocked with the things needed, but it is almost impossible to learn just what is on hand and where it is to be found. When private property was nationalized, the stores and warehouses were sealed, and no one apparently knows what they contain. Our architects, engineers, and workers fly about the city, wasting their time in a vain effort to secure the required material. For days they crowd the various bureaus to procure "authorized orders" for a few spades or lengths of water pipe, and when these are finally secured, we are balked by the general ignorance as to where the object sought can be found. In this situation the only economic and efficient mode of procedure would be to have our own committee overhaul the warehouses and

take an inventory of the stock on hand. But my proposition to this effect has impugned upon the thick wall of the prevailing bureaucratic system. The Commissars of the various departments —all Communists —are inclined to take offense at such apparent ignoring of their authority: established modes of procedure have to be followed. Moreover, the stores and warehouses had been sealed by the Cheka; without its permission in each particular case the locks cannot be touched. The Cheka frowns upon my suggestion, coming from a nonmember of the Party, at that. *Nitcheve ne podelayesh*, Zorin says.

I find the new Soviet bureaucracy, its inefficiency and indifference, the greatest handicap in the work. It involves a continuous struggle against official red tape, precedence, and petty jealousy. Time is passing, and almost no progress is being made. The situation is disheartening.

I consider it vital that the men employed in the work of preparing a recreation place for the proletariat should themselves feel an interest in the matter, for only thus can effective cooperation be secured and results achieved. I have, therefore, suggested the formation of a committee to visit the shops and factories, to explain our plan to the workers, and enlist their interest and voluntary aid. I pointed out also the moral value of such a proceeding, and offered to organize the committee from the *Buford* deportees, most of whom are still looking for employment. Zorin favors the idea, but objections have been raised in various quarters. I wonder whether it is official distrust of the *Buford* men or disinclination to permit such a committee to get in direct contact with the workers. At any rate, the carrying out of my suggestion has become involved in endless applications to various Commissars and has apparently been lost in the intricate network of the Soviet machinery.

Instead, soldiers and prisoners from the forced labor camps of the city have been commandeered for road repairing, cleaning neglected gardens and renovating the houses. But they have no interest in the work; their thoughts and time are entirely occupied with the question of the *pyock*. A most vital matter: for not being employed at their regular tasks, they risk losing the rations due them, and no adequate provision has been made to feed them on the island. A general mess hall has been opened, but such favoritism prevails there that the prisoners and soldiers without influence often remain without meals, preference being given to the numerous friends and appointees of the Commissars and Communists. The common laborers at work are growing dissatisfied. “The actual worker,” a soldier said to me, “will not get into the summer resort. It will be only for Commissars and Communists.”

Some buildings in the area of the planned rest homes are occupied as children's homes and schools; others, by the families of the intelligentsia. All of them have been ordered to vacate. But while arrangements have been made to secure quarters for the schools in the city, the private dwellers are considered *bourzhooi* and as such not worthy of any consideration: they are to be evicted. Yet hidden influences are at work: a number of the *bourzhooi* have received "protection," while those without friends in high places are vainly begging for mercy. Zorin has asked me to execute the order for eviction, but eager as I am to establish rest homes for the workers, I had to refuse to cooperate in what seems to me gross injustice and needless brutality. Zorin is displeased at my "sentimentality," and I am being eliminated from the work.

XVII
The First of May

Awakened early in the morning by strains of music and song, I went out into the street. The city was in gala attire: flags and banners fluttered in the air; red carpets and curtains hung from windows and doors, the variety of shade and design producing a warm, Oriental effect.

On the Nevsky a large automobile passed me, stopping a few paces ahead. A curly, black head rose from the depths of the machine, and someone hailed me: “Hello, Berkman, come and join us.” I recognized Zinoviev.

Detachments of military filed by, singing revolutionary songs, and groups of boys and girls marched to the strains of “The Internationale.” “*Subotniki*,”[19] Zinoviev remarked, “going to Marsove Pole to plant trees on the graves of our heroic dead.” Our car moved slowly between phalanxes of revolutionary youths and Red Army men, and my mind reverted to a previous May Day demonstration. It was my first experience of the kind, in New York, in the latter part of the 80’s. Radicals of every camp had cooperated to make the event successful, and a huge demonstration was expected on the historic Union Square. But the majority of the American workers of the city remained deaf to our proclamation, and only a few thousands attended, mostly of the foreign element.

The meeting had just begun when suddenly the blue-coated giants appeared, and the gathering was attacked with riot clubs and dispersed into the side streets. Some of us had foreseen such a possibility, and a little group of the younger element had prepared to resist the police. But on the eve of the demonstration, in our last committee conference, H ——, the leader of the older members, had warned us against “being provoked into violence,” and well I remember how passionately I resented the “arguments” of the pusillanimous Social Democrat. “We are the teachers of the people,” he had said, “and we must lead them to greater class consciousness. But we are few and it were folly to sacrifice ourselves unnecessarily. We must save ourselves for more important work.”

I scoffed at the cowardly warning and called it the spiritual acme of our Christian civilization which has turned the bold eagle, man, into a fox. But H ——’s speech paled the enthusiasm of our group, and there was no resistance to the police brutality. I went home discouraged by the ignominious failure of our 1st of May demonstration.

The metallic thunder of "The Internationale," struck up by several bands at once, recalled me to the present. Here, indeed, was the First of May of my youthful dreams. Here was the Revolution itself!

At the Uritsky Square we alighted. Affectionately I looked at the workers and soldiers that joined our group. Here were the builders of the Revolution who, in the face of insurmountable difficulties, are leading it to victory. I glanced at Zinoviev —he looked weary, overworked, heavy rings under his eyes —the "Communist look" I had become familiar with.

The procession formed. Zinoviev put his arm through mine, and someone pushed us into the front rank. Holding hands, the lines marched toward the Field of Mars, Zorin carrying the huge red banner. His slender figure staggered beneath its weight, and willing hands stretched out to relieve him. But Zorin would not be deprived of the precious burden.

The Field of Mars was dotted with bending figures busily at work —the *subotniki* decorating the graves of the revolutionary martyrs. They labored joyfully, snatches of their song reaching us between the pauses of the brass bands in our rear.

I stood with Zinoviev on the reviewing stand, interpreting his answers to the American correspondent whom Chicherin finally admitted into Russia. As far as the eye could reach, soldiers and workers filled the huge square and adjoining streets. Proletarians from the factories marched by, each group with its crimson banner inscribed with revolutionary mottoes. Red Army nurses, women employees of shops and Soviet institutions, regiments of the Communist Youth, the *vsevobutch* of the armed workers, and long lines of children, boys and girls, filed by with the flags of their organizations.

It was the most imposing demonstration of revolutionary consciousness I had ever seen, and I felt inspired by it. But the appearance of the marchers was depressing; they were undernourished, exhausted, poorly clad, and I noticed many children walking barefoot. It was probably due to their physical weakness, I thought, that the paraders showed so little enthusiasm —they barely responded to the greetings of the Communists on the reviewing stand, and the frequent "Hurrah, Hurrah, *Tovarishi*!" shouted by Lashevitch and Antselovitch, Zinoviev's lieutenants, found but a weak, spiritless echo in the ranks of the passing demonstrators.

The festivities closed in the evening with an open air mass spectacle, illustrating the triumph of the Revolution. It was a powerful portrayal of the age-long slavery of the people, of their suffering and misery, and the underground revolutionary activities of the pioneers of liberty. The best artists of the city participated in the

portrayal of the great Russian drama and gave an intense and moving presentation. I was spellbound by the horrors of the Tsars' tyranny; the clanking of the slaves' chains echoed in my consciousness, and I heard the muttering of approaching storm from the depths. Then sudden thunder of cannon, groans of the wounded and dying in the world slaughter, followed by the lightning of rebellion and the Triumph of the Revolution.

I lived through the whole gamut of the great struggle within the two hours of the performance, and I was profoundly stirred. But the huge audience remained silent —not a sign of approval was manifested. Was it the apathy of the northern temperament, I wondered, when I heard a young workman nearby saying: "What's the use of it all! I'd like to know what we have gained."

XVIII
The British Labor Mission

May, 1920. —New life has come to Petrograd with the arrival of the British Mission; many meetings, banquets, and festivities are taking place in its honor. I believe the Communists are inclined to exaggerate the importance of the visit and its probable results. Some even think the coming of the Englishmen augurs the political recognition of Russia in the near future. Soviet newspapers and Communist speeches have created the impression that the Mission represents the sentiment of the whole British proletariat, and that the latter is about to come to the aid of Russia.

I heard the subject discussed by a group of workers and soldiers at the meeting in the Labor Temple. I had been asked to render into English the resolutions to be presented, and a small table was assigned to me. People crowded about me to get a better look at the delegates on the platform. The full glare of the electric lights shone upon Ben Turner, the Chairman of the Mission, short, stocky, and well-fed.

“There, look at him!” a worker behind me exclaimed, “you can tell he’s from abroad. Our people are not so fat.”

“What wonder!” a soldier replied, “it isn’t Russia, England isn’t, and people don’t go hungry there.”

“The workers starve everywhere,” a hoarse voice said.

“These are not workers,” the first man corrected. “They are delegates.”

“Of course, delegates, but proletarian delegates,” the hoarse voice insisted. “The English working class sent them to see what help we need.”

“You think they will help?” the soldier asked hopefully.

“That’s what they are here for. They’ll go back home and tell the proletariat there how we suffer, and they’ll have the blockade taken off.”

“God be willing, God be willing,” the worker sighed fervently.

A man passed by, energetically pushing his way through the crowd, and ascended the platform. His prosperous appearance, well-fitting clothes, and ruddy face were in striking contrast with the people about.

“Look at that fat delegate! They ain’t starving in England,” the soldier whispered to his neighbor.

Something familiar about the stout “delegate” fastened my attention. His eye fell upon me and he smiled recognition. It was Melnitchansky, the Chairman of the Moscow Soviet of Labor Unions.

Considerable disappointment is felt in Communist circles regarding the Mission. The military displays have failed to impress them, the visits to mills and factories have produced no enthusiasm among the “cold-blooded Britishers.” They seem purposely to avoid a definite expression of opinion regarding aid that might be expected from their country or the nature of their report to the workers of England. Certain remarks by individual delegates have caused uneasiness. Some Communists think it poor taste to honor a labor mission with military demonstrations, some of whose members are outspoken pacifists. A revolutionary country like Russia, they say, should lay more stress on the proletarian consciousness of the people as the true symbol of its character and the best guarantee of its peaceful intentions. The visits to the industrial establishments, it is claimed, could impress only with their lack of productive results and the fact that the factories and mills had been “primed” for the delegates. It is even whispered about that the Britishers sense in the official atmosphere with which they are surrounded a sort of surveillance very irksome to them.

The men sent from Moscow to welcome the Mission —Radek, Melnitchansky, and Petrovsky —believe that every effort must be made to create a good impression on the delegates, in the hope of securing their favorable report in England and correspondent action there in behalf of Russia. Radek and Petrovsky are strong defenders of “diplomacy”; Petrovsky, especially, who apparently enjoys considerable influence in the councils of the Party, though his allegiance to Bolshevism is of very recent origin. I knew him in America as Dr. Goldfarb, labor editor of the *New York Jewish Forward*, and a very fanatical Social Democrat —a Menshevik, in the Russian terminology. His conversion to Bolshevism was rather sudden, and I am surprised to learn that he holds the important position of Commissar of military education.

Angelica Balabanova, an old revolutionist and very lovable personality, who is on the Reception Committee, agrees with me that the best policy is to enable the Mission to learn the whole truth concerning Russia, and to enlist their friendship and cooperation in the work of upbuilding the country by their adequate understanding of its needs, rather than by the lack of it. But the other members of the Committee of Welcome hold a different view. Overzealous and anxious, they exaggerate the truth and minimize or entirely deny the weak points. At demonstrations and meetings this policy has been followed, but it is evident that

some of the delegates saw through the mask of pretense. At the final banquet given in honor of the Britishers before their departure for Moscow, almost every speaker emphasized the fact that only the truth had been told the Mission, unconscious of the smile of incredulity in the polite attention of the delegates. Antselovitch, Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet of Labor Unions, rose even to the height of asserting that full individual liberty is established in Russia —at least for the workers, he added, as if suddenly become aware of the recklessness of his statement.

Perhaps I did Antselovitch an injustice by omitting that falsehood in my translation of his speech. But I could not stand up before the delegates and repeat what I knew, as well as they, to be a deliberate lie, as stupid as it was unnecessary. The delegates are aware that dictatorship is the reverse of liberty. They know there is no freedom of speech or press for anyone in Soviet Russia, not even for Communists, and that sanctity of home or person is unknown. The exigencies of the revolutionary struggle make such a condition of affairs imperative, Lenin frankly admits. It is an insult to the intelligence of the Mission to pretend otherwise.

At our visits to the mills and factories Antselovitch and his aides danced attendance upon the delegates in a manner clearly displeasing to them. One of the Britishers hinted to his colleagues that the places had received previous notice and were "prepared" for the distinguished guests. The information about conditions and output given by managers, foremen, and Communist employees varied so obviously as to elicit surprised remarks. Some members of the Mission were aware of the attendance of Chekists and conscious of the timidity of the workers in their presence.

A train de luxe, with Pullman sleepers and diner, was waiting at the Nikolayevsky Station to take the British Mission to Moscow. At every car the delegates were saluted by the guard of honor, young Mussulmen *kursanti*[20] in their picturesque Cherkess uniforms. The place presented an unusually serene appearance. The customary crowds with their heavy loads, shouting and pushing, were absent. Not a bedraggled workman or filthy beggar was in sight. Station and platform were the picture of cleanliness and well-regulated order.

At the stroke of 11 p.m. on Sunday, May 16, the Mission started for Moscow. The delegates were accompanied by a large coterie of prominent Communists, including Radek, Kollontai, Losovsky, his daughter, who acts as his secretary, Balabanova, Zorin, and some lesser lights. By request I went with the Mission as unofficial interpreter, sharing my coupé with Ichov, head of the Government publications in Petrograd.

On the way Russia and Russian conditions were discussed, the Communists striving to "draw out" the delegates, while most of the latter were careful to express no definite opinion. In general terms Ben Turner, the Chairman of the Mission, spoke of the need of a more humane attitude to Russia, while Messrs. Skinner and Purcell nodded their approval —more of the generality of the Chairman's remarks, it seemed to me, than of their meaning. Williams was outspoken in his admiration of the good order which prevails in Petrograd, while Wallhead, of the Independent Labor Party, agreed with Allen —the only Communist among the Englishmen —in roundly denouncing the Allied crime of the blockade which is starving millions of innocent women and little children. Mrs. Snowden preserved the well-bred dignity of high society, participating in the conversation to the extent of a patronizing smile that said very plainly, "I am with you, but not of you." Once she voiced her pleasant surprise at not finding the streets of Petrograd infested with highwaymen who robbed the people unhindered by daylight, as "some folks in England believed."

Of all the delegates, the most sympathetic to me were Allen, with his thoughtful, ascetic face, and Bertrand Russell, who accompanied the Mission in a private capacity, I believe. Unlike each other in temperament and viewpoint, both impressed me as men of deep insight and social sincerity.

In Moscow a great ovation had been prepared for the Mission. The railway platform was lined with Red Army men in dress parade uniforms and shining accoutrements, military bands played "The Internationale," and Communist orators gave a "triumphant welcome" to the British guests. Kamenev greeted them on behalf of the Central Government, and Tomsky, President of the All-Russian Soviet of Labor Unions, in a long speech addressed the representatives of the British workers in the name of their Russian brothers. All the speakers characterized the happy occasion as the symbol of the common cause of the toilers of the two countries and voiced the conviction that the English proletariat is about to come to the aid of the Revolution.

For almost two hours the delegates were kept standing on the platform listening to speeches in a language unintelligible to them. But at last the ceremony was over, and the visitors were seated in automobiles and driven to the Soviet Hotel, assigned as their quarters. In the great crowding the Englishmen became separated, some of them almost submerged by the surging waves of humanity. Gradually the soldiers filed out, the crowd thinned, and at last I was able to make my way to the street. The Government machines had already left, and I looked about for an *isvoshtchik* (cab), when I noticed Bertrand Russell struggling out of the station. He stood

bewildered on the steps, not knowing where to turn, forgotten amidst the excited people shouting a strange jargon. An auto drove up at that moment, and I recognized Karakhan.

“I am a little late,” he said; “are all the delegates gone?”

“Bertrand Russell is here yet,” I replied.

“Russell? Who is he?”

I explained.

“Never heard of him,” Karakhan said naively. “But let him come in; there’s room for both of you.”

Delovoi Dvor, the Soviet Hotel assigned to the British guests, has been entirely renovated, and looks clean and fresh. The large dining room is tastefully decorated with crimson banners and mottoes of welcome. Socialist legends of the solidarity of the workers of the world and the triumph of the Revolution through the dictatorship of the proletariat speak from the walls in various tongues. Potted plants lend the spacious room warmth and color.

Covers were set for a large number, including the delegates, the official representatives of the Soviet Government, some members of the Third International, and the invited spokesmen of labor. Russian caviar, soup, white bread, two kinds of meat and a variety of vegetables were on the menu. When fried chicken was served, I saw some of the Britishers exchange wondering glances.

“A jolly good meal for starving Russia,” a delegate at my side remarked to his neighbor in the lull of clattering dishes and laughter.

“Rather. Natty wench,” the other replied with a suggestive wink at the winsome young waitress serving him. “Thought the Bolsheviks had done away with servants.”

Angelica Balabanova, sitting opposite me, looked perturbed.

On May 18th, the day following its arrival in Moscow, the Mission was honored with a great demonstration. It was a splendid military display, all branches of the Red Army participating. No workers marched in the parade.

The continuous round of festivities, special theatrical performances, and visits to factories, are apparently palling upon the delegates. A feeling of dissatisfaction is noticeable among them, a sense of resentment at the apparent surveillance to which they feel themselves subjected. Several have complained of inability to see their callers, the *propusk* system introduced in the Delovoy Dvor since the arrival of the

Mission practically excluding visitors considered persona non grata by the Cheka agent at the clerk's desk. The delegates are becoming aware of the subtle curtailment of their liberty, conscious of their every step and word being spied upon. They resent the "prison atmosphere," as a member of the Mission characterized the environment. "We are friendly disposed," he said to me, "and there is no sense in such tactics." He was not content with seeing only things officially shown to the Mission, he said. He was anxious to look deeper, and he complained of being compelled to resort to stratagems in order to come in contact with persons whose views he wanted to learn.

"The Russian Revolution is the greatest event in all history," one of the delegates remarked to me, "petty consideration should have no place in it. A new world is in the making; to minimize the terrific travail of such a birth is worse than folly. The Bolsheviki, in the vanguard of the revolutionary masses, are playing a part in the process whose significance history will not fail to estimate. That they have made mistakes is inevitable, is human; but in spite of errors, they are founding a new civilization. History does not forgive failure: it will immortalize the Bolsheviki because of their success in the face of almost insuperable difficulties. They may justly be proud of their achievements."

He paused, then continued thoughtfully: "Let the delegates and the world look the situation full in the face. We must learn what revolution actually *is*. The Russian Revolution is not a matter of mere political recognition; it is a world-changing event. Of course we'll find wrongs and abuses in it. A period of such storm and strife is unthinkable without them. Evils discovered need only be cured, and well-intentioned criticism is of utmost value. Nor is it a secret that Russia is suffering from starvation, and it is criminal to pretend well-being by grand banquets and dinners. On the contrary, let the delegates behold the terrible effects of the blockade, let them see the frightful disease and mortality resulting from it. No outsider can have even an approximate conception of the full extent of the Allied crime against Russia. The closer the delegates come in contact with the actuality, the more convincing will be their appeal to the British proletariat, and the more effectively will they be able to fight the blockade and Entente intervention."

XIX
The Spirit of Fanaticism

The Universalist Club on the Tverskaya was in great commotion. Anarchists, Left Social Revolutionists, and Maximalists, with a considerable sprinkling of factory workers and soldiers, filled the lecture room and were excitedly discussing something. As I entered, a tall, well-built young man in a naval blouse separated himself from the crowd and approached me. It was my friend G ——, the Anarchist sailor.

“What do you say *now*, Berkman?” he demanded, his strong face expressive of deep indignation. “Do you still think the Bolsheviki revolutionary?”

I learned that forty-five Anarchists in the Butirki prison (Moscow) had been subjected to such unbearable conditions of existence that they at last resorted to the desperate protest of a hunger strike. All of them have been in prison for many months, ever since the Leontievsky affair,[21] without charges being preferred against them. They are kept under a most rigid regime, deprived of exercise and visitors, and the food served them is so insufficient and unwholesome that almost all of the prisoners are ill with scurvy. The hunger strikers demand to be tried or released, and their action is considered so justifiable by the other prisoners that the entire Butirki population of over 1,500 have joined the strikers. They have sent a collective protest to the Central Executive of the Communist Party, copies of which have also been forwarded to Lenin, the Moscow Soviet, the Labor Unions, and other official bodies. In view of the urgency of the situation the Universalists have elected a Committee to call on the Secretary of the Communist Party, and it has been suggested that I also join the Committee.

“Will you help?” my sailor friend asked, “or have you entirely deserted us?”

“Perhaps you’ll soon be in the Party,” another remarked bitterly, “you’re a Bolshevik now, a Sovietsky Anarchist.”

In the hope that a reapproachment may still be established between the Communists and the Left elements, I consented.

Returning home that evening, I reflected on the failure of my previous efforts to bring about a better understanding between the warring revolutionary factions. I recalled my visits to Lenin and Krestinsky, my talks with Zinoviev, Chicherin, and other leading Bolsheviki. Lenin had promised to have the Central Committee consider the matter, but his reply —in the form of a resolution of the

Party —merely repeated that "*ideini* Anarchists[22] are not persecuted," but emphasized that "agitation against the Soviet Government cannot be tolerated." The question of legalizing Anarchist educational work, which I discussed with Krestinsky several weeks ago, has not been acted upon and has evidently been ignored. Persecution of the Left elements continues, and the prisons are filled with revolutionists. Many of them have been outlawed and compelled to "go underground." Maria Spiridonova[23] has for a long time been imprisoned in the Kremlin, and her friends are being hunted as in the days of the Tsar.

A sense of discouragement comes over me as I witness the bitter animosity of the Communists toward the other revolutionary elements. They are even more ruthless in suppressing the Left opposition than that of the Right. Lenin, Chicherin, and Zinoviev assured me that Spiridonova and her circle are dangerous enemies of the Revolution. The Government pretended to consider Maria insane and had placed her in a sanitarium, from which she recently escaped. But I had an opportunity to visit the young woman, who is again hiding as in the Romanov times. I found her perfectly well-balanced, a most sincere idealist passionately devoted to the peasantry and the best interests of the Revolution. The other members of her circle —Kamkov, Trutovsky, Izmailovitch —are persons of high intelligence and integrity. The Bolsheviki, they believe, have betrayed the Revolution; but they do not advocate armed resistance to the Soviet Government, demanding only freedom of expression. They consider the Brest peace as the most fatal Communist step, the beginning of their reactionary policies and of the persecution of the Left elements. In protest against it and against the presence of the representative of German imperialism in Soviet Russia, they caused the death of Count Mirbach in 1918.

The Communists have grown Jesuitical in their attitude to other viewpoints. Yet most of them I find sincere and hardworking men, devoted to their cause and serving it to the point of self-abnegation. Very illuminating was my experience with Bakaiev, the head of the Petrograd Cheka, with whom I interceded in behalf of three Anarchists arrested recently. A simple and unassuming man, I found him in a small unpretentious room in the Astoria, at dinner with his brother. They sat before a meager meal of thin soup and rice dessert; there was no meat and only a few slices of black bread. I could not help noticing that both men remained hungry.

Introduced by a personal note from Zinoviev, I appealed to Bakaiev for the prisoners, informing him that I knew them personally and considered their arrest unjustifiable.

"They are true revolutionists," I urged. "Why do you keep them in prison?"

"In the room of Tch ——," Bakaiev replied, "we found certain apparatus."

"Tch ——— is a chemist," I explained.

"We know it," he retorted; "but anti-Soviet handbills had been found in the factories, and my men thought they might have some connection with Tch ———'s laboratory. But he stubbornly refused to answer questions."

"Well, that's an old practice of arrested revolutionists," I reminded him.

Bakaiev grew indignant. "That is why I'm holding him," he declared. "Such tactics were justified against the bourgeois regime, but it is an insult to treat us so. Tch ——— acts as if we were gendarmes."

"Do you think it matters by whom one is kept in jail?"

"Well, don't let us discuss it, Berkman," he said. "You don't know for whom you are interceding."

"And the other two men?"

"They were found with Tch ———," he replied. "We are not persecuting Anarchists, believe me; but these men are not safe at liberty."

I appealed to Ravitch, the Commissar of Internal Affairs for the Petrograd District, a young woman with the impress of tragic revolutionary experience on her comely face. She regretted that she could do nothing, the Cheka having exclusive authority in such matters, and referred me to Zinoviev. The latter had not been informed of the arrests, but he assured me I need not be anxious about my friends.

"You know, Berkman, we do not arrest *ideini* Anarchists," he said; "but those people are not your kind. Anyhow, rest easy; Bakaiev knows what he is about."

He slapped me cheerfully on the shoulder and invited me to join him in the Imperial loge at the ballet that evening.

Later I learned that Bakaiev was suspended and exiled to the Caucasus for his too zealous use of summary execution.

May 25. —This morning, on the fifth day of the Burtiki hunger strike, I called at the offices of the Central Committee of the Party, on Mokhovaia Street. As on my previous visit the anterooms were crowded with callers; numerous clerks, mostly young girls in abbreviated skirts and high-heeled lacquered shoes, flitted about with arms full of documents; others sat at desks writing and sorting large piles of reports and *dokladi*. I felt in the whirl of a huge machine, its wheels unceasingly revolving above the beehive on the street and grinding out slips of paper, endless paper for the guidance of the millions of Russia.

Preobrazhensky, formerly Commissar of Finance and now in Krestinsky's place, received me somewhat coldly. He had read the protest of the hunger strikers, he said, but what of it? "What is it you come for?" he demanded.

I stated my mission. The politicals have been kept in prison for nine months, some of them even for two years, without trial or charges, and now they demand some action in their cases.

"They are within their rights," Preobrazhensky replied, "but if your friends think they can influence us by a hunger strike, they are mistaken. They may starve as long as they want." He paused and a hard expression came into his eyes. "If they die," he added thoughtfully, "perhaps it would be best."

"I have come to you as a comrade," I said indignantly, "but if you take such an attitude —"

"I have no time to discuss it," he interrupted. "The matter will be considered this evening by the Central Committee."

Later in the day I learned that ten of the imprisoned Anarchists, including Gordin —the founder of the Universalist group —were released by order of the Cheka, in the hope of breaking the hunger strike. This development was independent of any action of the Central Committee. It also became known that some of the Butirki politicals were condemned to five years' prison, without having received hearing or trial, while others were sentenced to concentration camps "till the end of civil war."

I was in a room in the Hotel National translating for the British Labor Mission various resolutions, articles, and Losovsky's brochure on the history of Russian unionism, when I received a message from Radek asking me to call on a matter of great urgency. Wondering, I entered the automobile he had sent for me and was driven at a fast clip through the city till we reached the former quarters of the German Legation, now occupied by the Third International. The elegant reception hall was filled with callers and foreign delegates, some of whom were curiously examining the bullet marks in the mosaic floor and walls —reminders of the violent death Mirbach had met in this room at the hands of Left Social Revolutionists opposed to the Brest peace.

I was conscious of the disapproving looks directed at me when, out of my turn, I was requested to follow the attendant to the private office of the Secretary of the Communist International. Radek received me very cordially, inquired about my health, and thanked me for so promptly responding to his call. Then, handing me a thick manuscript, he said:

"Ilyitch[24] has just finished this work and he is anxious to have you render it into English for the British Mission. You will do us a great service."

It was the manuscript of *The Infantile Sickness of Leftism*. I had already heard about the forthcoming work and knew it to be an attack on the Left revolutionary tendencies critical of Leninism. I turned over some pages, with their profusely underscored lines corrected in Lenin's small but legible handwriting. "Petty bourgeois ideology of Anarchism," I read; "the infantile stupidity of Leftism," "the ultrarevolutionists suffocating in the fervor of their childish enthusiasm." The pale faces of the Butirki hunger strikers rose before me. I saw their burning eyes peering accusingly at me through the iron bars. "Have you forsaken us?" I heard them whisper.

"We are in a great hurry about this translation." Radek was saying, and I felt impatience in his voice. "We want it done within three days."

"It will require at least a week," I replied. "Besides, I have other work on hand, already promised."

"I know, Losovsky's," he remarked with a disparaging tilt of the head; "that's all right. Lenin's takes precedence. You can drop everything else, on my responsibility."

"I will undertake it if I may add a preface."

"This is no joking matter, Berkman." Radek was frankly displeased.

"I speak seriously. This pamphlet misrepresents and besmirches all my ideals. I cannot agree to translate it without adding a few words in defense."

"Otherwise you decline?"

"I do."

Radek's manner lacked warmth as I took my departure.

A subtle change has taken place in the attitude of the Communists toward me. I notice coldness in their greeting, a touch of resentment even. My refusal to translate Lenin's brochure has become known, and I am made to feel guilty of lèse majesté.

I have been accompanying the British Mission on its visits to mills, theaters, and schools, and everywhere I was aware of the scrutinizing gaze of the Chekamen attending the delegates as guides and interpreters. In the Delovoi Dvor the clerk has suddenly begun to demand my *propusk* and to ask my "business," though he knows that I live there and am helping the delegates with translations.

I have decided to give up my room in the Dvor and to accept the hospitality of a friend in the National. It is contrary to the rules of the Soviet Houses, no visitor being permitted to remain after midnight. At that hour the day's *propuski*, with the names of the callers and the persons visited, are turned over to the Cheka. Not being an official guest of the Hotel, I am not entitled to meals and am compelled to commit another breach of Communist order by resorting to the markets, officially abolished but practically in operation. The situation is growing intolerable, and I am preparing to leave for Petrograd.

"You have become persona non grata," Augustine Souchy, the delegate of the German Syndicalist Union, remarked as we were sitting in the Delovoi translating the resolutions submitted by Losovsky to the labor representatives of Sweden, Norway, and Germany.

"In both camps," I laughed. "My friends of the Left call me a Bolshevik, while the Communists look askance at me."

"Many of us are in the same boat," Souchy replied.

Bertrand Russell passed by and called me aside. "I think nothing will come of our proposed visit to Peter Kropotkin," he said. "For five days they have been promising a machine. It's always 'in a moment it will be here,' and the days pass in vain waiting."

A curly-headed little Communist, one of the English-speaking guides assigned to the Mission, sauntered by, as if inadvertently.

"Is the machine ready?" Russell asked. "It was to be here at ten this morning; it's 2 p.m. now."

"The Commissar just told me that the machine unfortunately got out of order," the guide replied.

Russell smiled. "They are sabotaging our visit," he said; "we'll have to drop it." Then he added sadly: "I feel like a prisoner, every step watched. Already in Petrograd I became aware of this annoying surveillance. It's rather stupid of them."

I listened to some of the British delegates discussing the printers' meeting from which they had just returned. Melnitchansky and other Bolsheviki had addressed the gathering, eulogizing the Soviet regime and the Communist dictatorship. Suddenly a man wearing a long black beard appeared on the platform. Before anyone realized his identity, he launched an attack on the Bolsheviki. He branded them as the corrupters of the Revolution and denounced their tyranny as worse than

the Tsar's. His fiery oratory kept the audience spellbound. Then someone shouted: "Who are you? Your name!"

"I am Chernov, Victor Chernov," the man replied in bold, defiant voice.

The Bolsheviki on the platform jumped to their feet in rage.

"Hurrah! Long live Chernov, brave Chernov!" the audience shouted, and a wild ovation was tendered the Social Revolutionary leader and former President of the Constituent Assembly.

"Arrest him! Hold the traitor!" came from the Communists. There was a rush to the platform, but Chernov had disappeared.

Some of the Britishers expressed admiration for the daring of the man whom the Cheka has been so assiduously searching for a long time. "It was rather exciting," someone remarked.

"I shudder to think what will happen to him if he's caught," said another.

"Deucedly clever, his escape."

"The printers will pay for it."

"I hear the leaders of the Third Soviet bakery are under arrest and the men locked out for demanding more bread."

"It's different at home," a delegate sighed. "But I believe we all agree that the blockade must be raised."

XX
Other People

June. —Winter has released its icy grip, and the sun shines brightly. In the parks the benches are filling with people.

Our *Buford* mascot, the "Baby," passed me and I hailed him. The color has faded from his face, and he looks yellow and weary.

"No, most of our boys are not working yet," he said, "and we're sick of the red tape. They always tell you they need workers, but nobody really wants us. Of course, the Communists of our group have all gotten good berths. Have you heard about Bianki? You remember how he roasted them at that meeting in Beloostrov? How he joined the Party and got a responsible job? The Boston sailor, remember him? Well, I met him walking on the street the other day, all dressed up in a leather suit, with a gun as big as your arm. In the Cheka. His old business. Did you know he was a detective in Boston?"

"I thought he was a sailor."

"Years back. Later he served in a private sleuth agency.

"Several of our boys worked for a while in the Petrotop,"[25] the "Baby" continued. "The Cheka thought there were too many Anarchists there and they kicked us out. Dzerzhinsky[26] says the Petrotop is an Anarchist nest; but everyone knows the city would have frozen to death last winter if it wasn't for Kolobushkin. He is an Anarchist and the whole brains of that place, but they talk of arresting him. An old Schlüsselburg man at that; spent ten years in the dungeons there."

With primitive unconcern of those about her, an old peasant woman has bared the back of a young girl at her side and is closely scrutinizing her garments. With deliberate movement her thumb and forefinger come together, she withdraws her hand, straightens herself, and releases her captive on the ground. Her neighbor draws nervously aside. "Be careful, good woman," he chides her, "I have enough of my own."

"Tell me, my dear," the old woman inquires, "is it true what people are saying about new wars?"

"Yes."

"With whom, then?"

"With the Poles."

"Oh, God be merciful! And why must they always be fighting, Little Uncle?"

The man is silent. The girl lifts her face from the woman's lap. "It's chilly, aunt. Are you done now?"

"You're full of 'em, child."

On the corner two militiamen are directing a group of street cleaners, oldish men and boys from the concentration camp, and women arrested without documents on trains. Some have high felt boots on, the loose soles flapping noisily in the liquid dung. Others are barefoot. They work apathetically, carrying the filth from the yards to the street and loading it upon carts. The stench is nauseating.

A husky *militsioner* leisurely saunters up to one of the women. She is young and good-looking, though extremely pale and gaunt.

"What's your dreaming! Work, you wench," he says, playfully poking her in the ribs.

"Have a heart," she pleads. "I'm so weak; just out of the hospital when they nabbed me."

"Serves you right for riding without a pass."

"Couldn't help it, little pigeon," she says good humoredly. "They told me my husband is in Peter,[27] back from the front, and he away from me five years. So I goes to the office; three days in line and then they refuse me a pass. I thought I'd come some way, but they took me off the train, and I'm so weak and sick and they give me no *pyock*. How am I to find my man now?"

"Get yourself another," the militiaman laughs. "You won't see him again."

"Why won't I?" she demands angrily.

"Cause he's likely been sent against the Poles."

"Oh, my misfortune!" the woman wails. "Is there to be no end to war?"

"You're a woman and naturally stupid. Can't expect you to understand such things!"

In the Dom Outchonikh (Home of the Learned) I met literary men, scientists, and intellectuals of various political camps, all looking the mere shadows of humans. They sat about listlessly, some nibbling pieces of black bread.

In a corner a group was discussing the rumors of war.

"It is a great blow to the hope of industrial revival," B ——, the well-known political economist, said. "And we had begun to dream of more freedom to breathe."

"The worst of it is," Z ——, the ethnologist, remarked: "we shall not be able to receive the book donations promised us from abroad."

"I'm so out of touch with scientific progress, I feel downright ignorant," said Prof. L ——, the bacteriologist.

"Poland is on the eve of Revolution," F ——, the Communist asserted. "The Red Army will go straight to Warsaw and we'll help the Polish proletariat drive out the masters and establish a Soviet Republic."

"Like our own," B —— retorted ironically. "They are to be congratulated."

In the evening I visited my friend Pyotr, a nonpartisan worker in the Trubotchny mill. "We have received war orders in the shop," he was saying to his wife. "How are we to conquer the *razrukha*, our terrible economic ruin, when everything works for war again?"

A middle-aged man, stout and coarse looking, came in.

"Well, Pyotr Vassilitch," he addressed the host cheerily, "it's war with Poland and we'll teach those *pani* a lesson."

"It's easy for you to talk, Ivan Nikolaievitch," Pyotr replied; "you don't have to live on your *pyock*. He supplies lumber to the government," he explained, turning to me, "and he don't starve, *he* don't."

"We must defend our country against the Poles," the contractor replied sententiously.

"Will they take Vanya?" the housewife asked tearfully; "he is not seventeen yet."

"I don't mind going to the front," came from the boy lying on the stove. "They get a good *pyock* in the Army, and I may advance to *Kommandir* like cousin Vaska did."

He rose, drew a herring and a hunk of bread from his *polushubka*, and began to eat. His father watched him hungrily. "Give mother a bite," he urged after a while; "she's had nothing since yesterday."

"I'm not hungry," the mother said apologetically.

"Yes, my friends," the contractor spoke again as if remembering an unfinished thought, "the Poles must be taught a lesson, and we must all defend the Revolution."

"What are we to defend?" Pyotr demanded bitterly. "The fat Commissars and the Cheka with its shooting, that's what we defend. We haven't got anything else."

"You talk like a counterrevolutionist," Vanya shouted, jumping off the stove.

"We haven't even our children," his father continued. "That boy has become a hoodlum since he joined the Komsomol.[28] He learns there to hate his parents."

Vanya pushed his fur cap over his ears and stepped toward the door. "Take care I don't tell on you," he said, slamming it behind him.

The Italian Socialist Mission, headed by Seratti, is in the city, and the occasion is celebrated with the usual military parades, demonstrations, and meetings. But the show has lost interest for me. I have looked back of the curtain. The performances lack sincerity; political intrigue is the mainspring of the spectacles. The workers have no part in them except for mechanical obedience to orders; hypocrisy conducts the delegates through the factories; false information deceives them regarding the actual state of affairs; surveillance prevents their getting in touch with the people and learning the truth of the situation. The delegates are dined, fêted, and influenced to bring their organizations into the fold of the Third International, under the leadership of Moscow.

How far it all is from my conception of revolutionary probity and purpose!

The Communist leaders have become involved in schemes of political recognition and are wasting the energies of the Revolution to create an appearance of military strength and industrial health. They have lost sight of the real values underlying the great change. The people sense the false tendencies of the new regime and helplessly see it return to old practices. The proletariat is growing disillusioned; it sees its revolutionary conquests sacrificed one by one, the former champions of liberty become hard rulers, defenders of the existing regime, and the revolutionary slogans and hopes turn to dying embers.

An atmosphere of embittered helplessness pervades the circles of the intelligentsia, a paralyzing sense of their lack of cohesion and energizing purpose. They are exhausted by years of starvation; their mental bases are weakened, the spiritual bonds with the people severed.

The revolutionists of the Left are disorganized, broken by persecution and internal disunion. The stress and storm period has shattered old moorings and set accepted values adrift. Little of constructive character is manifest in the general confusion. The ruthless hand of life in the making, more than Bolshevik fiat, has destroyed old forms, creating a chaos of things physical and spiritual. Institutions and ideas, thrown into a common heap, rage in primitive passion and wildly seek to

disentangle themselves, desperately clutching at each other in the attempt to rise to the surface. And above the shouts and din of the struggling mass, drowning all other cries, sounds the desperate, ceaseless plea: Bread! Bread!

Moscow is eaten with bureaucracy, Petrograd is a dying city. Not here is the Revolution. Out in the country, among the common people, one must see new Russia and live its life in the making.

I have been requested to join the expedition planned by the Museum of the Revolution. Its purpose is to collect historic material of the revolutionary movement since its inception, almost a hundred years ago. I had hoped to participate in more constructive labors, but circumstances and the growing coldness of the Communist attitude exclude me from more vital work. The mission of the expedition is nonpolitical, and I have decided to accept the offer.

XXI
En Route to the Ukraine

July, 1920. —Turbulent mobs besiege our train at every station. Soldiers and workers, peasants, women, and children, loaded with heavy bags, frantically fight for admission. Yelling and cursing, they force their way toward the cars. They climb through the broken windows, board the bumpers, and crowd upon the steps, recklessly clinging to door handles and clutching at each other for support. Like maddened ants they cover every inch of space, in momentary danger of limb and life. It is a dense, surging human sea moved by the one passion of securing a foothold on the already moving train. Even the roofs are crowded, the women and children lying flat, the men kneeling or standing up. Frequently at night, the train passing under a bridge or trestle, scores of them are swept to their death.

At the stations the railroad militia await us. They surround a car, drive the passengers off roof and steps, and proceed to another coach. But the next instant there is a rush and struggle, and the cleared car is again covered with the human swarm. Often the *militsioneri* resort to arms, firing salvos over the train. But the people are desperate: they had spent days, even weeks, in procuring "traveling papers" —they are in search of food or returning with filled bags to their hungry families. Death from a bullet is no more terrible to them than starvation.

With sickening regularity these scenes repeat themselves at every stopping place. It is becoming a torture to travel in comparative comfort in our conspicuous-looking car, recently renovated and painted a bright red, and bearing the inscription, "Extraordinary Commission of the Museum of the Revolution."

The Expedition consists of six persons, comprising the secretary, Miss A. Shakol; the treasurer, Emma Goldman; the historical "expert" Yakovlev, and his wife; a young Communist, a student of the Petrograd University; and myself as chairman. Our party also includes the official *provodnik* (porter) and Henry Alsberg, the American correspondent, whose friendly attitude to Russia had secured for him Zinoviev's permission to accompany us. Our coach is divided into several coupés, an office, dining room, and a kitchen furnished with the linen and silverware of the Winter Palace, now the headquarters of the Museum.

In the daytime the people remain at a respectful distance, the inscription on our car evidently creating the impression that it is occupied by the Cheka, the most dreaded institution in Russia. But at night, the stations in semidarkness, we are besieged by throngs clamoring for accommodation. It is contrary to our instructions to admit

anyone, because of the danger of having our material stolen, as well as for fear of disease. The people are vermin-infected; almost everyone traveling in the Ukraine is afflicted with *sipnyak*, a form of typhus that often results fatally. Our historian lives in mortal dread of it, and vehemently protests against receiving outsiders. We compromise by permitting several old women and cripples to ride on the platform, and stealthily we feed them from the supplies of our "commune."

The population of the districts we are passing through is in a state of disquiet and alarm. At every station we are warned not to proceed further: the Whites, robber bands, Makhno, and Wrangel are within gunshot, we are assured. The atmosphere thickens with fear —inspiring rumors as we advance southward.

A cauldron of seething emotions, life in the South constrasts strikingly with that of the North. By comparison Moscow and Petrograd appear quiet and orderly. Here all is unformed, grotesque, chaotic. Frequent changes of government, with their accompaniment of civil war and destruction, have produced a mental and physical condition unknown in other parts of the country. They have created an atmosphere of uncertainty, of life lacking roots, of constant anxiety. Some parts of the Ukraine have experienced fourteen different regimes within the period of 1917 – 1920, each involving violent disturbance of normal existence, disorganizing and tearing life from its foundations.

The whole gamut of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary passions has been played on this territory. Here the nationalistic Rada had fought the local organs of the Kerensky government till the Brest Treaty opened Southern Russia to German occupation. Prussian bayonets dissolved the Rada, and Hetman Skoropadsky, by grace of the Kaiser, lorded it over the country in the name of an "independent and self-determining" people. Disaster on the Western Front and revolution in their own country compelled the Germans to withdraw, the new state of affairs giving Petlura victory over the Hetman. Kaleidoscopically changed the governments. Dictator Petlura and his Directorium were driven out by the rebel peasantry and the Red Army, the latter in turn giving way to Denikin. Subsequently the Bolsheviki became the masters of the Ukraine, soon to be forced back by the Poles, and then again the Communists took possession.

The long-continued military and civil struggles have deranged the entire life of the South. Social classes have been destroyed, old customs and traditions abolished, cultural barriers broken down, without the people having been able to adjust themselves to the new conditions, which are in constant flux. There has been neither time nor opportunity to reconstruct one's mental and physical mode of life, to orient oneself within the constantly changing environment.

The instincts of hunger and fear have become the sole leitmotif of thought, feeling, and action. Uncertainty is all-pervading and persistent: it is the only definite, actual reality. The question of bread, the danger of attack, are the exclusive topics of interest. You hear stories of armed forces sacking the environs of the city, and fanciful speculation about the character of the marauders, whom some claim as Whites, others as Greens,[29] or pogrom bandits. The legendary figures of Makhno, Marusya, and Stchooss loom large in the atmosphere of panic created by the horrors lived through and the still more fearful apprehension of the unknown.

Alarm and dread punctuate the life and thought of the people. They permeate the entire consciousness of being. Characteristic of it, as of the general chaos of the situation, is the reply one receives on inquiring the time of day. It is indicative of the degree of the informant's Bolshevik or opposition sentiments when one is told: "three o'clock by the old," "five by the new," or "six by the latest," the Communists having recently ordered, for the third time, the "saving" of another hour of daylight.

The whole country resembles a military camp living in constant expectation of invasion, civil war, and sudden change of government, bringing with it renewed slaughter and oppression, confiscation, and famine. Industrial activity is paralyzed, the financial situation hopeless. Every regime has issued its own money, interdicting all previous forms of exchange. But among the people the various "papers" are circulating, including Kerensky, Tsarist, Ukrainian, and Soviet money. Every "rouble" has its own, constantly varying value, so that the market women have to become professors of mathematics —as the people jestingly say —to find their way in this financial labyrinth.

Beneath the surface of the daily life man's primitive passions, unleashed, hold almost free sway. Ethical values are dissolved, the gloss of civilization rubbed off. There remains only the unadorned instinct of self-preservation and the ever-present dread of tomorrow. The victory of the Whites or the investing of a city by them involves savage reprisals, pogroms against Jews, death for Communists, prison and torture for those suspected of sympathizing with the latter. The advent of the Bolsheviki signifies indiscriminate Red terror. Either is disastrous; it has happened many times, and the people live in perpetual fear of its repetition. Internecine strife has marched through the Ukraine like a veritable man-eater, devouring, devastating, and leaving ruin, despair, and horror in its wake. Stories of White and Red atrocities are on everybody's lips, accounts of personal experiences harrowing in their recital of fiendish murder and rapine, of inhuman cruelty and unspeakable outrages.

XXII
First Days in Kharkov

The work of collecting material is divided among the members of our Expedition according to fitness and inclination. By general consent, and to his own great satisfaction, the only Communist among us, a very intelligent and idealistic youth, is assigned to visit Party headquarters. Besides my general duties as Chairman, my domain includes labor unions, revolutionary organizations, and semi-legal or "underground" bodies.

In the Soviet institutions, as among the people at large, an intensely nationalistic, even chauvinistic spirit is felt. To the natives the Ukraine is the only true and real Russia; its culture, language, and customs superior to those of the North. They dislike the "Russian" and resent the domination of Moscow. Antagonism to the Bolsheviki is general, the hatred of the Cheka universal. Even the Communists are incensed over the arbitrary methods of the Center, and demand greater independence and self-determination. But the policy of the Kremlin is to put its own men at the head of Ukrainian institutions, and frequently a whole trainload of Moscow Bolsheviki, including clerks and typists, are dispatched to the South to take charge of a certain department or bureau. The imported officials, unfamiliar with the conditions and psychology of the country, often even ignorant of its language, apply Moscow methods and force Moscow views upon the population with the result of alienating even the friendly disposed elements.

A July day, with the Southern sun steadily pouring down heat, and the stone pavement seeming to melt beneath my feet. The streets are crowded with people in variegated attire, the play of color pleasing to the eye. The Ukrainians are better clad and nourished than the people in Petrograd or Moscow. The women are strikingly beautiful, with expressive dark eyes and oval faces, olive skinned. The men are less prepossessing, often low-browed and coarse-featured, the trace of the Mongol evident. Most of the girls, comely and buxom, are short-skirted and bare-legged; others, well shod but stockingless, present an incongruous sight. Some wear *lapti*, a rough wooden sandal that clatters noisily on the pavement. Almost everyone is chewing the popular *semetchki*, dried sunflower seeds, deftly ejecting the shell, and covering the filthy sidewalks with a sheet of whitish gray.

On the corner two boys in worn student uniforms vociferously call the attention of the passersby to hot *pirozhki*, the Russian doughy cake filled with meat or cabbage.

A bevy of young girls, almost children, faces powdered, lips crimson, approach the venders.

"What costs the pleasure?" inquires one in a thin, high-pitched voice.

"Fifty roubles."

"Oh, you little speculator," the girl teases. "Make it cheaper for me, won't you, dear one?" she coaxes, pressing closer to the boy.

Three sailors approach, whistling the popular Stenka Razin tune. "What beauties!" one comments, unceremoniously embracing the girl nearest him.

"Hey, lasses, come with us," another commands. "Don't be hanging around those speculators."

With ribald laughter the girls join them. Arm in arm they march down the street.

"Damn those Sovietsky cavaliers," one of the students rages. "Hot *pirozhki*, hot! Buying, who's buying, *tovarishi*!"

With considerable difficulty I find the home of Nadya, the Left Social Revolutionist, for whom I have a message from her friends in Moscow. My knock is answered by an old lady with kindly face and snow-white hair. "My daughter is at work," she says, suspiciously scrutinizing me. "May I know what you wish?"

Reassured by my explanation, she bids me enter, but her manner continues guarded. It requires some time before she is convinced of my good intentions, and then she begins to unburden her heart. She owned the house in which she now occupies one room together with her daughter, the rest having been requisitioned by the Soviet Housing Committee. "It is enough for our modest needs," the old lady says resignedly, her glance passing over the small chamber containing a single bed, a kitchen table, and several wooden chairs. "I have only Nadya now," she adds, a tremor in her voice.

"I thank God I have her," she continues after a while. "Oh, the terrible times we have lived through. You will surely not believe it —I'm not fifty yet." She passes her delicate, thin hand over her white hair. "I don't know how it is where you come from, but here life is a *koshmar*.[30] I have grown used to hunger and cold, but the constant fear for the safety of my child makes life a torture. But it is a sin to complain," she crosses herself devoutly. "Blessed be the Lord, for he has left me my daughter."

In the course of the conversation I learn that her eldest son was killed by Denikin men; the youngest, Volodya, a boy of twenty, was shot by the Bolsheviki. She could never find out the reason. "The terrible Cheka," she sighs, with tears in her

eyes. “But the *predsedatel*[31] was a kind man,” she continues presently; “it was he who saved my little Nadya. She had also been doomed to die. Once they took her to the cellar, stark naked —may, God forgive them! They forced her to the floor, face downward. Then a shot was fired over her head. Oh, the horror of it! She was told to confess and her life would be saved. But what could the poor child confess? She had nothing to tell. Indeed, she wouldn’t if she could, for Nadenka is like steel. Then she was sent back to her cell, and every night she expected to be taken out and shot, and when she heard a footstep, she would think they were coming for her. What torture the child lived through! But it was always someone else they took, and those never returned. Then one day the *predsedatel* sent for her and told her he did not want her shot, and that she was free to go home. Before that the Cheka had assured me that my daughter had been sent to Moscow for trial. And there she stood before me —ah, so pale and wan, more like a ghost of herself. Glory to the Lord for His goodness,” she sobs quietly.

The door opens and a girl steps in, carrying a bag slung across her shoulders. She is young and attractive, not over twenty, with her face lit up by black, shining eyes.

She stops affrighted as her glance falls upon me. “A friend,” I hasten to reassure her, delivering the message entrusted to me in Moscow. She brightens at once, puts the bag on the table, and kisses her mother. “We’ll celebrate today, *mamenka*,” she announces; “I got my *pyock*.” She begins sorting the things, calling out cheerily, “Herrings, two pounds; half a pound of soap; one pound of vegetable butter; a quarter of a pound of tobacco. That’s from the Sobezh” (Department of Social Care), she explains, turning to me. “I am employed there, but the main ‘social care’ is given to the ration,” she says jestingly. “It’s better in quality and quantity than I receive at the other two places. You know, some of us have to hold three or even four, positions to make ends meet. Mother and I together receive one and three-quarter pounds of bread per day, and with this monthly *pyock* and what I get from my other positions, we manage to live. Isn’t it so, *mamenka*?” and she again embraces her mother affectionately.

“It would be sinful to complain, my child,” the old lady replies; “other people are worse off.”

Nadya has preserved her sense of humor, and her silvery laugh frequently punctuates the conversation. She is much concerned about the fate of her friends in the North, and is overjoyed to get direct news of Marusya, as she affectionately calls Maria Spiridonova. Eagerly she listens to the story of my repeated visits to the famous leader of the Left Social Revolutionists, who is now in hiding in Moscow. “I love and worship her,” she declares impetuously; “she has been the heroine of

my life. And to think how the Bolsheviki hound her! Here in the South," she continues more calmly, "our Party has been almost entirely liquidated. The persecution has forced the weaker ones to make peace with the Communists; some have even joined them. Those of us who have remained true keep 'underground.' The Red terror is such that activity now is out of the question. With paper, presses, and everything else nationalized, we cannot even print a handbill, as we used to do in the time of the Tsar. Besides, the workers are so cowed, their need so great, they will listen to you only if you can offer them bread. Moreover, their minds have been poisoned against the intelligentsia. The latter are actually dying of starvation. Here in Kharkov, for instance, they receive six to seven thousand roubles per month, while a pound of bread costs two to three thousand. Some wit figured out that the Soviet salary of twenty of the most noted Russian professors equals —according to the present purchasing power of the rouble —the amount allowed by the old regime budget for the support of the watchdog at the government institutions."

By the aid of Nadya I am enabled to get in touch with several "irreconcilables" of the Left Social Revolutionists. The most interesting personality among them is N ——, a former *katorzhanin*[32] and later instructor in literature in the People's University of Kharkov. Recently he has been discharged because the political commissar, a Communist youth, considered his lectures of an anti-Marxian tendency.

"The Bolsheviki complain that they lack teachers and educators," N —— said, "but in reality they permit no one to work with them unless he be a Communist or ingratiate himself with the Communist 'cell.' It is the latter, the Party unit in every institution, that decides on the 'reliability' and fitness —even of professors and teachers."

"The Bolsheviki have failed," he remarked to me on another occasion, "chiefly because of their total intellectual barbarism. Social life, no less than individual, is impossible without certain ethical and human values. The Bolsheviki have abolished them, and in their place we have only the arbitrary will of the Soviet bureaucracy and irresponsible terror."

N —— voices the sentiments of the Left Social Revolutionary group, his views fully shared by his comrades. The rule of a minority, they agree, is necessarily a despotism based on oppression and violence. Thus 10,000 Spartans governed 300,000 Helots, while in the French Revolution 300,000 Jacobins sought to control the 7,000,000 citizens of France. Now 500,000 Communists have by the same methods enslaved the whole of Russia with its population of more than

100,000,000. Such a regime must become the negation of its original source. Though born of the Revolution, the offspring of the movement for liberation, it must deny and pervert the very ideals and aims that gave it birth. In consequence there is crying inequality of the new social groups, instead of the proclaimed equality; the stifling of every popular opinion instead of the promised freedom; violence and terror instead of the expected reign of brotherhood and love.

The present situation, N —— believes, is the inevitable result of Bolshevik dictatorship. The Communists have discredited the ideas and slogans of the Revolution. They have started among the people a counterrevolutionary wave which is bound to destroy the conquests of 1917. The strength of the Bolsheviki is in reality insignificant. They remain in power only because of the weakness of their political opponents and the exhaustion of the masses. "But their Ninth Thermidor[33] must soon come," N —— concluded with conviction, "and no one will rise to their defense."

Returning late in the evening to the room assigned me in the home of G ——, a former bourgeois, and finding the bell out of order, I knocked long and persistently without receiving a reply. I almost despaired of gaining admittance, when there resounded the clanking of chains, a heavy bar was lifted, someone fumbled with the keys, and at last the door opened before me. I could see no one about, and a feeling of uneasiness possessed me when suddenly a tall, slender figure stepped before me, and I recognized the owner of the apartment.

"I did not see you," I exclaimed in surprise.

"A simple precaution," he replied, pointing to the niche between the double doors where he had evidently been hiding.

"One can't tell these days," he remarked nervously: " 'they' have the habit of visiting us unexpectedly. I can slip through," he added significantly.

I invited him to my room, and we talked until early morning. G ——'s story proved a most interesting page from the recent life of Russia. He formerly lived in Petrograd, where he was employed as a mechanical engineer in the Putilov Mills, his brother-in-law serving as his assistant. Neither of them participated in politics, all their time being devoted to their work. One morning Petrograd was stirred by the killing of Uritsky, the head of the Cheka. G —— and his brother-in-law had never before heard of Kannegisser, who committed the deed, yet both were arrested together with several hundred other bourgeois. His brother-in-law was shot —by mistake, as the Cheka later admitted, his name resembling that of a distant relative, a former officer in the Tsar's army. The wife of the executed, G ——'s sister,

learning of the fate of her husband, committed suicide. G —— himself was released, then rearrested, and sent to forced labor in Vologda as a *bourzhooi*.

"It happened so unexpectedly," he related, "they did not even give us time to take a few things along. It was a windy, cold day, in October, 1918. I was crossing the Nevsky on my way home from work, when all at once I realized that the whole district was surrounded by the military and Chekists. Everyone was detained. Those who could not produce a Communist membership card or a document proving themselves Soviet employees were arrested. The women also, though they were released in the morning. Unfortunately I had left my portfolio at my office, with all my papers in it. They would not listen to explanations or give me a chance to communicate with anyone. Within forty-eight hours, all the men were transported to Vologda. My family —my dear wife and three children —remained in complete ignorance of my fate." G —— paused. "Shall we have some tea?" he asked, trying to hide his emotion.

As he continued, I learned that together with several hundred other men, almost all alleged bourgeois, G —— was kept in the Vologda prison for several weeks, being treated as dangerous criminals and finally ordered to the front. There they were divided into working parties of ten, on the principle of collective responsibility: should one member of the party escape, the other nine would forfeit their lives.

The prisoners had to dig trenches, build barracks for the soldiers, and lay roads. Often they were forced to expose themselves to the fire of the English, to save machine guns deserted by the Red Army during the fight. They could be kept, according to Soviet decree, only three months at the front, yet they were forced to remain till the end of the campaign. Exposed to danger, cold, and hunger, without warm clothing in the raw winter of the North, the ranks of the men thinned daily, to be filled by new parties of forced labor collected in a similar manner.

After a few months G —— fell ill. By the aid of a military surgeon, a drafted medical student whom he had known before, he succeeded in being returned home. But when he reached Petrograd, he failed to locate his family. All the bourgeois tenants of his house had been ejected, to make place for workers; he could find no trace of his wife and children. Laid low by fever acquired on the front, G —— was sent to a hospital. The physicians held out little hope of recovery, but the determination to find his family rekindled the dying embers of life, and after four weeks G —— left his sick bed.

He had just started his search again when he received an order mobilizing him, as an engineer, to a machine factory on the Ural. His efforts to secure delay proved fruitless. Friends promised to continue looking for his loved ones, and he departed

for the East. There he applied himself conscientiously to the work, making the necessary repairs, so that the factory could presently begin operations. After a while he asked permission to return home, but he was informed that he would go as a prisoner, the political commissar having denounced him for "unfriendly disposition" toward the Bolsheviki. G —— was arrested and sent to Moscow. When he reached the capital, he found a charge of sabotage against him. He succeeded in proving the falsity of the accusation, and after four months of imprisonment he was released. But the experience so affected him that he suffered two successive attacks of "returning" typhus, from which he emerged entirely unfit for work. He secured permission to visit his relatives in Kharkov where he hoped to recuperate. There, to his great joy, quite unexpectedly, he found his family. They had long thought him dead, their inquiries and numerous letters having remained unanswered. Reunited with his wife and children, G —— remained in the city, having received a position in a local institution. He finds life in Kharkov much more bearable, though the Communist campaign against the intellectuals constantly rouses the people against them.

"The Bolsheviki have turned the intelligentsia into a class of hunted animals," G —— said. "We are looked upon as even worse than the bourgeoisie. As a matter of fact, we are much worse off than the latter, for they usually have 'connections' in influential places, and most of them still possess some of the wealth they had hidden. They can speculate; yes, even grow rich, while we of the professional class have nothing. We are doomed to slow starvation."

Snatches of song and music reached us from across the street, coming apparently from the house opposite, its windows flooded with light. "One of the Cheka commissars," my host answered my questioning look. "By the way, a curious incident happened to me," he continued, smiling sadly. "The other day I met that Chekist. Something about him attracted my attention —a peculiar sense of the familiar that I could not account for. Suddenly it dawned on me —that new dark-brown suit he wore, why, it was mine! They took it from me in the last house raid, two weeks ago. 'For the proletariat,' they said."

XXIII
In Soviet Institutions

Petrovsky, Chairman of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, the supreme government body of the South, sat at his desk busy over a pile of documents. A middle-aged man of medium stature, his typical Ukrainian face is framed in a black beard, lit up by intelligent eyes and a winning smile. A peasant-Communist appointed by Moscow to high office, he has remained democratic and simple in manner.

Learning the mission of our Expedition, Petrovsky evinced the greatest interest. “I am heartily in sympathy with it,” he said; “it’s splendid, this idea of collecting the material of our great Revolution for the information of the present and future generations. I’ll help you all I can. Here, in the Ukraine, you will find a wealth of documents, covering all the political changes we have had since 1917. Of course,” he continued, “we have not reached the well-organized and ordered condition of Russia. The development of our country has been quite different, and since 1918 we have been living in constant turmoil. It’s only two months ago that we have driven the Poles out of Kiev —but we have driven them out for good,” he laughed heartily.

“Yes, we drove them out for good,” he repeated after a while. “But we must do more; we must teach the cursed Poles a lesson —the Polish *pani*,[34] I mean,” he corrected himself. “Our good Red Army is almost at the gates of Warsaw now. The Polish proletariat are ready to throw off the yoke of their oppressors; they are only waiting for us to give them a helping hand. We expect the Revolution to break out there any day,” he concluded in a confidential way, “and then Soviet Poland will combine federatively with Soviet Russia, as Ukraine has done.”

“Don’t you think such an aggressive policy may produce a harmful effect?” I asked. “Threatened invasion may serve to arouse patriotic ardor.”

“Pooh-pooh!” the Chairman laughed. “You evidently don’t know the revolutionary temper of the Polish workers. The whole country is on fire. The Red Army will be received ‘with bread and salt,’ as our saying is —be given a hearty welcome.”

The conversation turned to the situation in the South. “The work of organizing Soviet conditions,” Petrovsky said, “is progressing very satisfactorily in the districts evacuated by the Poles. As to the economic situation, the Ukraine used to be the great bread-giver of Russia, but the farmers have suffered much from

confiscation and robbery by the White forces. However, the peasants have learned that only under the Communists they are secure in the enjoyment of their land. It is true, many of them are *kulaki*; that is, rich farmers who resent sharing their surplus with the Red Army and the workers. They and the numerous counterrevolutionary bands make the work of the Soviet Government very difficult. Makhno, in particular, is a source of much trouble. But the Greens and other bandits are being gradually liquidated, and before long Makhno also will be eliminated. The Government has decreed merciless war against these Soviet enemies, and the peasantry is aiding in its efforts."

"You must have surely heard in Russia about Makhno," Petrovsky remarked, giving me a searching look. "Many legends have grown around his name, and to some he appears almost a heroic figure. But here in the Ukraine you will learn the truth about him. Just a robber ataman, that's all he is. Under the mask of Anarchism he conducts raids upon villages and towns, destroys railroad communications, and takes a fiendish delight in murdering commissars and Communists. But before long we shall terminate his activities."

Girl clerks kept coming in, bringing documents, and answering telephone calls. Most of them were barefoot, while some wore new, high-heeled shoes without hosiery. From time to time the Chairman interrupted the conversation to glance at the papers, putting his signature to some and referring others to the secretary. But he seemed eager to continue our talk, dwelling on the difficult problems presented by the Ukraine, the steps taken to assure greater production of coal, the reorganization of the railways, and the clearing of the labor unions of anti-Soviet influences.

He spoke unaffectedly, in the language of the workingman whose native intelligence has been sharpened by experience in the school of life. His conception of Communism is a simple matter of a strong government and determination to execute its will. It is not a question of experimentation or idealistic possibilities. His picture of a Bolshevik society has no shadows. A powerful central authority, consistently carrying out its policies, would solve all problems, he believes. Opposition must be eliminated; disturbing elements and inciters of the peasantry against the Soviet regime, such as Makhno, crushed. At the same time the work of the *polit-prosvet* (political education) should be broadened; the youth, especially, must be trained to regard the Bolsheviki as the revolutionary advance guard of humanity. On the whole, Communism is a problem of right bookkeeping, as Lenin had truly said; of taking an invoice of the country's wealth, actual and potential, and arranging for its equalized distribution.

The subject of peasant dissatisfaction kept returning in our conversation. The *povstantsi* (armed rebel peasantry), Petrovsky admitted, had played a vital part in the Revolution. They repeatedly saved the Ukraine, and even Russia, at most critical moments. By guerrilla warfare they disorganized and demoralized the Austro-German forces, and prevented their marching on Moscow and suppressing the Soviet regime. They defeated the Interventionist attack in the South, by resisting and routing the French and Italian divisions that were landed by the Allies in Odessa with the intention of supporting the nationalistic Directorium in Kiev. They fought Denikin and other White generals, and were largely instrumental in making the victories of the Red Army possible. But some *povstantsi* elements have now joined the Green and other bands operating against the Communists. They also comprise the greater part of the Makhno forces, possessing even machine guns and artillery. Makhno is particularly dangerous. At one time he had served in the Red Army; but he mutinied, opening the front to Denikin, for which treachery he was outlawed by Trotsky. Since then Makhno has been fighting against the Bolsheviki and helping the enemies of the Revolution.

From the adjoining office, occupied by Petrovsky's secretary, loud talking and a woman's hysterical voice kept disturbing our conversation. "What is going on there, I wonder," the Chairman exclaimed at last, stepping to the door. As he opened it, a young peasant woman rushed toward him, throwing herself at his feet.

"Save us, Little Father!" she cried. "Have mercy!"

Petrovsky helped her up. "What is the matter?" he asked kindly.

Amid sobs she related that her husband, home on furlough from the Army, had gone to Kharkov to visit his sick mother. There he was arrested in a street raid as a labor deserter. He could not prove his identity, because he had been robbed on his way to the city; all his documents and money were gone. He sent word to her about his misfortune; but by the time she reached the city she learned that her husband had been taken away with a party of other prisoners. Since then she failed to find out anything more about him. "Oh, Little Father, they've sure shot him," she wailed, "and he a Red Army man who fought Denikin."

Petrovsky sought to calm the distracted woman. "Nothing will happen to your husband," he assured her, "if he can prove himself a soldier."

"But they've already taken him away somewhere," she moaned, "and they shoot deserters. Oh, good Lord, have mercy on me!"

The Chairman questioned the woman, and then, apparently convinced of the truth of her story, he ordered the secretary to supply her with a "paper" to aid in her

search. She grew quieter, and then impulsively kissed Petrovsky's hand, calling upon the saints to "bless the kind commissar."

At labor union headquarters I found a flow of humanity surging through the corridors. Men, women, and children crowded the offices and filled the hallways with shouting and tobacco smoke. A bedraggled assembly it was —poorly nourished and clad; calico kerchiefs worn by the women, the men in thick-soled wooden *lapti*, the children mostly barefoot. For hours they stood in line, discussing their troubles. Their wages, they complained, though continuously increased, do not keep step with the rising price of food. A week's labor is not enough to purchase two pounds of bread. Moreover, three months' pay is due them: the government has failed to supply enough money. The Soviet distributing centers are short of provisions; one has to look out for himself, or starve. Some have come to ask for a ten days' release from work and permission to visit their folks in the country. There they would get a few pounds of flour or a sack of potatoes to tide the family over for a little while. But it is difficult to secure such a privilege: the new decrees bind the worker to the factory, as in the days of old the peasants were chained to the soil. Yet the village is their only hope.

Others have come to enlist the help of their labor organization in locating lost brothers, fathers, husbands, suddenly disappeared —no doubt taken in the frequent raids as military or labor deserters. They had vainly sought information at the various bureaus; maybe the union will help.

After long waiting I gained admission to the Secretary of the Soviet of Labor Unions. He proved to be a young man not over twenty-three, with quick, intelligent eyes and nervous manner. The Chairman had been called away to a special conference, the Secretary informed me, but he would aid our mission as far as possible. He doubted, however, that we would find much valuable material in the city. Most of it had been neglected or destroyed —there had been no time to think of such matters in the intense revolutionary days Kharkov had passed through. But whatever records could be found, he would order them turned over to me. Better yet, he would supply me with a circular letter to the secretaries of the local unions, and I could personally select the material I needed, leaving copies of the same in the archives.

The Secretary himself could give me little information about labor conditions in the city and province, as he had only recently assumed charge of his office. "I am not a local man," he said; "I was sent from Moscow only a few weeks ago. You see, Comrade," he explained, evidently assuming my membership in the Communist Party, "it became necessary to liquidate the whole management of the Soviet and of

most of the unions. At their heads were Mensheviki. They conducted the organization on the principle of alleged protection of the workers' interests. Protection against whom?" he raged. "You understand how counterrevolutionary such a conception is! Just a Menshevik cloak to further their opposition to us. Under capitalism, the union is destructive of bourgeois interests; but with us, it is constructive. The labor bodies must work hand in hand with the government; in fact, they *are* the actual government, or one of its vital parts. They must serve as schools of Communism and at the same time carry out in industry the will of the proletariat as expressed by the Soviet Government. This is our policy, and we shall eliminate every opposition."

A dark, heavyset man of medium stature walked quickly into the office, casting a questioning look at me. "A comrade from the center," the Secretary introduced me, "sent to collect data on the Revolution. This is our *predsedatel*," he explained.

The Chairman of the Labor Soviet shook hands with me hastily: "You will excuse me," he said, "we are just swamped with work. I had to leave the session of the wage commission before it closed, because I have been phoned to attend an important conference of our Party Committee. The Mensheviki have declared a hunger strike in prison, and we are to take action on the matter."

As we stepped out of the office, the Chairman was beset by a clamoring crowd. "Dear *tovarish*, just a minute please," an old worker pleaded; "my brother is down with typhus, and I can't get any medicine for him."

"When will we be paid? Three months is due us," another urged.

"Go to your own union," the *predsedatel* advised him.

"But I've just come from there."

"I haven't time, *tovarish*, I haven't time now," the chairman kept repeating to the right and left, gently forcing his way through the crowd.

"Oh, Little Father," a woman screamed, grabbing him by the arm. It was the young peasant I had met in Petrovsky's office. "Has my husband been shot?"

The Chairman looked bewildered. "Who is your husband?" he demanded.

"A Red Army man, *tovarish*. Taken in a street raid for a labor deserter."

"A deserter! That's bad." Reaching the street, and waving his hand to me, the *predsedatel* jumped into his waiting automobile, and was driven away.

XXIV
Yossif the Emigrant

A short, slender man of thirty, with lustrous dark eyes set wide apart, and a face of peculiar sadness. The expression of his eyes still haunts me: now mournful, now irate, they reflect all the tragedy of his Jewish descent. His smile speaks the kindliness of a heart that has suffered and learned to understand. The thought kept running through my mind, as he was relating his experiences in the Revolution, that it was his patient, winsome smile which had conquered the brutality of his persecutors.

I had known him in America, him and his friend Lea, a sweet-faced girl of unusual self-control and determination. Both had for years been active in the radical movement in the United States, but the call of the Revolution brought them back to their native land in the hope of helping in the great task of liberation. They worked with the Bolsheviki against Kerensky and the Provisional Government, and cooperated with them in the stormy October days, which "gave so much promise of a rainbow," as the Emigrant remarked sorrowfully. But soon the Communists began to suppress the other revolutionary parties, and Yossif went with Lea to the Ukraine, where they aided in organizing the Southern Confederation of Anarchist Groups under the name of the Nabat (Alarm).

As the "Emigrant," his pen name in the *Nabat*, the organ of the Confederation, Yossif is widely known in the South and is much loved for his idealism and sunny disposition. Energetic and active, he is tireless in his labors among the Ukrainian peasantry, and everywhere he is the soul and inspiration of proletarian circles.

I have repeatedly visited him and his friends in the Anarchist bookstore Volnoye Bratstvo (Free Brotherhood). They have witnessed the numerous political changes in the Ukraine, have suffered imprisonment by the Whites, and have been maltreated by Denikin soldiers. "We are hounded no less by the Bolsheviki," the Emigrant said; "we never know what they will do to us. One day they arrest us, and close our club and bookstore; at other times they leave us alone. We never feel safe; they keep us under constant surveillance. In this they have a great advantage over the Whites; under the latter we could work underground, but the Communists know almost everyone of us personally, for we always stood shoulder to shoulder with them against counterrevolution."

The Emigrant, whom I had formerly known as a most peace-loving man, surprised me by his militant enthusiasm regarding Makhno, whom he familiarly calls Nestor.

He spent much time with the latter, and he regards him as a thorough Anarchist, who is fighting reaction from the Left as well as from the Right. Yossif was active in Makhno's camp as educator and teacher; he shared the daily life of the *povstantsi*, and accompanied them as a noncombatant on their campaigns. He is deeply convinced that the Bolsheviki have betrayed the people. "As long as they were revolutionary we cooperated with them," he said; "the fact is, we Anarchists did some of the most responsible and dangerous work all through the Revolution. In Kronstadt, on the Black Sea, in the Ural and Siberia, everywhere we gave a good account of ourselves. But as soon as the Communists gained power, they began eliminating all the other revolutionary elements, and now we are entirely outlawed. Yes, the Bolsheviki, those arch-revolutionists, have outlawed us," he repeated bitterly.

"Could not some way of reapproachment be found?" I suggested, referring to my intention of broaching the matter to Rakovsky, the Lenin of the Ukraine.

"No, it's too late," Yossif replied positively. "We've tried it repeatedly, but every time the Bolsheviki broke their promises and exploited our agreements only to demoralize our ranks. You must understand that the Communist Party has now become a full-fledged government, seeking to impose its rule upon the people and doing it by the most drastic methods. There is no more hope of turning the Bolsheviki into revolutionary channels. Today they are the worst enemies of the Revolution, far more dangerous than the Denikins and Wrangels, whom the peasantry know as such. The only hope of Russia now is in the forcible overthrow of the Communists by a new uprising of the people."

"I see no evidence of such a possibility," I objected.

"The whole peasantry of the South is bitterly opposed to them," Yossif replied, "but, of course, we must turn their blind hatred into conscious rebellion. In this regard I consider Makhno's *povstantsi* movement as a most promising beginning of a great popular upheaval against the new tyranny."

"I have heard many conflicting stories about Makhno," I remarked. "He is painted either as a devil or as a saint."

Yossif smiled. "Ever since I learned that you are in Russia," he said earnestly, "I have been hoping you would come here." In a lowered voice he added: "The best way to find out the truth about Makhno would be to investigate for yourself."

I looked at him questioningly. We were alone in the bookstore, save for a young woman who was busying herself at the shelves. Yossif's eyes wandered to the

street, and his look rested on two men conversing on the sidewalk. “Cheka,” he declared laconically, “always sneaking around here.”

“I have something to propose to you,” he continued, “but we must find a safer place. Tomorrow evening I shall have several comrades meet you. Come to the datcha ———,” he named a summer house occupied by a friend, “but be careful you are not followed.”

At the datcha, situated in a park in the environs of the city, I found a number of Yossif’s friends. They felt safe in that retreat, they averred; but the hunted look did not leave them, and they spoke in lowered voices. Someone remarked that the occasion reminded him of his university days, in the time of Nicholas II, when the students used to gather in the woods to discuss forbidden political questions. “Things have not changed in that respect,” he added sadly.

“Incomparably worse in every regard,” a dark-featured Ukrainian remarked emphatically.

“Don’t take him literally,” smiled Yossif, “he is our inveterate pessimist.”

“I do mean it literally,” the Ukrainian persisted. “There isn’t enough left of the Revolution to make a figleaf for Bolshevik nakedness. Russia has never before lived under such absolute despotism. Socialism, Communism, indeed! Never had we less liberty and equality than today. We have merely exchanged Nicholas for Ilyitch.”

“You see only the forms,” put in a young man introduced as the Poet; “but there is an essence in the present Russia that escapes you. There is a spiritual revolution which is the symbol and the germ of a new *Kultur*. For every *Kultur*,” he continued, “is an organic whole of manifold realization; it is the knowing of something in connection with something else. In other words, consciousness. The highest expression of such *Kultur* is man’s consciousness of self, as a spiritual being, and in Russia today this *Kultur* is being born.”

“I can’t follow your mysticism,” the Pessimist retorted. “Where do you see this resurrection?”

“It is not a resurrection; it is a new birth,” the Poet replied thoughtfully. “Russia is not made up of revolutionists and counterrevolutionists only. There are others, in all walks of life, and they are sick of all political dogmas. There are millions of consciousnesses that are painfully struggling toward new criteria of reality. In their souls they have lived through the tremendous collision of life and death; they have died and come to life again. They have attained to new values. In them is the coming dawn of the new Russian *Kultur*.”

"Ah, the Revolution is dead," remarked a short, smooth-shaven man of middle age, in a Red Army uniform. "When I think of the October days and the mighty enthusiasm which swept the country, I realize to what depths we have sunk. Then was liberty, indeed, and brotherhood. Why, the joy of the people was such, strangers kissed each other on the highways. And even later, when I fought against the Czechoslovaks on the Ural, the Army was inspired. Each felt himself a free man defending the Revolution that was his. But when we returned from the front, we found the Bolsheviki proclaimed themselves dictators over us, in the name of their Party. It's dead, our Revolution," he concluded, with a deep sigh.

"You are wrong, my friend," Yossif protested. "The Bolsheviki have indeed retarded the progress of the Revolution and they are trying to destroy it altogether, to secure their political power. But the spirit of the Revolution lives, in spite of them. March, 1917, was only the revolutionary honeymoon, the lisping of lovers. It was clean and pure, but it was inarticulate, impotent. The real passion was yet to come. October sprang from the womb of Russia itself. True, the Bolsheviki have turned Jesuits, but the Revolution has accomplished much —it has destroyed capitalism and undermined the principles of private ownership. In its concrete expression today Bolshevism is a system of the most ruthless despotism. It has organized a socialistic slavery. Yet, notwithstanding, I declare that the Russian Revolution lives. For the leaders and the present forms of Bolshevism are a temporary element. They are a morbid spasm in the general process. The paroxysm will pass; the healthy revolutionary essence will remain. Everything that is good and valuable in human history was always born and developed in the atmosphere of evil and corruption, mixing and interweaving with it. That is the fate of every struggle for liberty. It also applies to Russia today, and it is our mission to give aid and strength to the fine and the true, the permanent, in that struggle."

"I suppose that's why you are so partial to Makhno," put in the Red Army man.

"Makhno represents the real spirit of October," Yossif replied with warmth. "In the revolutionary *povstantsi*, whom he leads, is the sole hope of the country. The Ukrainian peasant is an instinctive Anarchist, and his experience has taught him that all governments are essentially alike —taking everything from him and giving nothing in return. He wants to be rid of them; to be left alone to arrange his own life and affairs. He will fight the new tyranny."

"They are *kulaki* with petty bourgeois ideas of property," retorted the Pessimist.

"There is such an element," Yossif admitted, "but the great majority are not of that type. As to the Makhno movement, it offers the greatest field for propaganda. Nestor, himself an Anarchist, affords us the fullest opportunity to work in his army,

even to the extent of supplying us with printed material and machinery for the publication of our newspapers and leaflets. The territory occupied by Makhno is the only place where liberty of speech and press prevails."

"But not for Communists," retorted the soldier.

"Makhno justly considers the Communists as much counterrevolutionary as the Whites," replied Yossif. "But for the revolutionists —for Anarchists, Maximalists, and Left Social Revolutionists —there is full liberty of action in the *povstantsi* districts."

"Makhno may call himself an Anarchist," spoke up M ——, an Individualist Anarchist, "but I disagree entirely with Yossif about the significance of his movement. I consider his 'army' merely an enlarged band of rebel peasants without revolutionary purpose or consciousness."

"They have been guilty of brutality and pogroms," added the Pessimist.

"There have been excesses," Yossif replied, "just as they happen in every army, the Communist not excepted. But Nestor is merciless toward those guilty of Jew-baiting. Most of you have read his numerous proclamations against pogroms, and you know how severely he punishes such things. I remember, for instance, the incident at Verkhny Takmar. It was characteristic. It happened about a year ago, on the 4th or 5th of May, 1919. Makhno, accompanied by several members of his military staff, was on his way from the front to Gulyai-Pole, his headquarters, for a conference with the special Soviet emissaries sent from Kharkov. At the station of Verkhny Takmar Nestor noticed a large poster reading: 'Kill the Jews! Save Russia! Long live Makhno!' Nestor sent for the station master. 'Who put up that poster?' he demanded. 'I did,' replied the official, a peasant who had been in fights against Denikin. Without another word Makhno shot him. That's the way Nestor treats Jew baiters," Yossif concluded.

"I have beard many stories of atrocities and pogroms committed by Makhno units," I remarked.

"They are lies willfully spread by the Bolsheviki," Yossif asserted. "They hate Nestor worse than they do Wrangel. Trotsky once said that it were better the Ukraine were taken by Denikin than to allow Makhno to continue there. With reason: for the savage rule of the Tsarist generals would soon turn the peasantry against them and thus enable the Bolsheviki to defeat them, while the spread of Makhnovstchina, as the Makhno movement is known, with its Anarchist ideas threatens the whole Bolshevik system. The pogroms ascribed to Makhno upon investigation always prove to have been committed by the Greens or other bandits.

The fact is, Makhno and his staff keep up a continuous agitation against religious and nationalistic superstitions and prejudices."

Though radically differing concerning the character and significance of the Makhnovstchina, those present agreed that Nestor himself is a unique figure and one of the most outstanding personalities on the revolutionary horizon. To his admirer Yossif, however, he typifies the spirit of Revolution as it expresses itself in the feeling, thought, and life of the rebel peasantry of the Ukraine.

XXV
Nestor Makhno

Greatly interested in the personality and activities of Makhno, I induced Yossif to sketch his story in its essential features.

Born of very poor parents in the village of Gulyai-Pole (county of Alexandrovsk, province of Yekaterinoslav, Ukraine), Nestor spent a sunless childhood. His father died early, leaving five small boys to the care of the mother. Already at the tender age of eight young Makhno had to help eke out an existence for the family. In the winter months he attended school, while in the summer he was "hired out" to take care of the rich peasants' cattle. When not yet twelve years old, he went to work in the neighboring estates, where brutal treatment and thankless labor taught him to hate his hard taskmasters and the Tsarist officials who always sided against the poor. The Revolution of 1905 brought Makhno, then only sixteen, in touch with socialist ideas. The movement for human emancipation and well-being quickly appealed to the intense and imaginative boy, and presently he joined the little group of young peasant Anarchists in his village.

In 1908, arrested for revolutionary activities, Makhno was tried and condemned to death. Because of his youth, however, and the efforts of his energetic mother, the sentence was subsequently commuted to penal servitude for life. He spent seven years in the Butirki prison in Moscow, where his rebellious spirit continually involved him in difficulties with the authorities. Most of the time he was kept in solitary confinement, chained hand and foot. But he employed his leisure to good advantage; he read omnivorously, being particularly interested in political economy, history, and literature. Released by the February Revolution, he returned to his native place, a convinced Anarchist, much ripened by years of suffering, study, and thought.

The only liberated political in the village, Makhno immediately became the center of revolutionary work. He organized a labor commune and the first Soviet in his district, and systematically encouraged the peasants in their resistance to the big landowners. When the Austro-German forces occupied the country, and Hetman Skoropadsky by their aid sought to stifle the growing agrarian rebellion, Makhno was one of the first to form military units for the defense of the Revolution. The movement grew quickly, involving ever larger territory. The reckless courage and guerrilla tactics of the *povstantsi* brought panic to the enemy, but the people regarded them as their friends and defenders. Makhno's fame spread; he became

the avenging angel of the lowly, and presently he was looked upon as the great liberator whose coming had been prophesied by Pugatchev in his dying moments.[35]

Continued German oppression and the tyranny of the home masters resulted in the organization of *povstantsi* units throughout the Ukraine. Some of them joined Makhno, whose forces soon reached the size of an army, well provisioned and clad, and supplied with machine guns and artillery. His troops consisted mostly of peasants, many of whom returned to their fields to follow their usual occupations when their district was temporarily freed from the enemy. But at the first sign of danger there would issue Nestor's call, and the farmers would leave their homes to shoulder the gun and join their beloved leader, upon whom they bestowed the honored and affectionate title of *bat'ka* (father).

The spirit of Makhnovstchina swept the whole southern Ukraine. In the northwest there were also numerous *povstantsi* units, fighting against the foreign invaders and White generals, but without any clear social consciousness and ideal. Makhno, however, assumed the black flag of the Russian Anarchists as his emblem, and announced a definite program: autonomous communes of free peasants; the negation of all government, and complete self-determination based on the principle of labor. Free Soviets of peasants and workers were to be formed of delegates in contradistinction to the Bolshevik Soviets of deputies; that is, to be informative and executive instead of authoritarian.

The Communists appreciated the unique military genius of Makhno, but they also realized the danger to their Party dictatorship from the spread of Anarchist ideas. They sought to exploit his forces in their own interests, while at the same time intent upon destroying the essential quality of the movement. Because of Makhno's remarkable success against the occupation armies and counterrevolutionary generals, the Bolsheviki proposed to him to join the Red Army, preserving for his *povstantsi* units their autonomy. Makhno consented, and his troops became the Third Brigade of the Red Army, later officially known as the First Revolutionary *Povstantsi* Ukrainian Division. But the hope of the Bolsheviki to absorb the rebel peasants in the Red Army failed. In the Makhno territory the influence of the Communists remained insignificant, and they found themselves even unable to support their institutions there. Under various pretexts they interdicted the conferences of the *povstantsi* and outlawed Makhno, hoping thus to alienate the peasantry from him.

But whatever the relations between the Bolsheviki and Makhno, the latter always came to the rescue of the Revolution when it was threatened by the Whites. He

fought every counterrevolutionary enemy who sought to establish his rule over the Ukraine, including Hetman Skoropadsky, Petlura, and Denikin. He eliminated Grigoriev, who had at one time served the Communists and then betrayed them. But the Bolsheviki, fearing the spirit of Makhnovstchina, continually tried to disorganize and disperse its forces, and even set a price on Makhno's head, as Denikin had done. Repeated Communist treachery finally brought a complete rupture, and compelled Makhno to fight the Communists as bitterly as the reactionists of the Right.

Yossif's story was interrupted by the arrival of the friends whom I had met at the datcha on the previous occasion. Several hours were spent in discussing matters of Anarchist organization, the difficulty of activity in the face of Bolshevik persecution, and the increasingly reactionary attitude of the Communist Government. But, as usual in the Ukraine, the subject gradually converged upon Makhno. Someone read excerpts from the official Soviet press bitterly attacking and vilifying Nestor. Though the Bolsheviki formerly extolled him as a great revolutionary leader, they now painted him as a bandit and counterrevolutionary. But the peasants of the South —Yossif felt confident —love Makhno too well to be alienated from him. They know him as their truest friend; they look upon him as one of their own. They realize that he does not seek power over them, as do the Bolsheviki no less than Denikin. It is Makhno's custom upon taking a city or town to call the people together and announce to them that henceforth they are free to organize their lives as they think best for themselves. He always proclaims complete freedom of speech and press; he does not fill the prisons or begin executions, as the Communists do. In fact, Nestor considers jails useless to a liberated people.

"It is difficult to say who is right or wrong in this conflict between the Bolsheviki and Makhno," remarked the Red Army man. "Trotsky charges Makhno with having willfully opened the front to Denikin, while Makhno claims that his retreat was caused by Trotsky purposely failing to supply his division with ammunition at a critical period. Yet it is true that Makhno's activities against Denikin's rear, especially by cutting the White Army off from its artillery base, enabled the Bolsheviki to stem the advance on Moscow."

"But Makhno refused to join the campaign against the Poles," the Pessimist objected.

"Rightly so," Yossif replied. "Trotsky's order sending Makhno's forces to the Polish front was meant only to eliminate Nestor from his own district and then

bring the latter under the control of the commissars, in the absence of its defenders. Makhno saw through the scheme and protested against it."

"The fact is," the Pessimist persisted, "that the Communists and the Makhnovtsi are doing their best to exterminate each other. Both sides are guilty of the greatest brutalities and atrocities. It seems to me Makhno has no object save Bolshevik-killing."

"You are pitifully blind," retorted Yasha, an Anarchist holding a high position in a Soviet institution, "if you can't see the great revolutionary meaning of the Makhnovstchina. It is the most significant expression of the whole Revolution. The Communist Party is only a political body, attempting —successfully indeed —to create a new master class over the producers, a Socialist rulership. But the Makhno movement is the expression of the toilers themselves. It's the first great mass movement that by its own efforts seeks to free itself from government and establish economic self-determination. In that sense it is thoroughly Anarchistic."

"But Anarchism cannot be established by military force," I remarked.

"Of course not," Yossif admitted. "Nor does Nestor pretend to do so. 'I'm just clearing the field,' —that's what he always tells the comrades visiting him. 'I'm driving out the rulers, White and Red,' he says, 'and it's up to you to take advantage of the opportunity. Agitate, propagate your ideals. Help to release and to apply the creative forces of the Revolution.' That is Nestor's view of the situation."

"It is a great mistake that most of our people stay away from Makhno," Yasha declared. "They remain in Moscow or Petrograd, and what are they accomplishing? They can do nothing but fill Bolshevik prisons. With the *povstantsi* we have an exceptional chance of popularizing our views and helping the people to build a new life."

"As for myself," announced Yossif, "I am convinced that the Revolution is dead in Russia. The only place where it still lives is the Ukraine. Here it holds out a rich promise to us," he added confidently. "What we should do is to join Nestor, all of us who want to be active.

"I disagree," the Pessimist objected.

"He always disagrees when there is work to be done," Yossif retorted with the inimitable smile that took the sting out of even his sharpest words. "But you, friends" —he faced the others —"you must clearly realize this: October, like February, was but one of the phases in the process of social regeneration. In October the Communist Party exploited the situation to further its own aims. But that stage has by no means exhausted the possibilities of the Revolution. Its

fountain head contains springs that continue to flow to the height of their source, seeking the realization of their great historic mission, the emancipation of the toilers. The Bolsheviki, become static, must give place to new creative forces."

Later in the evening Yossif took me aside. "Sasha," he spoke solemnly, "you see how radically we differ in our estimate of the Makhno movement. It is necessary you should learn the situation for yourself." He looked at me significantly.

"I should like to meet Makhno," I said.

His face lit up with joy. "Just as I have hoped," he replied. "Listen, dear friend, I have talked the matter over with Nestor —and, by the way, he is not far from here just now. He wants to, see you; you and Emma, he said. Of course, you can't go to him," Yossif smiled at the question he read in my eyes, "but Nestor will arrange to take any place where your Museum car may happen to be on a date agreed upon. To secure you against Bolshevik persecution, he will capture the whole Expedition —you understand, don't you?"

Affectionately placing his arm about me, he drew me aside to explain the details of the plan.

XXVI
Prison and Concentration Camp

A nauseating stench assails us as we enter the compulsory labor camp at Kharkov. The courtyard is filled with men and boys, incredibly emaciated, mere shadows of humans. Their faces yellow and eyes distended, bodies ragged, and barefoot, they forcibly remind me of starving pariahs in famine-stricken India.

“The sewer is being repaired,” the official accompanying us explains. Only a few prisoners are at work; the others stand about apathetically, or sprawl on the ground as if too weak for exertion.

“Our worst scourge is disease,” the guide remarks. “The men are undernourished and lack resistance. We have no medicine and we are short of physicians.”

Some of the prisoners surround our party, apparently taking us for officials. “*Tovarishi*,” a young man appeals to us, “when will the Commission decide upon my case?”

“Visitors,” the guide informs him laconically.

“We can’t live on the *pyock*. The bread ration has been cut again. No medicine is given out,” several complain.

The guards motion them aside.

The large male dormitory is appallingly crowded. The whole floor space is taken up by cots and benches, set so closely together it is difficult for us to pass. The prisoners cluster in the corners; some, naked to the hips, are engaged in picking lice off their garments; others sit listlessly, gazing vacantly about them. The air is foul, suffocating.

From the adjoining female ward come quarreling voices. As we enter a girl cries hysterically: “Don’t dare call me a speculator! It’s my last things I was selling.” She is young and still beautiful, her torn blouse exposing delicate, well-formed shoulders. Her eyes burn feverishly, and she breaks into a hacking cough.

“God may know who you be,” a peasant woman retorts. “But just think of me, with three little ones at home.” Catching sight of our group, she rises heavily from the bench, stretching her hand out pleadingly: “Dear ones, let me go home. My poor children will die without me.”

The women beset us. The rations are bad and insufficient, they declare. Only a quarter of a pound of bread is given them and a plate of thin soup once a day. The

doctor does not attend the sick; their complaints are ignored, and the prison commission does not pay any attention to their protests.

A keeper appears in the door. “To your places!” he shouts angrily. “Don’t you know the regulations? Send your petitions in writing to the Commission.”

“We’ve done it, but we get no reply,” several women cry.

“Silence!” the overseer commands.

At the gate of the Cold Hill Prison (Kholodnaya Gorka) we meet an excited crowd, mostly women and girls, each with a little bundle in hand. They are wildly gesticulating and arguing with the guards. They have brought provisions and clothing for their arrested relatives —the custom, known as *peredatcha*, prevailing throughout the country owing to the inability of the government to supply its prisoners with sufficient food. But the guard declines to accept the offerings. “New orders,” he explains: “no more *peredatcha*.”

“For how long?”

“For several weeks.”

Consternation and resentment break from the people. The prisoners cannot exist without *peredatcha*. Why should it be refused? Many of the women have come long distances, even from neighboring towns, to bring some bread and potatoes to husband or brother. Others have deprived themselves of necessaries to procure a little delicacy for a sick friend. And now this terrible order!

The crowd besieges us with pleas. We are accompanied by the woman secretary of a high commissar, herself an official of the Rabkrin, the powerful Department of Inspection, organized to investigate and correct abuses in the other Soviet institutions. She is past middle age, lean and severe looking, with the reputation of being efficient, strict, and heartless. I have heard that she was formerly in the Cheka, one of its Commandants, as the executioners are called.

Some of the women recognize our guide. From all sides come appeals to intercede, in tones of fear mixed with hope.

“I don’t know why *peredatcha* is refused,” she informs them, “but I shall inquire at once.”

We enter the prison, and our guide sends for the commissar in charge. A youngish man, gaunt and consumptive-looking, appears. “We have suspended the *peredatcha*,” he explains, “because we are short of help. We have more work just now than we can handle.”

"It is a great hardship for the prisoners. Perhaps the matter can be managed," the Secretary suggests.

"Unfortunately it can't," the man retorts coldly. "We work beyond our strength. As for the rations," he continues, "the honest workers outside are no better off."

Noticing our look of disapproval, he adds: "As soon as we have caught up on our work, we'll permit the *peredatcha* again."

"How soon might that be?" one of our party inquires.

"In two or three weeks, perhaps."

"A long time to starve."

The Commissar does not reply.

"We all work hard without complaining, *tovarish*," the guide reproves him severely. "I regret I shall have to report the matter."

The prison has remained as it was in the days of the Romanovs; even most of the old keepers still hold their positions. But it is much more crowded now; sanitary arrangements are neglected and medical treatment is almost entirely absent. Yet a certain indefinable new spirit is felt in the atmosphere. The commissar and keepers are informally addressed as *tovarish*, and the prisoners, even the non-politicals, have acquired a freer, more independent manner. But the discipline is severe: the old custom of collective protest is sternly suppressed, and repeatedly the politicals have been driven to the extreme method of self-defense —a hunger strike.

In the corridors the inmates walk about without guards, but our guide frowns down their attempts to approach us by a curt, "Not officials, *tovarishi*." She seems not quite at ease, and discourages conversation. Some prisoners trail behind us; occasionally a more daring one appeals to have his case looked into. "Send in your petition in writing," the woman admonishes him, whereupon there comes the retort, "I did, long ago, but nothing has been done."

The large cells are crowded, but the doors are open, and the men pass freely in and out. A dark-haired youth, with sharp black eyes, unobservedly joins our party. "I'm in for five years," he whispers to me. "I'm a Communist, and it was revenge on the part of a crooked commissar whom I threatened to expose."

Walking through the corridors I recognize Tchernenko, whose description was given me by Kharkov friends. He was arrested by the Cheka to prevent being seated in the Soviet, to which he was elected by his fellow workers in the factory. By the help of a friendly soldier he succeeded in escaping from the concentration camp, but was rearrested and sent to the Cold Hill Prison. I slow down my pace,

and Tchernenko, falls into the rear of our party. “More politicals than common criminals here,” he says, pretending to speak to the prisoner at his side. “Anarchists, Left Social Revolutionists, and Mensheviki. Treated worse than the others. Only a few Whites and one American from the Kolchak front. Speculators and counterrevolutionists can buy their way out. Proletarians and revolutionists remain.”

“The revision commission?” I whisper in an aside.

“A fake. They pay no attention to our petitions.”

“What charge against you?”

“None. Neither charge nor trial. The usual sentence —till the end of civil war.”

The guide turns into a long, dark passage, and the prisoners fall back. We enter the women’s department.

Two rows of cells, one above the other, cleaner and lighter than the male part. The doors stand ajar, the inmates free to walk about. One of our party —Emma Goldman —asks permission to see a political whose name she had secured from friends in the city. The guide hesitates, then consents, and presently a young girl appears. She is neat and comely, with an earnest, sad face.

“Our treatment?” she repeats the question addressed to her. “Why, at first they kept us in solitary. They would not let us communicate with our male comrades, and all our protests were ignored. We had to resort to the methods we used under the old regime.”

“Be careful what you say,” the guide admonishes her.

“I’m speaking the truth,” the prisoner retorts unabashed. “We employed obstruction tactics: we smashed everything in our cells and we defied the keepers. They threatened us with violence, and we all declared a hunger strike. On the seventh day they consented to leave our doors open. Now we can breathe the corridor air at least.”

“That is enough,” the guide interrupts.

“If we are deprived of the *peredatcha* we’ll start a hunger strike again,” the girl declares as she is led away.

In the death house the cell doors are closed and locked. The occupants are invisible, and an oppressive silence is felt in the living tomb. From somewhere a short, hacking cough strikes upon the ear like ominous croaking. Slow, measured steps resound painfully through the narrow corridor. A foreboding of evil hangs in

the air. My mind reverts to a similar experience long buried in the recesses of my memory —the "condemned" gallery of the Pittsburg jail rises before me. …

The guard accompanying us lifts the lid of the observation "eye" out into the door, and I look into the death-cell. A tall man stands motionless in the corner. His face, framed in a thick black beard, is ashen gray. His eyes are fastened on the circular opening, the expression of terror in them so overwhelming that I involuntarily step back. "Have mercy, *tovarish*," his voice comes as from a grave, "oh, let me live!"

"He appropriated Soviet funds," the woman guide comments unemotionally.

"It was only a small sum," the man pleads. "I'll make it good, I swear it. I am young, let me live!"

The guide shuts the opening.

For days his face haunts me. Never had I seen such a look in a human before. Primitive fear stamped upon it in such relief, it communicated itself lingeringly to me. Terror so absolute, it turned the big, powerful man into a single, all-absorbing emotion —the mortal dread of the sudden call to face his executioner.

As I note down these experiences in my Diary, there come to me the words of Zorin. "The death penalty is abolished, our prisons empty," he had said to me soon after my arrival in Russia. It seemed natural, self-evident. Have not revolutionists always opposed such barbarous methods? Was not much of Bolshevik popularity due to their condemnation of Kerensky for restoring capital punishment at the front, in 1917? My first impressions in Petrograd seemed to bear out Zorin's statement. Once, strolling along the river Moika, there came to my view the big prison demolished at the outbreak of the Revolution. Hardly a stone was left in place —cells, floors, ceilings, all were a mass of debris, the iron doors and steel window bars a heap of twisted junk. There lay what had once been a dreaded dungeon, now eloquent of the people's wrath, blindly destructive, yet wise in its instinctive discrimination. Only part of the outer walls of the building remained; inside everything had been utterly wrecked by the fury of age-long suffering and the leveling hand of dynamite. The sight of the destroyed prison seemed an inspiration, a symbol of the coming day of liberty, prisonless, crimeless. And now, in the Cold Hill death house. …

XXVII
Further South

August 7, 1920. —Slowly our train creeps through the country, evidence of devastation on every hand reminding us of the long years of war, revolution, and civil strife. The towns and cities on our route look poverty-stricken, the stores are closed, the streets deserted. By degrees Soviet conditions are being established, the process progressing more rapidly in some places than in others.

In Poltava we find neither Soviet nor Ispolkom, the usual form of Bolshevik government. Instead, the city is ruled by the more primitive Revkom, the self-appointed revolutionary committee, active underground during White regimes, and taking charge whenever the Red Army occupies a district.

Krementchug and Znamenka present the familiar picture of the small southern town, with the little marketplace, still suffered by the Bolsheviki, the center of its commercial and social life. In uneven rows the peasant women sprawl on sacks of potatoes, or squat on their haunches, exchanging flour, rice, and beans for tobacco, soap, and salt. Soviet money is scorned, hardly anyone accepting it, though *tsarskiye* are in demand and occasionally *kerenki* are favored.

The entire older population of the city seems to be in the market, everyone bargaining, selling, or buying. Soviet *militsioneri*, gun slung across the shoulder, circulate among the people, and here and there a man in leather coat and cap is conspicuous in the crowd —a Communist or a Chekist. The people seem to shun them, and conversation is subdued in their presence. Political questions are avoided, but lamentation over the "terrible situation" is universal, everyone complaining about the insufficiency of the *pyock*, the irregularity of its issue, and the general condition of starvation and misery.

More frequently we meet men and women of Jewish type, the look of the hunted in their eyes, and more dreadful become the stories of pogroms that had taken place in the neighborhood. Few young persons are visible —these are in the Soviet institutions, working as the employees of the government. The young women we meet occasionally have a startled, frightened look, and many men bear ugly scars on their faces, as if from a saber or sword cut.

In Znamenka, Henry Alsberg, the American correspondent accompanying our Expedition, discovers the loss of his purse, containing a considerable amount of foreign money. Inquiries of the peasant women in the marketplace elicit only a

shrewdly naive smile, with the resentful exclamation, “How’d I know!” Visiting the local police station in the faint hope of advice or aid, we learn that the whole force has just been rushed off to the environs reported to be attacked by a company of Makhnovtsi.

Despairing of recovering our loss, we return to the railroad station. To our astonishment the Museum car is nowhere to be seen. In consternation we learn that it was coupled to a train that started for Kiev, via Fastov, an hour ago.

We realize the seriousness of our predicament in being stranded in a city without hotels or restaurants, and with no food to be purchased for Soviet money, the only kind in our possession. While discussing the situation we observe a military supply train in slow motion on a distant siding. We dash forward and succeed in boarding it at the cost of a few scratches. The commissar in charge at first strenuously objects to our presence, at no pains to hide the suspicions aroused by our sudden appearance. It requires considerable argument and much demonstration of official documents before the bureaucrat is mollified. Over a cup of tea he begins to thaw out, the primitive hospitality of the Russian helping to establish friendly relations. Before long we are deep in the discussion of the Revolution and current problems. Our host is a Communist “from the masses,” as he terms it. He is a great admirer of Trotsky and his “iron broom” methods. Revolution can conquer only by the generous use of the sword, he believes; morality and sentiment are bourgeois superstitions. His conception of Socialism is puerile, his information about the world at large, of the scantiest. His arguments echo the familiar editorials of the official press; he is confident the whole of Western Europe is soon to be aflame with revolution. The Red Army is even now before the gates of Warsaw, he asserts, about to enter and to assure the triumph of the Polish proletariat risen against its masters.

Late in the afternoon we reach Fastov, and are warmly welcomed by our colleagues of the Expedition, who had spent anxious hours over our disappearance.

XXVIII
Fastov the Pogromed

August 12, 1920. —Our little company slowly trudges along the unpaved, dusty road that runs almost in a straight line to the marketplace in the center of the city. The place seems deserted. The houses stand vacant, most of them windowless, their doors broken in and ajar —an oppressive sight of destruction and desolation. All is silent about us; we feel as in a graveyard. Approaching the marketplace our group separates, each of us going his own way to learn for himself.

A woman passes by, hesitates, and stops. She pushes the kerchief back from her forehead, and looks at me with wonderment in her sad old eyes.

"Good morning," I address her in Jewish.

"You are a stranger here," she says kindly. "You don't look like our folks."

"Yes," I reply, "I am not long from America."

"Ah, from Amerikeh," she sighs wistfully. "I have a son there. And do you know what is happening to us?"

"Not very much, but I'd like to find out."

"Oh, only the good God knows what we have gone through." Her voice breaks. "Excuse me, I can't help it" —she wipes the tears off her wrinkled face. "They killed my husband before my eyes. … I had to look on, helpless. … I can't talk about it. …" She stands dejectedly before me, bent more by grief than age, like a symbol of abject tragedy.

Recovering a little, she says: "Come with me, if you want to learn. Come to Reb Moishe, he can tell you everything."

We are in the market. A double row of open stalls, no more than a dozen in all, dilapidated and forlorn-looking, almost barren of wares. A handful of large-grained, coarse salt, some loaves of black bread thickly dotted with yellow specks of straw, a little loose tobacco —that is all the stock on hand. Almost no money is passing in payment. The few customers are trading by exchange: about ten pounds of bread for a pound of salt, a few pipefuls of tobacco for an onion. At the counters stand oldish men and women, a few girls among them. I see no young men. These, like most of the able-bodied men and women, I am informed, had stealthily left the town long ago, for fear of more pogroms. They went on foot, some to Kiev, others to Kharkov, in the hope of finding safety and a livelihood in

the larger city. Most of them never reached their destination. Food was scarce —they had gone without provisions, and most of them died on the way from exposure and starvation.

The old traders surround me. “Khaye,” they whisper to the old woman, “who is this?”

“From Amerikeh,” she replies, a ray of hopefulness in her voice; “to learn about the pogroms. We are going to Reb Moishe.”

“From Amerikeh? Amerikeh?” Amazement, bewilderment is in their tones. “Did he come so far to find us? Will they help us? Oh, good God in Heaven, may it be true!” Several voices speak at once all astir with the suppressed excitement of sudden hope, of renewed faith. More people crowd about us; business has stopped. I notice similar groups surrounding my friends nearby.

“Shah, shah, good people,” my guide admonishes them; “not everybody at once. We are going to see Reb Moishe; he’ll tell him everything.”

“Oh, one minute, just one minute, respected man,” a pale young woman desperately clutches me by the arm. “My husband is there, in Amerikeh. Do you know him? Rabinovitch —Yankel Rabinovitch. He is well known there; surely you must have heard of him. How is he, tell me, please.”

“In what city is he?”

“In Nai-York, but I haven’t had any letter from him since the war.”

“My son-in-law Khayim is in Amerikeh,” a woman, her hair all white, interrupts; “maybe you saw him, what?” She is very old and bent, and evidently hard of hearing. She places her hand back of her ear to catch my reply, while her wizened, lemon-like face is turned up to me in anxious expectation.

“Where is your son-in-law?”

“What does he say? I don’t understand,” she wails.

The bystanders shout in her ear: “He asks where Khayim, your son-in-law, is?”

“In Amerikeh, in Amerikeh,” she replies.

“In Amerikeh,” a man near me repeats.

“America is a big country. In what city is Khayim?” I inquire.

She looks bewildered, then stammers: “I don’t know —I don’t recollect just now —I —”

"*Bobeh*,[36] you have his letter at home," a small boy shouts in her ear. "He wrote you before the fighting started, don't you remember?"

"Yes, yes! Will you wait, *gutinker*?"[37] the old woman begs. "I'm going right away to fetch the letter. Maybe you know my Khayim."

She moves heavily away. The others ply me with questions, about their relatives, friends, brothers, husbands. Almost everyone of them has someone in that far-off America, which is like a fabled land to these simple folk —the land of promise, peace, and wealth, the happy place from which but few return.

"Maybe you will take a letter to my husband?" a pale young woman asks. All at once a dozen persons begin to clamor for permission to write and send their letters through me to their beloved ones, "there in Amerikeh." I promise to take their mail, and the crowd slowly melts away, with a pleading admonition to wait for them. "Only a few words —we'll be right back."

"Let us go to Reb Moishe," my guide reminds me. "They know," she adds, with a wave at the others, "they'll bring their letters there."

As we start on our way a tall man with jet-black beard and burning eyes detains me. "Be so good, one minute." He speaks quietly, but with a strong effort to restrain his emotion. "I have no one in America," he says; "I have no one anywhere. You see this house?" There is a nervous tremor in his voice, but he steadies, himself. "There, across the way, with the broken windows, paper-covered, pasted over. My old father, the Almighty bless his memory, and my two young brothers were killed there. Cut to pieces with sabers. The old man had his *peyes*[38] cut off, together with his ears, and his belly ripped open. … I ran away with my daughter, to save her. Look, there she is, at the third stall on the right." His eyes, stream with tears as he points towards a girl standing a few feet away. She is about fifteen, oval faced, with delicate features, pale and fragile as a lily, and with most peculiar eyes. She is looking straight before her, while her hands are mechanically cutting chunks of bread from the big round loaf. There is the same dreadful expression in her eyes that I have recently seen for the first time in the faces of very young girls in pogromed cities. A look of wild terror frozen into a stare that grips at my heart. Yet, not realizing the truth, I whisper to her father, "Blind?"

"No, not blind;" he cries out. "Wish to God —no, much worse. She has been looking like that ever since the night when I ran away from our house with her. It was a fearful night. Like wild beasts they cut and slashed and raved. I hid with my Rosele in the cellar, but we were not safe there, so we ran to the woods nearby. They caught us on the way. They took her from me and left me for dead. Look —"

He takes off his hat and I see a long sword cut, only partly healed, scarring the side of his head. “They left me for dead,” he repeats. “When the murderers had gone, three days later, she was found in the field and she has been like that … with that look in her eyes … she hasn’t talked since. … Oh, my God, why dost Thou punish me so?”

“Dear Reb Sholem, do not blaspheme,” my woman guide admonishes him. “Are you the only one to suffer? You know my great loss. We all share the same fate. It has always been the fate of us Jews. We know not the ways of God, blessed be His holy name. But let us go to Reb Moishe,” she says, turning to me.

Behind the counter of what was once a grocery store stands Reb Moishe. He is a middle-aged Hebrew, with an intelligent face that now bears only the memory of a kindly smile. An old resident of the town and elder in the synagogue, he knows every inhabitant and the whole history of the place. He had been one of the well-to-do men of the city, and even now he cannot resist the temptation of hospitality, so traditional with his race. Involuntarily his eyes wander to the shelves entirely bare save for a few empty bottles. The room is dingy and out of repair; the wall paper hangs down in cracked sheets, exposing the plaster, yellow with moisture. On the counter are some loaves of black bread, straw dotted, and a small tray with green onions. Reb Moishe bends over, produces a bottle of soda from under the counter, and offers the treasure to me, with a smile of benign welcome. A look of consternation spreads over the face of his wife, who sits darning silently in the corner, as Reb Moishe shamefacedly declines the proferred payment. “No, no, I cannot do it,” he says with simple dignity, but I know it as the height of sacrifice.

Learning the purpose of my visit to Fastov, Reb Moishe invites me to the street. “Come with me,” he says; “I’ll show you what they did to us. Though there is not much for the eyes” —he looks at me with searching gaze —“only those who lived through it can understand, and maybe” —he pauses a moment —“maybe also those who really feel with us in our great bereavement.”

We step out of the store. Across is a large vacant space, its center littered with old boards and broken bricks. “That was our schoolhouse,” Reb Moishe comments. “This is all that’s left of it. That house on your left, with the shutters closed, it was Zalman’s, our schoolteacher’s. They killed six there —father, mother, and four children. We found them all with their heads broken by the butts of guns. There, around the corner, the whole street —you see, every house pogromed. We have many such streets.”

After a while he continues: “In this house, with the green roof, the whole family was wiped out —nine persons. The murderers set fire to it, too —you can see

through the broken doors —the inside is all burned and charred. Who did it?" he repeats my question in a tone of hopelessness. "Better ask who did not? Petlura came first, then Denikin, and then the Poles, and just bands of every kind; may the black years know them. There were many of them, and it was always the same curse. We suffered from all of them, every time the town changed hands. But Denikin was the worst of all, worse even than the Poles, who hate us so. The last time the Denikins were here the pogrom lasted four days. Oh, God!"

He suddenly halts, throwing up his hands. "Oh, you Americans, you who live in safety, do you know what it means, four days! Four long, terrible days, and still more terrible nights, four days and four nights and no letup in the butchery. The cries, the shrieks, those piercing shrieks of women seeing their babies torn limb from limb before their very eyes. … I hear them now. … It freezes my blood with horror. … It drives me mad. … Those sights. … The bloody mass of flesh that was once my own child, my lovely Mirele. … She was only five years old." He breaks down. Leaning against the wall, his body shakes with sobs.

Soon he recovers himself. "Here we are in the center of the worst pogromed part," he continues. "Forgive my weakness; I can't speak of it with dry eyes. … There is the synagogue. We Jews sought safety in it. The Commander told us to. His name? May evil be as strange to me as his dark name. One of Denikin's generals; the Commander, that's what he was called. His men were mad with blood lust when there was nothing more to rob. You know, the soldiers and peasants think there is gold to be found in every Jewish home. This was once a prosperous city, but the rich men that did business with us lived in Kiev and Kharkov. The Jews here were just making a living, with a few of them comfortably off. Well, the many pogroms long ago robbed them of all they had, ruined their business, and despoiled their homes. Still, they lived somehow. You know how it is with the Jew —he is used to mistreatment, he tries to make the best of it. But Denikin's soldiers —oh, it was Gehenna let loose. They went wild when they found nothing to take, and they destroyed what they didn't want. That was the first two days. But with the third began the killing, mostly with swords and bayonets. On the third day the Commander ordered us to take refuge in the synagogue. He promised us safety, and we brought our wives and children there. They put a guard at the door, to protect us, the Commander said. It was a trap. At night the soldiers came; all the hooligans of the town were with them, too. They came and demanded our gold. They would not believe we had none. They searched the Holy Scrolls, they tore them and trampled upon them. Some of us could not look quietly on that awful desecration. We protested. And then began the butchery. The horror, oh, the horror of it. … The women beaten, assaulted, the men cut down with sabers. … Some of us

broke through the guard at the door, and we ran into the streets. Like hounds of hell, they followed us, slashing, killing, and hunting us from house to house. For days afterwards the streets were littered with the killed and maimed. They would not let us approach our dead. They would not permit us to bury them or to help the wounded who were groaning in their misery, begging for death. … Not a glass of water could we give them. … They shot anyone coming near. … The famished dogs of the whole neighborhood came; they smelt prey. I saw them tear off limbs from the dead, from the helpless wounded. … They fed on the living … on our brothers. …"

He broke down again. "The dogs fed on them … fed on them …" he repeats amid sobs.

Someone approaches us. It is the doctor who had ministered to the sick and wounded after the last pogrom was over. He looks the typical Russian of the intelligentsia, the stamp of the idealist and student engraved upon him. He walks with a heavy limp, and his quick eye catches my unvoiced question. "A memento of those days," he says, attempting a smile. "It troubles me a good deal and handicaps my work considerably," he adds. "There are many sick people and I am on my feet all day. There are no conveyances —they took away all the horses and cattle. I am just on my way now to poor Fanya, one of my hopeless patients. No, no, good man, it's no use your visiting her," he waives aside my request to accompany him. "It is like many others here; a terrible but common case. She was a nurse, taking care of a paralytic young girl. They occupied a room on the second floor of a house nearby. On the first floor soldiers were quartered. When the pogrom began the soldiers kept the paralytic and her nurse prisoners. What happened there no one will ever know … When the soldiers had at last gone we had to use a ladder to get to the girls' room. The brutes had covered the stairs with human excrement —it was impossible to approach. When we got to the two girls, the paralytic was dead in the arms of the nurse, and the latter a raving maniac. No, no; it's no use your seeing her."

"Doctor," says Reb Moishe, "why don't you tell our American friend how you got crippled? He should hear everything."

"Oh, that is not important, Reb Moishe. We have so many worse things." Upon my insisting, he continues: "Well, it is not a long story. I was shot as I approached a wounded man lying in the street. It was dark, and as I was passing by I heard someone moan. I had just stepped off the sidewalk when I was shot. It was the night of the synagogue pogrom. But my mishap, man —it's nothing when you think of the nightmare in the warehouse."

"The warehouse?" I asked. "What happened there?"

"The worst you can imagine," the doctor replies. "Those scenes no human power can describe. It wasn't murder there —only a few were killed in the warehouse. It was the women, the girls, even children … When the soldiers pogromed the synagogue, many of the women succeeded in gaining the street. As if by some instinct they collected afterwards in the warehouse —a big outhouse that had not been used for many years. Where else were the women to go? It was too dangerous at home; the mob was searching for the men who had escaped from the synagogue and was slaughtering them on the street, in their homes, wherever found. So the women and girls gathered in the warehouse. It was late at night and the place was dark and still. They feared to breathe, almost, lest their hiding-place be discovered by the hooligans. During the night more of the women folk and some of their men also found their way to the warehouse. There they all lay, huddled on the floor in dead silence. The cries and shrieks from the street reached them, but they were helpless and every moment they feared discovery. How it happened we don't know, but some soldiers did find them. There was no pogrom there, in the ordinary sense. There was worse. The Commander himself gave orders that a cordon of soldiers be stationed at the warehouse, that no pogrom was to be made, and that no one be permitted to leave without his permission. At first we did not understand the meaning of it, but the terrible truth soon dawned on us. On the second night several officers arrived, accompanied by a strong detachment, all mounted and carrying lanterns. By their light they peered into the faces of the women. They selected five of the most beautiful girls, dragged them out and rode away with them. They came again and again that night … They came every night, always with their lanterns. First the youngest were taken, girls of fifteen and twelve, even as young as eight. Then they took the older ones and the married women. Only the very old were left. There were over four hundred women and girls in the warehouse, and most of them were taken away. Some of them never returned alive; many were later found dead on the roads. Others were abandoned along the route of the withdrawing army … they returned days, weeks later … sick, tortured, everyone of them infected with terrible diseases."

The doctor pauses, then takes me aside. "Can an outsider realize the whole depth of our misfortune?" he asks. "How many pogroms we have suffered! The last one, by Denikin, continued eight days. Think of it, eight days! Over ten thousand of our people were slaughtered; three thousand died from exposure and wounds." Glancing toward Reb Moishe, he adds in a hoarse whisper: "There is not a woman or girl above the age of ten in our city who has not been outraged. Some of them four, five, as high as fourteen times. … You said you were about to go to Kiev.

In the City Hospital there you will find seven children, girls under thirteen, that we succeeded in placing there for medical treatment, mostly surgical. Everyone of those girls has been outraged six and more times. Tell America about it —will it still remain silent?”

XXIX
Kiev

The Krestchatik, Kiev's main thoroughfare, pulsates with intense life. Straight as an arrow it lies before me, a magnificent broad avenue stretching far into the distance and finally disappearing in the superb Kupetchesky Park, formerly the pride of the city. Ancient, the storms of time and human strife defying, Kiev stands picturesquely beautiful, a radiant mosaic of iridescent foliage, golden cathedrals and monasteries of exotic architecture, and green-clad mountains towering on the banks of the Dnieper flowing majestically below.

Recent days revived the bloody scenes the old city had witnessed in the centuries past, when Mongol and Tartar, Cossack, Pole, and fierce native tribes had fought for its possession. But more sanguinary and ferocious have been the struggles of yesterday. Foreign armies of occupation, German, Magyar, and Austrian, native *gaidamaki*, Poles, Russians —each turned the ancient city into a shamble. Skoropadsky, Petlura, Denikin, like the savage atamans of Gogol's tales, have vied with each other in filling the streams that crimson the Dnieper in these the darkest days of Russia.

Incredible vitality of man! Exasperating, yet blessed brevity of human memory! Today the city looks bright and peaceful —forgotten is the slaughter, forgotten the sacrifices of yesterday.

The streets, full of movement and color, contrast strikingly with the sickly exhaustion of northern cities. Stores and restaurants are open, and the bakeries display appetizing *pirozhniye*, the sweets so dear to the Russian heart. Most of the business signs are still in their accustomed places, some in Russian, others in the Ukrainian language, the latter predominating since the famous decree of Skoropadsky when overnight all shingles had to be "Ukrainianized." The boulevards are alive with people, the women larger and less beautiful than in Kharkov, the men stolid, heavy, unprepossessing.

It is a month since the Poles left the city: the Bolsheviki have not yet had time to establish completely their regime. But the reports of Polish destruction, so industriously circulated in Moscow, prove baseless. Little damage has been done by the enemy, except the burning of some railroad bridges on the outskirts of the city. The famous Sofiysky Cathedral and the Michailovsky Monastery are undisturbed in their imposing splendor. Without reason did Chicherin protest to the world against "the unheard-of vandalism" toward those gems of old architecture.

The Soviet institutions present the familiar picture of Moscow pattern: gatherings of worn, tired people, looking hungry and apathetic. Typical and sad. The corridors and offices are crowded with applicants seeking permission to do or to be exempt from doing this or that. The labyrinth of new decrees is so intricate, the officials prefer the easier way of solving perplexing problems by "revolutionary method," on their "conscience," generally to the dissatisfaction of the petitioners.

Long lines are everywhere, and much writing and handling of "papers" and documents by Sovietsky *barishni* (young ladies), in high-heeled shoes, that swarm in every office. They puff at cigarettes and animatedly discuss the advantages of certain bureaus as measured by the quantity of the *pyock* issued, the symbol of Soviet existence. Workers and peasants, their heads bared, approach the long tables. Respectfully, even servilely, they seek information, plead for an "order" for clothing, or a "ticket" for boots. "I don't know," "In the next office," "Come tomorrow," is the usual reply. There are protests and lamentations, and begging for attention and advice. Occasionally someone in the line, after days of fruitless effort, loses his temper, and a string of true Russian curses fills the room, rising above the noise and the smoke. But when the commissar hastily enters, belated from the conference of the Party Committee, the hubbub subsides, and the *barishni* appear busy at their tasks. He has a worn and worried look: his desk is piled with papers awaiting his attention, and within an hour he is expected at another session. Lucky applicant that gets a hearing; happy if action is taken on his case.

The industries are at low ebb, mainly because of the lack of raw material and coal. The decree militarizing labor is being applied with great severity; the toilers in the shops and factories are rigidly bound to their places of employment. But the machinery has been neglected, most of it is out of repair, and there is a scarcity of artisans capable of putting it in order. The men are at their posts, pretending to work, but in reality idling or engaged in the stealthy manufacture of cigarette lighters, keys, locks, and other objects for personal use or private sale.

Many of the factories are entirely closed; others are operating with a minimum output. The sugar refineries, the most important industry of the Southeast, are working at a great deficit. Because of the total devaluation of Soviet money the State is compelled to pay its employees with products, chiefly with sugar from the old reserves. In search of documents for the Museum, I gather official statistics showing that to produce one pood (about 40 lbs.) of sugar, the government expends thirty-five, often even fifty-five pounds of the old sugar. The officials realize the extreme seriousness of the situation, but feel themselves helpless. Some skeptically, others with characteristic racial fatality, trudge on in the treadmill.

In the civil and military departments there is feverish activity, but sadly unorganized. Almost every branch is working independently, without relation to other Soviet institutions, frequently in entire ignorance and even in opposition to the policies and measures of the other executive bodies. Curious incidents result. Thus the Chairman of the All-Ukrainian Executive Committee has sent a telegraphic request to all Soviet institutions to aid the work of our Expedition, while the Secretary of the Party has at the same time issued an order against us, condemning our Mission as an attempt to deprive Ukraine of its historic documents, and threatening to confiscate the material we have collected.

The Soviet of Labor Unions occupies the huge building on the Krestchatik which was formerly the Hotel Savoy. In 1918 and 1919 that body played a most important role, its work covering the whole field of proletarian interests and its authority based on the expressed will of the industrial masses. But gradually the Soviet has been deprived of power, the government taking over its essential functions, and turning the unions into executive and administrative branches of the State machinery. The elective principle has been abolished and replaced by Communist appointment.

The labor headquarters are in great confusion. As in Kharkov, the entire Soviet and most of the managing boards of the locals have been recently "liquidated" as Menshevik or unsympathetic to the Communists, and new officials appointed by Moscow. The same atmosphere of suppressed nervousness is sensed in the unions as in the other government institutions. The Bolsheviki do not feel secure in the city, and there are stubborn rumors of Communist reverses on the Polish front, of Wrangel advancing from the Crimea, of Odessa being taken by the Whites, and of Makhno activity in the Kiev province.

In the course of my work I come in touch with T ——, the Ukrainian Communist, whom I had met last winter in the Kharitonensky as a member of the delegation that had come to Moscow to plead for greater independence and self-determination for the Ukraine. He is of middle age, a university graduate and revolutionist repeatedly imprisoned under the Romanov regime. An active *borodbist* (Left Social Revolutionist of the Ukraine), he submitted to discipline when his party joined the Communists.

But he has "private opinions" which, long suppressed, seek relief. "I don't mind discussing these questions with you," he remarks, with an emphasis on the pronoun, "though I know that you are not a Communist —"

"But I am," I interrupt; "not indeed a Bolshevik; nor a Governmentalist, but a free, Anarchist Communist."

"Not *our* kind of Communist. Still, you are an old revolutionist. I heard a good deal about you in Moscow, and I can call you comrade. I disagree with you, of course, but I also disagree with the policies of my Party. The Ukraine is not Russia —it's a great mistake for 'the center' to treat us as if we were. We could win the people to our side by having greater local autonomy and more independence. Our Ukrainian Party has used every effort to convince Moscow in this matter, but without result. We are a republic in name only; in reality we are just a Russian province."

"Do you want entire separation?"

"No. We want to be federated with R.S.F.S.R., but not subject. We are as good Communists as they in Moscow, but our influence here would be much greater were we left free to act. We know the conditions and needs of the people better than those who sit in the Kremlin. Take, for instance, the recent wholesale suspension of the union management. It has antagonized the entire labor element against us. The same is happening in the other Soviet institutions. Only yesterday a chauffeur complained to me about our 'Moscow methods.' The man had been ordered to the front, but his wife died recently, leaving a paralytic boy on his hands. He has been trying to get his child into some hospital or home, but his petition, in the Ukrainian language, has been returned to him with the order to 'write it in Russian.' And that after two weeks of waiting! Now the man is to join his regiment within two days. Do you wonder that the people hate us? The 'center' ignores our suggestions, and we are powerless."

Criticism of Moscow is general among the Ukrainian Communists. Often, to my surprise and consternation, I detect obvious antisemitism in their resentment of Kremlin domination. The anecdotes and puns circulating in Soviet institutions are tinged with this spirit, though some do not lack wit. Among the people at large hatred of the Jew is intense, though its active expression is held in abeyance. Yet not unfrequent are incidents such as happened this morning in the Podol, the proletarian district of the city, where a man ran amuck in the market, knife in hand, shouting: "Kill the Jews, save Russia!" He stabbed several persons before he was overpowered. It is said that the man was crazed by hunger and illness, but his sentiments are unfortunately too popular to require such an explanation.

Kiev, in the heart of the former ghetto, has lately still more increased its Hebrew population, come to the larger city in the hope of finding comparative safety from the continual wave of pogroms which swept the province since 1917. Whoever the changing political masters —with the sole exception of the Bolsheviki —the Jew was always the first victim, the eternal martyr. It is the concurrence of opinion that Denikin and the Poles were the most brutal and ruthless. Under the latter even Kiev

was not free from antisemitic excesses, and in the Podol pogroms took place repeatedly.

In the city library, in a recent publication by a man of great literary and intellectual attainments, I read: “Pogroms are sad, but if that is the only way to get rid of the Bolsheviki, then we must have pogroms.”

XXX
In Various Walks

By the aid of R ——, the secretary of an important labor union, I have gathered much valuable material for the Expedition. R —— is a Menshevik who has in some unexplained manner escaped the recent "cleaning process." His known popularity among the workers, he believes, has saved him. "The Bolsheviki are keeping an eye on me, but they have left me alone so far," he said significantly.

Familiar with the city, its museums, libraries, and archives, R —— has been a great help in my quest for data and documents. Much that is valuable has been lost, and still more has been destroyed by the workers themselves, in the interests of their safety, at the time of German occupation and White Terror. But a considerable part of the labor archives has been preserved, sufficient to reconstruct the history of the heroic struggle of the unions since their inception and throughout the stormy days of revolution and civil war. All through the Mensheviki played the role of the intellectual leaders, with the Bolsheviki and Anarchists as the revolutionary inspiration of the workers.

The headquarters of the Labor Soviet have somehow become the depository of a strange documentary mixture. Police and gendarme records, the minutes of Duma sessions, and financial statistics have found their way there, only to be forgotten. By a curious chance the first Universal of Petlura, a rare document containing the original declaration of principles and aims by the Ukrainian national democracy, has been discovered by me in a neglected drawer. A Communist official claims it as his "personal possession," with which, however, he is willing to part for a consideration. In view of the large price demanded, the matter has now become a subject of correspondence with the Museum.

In Menshevik circles feeling against the Bolsheviki is very bitter. It is the general sentiment among them that the Communists, formerly Social Democrats, have betrayed Marx and discredited Socialism. "Asiatic revolutionists," R —— calls them. There is no difference between Trotsky and the hangman Stolypin, he asserts; their methods are identical. Indeed, there was more political life under Nicholas II than there is today. The Bolsheviki, alleged Marxists, think by decrees and terror to alter the immutable law of social evolution; to skip several steps at once, as it were, on the ladder of progress. The February Revolution was essentially bourgeois, but Lenin attempted to turn it by the violence of an insignificant minority into a social revolution. The complete debacle of all hopes is

the result. The Communists, R —— believes, cannot last much longer. Russia is on the verge of utter economic collapse. The old food reserves are exhausted; production has almost ceased. Militarization of toil has failed. Trotsky's calculations of the progressive increase of the output on the "labor front" have been exploded like Bolshevik prophecies of world revolution. The factory is not a battlefield. Converting the country into a camp of forced labor is not conducive to creative effort. It has divided the people into slaves and slave drivers, and created a powerful class of Soviet bureaucrats. Most significant of all, it has turned even the more advanced workers against the Communists. Now the Bolsheviki can count neither on the peasant nor on the proletariat; the whole country is against them. But for the stupid policy of the Allies, they would have been swept away long ago. The blockade and invasions have played into their hands. The Bolsheviki need war to keep them in power; the present Polish campaign suits them splendidly. But it is the last Communist straw. It will break, and the bloody Bolshevik experiment will come to an end. "History will write them down as the arch-enemies of the Revolution," R —— concluded emphatically.

Friday evening. —On the dining table at the home of Reb Zakhare, the old Zionist, burn three candles orthodoxically blessed by the housewife. The whole family are gathered for the festive occasion. But the traditional soup and meat are absent: herring and kasha are being served, and small chunks of challah, the Sabbath bread, now only partly of wheat. Besides the parents, two daughters and a son of eighteen are present. The oldest boy —"Yankel was his name," Reb Zakhare says with a heavy sigh. "He'd now be twenty-three, his memory be blessed" —was killed in the pogrom the Denikin men had made just before they finally evacuated the city. He sought to defend his sister —the youngest, then only fifteen. Together they were visiting a friend in the Podol when the mob broke into the street, sacking every house, pillaging, and murdering.

The old lady sits in the corner crying quietly. The look of frozen terror, which I have seen often lately, is in the eyes of the girls. The young man steps over to his mother and gently speaks to her. True Zionists, the family converse in Old Hebrew, making an evident concession in addressing me in Yiddish.

"At least you are free from pogroms under the Bolsheviki," I remark.

"In a certain sense," the old man assents; "but it is the Bolsheviki who are responsible for pogroms. Yes, yes, we had them under the Tsar also," he interrupts my protest, "but they were nothing like those we have had since. Hatred against us has increased. To the gentiles a Bolshevik now means a Jew; a commissar is a *Zhid*,[39] and every Hebrew is held responsible for the murders of the Cheka. I have

lived all my life in the ghetto, and I have seen pogroms in the years past, but never such terrible things as since the Bolsheviki got into Moscow."

"But they have made no pogroms," I insist.

"They also hate the Jew. We are always the victims. Under the Communists we have no violent mob pogroms; at least I have not heard of any. But we have the 'quiet pogroms,' the systematic destruction of all that is dearest to us —of our traditions, customs, and culture. They are killing us as a nation. I don't know but what that is the worst pogrom," he adds bitterly.

After a while he takes up the subject again:

"Some foolish Jews are proud that our people are in the government, and that Trotsky is war minister. As if Trotsky and such others are Jews! What good is it all, I ask, when our nation must suffer as before, and more?"

"The Jews have been made the political and social equals of gentiles," I suggest.

"Equals in what? In misery and corruption. But even there we are not equal. The Jew has more to bear than the others. We are not fit for the factory —we were always businessmen, traders, and now we have been ruined entirely. They have sown corruption in our youth who now think only of power; or to join the Cheka for gain. That was never before. They are destroying the dream of Palestine, our true home; they are suppressing every effort to educate our children in the proper Jewish spirit."

In the Kulturliga gather Hebrew writers, poets, and teachers, most of them members of the Volkspartei when that political party was represented in the Rada by its Minister of Jewish Affairs. Formerly the League was a powerful organization, with 230 branches throughout the South, doing cultural work among its coreligionists. The institution had much to suffer through the various political changes, the Bolsheviki were tolerant at first, and even financially aided its educational efforts. But gradually the help was withdrawn and obstacles began to be placed in the way of the League. The Communists frown upon the too nationalistic character of its work. The Yovkom, Jewish branch of the Party, is particularly antagonistic. The League's teachers and older pupils have been mobilized into State service, and the field of its efforts narrowed down. In the provinces most of its branches have been compelled to close entirely, but in Kiev the devotion and persistence of its leading spirits still enables the League to continue.

It is the sole oasis in the city of nonpartisan intellectual and social life. Though now limited in its activities, it still enjoys great popularity among the Jewish youth. Its

art classes, including drawing, painting and sculpture, are eagerly visited, and the theatrical studio is developing young actors and actresses of much promise. The rehearsals I attended, especially that of *The World's End*, the posthumous work of an unknown dramatist, were unique in artistic conception and powerful in expression.

The younger elements that frequent the Kulturliga dream of Zion, and look to the aid of England in securing to the Jewish nation its traditional home. They are out of touch with the Western world and recent events, but their reliance on the hopes raised by the Jewish Congress is unshaken. Somehow, sometime, probably even in the not distant future, is to happen the great event and Jewry will be reestablished in Palestine. In that ardent faith they drag on their existence from day to day, intellectually vegetating, physically in misery. Their former sources of support are abolished, the government having supplied them with a bread-card of the fourth category. The latter is the Bolshevik label of the *bourzhooi*, the intelligentsia now being denounced as such, though in reality the rich middle class has sought safety at the outbreak of the Revolution. Hatred of the bourgeoisie has been transferred to the intellectuals, official agitation cultivating and intensifying this spirit. They are represented as the enemies of the proletariat, traitors to the Revolution —at best speculators, if not active counterrevolutionists. There is no stemming the fearful tide sweeping against them. Nor is it the spontaneous unfettering of popular sentiment. The flames are fanned by Moscow. Bolshevik agents from the center, sent as chiefs and "instructors," systematically rouse the basest instincts. Zinoviev himself severely upbraided the local Communists and his "brother proletarians" for leniency to the bourgeoisie. "They still walk your streets," he exclaimed at a public meeting, "clad in the best finery, while you go about in rags. They live in the luxurious homes, while you grovel in cellars. You must not permit such things any longer."

Visits of Communist leaders are always followed by renewed "requisitions from the bourgeoisie." The method is simple. The house porter is instructed to compile a list of holders of cards of the fourth category. In most cases they are intellectual proletarians —teachers, writers, scientists. But the possession of the fourth category card is their doom: they are legitimate victims of requisition. Clothing, underwear, household goods —everything is confiscated as alleged *izlishki* (superfluities).

"The most tragic part of it," said C ——, the well-known Yiddish writer, "is that the *izlishki* rarely reach their proletarian destination. We all know that the really

valuable things confiscated get no further than the Cheka, while the old and almost useless rags are sent to the unions, for distribution among the workers."

"Often one does not even know who is 'requisitioning,' " remarked a member of the League; "sometimes it is done by Chekists on their own account."

"Is there no redress?" I asked; "does no one protest?"

C —— made a deprecating motion. "We have learned better," be replied, "from the fate of those who dared."

"You can't protest against Bolshevik 'revolutionary orders,' as they call it," said a young woman teacher. "I have tried it. It happened like this. One day, returning to my room, I found a stranger occupying it. On my demanding what he was doing there, he informed me that he had been assigned to it, showing me his document from the Housing Bureau. 'And what shall I do?' I asked. 'You can sleep on the floor,' he replied, stretching himself on my bed. I protested to the higher authorities, but they refused to consider the matter. 'The room is big enough for two,' they insisted, though that was not the case at all. 'But you put a strange man in my room,' I pleaded. 'You'll soon get acquainted,' they sneered, 'we make no distinction of sex.' I remained with some friends for a while, but they were so crowded I had to look for other quarters. For days I stood in line in the Housing Bureau, but it was impossible to get an order for a room. Meanwhile my chief threatened to report me for neglecting my work, because most of my time was spent in the Soviet offices. Finally I complained to the Rabkrin, which is supposed to protect proletarian interests. Their agent invited me to share his room, and I slapped his face. He had me arrested, and I was kept in the Cheka two months for 'sabotage.' "

"It might have ended worse," someone commented.

"When you were released," I pursued, interested in the woman's story, "what did you do about your room?"

She smiled sadly. "I learned a lot while sitting in the Cheka," she said. "When I was liberated, I sought out a member of the Housing Bureau. Fortunately I had saved a pair of fine French shoes, and I presented them to him. 'A little gift for your wife,' I told him, not much caring which one would get it, for he is known to have several. Within twenty-four hours I received a splendid large room, furnished in true bourgeois style."

The sun has set, the streets are dark, the infrequent lights flicker dimly in the foggy air. Turning the corner of the Krestchatik, on my way to the Ispolkom, I find myself in the midst of an excited crowd, surrounded by soldiers and militia. It is an

oblava looking for labor deserters. Men and women are detained within the military circle, to be taken to the station for examination. Only a Communist card secures immediate release. Arrest means detention for days, even weeks —and I have an urgent appointment at Communist headquarters. But in vain I explain to the *militsioneri* that *tovarish* Vetoshkin is expecting me. Even the name of the powerful head of the Executive Committee does not impress them. The Committee of Labor and Defense is now supreme; its orders are to detain everyone for investigation regarding his employment. The arrested men and women plead, argue, and produce documents, but the soldiers remain stolid, commanding everyone to line up. I demand to see the officer in charge, but the *militsioner* remains at my side, ignoring my protests. Suddenly the crowd in front begins jostling and pushing: a fight has started on the Corner. My guard rushes forward and, taking advantage of the situation, I cross the street and step into the Ispolkom building.

Vetoshkin's secretary meets me on the stairs. Excusing my tardiness by the *oblava* incident, I suggest the desirability of better system and judgment in the organization of such matters. The Secretary expresses regret at the stupid and irresponsible manner of the raid, but "*nitchevo ne podelayesh*" (it can't be helped), he assures me with conviction.

The Communist banquet hall is flooded with light; the walls are decorated with red banners and inscriptions, and crimson bunting frames the large portraits of Lenin and Trotsky, with a small likeness of Lunacharsky in a less conspicuous place. The long dining table is laden with a variety of fruit and wine, and a choice meal is served the guests invited to honor the French and Italian delegates visiting the city. Angelica Balabanova is presiding; at her side are Vetoshkin and other high Soviet officials of the city, with a large sprinkling of men in military uniform.

It is an official assembly of the Communist aristocracy, with Emma Goldman and myself as the only non-Bolsheviki present by special invitation of our mutual friend Angelica. Her motherly, simple personality seems out of place in this gathering. There is deep sadness in her look, a suggestion of disapproval of all the finery and "style" put on for the occasion. Her attention is engaged by the local men at her side, who exert themselves to please the important personage "from the center." Others are entertaining the foreign delegates, the French-speaking *tovarishi* having been placed as their neighbors. The wine is good and unstinted, the food delicious. By degrees the atmosphere loses its stiff formality, and a freer spirit descends upon the banquet table.

With coffee begin the speeches. The Russian proletariat, with the Communist Party as its advance guard, is extolled as the banner bearer of social revolution, and the firm conviction of the speedy breakdown of capitalism throughout the world is expressed. But for the cursed Allies starving the country and supporting armed counterrevolution, Russia —it is claimed —would be a workers' paradise with full liberty and welfare for all. The Mensheviki and the Social Revolutionists, traitors to the Revolution, have been silenced within the country, but abroad these lackeys of capitalism, the Kautskys, Lafargues, et al., still continue their poisonous work, maligning the Commmunists and defaming the Revolution. It is, therefore, doubly to be welcomed that the foreign delegates have come to Russia to acquaint themselves with the real situation, and that they are visiting the Ukraine where they can with their own eyes witness the great work the Communists have accomplished.

I glance at the delegates. They sit unmoved during the long speeches in the strange language, but even Angelica's masterful rendering into French, enriched by her personality and impassioned oratory, does not seem to impress them. I detect disappointment in their faces. Perhaps they had hoped for a less official, more intimate discussion of the revolutionary problems. They have undoubtedly heard of the numerous peasant uprisings and the punitive expeditions, the frequent strikes, the Makhno movement, and the general opposition to the Communists. But these matters have been carefully avoided by the speakers, who have sought to present a picture of a unified people cooperating in the "proletarian dictatorship" and enthusiastically supporting its "advance guard, the Communist Party."

Late at night, accompanying the foreign delegates to the railroad station, I have opportunity to learn their sentiments. "The observations we have made while in Russia and the material we have collected," one of them remarks, "entirely disprove Bolshevik claims. We feel it our duty to tell the whole truth to our people at home."

Next morning in the Passage, where provisions are purchased to fill out the scanty *pyock*, I meet little knots of people lamenting and crying. Nothing is being sold: the little bakery and fruit stores were visited by the authorities the previous evening and all their goods requisitioned. Deep gloom hangs over the traders and their customers. With a sense of outrage they point to the large delicatessen stores on the Krestchatik which have not been molested. "They have protection," someone says indignantly.

"My God, my God!" a woman cries. "It's we poor people who gave that banquet to the delegates."

She was introduced to me as Gallina —a young woman in peasant dress, but of graceful figure, and with thoughtful blue eyes. "Gallina?" I wondered. "Yes, Makhno's wife."

Surprise and fear for her safety struggled with my admiration of her courage. Her presence in Kiev, in the very lair of the Cheka, means certain death were she to be recognized. Yet she has braved imminent peril and great difficulties in crossing the front. She has business in the city for the *povstantsi*, she said; she has also brought a message from Nestor: he is very anxious to have Emma Goldman and myself visit him. He is not far from the city, and arrangements could be made to enable us to see him.

Her manner was reserved, almost shy; but she was very positive in her views, and her expression clear and definite. She looked so frail and alone, I was overwhelmingly conscious of the great danger to which she was exposing herself. She gave me the feeling of a diminutive David rising up to smite Goliath.

"I'm not afraid," she said simply. "You know, I usually accompany Nestor, and he is always at the head of his men," she added with quiet pride.

She spoke with much warmth of Makhno's military ability, his great popularity among the peasantry, and the success of his campaigns against Denikin. But she is not uncritical, nor a blind hero-worshiper. On the contrary, she dwelt much more on the significance and purpose of the rebel peasant movement than on the role of its individual leaders. In the Makhnovstchina she sees the hope of Russia's liberation from the yoke of White generals, *pomeshtchiki* (landlords), and Bolshevik commissarship. The one is as hateful to her as the other, both equally subversive of liberty and the Revolution.

"I regard the *povstantsi* movement," she said, "as the only true proletarian revolution. Bolshevism is the mastery of the Communist Party, falsely called the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is very far from our conception of revolution. It is the rulership of a caste, of the socialist intelligentsia which has imposed its theories upon the toilers. Their aim is State Communism, with the workers and farmers of the whole country serving as employees of the one powerful government master. Its result is the most abject slavery, suppression, and revolt, as we see on every hand. But the people themselves —the proletarians of city and country —have an entirely different ideal, even though to a great extent only instinctive. They ignore all parties and are antagonistic to the political intellectuals; they distrust the non-working, privileged elements. Our aim is the class organization of the revolutionary toiling masses. That is the sense of the great Ukrainian movement, and its best expression is to be found in the Makhnovstchina. Without the help of

government or political parties the peasants drove away the landlords; by their own efforts they secured the land. Their military units have successfully fought every counterrevolutionary force. The Bolsheviki with their Red Army usually came into the already freed district, there to impose their mastery upon city and country, and proclaim their dictatorship. Is it any wonder the people hate them and fight them as bitterly as the Whites?"

She is a typical specimen of the rebel Ukrainian, of the type molded in the crucible of hard revolutionary life. All night we talked of the burning problems of the South, of the needs of the peasantry, and the activities of the *povstantsi*, whose beloved and almost venerated leader is *bat'ka*[40] Makhno, the Stenka Razin of the Revolution.

She related stories of the great devotion of the peasantry to Nestor and told interesting anecdotes of his campaigns. Once, when Makhno with a small company found himself surrounded by a large Bolshevik force, he caused a marriage to be performed in the village occupied by the enemy. Makhno's men in borrowed holiday attire attended the celebration, their famous "sawed off" guns hidden upon their bodies. In the midst of the carousal, the Red soldiers the worse for the liquor freely supplied by the villagers, the pretended holiday makers opened fire, taking the Bolshevik garrison by surprise and putting them to flight.

The very mention of Makhno's name, Gallina said, brings terror to the enemy and frequently whole companies of the Red Army join his forces. Commissars and Communists —identical terms to the *povstantsi* —find no mercy, but the common soldier is always given the choice of remaining with him or going free.

"That was the case also," she continued in her melodious voice, "with Grigoriev's army. You have heard of him, haven't you, comrade? He was an officer of the Tsar, but at the outbreak of the Revolution he became a free lance. At one time he was with Petlura, then he fought him, and later he joined the Red Army. He was just a military adventurer, though not without some ability. He was very vain, loving to style himself the Ataman of Khersonstchina, because his greatest successes were in that province. Later he turned against the Bolsheviki and invited Makhno to make common cause with him. But Nestor found out that Grigoriev was planning to join Denikin; besides, he was guilty of many pogroms. The slaughter of Jews he organized in Yekaterinoslav in May of last year (1919) was especially atrocious. Makhno decided to eliminate him. He called a meeting, to which the Ataman and his men were invited. It was a large gathering at which twenty thousand peasants and *povstantsi* were present.[41] Nestor publicly accused Grigoriev of counterrevolutionary designs, charged him with pogroms and

denounced him as an enemy of the people. The Ataman and his staff were executed on the spot. Almost his whole force joined our *povstantsi*."

Gallina spoke of executions in an even, ordinary tone, as of matters of common occurrence. Life in the Ukraine, among the rebel peasantry, had made constant struggle and violence the habitual tenor of her existence. Occasionally she would slightly raise her voice in indignation when reports of Jew baiting by *povstantsi* were mentioned. She felt deeply outraged by such base misrepresentation. These stories were deliberately spread by the Bolsheviki, she averred. No one could be more severe in punishing such excesses than Nestor. Some of his best comrades are Jews; there are a number of them in the Revolutionary Soviet and in other branches of the army. Few men are so loved and respected by the *povstantsi* as Yossif, the Emigrant, who is a Jew, and Makhno's best friend.

"We are not such barbarians as we are painted," she said with a charming smile. "But you will learn more about us when you visit us, which will not be far off, I hope."

She listened wistfully to the news from the Western world, and plied me with questions about life in America and the attitude of its workers to Russia. The role of women on the "other side" was of intense interest to her, and she was eager to procure books dealing at length with the subject. She looked dejected on learning that almost nothing was known in the States about the Ukrainian peasant movement, but she recovered quickly, remarking: "Naturally, for we are so isolated. But some day they will know."

The night had turned to dawn, and all too quickly the morning was breaking. It was high time for Gallina to be on her way. Regretfully she left us, expressing her confidence in our speedy meeting in the camp of Makhno. In complete self-possession she stepped out of the house, while with bated breath we accompanied her at a distance, fearful lest a chance identification result fatally for the daring girl.

XXXI
The Cheka

A pall hangs over the home of my friend Kolya, the tailor. His wife is ill, the children neglected, dirty, and hungry. The plumbing is out of order, and water must be carried from the next street, four flights up. Kolya always performed the heavy work; his absence falls heavily upon the little family.

From time to time the neighbors look in on the sick woman. “Your husband will soon return,” they assure her cheerfully, but I know that all their efforts to find him have proved fruitless. Kolya is in the Cheka.

The workers of the clothing factory where my friend is employed have of late been very discontented. Their main complaint concerns the arbitrary methods of the *yatcheika*, the little group of Communists within every Soviet institution. Friction between them and the shop committee resulted in the arrest of the latter. In protest the workers declared a strike. Three delegates were sent to the Cheka with the request to release the prisoners, but the men disappeared, and Kolya was among them.

“They call the strikers counterrevolutionists,” Kolya’s sister said. “They have made a list of the ‘opposition’ in the shop, and every day someone is missing.”

“It’s the old Pirro methods,” remarked a neighbor, a young woman in charge of a children’s dining room.

“Pirro methods?” I asked in surprise.

“Don’t you know the Pirro affair? It was of a piece with the usual methods of Latsis, then head of the All-Ukrainian Extraordinary Commission. It was in the summer of 1919, and the Kiev Cheka was working —”

“Working —that’s right, just the proper word,” interrupted her brother.

“Yes, ‘working’ under high pressure,” she continued, “under instructions of Peters, who came from Moscow now and then. His presence in the city was always the signal for renewed arrests and shooting. Well, one day the Soviet papers announced the arrival of Count Pirro, Brazilian Ambassador. I was at the time employed in the Chinese Consulate, which gave a gala dinner in honor of the Count, on which occasion I made his acquaintance. I was surprised to find the Brazilian speaking excellent Russian, but he explained that he had spent many years in our country

before the Revolution. He sighed over the old days, and did not in the least disguise his unfriendliness to Bolshevism and its methods.

"Within a few days he began to organize his staff on a large scale. He asked me and my friends to recommend people for work in his consulate. 'Except Bolsheviki,' he said. 'I want only bourgeois and intellectuals who have no sympathy with the Communists. They'll be safe with me,' he told us in confidence, hinting at the wholesale destruction of the intelligentsia by the Cheka. Many hastened to offer their services to the Count, eager for the protection offered. Pirro accepted them all, placing some in his offices, while others were put on the waiting list, and their names and addresses, recorded. To be brief, within a short time they were all arrested and most of them shot, among them Mme. Popladskaya, Pirro's personal secretary, whom he was pretending to help join her husband in Paris. Pirro disappeared, but he was seen to leave town in Peters' automobile. It soon became known that the alleged Brazilian Count was an agent of the Cheka, a provocateur. Many people in Kiev are positive that it was Peters himself."

I related to my friend an incident which occurred soon after our Expedition arrived in the city. Early one morning a visitor called at our car, requesting to see the *predsedatel*. Of commanding stature, well proportioned, and straight as a young pine, he was a fine specimen of physical manhood. He had just returned from the front, he said, as if in explanation of his ridiculously belligerent appearance: two heavy guns hung from his belt, a Circassian dagger between them; at his side he carried a long sword, and a huge alarm whistle, set in silver, was suspended from his neck. His features were clean cut, nose aquiline, the sensuous lips somewhat shaded by a full beard. But the most striking feature were his eyes, the color of steel, cold, sharp, and piercing.

He introduced himself as an army man who had fought on every battlefield in the Ukraine. But he was tired of war and bloodshed, he said; he wanted a rest or at least a more peaceful occupation. The work of our Expedition appealed to him. Could he not be of service to us? Surely a large city like Kiev could not be thoroughly canvassed during our short stay. He would therefore suggest that we appoint a local man as our representative to continue the work after our Expedition should leave. He would consider himself honored to aid our important mission.

There was nothing unusual in his proposal, since it is our practice to leave an authorized person in the larger cities to supply the Museum with documents of current history. We promised to consider his application, and within a few days he called again. I thought he looked strangely animated, perhaps even under the influence of drink. He immediately launched into exaggerated assurances of his

fitness as our collaborator. He knew every important Communist in the city, he asserted; he was even on terms of intimacy with most of them. The previous night, he declared, he had spent in the company of high-placed commissars, among whom was also the chief of the Cheka. With that he began a recital of its activities, relating revolting details of torture and execution. He spoke with increasing fervor, and growing excitement. At last he announced himself a commandant. He had shot many counterrevolutionists, he boasted, and he had never felt any qualms about his work. His eyes gleamed with a fierce, savage fire, and suddenly he drew the dagger from his belt. Leaning over close to me and wildly waving the weapon, he cried, "Look at it —it's bloody to the hilt." Then he fell back into a chair, exhausted, and with a touch of sentimentality he muttered: "I've had enough —I'm tired —I want a rest."

"To judge from your description," remarked the young woman, "it must have been X ——, one of the most notorious executioners of the provincial Cheka. He is given to such escapades, especially when under the influence of drugs, for he is addicted to cocaine. One, of his hobbies is to get himself photographed —like this."

She rose, searched a moment among her effects, and handed me a small picture. It represented a man entirely nude, gun in hand, in the posture of taking deliberate aim. I recognized our visitor.

August 27, 1920. —Rumors of Bolshevik reverses are delaying our departure. There are persistent reports of Red Army defeats: Odessa is said to be evacuating, an enemy fleet in the Black Sea attacking the city, and Wrangel marching against it from the Crimea.

Nothing definite is to be ascertained in the general confusion, but from authoritative circles we have learned that Red forces are being concentrated in the vicinity. The new developments, Yossif has informed me, compelled Makhno to retire from the province. To my great regret our plan of meeting the *povstantsi* leader becomes impracticable for the present. With much anxiety I think of Gallina and her safety in the new turn of affairs.

Our Expedition faces the alternative of returning to Moscow or proceeding further South. In spite of insistent advice to the contrary, we decide to continue according to our schedule, which includes Odessa and the Caucasus.

XXXII
Odessa: Life and Vision

September 2, 1920. —Late yesterday afternoon we reached Odessa, our little commune greatly disturbed over the fate of Alsberg. Our traveling companion, whose cheerful spirit and ready helpfulness contributed so much toward making our journey more pleasant, was arrested on August 30, while we were stopping in Zhmerinka. The local Cheka agents had received orders from Moscow to "return the American correspondent," because he had gone to the Ukraine "without the knowledge" of the authorities. In vain we argued and produced Zinoviev's letter giving Alsberg permission to join the Expedition. He was removed from the train, to be taken under convoy to Moscow. The wires we sent to Lenin, Zinoviev, and Balabanova, protesting against the arrest and urging the release of our friend, have so far remained unanswered.

The great city, formerly the most important shipping center of the country, was shrouded in darkness, its electric supply station having been almost completely destroyed by fire several days previously. With considerable difficulty we found our way to one of the principal thoroughfares. On the corner we were detained by a *militsioner* who informed us that it is forbidden to be about after sunset, except by special permission. It required considerable persuasion before the officer was convinced of our "reliability" and permitted us to return to the car. Our first impressions seemed to justify the disconcerting reports we had heard en route.

No more cheerful is the once beautiful city in the glow of the bright morning sun. Few persons are on the streets; the houses and parks are neglected; the pavements broken and filthy. Everywhere is evidence of the poverty and suffering in the wake of foreign occupation and civil war. Food is very scarce; prices exorbitantly high on the markets which are still permitted to operate. The peasants of the district, systematically expropriated by their changing masters, now refuse to plant more than is necessary for their own needs, leaving the cities to their fate.

Externally Odessa is quiet, and there is no sign of enemy warships in the harbor. But an atmosphere of anxious suspense is felt everywhere: bands of Green and Makhno forces are said to be in the neighborhood, and Wrangel is reported to have taken some villages northeast, in the vicinity of Rostov. A spirit of qui vive pervades the Soviet bureaus, everyone wearing a preoccupied air as if listening for the first note of alarm and ready to take flight.

Much disorganization prevails in the unions. The new Communist management has not yet gained full control over the "liquidated" Menshevik and Anarchist leadership. Many of the latter are still at the head of labor affairs, persistently elected by the workers in open defiance of Communist orders. Among the opposition Shakhvorostov, an Anarchist of militant type, has such a strong following that the Bolsheviki have not dared to remove him. Due to his friendly efforts, the Soviet of Unions has decided to call a meeting of secretaries, whom I am to address in the interest of the Museum.

The nonpartisan proletarians, who constitute the great body of labor, look with scorn at the readiness of the Communists to flee should an enemy appear. Particularly the sailors of the destroyed Black Sea fleet, many of whom are in the city, resent the situation. The masses cannot evacuate, they say; the workers are doomed to remain, whoever comes, and to fight it out as best they can. Have not the unions, aided by the peasantry, waged successful guerrilla warfare against the Greek and Italian forces and the White generals? Then there was no distinction of political party —all revolutionists fought side by side. But every time the enemy is driven out, the Communists institute their dictatorship, seek to dominate the revolutionary committee in charge of the safety of the city, and eliminate the old and tried fighters. The masses know how to protect themselves against invaders, but they resent the domination of a political party that seeks to monopolize the Revolution.

Semyon Petrovitch, at whose home I spend considerable time, is an intelligent nonpartisan of independent views. An able statistician, he has been permitted by the Bolsheviki to remain in the Department of Economy, where he had served under previous regimes. Semyon is convinced that the Soviet Government will find itself compelled to change its methods and practices. "The ravager cannot long remain in the country he has ravaged" —he likes to repeat the alleged saying of Denikin. But the ire of the gods, he asserts, pursues the Bolsheviki: even their best intentions serve in practice to confound them. "They have closed the stores and abolished private trade," Semyon Petrovitch repeats, "they have nationalized, registered, and taken an invoice of everything under the sun. One would think that complete order should reign. Indeed, you cannot transfer a bed mattress from one apartment into another without special permission of the proper authorities. If you want to ride to the next station, you must get an 'order'; if you need a sheet of paper, you have to fill several sheets with applications. Every detail of our existence has become subject to Bolshevist regulation. In short, you will find the situation in Odessa about the same as in the rest of Russia," Semyon assured me.

"But life passes by the Soviet apparatus, because life is incomparably stronger than any attempts at doctrinaire regulation."

As in other Soviet cities, the population is supplied with a bread and products card. But except Communists, very few receive enough bread to exist. On the "bourgeois" categories none has been issued for months; in fact, since the Bolsheviki took Odessa in January. Occasionally a little salt, sugar, and matches are rationed out.

"Fortunately the markets are still permitted to exist," Semyon explained. "The government cannot press out enough bread of the farmers to feed the cities. The *pyock* is mostly a vision. That reminds me of a certain commissar in our department, a rare type of Communist, for he has a sense of humor. Once I asked him why the Bolsheviki nationalized everything except the *izvostchiki*.[42] His reply was characteristic. 'You see,' he said, 'we found that if you don't feed human beings, they continue to live somehow. But if you don't feed horses, the stupid beasts die. That's why we don't nationalize the cabmen.' "

Life is indeed stronger than decrees; it sprouts through every crevice of the socialist armor. When private trade was forbidden and only the cooperatives were permitted to continue, all business places suddenly became inspired by feelings of altruism, and every store was decorated with the sign of the Epo (cooperative). Later, when the cooperatives were also closed and only *kustarnoye* (small scale) production remained legal, all the little stores began manufacturing cigarette lighters and rubber soles from stolen automobile tires. Subsequently new decrees were issued permitting trade only in articles of food. Then in every store window there appeared bread and tea surrogates, while other wares were sold in the rear rooms. Finally all food stores were closed; now the illicit trade is transferred to the storekeeper's home, and business is done on the back stairs.

"The Bolsheviki want to abolish private trade and destroy speculation," Semyon remarked; "they want everyone to live exclusively by his labor. Yet in no place in the world is there so much speculation as in Russia; the whole country is swept by its fever. 'Nationalization of trade means that the whole nation is in trade,' our wits say. The truth is, we have all become speculators," he continued sadly. "Every family now depends more on the sale of its table and bed linen than on the salaries paid by the Soviet Government. The shopkeepers, having lost their shops, still remain traders; and they are now joined by those who formerly were workers, physical as well as intellectual. Necessity is stronger than laws, my dear friend. The real factory proletarians have become declassified: they have ceased to exist, as a class, because most of the factories and mills are not working. The workers flee

into the country or become *meshotchniki*.[43] The Communist dictatorship has destroyed, but it cannot build up."

At the house of Dr. L —— almost nightly gather little groups of the local intelligentsia. A man of broad culture and tolerance, L ——'s home is neutral ground for the most diverse political tendencies. His private sanatorium, beautifully situated on an enbankment washed by the Black Sea, was formerly famed as one of the best in Odessa. It has been nationalized, but the physician and his staff are exempt from professional mobilization and remain in charge. Dr. L —— is still permitted to receive a certain number of private patients, which privilege enables him to support himself and family in comparative comfort. In return he is obliged to treat without remuneration the sick assigned to the sanatorium by the authorities.

L —— and his wife, herself a graduate physician, are hospitable in the best Russian spirit. Though their present mode of living is far below that of former days, every comer finds a warm welcome which includes an invitation to the dining room —a custom now almost entirely fallen into disuse in Russia. With charming smile and graceful gesture Mme. L —— passes around tea, little lumps of yellow candy, homemade from beet sugar, and sandwiches, her manner quite innocent of any suggestion of the saving quality of her service to her famished guests.

The sanatorium was requisitioned for the "benefit of the proletariat," the doctor informs me with a humorous twinkle in his eyes, but it is occupied exclusively by high Communist officials and several members of the Cheka. Among the latter is also a Commissar, who has repeatedly taken treatment in the institution. He suffers from acute neurosis and is an habitual user of cocaine. In spite of the near presence of the dreadful autocrat of life and death, great freedom of speech prevails in L ——'s home. It is the tacit understanding among his guests that the place is a free forum, a "sanctuary for the crime of thought." Yet I notice that when a Communist happens to be present, expression is less spontaneous, more controlled. I recall the arrest of the frequenters of a similar oasis in Moscow, betrayed by a member of the family, a Bolshevik. Might not such a misfortune also happen here? Yet Dr. G ——, the Menshevik colleague of the host, is most outspoken against the Bolsheviki whom he holds up to ridicule, as counterfeit Marxists. The Zionists and literati present, among them Byalik, the greatest living Jewish poet, are more temperate in their criticism of the dictatorship. Their attitude is prompted by their love of the Jewry and its aspirations as a nation. They tell of the many vain efforts their most venerated representatives have made in the interests of justice to their coreligionists, only to be met with scorn and insult. R ——, the noted Hebrew

author, relates the incident of his visit to the chief of the Cheka, to seek protection for two friends unjustly accused of speculation and in danger of being shot. In the reception room, while awaiting audience with the *predsedatel*, he was abused by the Chekists, among whom he recognized several members of the old police force and two well-known criminals of former days. “You are insulting the Soviet power by interceding for the arrested,” the Cheka Chief told him. The author urged the innocence of the accused. “If you plead for speculators, you are no better than they,” the Chief retorted. Both men were executed without trial.

Through an open window I look out upon the broad expanse of the Black Sea below. It is a quiet moonlit night. The low murmur of the waters pleasantly strikes upon the ear, as the white-capped waves with musical regularity reach the shore, softly splash against the rocks, and silently recede. They return to caress the sentinel wall that seems to draw closer toward them as if yearning for their embrace. A gentle breeze floats into the room.

Angry voices recall me to the company. The young Bundist[44] D —— is involved in a virulent dispute with his former comrade turned Communist. D —— charges the Bolsheviki with having stooped to a partnership with the notorious Odessa criminals who were organized into regiments and possessed weapons and machine guns. They had first helped Ataman Grigoriev to take the city, and were later used by the Communists for the same purpose. Indebted to the thieves, the Bolsheviki did not molest them in the first days of their Odessa regime, and the “professional union” was permitted to “work” the city. Subsequently, the Soviet Government declared war upon them, but the leading spirits saved their lives by joining the Cheka.

The Communist vehemently denies that any agreement had existed between his Party and the criminals, though he admits that in some instances the thieves’ union aided the work of the Bolsheviki. The argument is becoming dangerously heated; Mme. I ——, grown apprehensive, holds up a warning hand. “Friends, *tovarishi*,” she cautions them, “please not so loud.”

“Do not worry,” the host laughs, “it’s the usual thing when these two come together. They are old friends; relatives, at that, for the ex-Bundist married the Bundist’s sister.”

“It is an open question,” observes Z ——, the literary investigator, “whether the Bolsheviki had a formal agreement with the thieves. But that they cooperated at one time is known to all of us. Well, they were also proletarians,” he adds sarcastically. “Later, of course, the Communists turned against them. But a similar fate has befallen most of us. The Left S.R.’s, the Maximalists, the Anarchists, did

they not all fight together with the Communists against the Whites? And where are they now? Those who did not die on the fronts have been shot or imprisoned by the Red dictators, unless they have been bribed or cowed into serving the Cheka."

"Only weaklings would save their lives thus," the hostess protests.

"Few can be brave with a loaded gun pointed at their temple," the Doctor remarks with a sigh.

It is a cold, chilly day as I turn my steps toward Sadovaya Street. There, at a secret session, is to take place a Menshevik *costnaya gazetta* (oral newspaper), and I am to meet prominent members of the party.

The "oral newspaper" is the modern Russian surrogate for a free press. Deprived of opportunity to issue their publications, the suppressed Socialist and revolutionary elements resort to this method. In some private dwelling or "conspirative lodgings" they gather, as in the days of the Tsar, but with even greater danger and more dread of the all-pervading presence of the Cheka. They come to the "lodgings" singly, stealthily, like criminals conscious of guilt, fearful of observation and discovery. Frequently they fall into an ambush: the house maybe in the hands of a *zassada*, though no sign of it is perceptible on the outside. No one having entered, however innocently or accidentally, may depart, not even a neighbor's child come to borrow a dish or some water for a sick member of the family. None is permitted to leave, that he may not give warning to possible victims. Such a *zassada* generally lasts for many hours, often even for several days and nights; when it is finally lifted, those caught in the net are turned over to the Cheka. Lucky if the charge of counterrevolution or banditism be not made, and the prisoners released after several weeks of detention. But the "leaders," the known revolutionists, are kept for months, even for years, without a hearing or charge.

It is dusk. In the unlighted, dingy room it is difficult to recognize the half score of men occupying chairs, smoking and talking in subdued voices. The person for whom I inquire has not yet arrived, and I find myself a stranger in the place. I notice nervous glances in my direction; the men near me regard me with frank suspicion. One by one they leave their seats; I see them gathering in a corner, casting inimical looks at me. As I approach them, they cease talking and eye me defiantly. Their manner is militant, and presently I am surrounded by the hostile crowd.

"May I see Comrade P ——?" I inquire.

"Who may you be?" someone demands ironically.

To ally their suspicions, I ask for *tovarish* Astrov, the famous Menshevik leader, with whom I have an appointment. Explanations follow, and at last the men appear satisfied regarding my identity. “You are looking for Astrov?” they ask in surprise. “Don’t you know? Haven’t you heard?”

“What?”

“He’s been arrested this morning.”

Bitter indignation and excitement prevail in labor and revolutionary circles as a result of the arrest. Astrov, a well-known Socialist, is a personality respected throughout Russia. His opposition to the Bolsheviki is purely intellectual, excluding hostile activities against the Government. It is reported, however, that the authorities hold him “morally responsible” for the wave of strikes that has recently swept the city. Astrov’s comrades are distracted at their failure to ascertain the fate of their leader. The Cheka declines to accept a *peredatcha* (packages of food or clothing), an omen which inspires the worst fears. It indicates strictest isolation —it may even signify that the prisoner has been shot.[45]

More hated even than in Kiev is the Cheka in Odessa. Ghastly stories are told of its methods and the ruthlessness of the *predsedatel*, a former immigrant from Detroit. The personnel of the institution consists mostly of old gendarme officers and criminals whose lives had been spared “for services to be rendered in fighting counterrevolution and speculation.” The latter is particularly proscribed, the “highest form of punishment” —shooting —being meted out to offenders. Executions take place daily. The doomed are piled into automobile trucks, face downward, and driven to the outskirts of the city. The long line of the death-vehicles is escorted by mounted men riding wildly and firing into the air —a warning to close the windows. At the appointed place the procession halts. The victims are made to undress and to take their places at the edge of the already prepared common grave. Shots resound —the bodies, some lifeless, some merely wounded, fall into the hole and are hastily covered with sod.

But though the “speculation” is forbidden and the possession or exchange of Tsarist money is frequently punished by death, the members of the Cheka themselves receive part of their salary in *tsarskiye*, whose purchasing power is many times that of Soviet paper. There is considerable circulation of the forbidden currency on the markets, and it is rumored that Cheka agents themselves are the chief dealers. I refuse to believe the charge till a member of the Expedition informs me that he succeeded in advantageously converting some of the *tsarskiye*, officially given us in Moscow, into Soviet money. “You are taking a great risk in exchanging,” I warn him.

"No risk at all," he replied gleefully. "Do you think I am tired of life that I would sell on the open market? I traded it through an old friend, and it was the good man N —— himself who did the little business for me."

N —— is a high placed magistrate of the Cheka.

With Emma Goldman I attend a gathering of local Anarchists come to meet the "comrades from America." The large room is filled with a mixed company —students and workers, Soviet employees, soldiers, and some sailors. Every nongovernmental tendency is represented: there are followers of Kropotkin and of Stirner, adherents of positivism and immediate actionists, with a number of Sovietsky Anarchists, so called because of their friendly attitude to the Bolsheviki.

It is an informal assembly of the widest divergence of opinion. Some denounce the Communists as reactionary; others believe in their revolutionary motives, but entirely disapprove of their methods. Several consider the present stage as a transitory but inevitable phase of the Revolution. But the majority deny the historic existence of such a period. Progress, they claim, is a continuous process, every step foreshadowing and shaping the next. Long-continued despotism and terror destroy the possibilities of future liberty and brotherhood.

The most animated discussion revolves about the proletarian dictatorship. It is the basic problem, determined by one's conception of revolution and in turn determining one's attitude to the Bolsheviki. The younger element unreservedly condemn the Party dictatorship with its violence and bloodshed, its punitive measures, and general counterrevolutionary effects. The Sovietsky Anarchists, though regretting the ruthlessness of Communist practice, consider dictatorship inevitable at certain stages of the revolution. The discussion is drawn out for hours, and the vital question is obscured by theoretic assertions. I feel that the years of storm and stress have entirely uprooted the old values without having clarified new concepts of reality and vision.

"Can you suggest something definite in place of the dictatorship?" I ask at last. "The situation demands a unified purpose."

"What we have is a dictatorship over the proletariat," retorts an enthusiastic Kropotkinist.

"That is begging the question. Not the faults and shortcomings of the Bolsheviki are at issue, but the dictatorship itself. Does not the success of the Revolution presuppose the forcible abolition of the bourgeoisie and the imposing of the proletarian will upon society? In short, a dictatorship?"

"Assuredly," assents the young woman at my side, a Left Social Revolutionist; "but not the dictatorship of the proletariat only. Rather the dictatorship of the toilers, including the peasantry as well as the city workers."

"If the Communists would not persecute the Anarchists, I'd be with them," remarks an Individualist Anarchist.

The others scorn his narrow partisanship, but the Kropotkinists refuse to accept dictatorship. There may be times during a revolutionary period where violence, even organized force, becomes necessary, they admit. But these matters must rest in the hands of the workers themselves and not be institutionalized in such bodies as the Cheka, whose work is detrimental and fosters a counterrevolutionary spirit among the violated masses.

The discussion gives no promise of reaching a basis for common work with the Bolsheviki. Most of those present have for years consecrated themselves to their ideal, have suffered persecution and imprisonment till at last the Revolution triumphed. Now they find themselves outlawed even by the Communists. They are deeply outraged by the "advance guard of the proletariat" turning executioners of the best revolutionary elements. The abyss is too wide to be bridged. With deep sorrow I think of the devotion, ability, and idealism thus lost to the Revolution, and of the fratricidal strife the situation inevitably involves.

September 3, 1920. —Wrangel is reported to be advancing northwest after having defeated the Red Army in several engagements. Budenny's cavalry is in retreat, leaving open the road to Rostov. Alyoshki, a suburb of Kherson, is invested by the Whites, and refugees are streaming into Odessa. Official silence feeds popular nervousness, and the wildest rumors are gaining circulation.

Our work in the city is completed, but the new military situation makes it impossible to continue our journey southeast, toward the Caucasus, as originally planned. We have therefore decided that the Expedition remain in Odessa, while two of its members attempt to reach Nikolayev, there to determine the possibilities of proceeding further. The *predsedatel* and secretary have been chosen for the task.

My colleagues have already left the city to take up their quarters in the car. With our secretary, Alexandra Shakol, I am loading the collected material on a cart. There is a large quantity, and the underfed old mare is barely able to pull the weight. It is pouring, the pavement is broken and slippery; the poor beast seems about to collapse.

"Your horse is exhausted," I remark to the driver, a peasant woman.

She does not reply. The reins have fallen out of her hands, her head is bent forward, and her body is shaken as if with the ague.

"What is the matter, *matushka*?" I call to her.

She looks up. Her eyes are red and tears are coursing down her cheeks, leaving streaks of yellow dirt behind. "Curses be upon you!" she mutters between sobs.

The horse has stopped. The rain is pouring with increased force, the chill pierces knife-like.

"Cursed be you all!" she cries vehemently.

We try to soothe her. The Secretary, a native Russian, herself of peasant stock, impulsively kisses the old woman on both cheeks. By snatches we learn that two days ago she had carted a load of hay to the city, part of her village's share of the *razvyorstka*. Returning home she was halted by a requisitioning detachment. She pleaded that her cattle had long ago been confiscated and only the one horse left her; as the widow of a Red Army man she is exempt from further requisition. But she had no documents with her, and she was taken to the police station. The Commissar berated his men for impressing an unfit animal for army duty, and the woman was overjoyed. But as she was about to leave, he detained her. "Your horse will do for light jobs," he said; "you will give us three days' labor duty."

She has been working two days now, receiving only half a pound of bread and no fodder for the beast except a little straw. This morning she was ordered to our quarters.

Most of the vehicles and horses have been nationalized; those still privately owned are subject to temporary requisition by the Tramot (transport bureau) for a specified number of hours weekly. In vain we hail the passing *izvostchiki*; all pretend to be "on Soviet duty." The woman grows hysterical. The horse is apparently unable to move further. The rain is wetting our material, the wind tearing at our newspaper files and blowing precious leaves into the street. At last with voices and shoulders we induce the horse to proceed, and after a long ride we reach the railroad station. There we hastily write a "receipt" testifying that the "requisitioned peasant and horse" have fulfilled their labor duty, give the woman a chunk of bread and a few tidbits for her children, and send her home bowing and repeating, "Bless you, good *barin*,[46] God bless you."

XXXIII
Dark People

Railroad communication between Odessa and Nikolayev is suspended, but we have been informed that a motor truck belonging to the Maritime Ossobiy Otdel (Cheka) is to leave for that city at midnight on September 6.

Accompanied by the Secretary, I proceeded early in the evening to the place of departure. For hours, we tramped unfamiliar streets and tortuous alleys without finding the appointed place. Fearfully my companion clung to me, Odessa's reputation for lawlessness and the brutality of its bandit element filling us with alarm. In the darkness we lost our bearings and kept circling within the crooked alleys near the docks, when suddenly there came the command, "Who goes there?" and we faced guards pointing guns at us. Fortunately we had secured the military password.

"Tula-Tar —"

"Tarantass," the soldier completed, permitting us to pass and directing us on our way.

It was after 2 a.m. when we reached the Maritime Otdel. But no machine was in sight, and we were overwhelmed with disappointment at the thought that we had missed the rare opportunity of reaching Nikolayev. Inquiries at the Cheka elicited the unwilling information that the motor had not yet arrived, and no one knew when it was due.

We spent the night in the street, the Chekists refusing us permission to remain indoors. At five in the morning the car arrived, piled high with clothing and ammunition for the Nikolayev garrison. Quickly we climbed to the top, soon to be joined by a number of soldiers accompanied by women. Everything seemed ready for the start, when the chauffeur announced that the gasoline issued him was not sufficient to carry us to our destination, two hundred miles northeast. A short, heavyset sailor, addressed as commandant and apparently in charge of the journey, gruffly ordered everyone off the truck. His command ignored, he drew a revolver, and we all made haste to obey.

"Now you'll have enough juice," he declared.

The soldiers protested: they were the convoy sent to accompany the consignment to Nikolayev. Swearing and cursing, the drunken sailor consented to their riding, and they climbed back pulling several girls up after them.

"No heifers!" the sailor shouted, but the women, stretching themselves on top of the load, paid no attention. The commandant got into a violent altercation with the chauffeur, accusing him of delaying the departure and threatening to arrest him. The driver pleaded that the truck had not been loaded on time; its belated arrival was not his fault. The Chekist cursed and swore in a manner that surpassed anything I had ever before heard in Russia, the variegated complexity of his oaths defying even approximate rendering into English. Meanwhile the number of passengers had increased. The sailor grew furious, and again displaying his Colt, he forced everyone to climb down. Three times the process was repeated, no one daring to resist the drunken commandant. We stood in the driving rain, the uncovered clothing on the truck getting soaked, while the chauffeur was pretending to be busy with the machine, yet stealthily watching the Chekist. Presently the latter walked out of the yard, whereupon the driver also disappeared. After an hour he returned carrying a large can and followed by half a score of men and women. He announced that all was in readiness, and there began a scramble of the new arrivals for a place. At last the huge machine got into motion, the living mass on top desperately clinging for support as we gradually gained speed. "You'll never make half the way with that load," the commandant shouted, rushing out into the street and threateningly waving his gun.

Over hills, down valleys, and across fields the auto sped, the chauffeur driving recklessly and every moment endangering our lives as the machine tore its way over large holes in the ground or wildly rushed down steep inclines. Our route lay along the sea and over waste land still bearing evidence of past military activities. The large estate of Sukhomlinov, the great Russian magnate, stretched for miles before us entirely deserted, the celebrated cattle appropriated by the villagers, the place now uncultivated. "No seed," laconically commented one of the peasants. "What would be the use?" another replied.

Long lines of wagons drawn by oxen and loaded with flour and potatoes crawled in the distance —the proceeds of the *razvyorstka* being delivered to Odessa.

The sailors, talkative and jolly, passed their time railing at the three peasants, typical Ukrainians. The latter took their banter in good humor, somewhat awed and not always comprehending the full drift of the slangy Russian. They were much friendlier with the soldiers, themselves Ukrainians, and presently they began exchanging experiences. They hailed from Krasnoye Selo; the *razvyorstka* tax upon their village was very heavy, and the local Soviet had sent them to Odessa to secure a reduction of the assessment. But they received no satisfaction in the big city; they spent days in line at the various bureaus without accomplishing anything.

Most of the officials just laughed at them; others ignored them. One Commissar even threatened to arrest them. Life has become harder than ever before, they complained. Under the Tsar they had been serfs; the White generals robbed them of their sons and cattle. They had set great hopes upon the Bolsheviki. "But it is the same whoever comes," the peasants sighed; "for us poor people it's always the same."

Two of the soldiers had participated in the campaign against Makhno, and they were exchanging experiences. They spoke freely of his exploits, of the original methods that enabled him to defeat greatly superior forces, and of the numerous times he had been surrounded by White or Red armies, yet always escaping, often in a most miraculous manner. They admired the clever ruse by which Makhno took Yekaterinoslav, then in the hands of Petlura. A handful of his men, dressed as peasants, crossed the bridge leading to the lower part of the city, with their arms hidden in carts. On reaching the other side, they unexpectedly opened fire on the Petlura men guarding the approaches. The sudden attack struck panic to the garrison, and Makhno's army easily took the city.

"We've got to catch him," one of the soldiers concluded, as if in self-justification, "but you can't deny it, he's a *molodets*" (daring fellow).

Both of them had once been taken prisoners by Makhno. Their last hour had come, they thought, as together with other captives they were led before the feared *bat'ka*. A slender young man with sharp, piercing eyes faced them sternly and began haranguing them. Bolshevik Commissars were no better than White generals, he said; both oppressed the people and robbed the peasants. He, Makhno, would defend the Revolution against all enemies. He promised that the prisoners would be given the choice of joining the *povstantsi* or going home, but the Red soldiers feared Makhno was deriding them. Yet he kept his word.

"*Bat'ka* kills only Jews and Commissars," one of the peasants drawled.

In the evening we stopped at Krasnoye Selo, in the district of the German colonies. The little frame houses, whitewashed and clean, were a pleasant contrast to the straw-thatched, dirty *izba* of the Russian peasant. Few men were to be seen, most of them drafted in the White or Red armies. Only women, children, and very old peasants were about. With my companion I followed a party of sailors and soldiers in search of lodgings for the night. At our approach the villagers ran terrified indoors. The sailors ordered them to bring food, but the women, weeping and imploring for mercy, called God to witness that the recent *razvyorstka* had taken their last provisions. They could offer only bread and country cheese. The Chekists

swore at them, fingered their guns, and demanded to be taken to the cellar. There they appropriated whatever eatables they could find.

Distressed I left with my companion to seek hospitality for ourselves. Word had passed of the arrival of "the Commissars," and the houses were barricaded. After many vain attempts we gained admission to a *khata* at the furthest end of the village. It was occupied by a woman and her three children, the oldest a girl of fourteen, whom her mother had hidden at our approach. She accepted our offer to pay, and set black bread and sour milk before us. Soon the neighbors began to drop in. They stood timidly on the threshold, observing us with unfriendly eyes and exchanging whispered remarks, Gradually they gained confidence, advanced toward the table, and began conversing. They were totally ignorant of the events in the world at large; what was happening in Russia, even, was entirely incomprehensible to them. They knew that the Tsar was no more and that freedom had been given the peasant. But they felt some huge deceit had been played on the "dark people" by those in high places. They were constantly harassed by the military, they complained; soldiers of every kind and armed men without uniforms kept swooping down upon the village, taxing, confiscating, and pillaging. One by one their male folks had been drafted, often not even knowing into what army, and then the boys began to be taken, as young as sixteen. Generals and commissars kept coming and carrying the last away, and now all the cattle are gone, and the fields cannot be worked except by hand in little patches, and even the smallest children must help. Frequently the older girls are dragged away by officers and soldiers, returning later hurt and sick. In a neighboring village the punitive expedition whipped old peasants on the public square. In a place thirty versts from Krasnoye eighteen peasants hanged themselves after the commissars had left.

"Is it as bad in other parts?" my hostess asked. "How is it in Germany —my people come from there."

"Germany has also had a revolution," I informed her. "The Kaiser is gone."

"Rev-o-lution?" she repeated in utter incomprehension. "Did Germany have war?"

I spent the night on a straw heap in the outhouse, joining our party early in the morning. The scenes of the previous day repeated themselves all along our route.

A very old city and once an important shipbuilding center, Nikolayev has played a prominent part in the labor and socialist history of Russia. It was the scene of the first great strike in the country, in the early days of the nineteenth century. In the "Nihilist" and "People's Will" period, it was the field of much underground revolutionary activity. In later years Nikolayev was the home of the "South

Russian Union," one of the first Social-Democratic groups in lower Ukraine, with Trotsky as its intellectual leader. Among the old archives we came upon documents relating to the case of Netchayev, which in some strange manner found their way there, though that famous terrorist had never been arrested in this city. We also discovered police "search orders" issued against Lopatin, Bakunin, and other celebrated revolutionists of that period.

Nikolayev still retains some of its former beauty, though its boulevards have been entirely denuded of trees, cut down within the two days' interregnum between the leaving of the Whites and the coming of the Bolsheviki. The streets are oppressively quiet: the city is in direct line of Wrangel's advance. The Communists are feverishly active to rouse the population to united defense, appealing particularly to the proletarians and reminding them of the slaughter of the workers by Slastchev, Wrangel's chief general, notorious as a labor executioner.[47]

The attitude of the surrounding districts is causing the Bolsheviki much anxiety. The peasantry has been in continual rebellion against the Soviet regime, and the arbitrary methods of labor mobilization have alienated the workers. The documents I have examined at the unions and the statistics concerning the distribution of labor power (*rabsil*) and desertion, show that almost every village in the provinces of Kherson and Nikolayev has offered armed resistance. Yet the peasants have no sympathy with the monarchism of Wrangel; his victory may deprive them of the land they have taken from the large estates. Several provincial Soviets have sent delegates to Nikolayev to assure the authorities of their determination to fight the Whites. Encouraged, the Communists are conducting an intensive agitation among the peasantry along the route of Wrangel.

Fear of the Whites has revived stories of their atrocities. The Jewish population lives in mortal dread, previous occupations having been accompanied by fearful pogroms. At the "underground" restaurant near the Soviet House the guests relate incidents of almost incredible barbarities. They speak indiscriminately of Whites, Greens, Mariusa, Makhno, and others who have at various times invested the city. It is asserted that Mariusa, an amazon of mysterious identity, refrains from pillage: she "kills only Communists and Commissars." Some insist that she is a sister of Makhno (though the latter has none), while others say she is a peasant girl who had sworn vengeance against the Bolsheviki because her lover was killed by a punitive expedition.

"The black years may know who they all be," the hostess comments. "When Makhno was here last time people said they saw Mariusa with him. They beat and robbed Jews at the docks."

“You are wrong,” the young Soviet employee who has been assigned to aid my work protests. “I helped to examine the men caught at that time. They were Greens and Grigoriev bandits. Mariusa wasn’t then in the city at all.”

“I heard Makhno himself speak,” remarked Vera, the daughter of the hostess, a young college girl. “It was on the square, and someone held a big black flag near him. He told the people they had nothing to fear, and that he would not permit any excesses. He said he would mercilessly punish anyone attempting a pogrom. I got a very favorable impression of him.”

“Whoever it is that makes pogroms,” her mother retorted, “we Jews are always the first victims.”

“Jews and Commissars,” the youth corrects.

“You are both —you’d better look out,” a guest teased him.

“Better take off that *kurtka*” (leather jacket), another warns.

XXXIV
A Bolshevik Trial

Having learned that old police records are in possession of the Extraordinary Commission, I visited Burov, the *predsedatel* of the Cheka. Very tall and broad, of coarse features and curt demeanor, he gave me the impression of a gendarme of the Romanov regime. He spoke in an abrupt, commanding tone, avoided my look, and seemed more interested in the large Siberian dog at his side than in my mission. He declined to permit me to examine the archives of the Third Department, but promised to select some material the Museum might be interested in, and asked me to call the next day.

His manner was not convincing, and I felt little faith in his assurances to aid my efforts. The following morning his secretary informed me that Burov had been too busy to attend to my request, but he could be seen at the Revolutionary Tribunal, where a trial was in progress.

On the dais of the Tribunal three men sat at a desk covered with a red cloth, the wall back of them decorated with lithographs of Lenin and Trotsky. At a small table below the dais was the defendant, a slender young man with a diminutive mustache, and near him an older man, his attorney. Burov, with the huge dog at his feet, was acting as the government prosecutor. The benches were occupied by witnesses, and soldiers were stationed in the aisles to preserve order.

The prisoner was charged with “counterrevolutionary activities,” the accusation brought by a young woman on the ground that he had “denounced her as a Communist to the Whites.” The witnesses were questioned first by the defense, then by the prosecutor and the judges. It appeared from their testimony that the prisoner and his accuser had for years lived in the same house and were known to be intimate. The proceedings dragged in a sleepy, uninteresting way until the attorney for the defense attempted to establish the fact that the woman, now a member of the Cheka, had formerly led a disreputable life. Burov slowly rose in his seat and pointing his finger at the lawyer, demanded: “Do you dare to attack the reputation of the Extraordinary Commission?” The attorney timidly appealed to the court for protection. The presiding judge, in high boots and corduroy jacket, looking very tired and sipping cold coffee, expressed his revolutionary sympathy with the social victims of the abolished capitalist order and berated the attorney for persisting in bourgeois prejudices.

Burov examined the defense witnesses regarding their past mode of life and present political adherence. He referred to the prisoner as "that scoundrelly counterrevolutionist" and succeeded in eliciting affirmative replies to questions previously negated by the same witnesses. One of the latter, a young woman, testified to the good reputation of the defendant and his political non-partisanship. She looked frightened as Burov towered above her. He plied her with questions, and she became confused. Under the spell of the Chekist's commanding voice she finally admitted that the accused was her brother.

A burst of indignation broke from the audience. On the bench in front of me an old man excitedly shouted: "You've terrorized her! She is no kin of his —she's my daughter!" The presiding judge shouted, "Silence!" and ordered the arrest of the interrupter for "behavior insulting to the high tribunal."

During the noon recess I found an opportunity to speak to Burov. I called his attention to the character of the testimony. It was valueless, I pointed out; the witnesses were intimidated. Burov was much pleased. "There is no fooling with us, and they know it," he said, indicating that all non-Communists are to be regarded as the natural enemies of the Bolshevik regime.

"The evidence is questionable," I pursued; "will the prisoner be convicted?"

"I'll demand the 'highest measure of punishment,' " he replied, employing the official term for the death sentence.

"But the man may be innocent," I protested.

"How can you speak so, *tovarish*?" he upbraided me. "You talk of evidence! Why, the uncle of this fellow was a rank *bourzhooi*, a big banker. He escaped with the Whites, and his whole family are counterrevolutionists. The best thing to do with such fellows is to *razmenyat* them" (to "change" —the expression used in the South for summary execution).

Leaving the courtroom, I inadvertently stepped into a small chamber where two women sat on a bench. "*Tovarish* from the center," one of them greeted me; "I saw you at Burov's yesterday."

She evidently took me for an official of the Moscow Cheka, and she at once became confidential. It was she who brought the charge against the prisoner, she said. They had been arrested together by the Whites, and when they were brought to the police station the defendant whispered something to the officer. She could not hear what he said, but she was sure that he had nodded in her direction. Both were locked up, but after a while the man was released while she was to be shot. She was positive the man had denounced her as a Bolshevik —though she was not

one at the time. She has become a Communist since, and now she is helping to fight counterrevolutionists, "same as you, *tovarish*," she added significantly.

Her face, offensively painted even to her lips, was coarse and sensuous. Her eyes glowed with a vengeful light and the consciousness of power. Her companion, younger and more comely, resembled her in a marked degree.

"Are you sisters?" I asked.

"Cousins," the younger one replied. "Katya is lying," she broke out vehemently, "she's jealous —the man left her —he didn't care for her —she wants revenge."

"A lot he cares for you!" the other mocked. "You are younger —that's all. And he's a dirty counterrevolutionist."

The door opened and a woman entered. She looked very old, but her carriage was stately and her sad face beautiful in its frame of snowy white. "Are you a witness?" the Chekist girl demanded. "Have you been called?"

"No, my dear," the old lady replied quietly; "I came of my own accord." She smiled benignantly and continued in a soft, melodious voice: "Listen, dear, I am an old woman and I will soon be dying. I came to tell the truth. Why should you cause the death of that boy?" She looked kindly at the Chekist. "Bethink yourself, dear one. He has done you no harm."

"Hasn't he, though!" the other retorted angrily.

"My dear one," the old lady pleaded, putting her hand affectionately on the girl's arm, "let bygones be bygones. He cared for you and he ceased to care —does he deserve death, dearest? Ah, I am old and I have seen much evil in my lifetime. Must we always go on hating and killing —"

"To court!" a soldier shouted into the room. Both girls hurriedly rose, smoothed their hair, and walked out.

"Must we always be hating and killing?" the old woman repeated as she slowly followed them.

XXXV
Returning to Petrograd

After a stay of several days we left Nikolayev, returning to Odessa by the same maritime auto truck. We followed the former route and witnessed the previous scenes again. Our reception was even more unfriendly than before.

Occasionally some good-natured soldier offered to pay with Sovietsky money, but the villagers pleaded that they could do nothing with the "colored papers," and begged for articles of "manufacture." The chauffeur produced a can of watered gasoline, which he had persuaded an old peasant to exchange for a smoked ham by assuring him that it was the "best kerosene in Russia." The neighbors protested, but the old man, too frightened to refuse, gave up the treasured meat, muttering: "May the Lord have mercy on us and see you depart soon."

In Odessa we learn that the Red Army is in full retreat from Warsaw, and Wrangel steadily advancing from the southeast. The alarming situation makes the further progress of the Expedition impossible. Our anxiety is increased by the circumstance that the mandate for the use of our car expires on October 31, after which date the Railroad Commission has the right of immediate confiscation, involving the probable loss of our material. Our repeated letters and wires have remained without reply by the Narkomput (People's Commissariat of Ways and Communication) in Moscow. No choice is left us but to hasten back to Petrograd to deliver to the Museum our collection which has grown so large it requires an entire *tepulshka* (freight car).

September 20 – 30. —At last we have left Odessa and are now journeying by slow stages northward. The lines are clogged with military trains, "dead" engines, and wrecked cars. At Znamenka we come upon the rear of the Twelfth Army retreating in disorder. The Bolsheviki are evacuating points along the route of the expected Polish advance. Large areas have been left without any government at all, the Communists having departed, the Poles not pursuing. The Red Army is rolling back toward Kiev and Kharkov. Our train is constantly delayed or switched to a side track, to clear the way for the military. Should the enemy advance, our Expedition may be entirely cut off from the north, finding itself between Wrangel's forces in the south and southeast, and the Poles in the north and northwest.

Progressing only a few miles a day, we pass Birsula, Vanyarki, Zhmerinka, and Kasatin. The Communists no longer deny the great disaster. The Polish campaign has ended in a complete rout, and Wrangel is driving the Red Army before him. It

is claimed that Makhno has joined forces with the counterrevolutionary general. The Soviet papers we occasionally find in the "educational bureau" at the stations brand the *povstantsi* leader as Wrangel's aid. Familiar with the methods of the Communist press, we do not give credence to the "news," but our anxiety to learn the facts of the situation is increased by the persistent report that England demands the entire withdrawal of the Bolsheviki from the Ukraine.

The approaches to Kiev are blocked, and we are detained twelve versts from the city. Two days of maneuvering bring us at last in visible distance of the passenger station, where we remain for the night. Kiev is being evacuated. A visit to the union headquarters fails to discover any prominent officials: they are preparing to leave in case of "revolutionary necessity." There is much speculation whether the Bolsheviki will release the political prisoners before surrendering the town, as the enemy will undoubtedly execute all revolutionists who fall into its hands. On the streets joy at the departure of the Communists struggles with dread of the hated Poles.

Rising next morning at nine (by the new time; seven by the sun) I am surprised not to find my clothes in their accustomed place. Believing my friends to have played a hoax, I proceed to wake them. All my apparel and personal effects are gone: we have been robbed! The thief evidently entered through the open corridor window; the imprint of his bare feet is still on the rain-softened ground. We are certain the theft was committed by the *militsioneri* guarding the woodpile about thirty feet from our car. It was a moonlit night. No one could have climbed through the window without being seen by the sentry. In any case, a desperate undertaking, for such acts are now punishable with death. Our interviews with the soldiers, inquiry and investigation fail to throw light on the robbery, and at heart we are glad. The loss, however great, is not worth a human life.

October 2. —Journeying toward Kursk. We still hope to be able to return south by way of Yekaterinoslav, but rumors are persistent of the taking of that city by Wrangel.

Splendid autumn day, clear and sunny. The country is luscious —fields of black soil, primitive forests of oak and fir. But the weather is growing cold, and our car is unheated for lack of dry wood. Our supplies are almost exhausted; even the resourceful culinary art of Emma Goldman is unable to produce meals from an empty larder.

In the evening a rare sunset over the Western slope, the horizon aglow with luminous red. Broad lines of purple afloat on an azure background, its base a light yellow of frayed edges. Now the dense woods hide the sky. I catch glimpses of the

paling fire shimmering through the trees. Windmills of ancient Russian type and peasant *khati*, their roofs straw-covered, sides whitewashed, slowly pass by, looking melancholy. Women at work in the fields; children driving a flock of black sheep. A solitary peasant trudges behind a pair of oxen hitched to a plow of primitive design. The country is even, flat, monotonous. It is growing dusk; our candles are exhausted.

In the gathering darkness, our little commune around the table, we exchange reminiscences. Today is the first anniversary of my release from the Federal prison.[48] A year rich with experience: intense days of anti-conscription agitation and opposition to world slaughter, arrest and detention at Ellis Island, stealthy deportation, and then —Russia and the life of the revolutionary period.

With the touching curiosity of the Russian in all things American our colleagues are absorbed in the story. The skyscraper, that bold striving toward the heights, is the symbol of the far-off world to them. Though theoretically familiar with American industrialism, their faith in that country as "free" is traditional, persistent, and they experience a rude awakening at the recital of the actual facts of our economic and political life. Habituated to thinking the "American" a gentleman of large and noble nature, with a touch of manly irresponsibility almost akin to "interesting madness," they are deeply shocked by the picture of prison existence with its tortures of solitary, underground dungeon, and "bull ring." Under the most cruel Tsarist regime, they assure me, the politicals were accorded better treatment even in the worst casemates of Petropavlovsk and Schlüsselburg.

"Is it possible," our Secretary asks for the third time, "that in free, cultured America a prisoner may for years be kept in solitary, deprived of exercise and visitors?"[49]

Only one year ago, yet how far it all seems, how removed from the present! Long trains of artillery rush through the darkness: the revolutionary army is routed on all fronts. The soldiers' plaintive song, now Russian, now Ukrainian, grips the heart with heavy sadness, as our train slowly creeps along the flatlands of Northern Ukraine.

October 21. A clear, cold day. The first snow of the season on the ground, Moscow presents a familiar sight, and I feel at home after our long absence.

Eagerly I absorb the news at the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. The Twelfth Army has precipitately retreated from Warsaw, but the Poles are not pursuing. It is officially realized now what a serious and costly mistake the campaign was, and

how baseless the expectations of a revolution in Poland. It is hoped that a quick peace may be patched up without too great sacrifices on the part of Russia.

Happier is the news from other fronts. Eastern Siberia has been cleared of the last remnants of Kolchak's army under Ataman Semyonov. In the Crimea Wrangel is almost entirely crushed, not the least share of credit admittedly belonging to Makhno. Far from aiding the counterrevolutionary forces, as had been reported, the *povstantsi* joined the fight against the White general. This development was the result of a politico-military agreement between the Bolsheviki and Makhno, the main condition of the latter being the immediate liberation of the imprisoned Anarchists and Makhnovtsi, and a guarantee of free speech and press for them in the Ukraine. The telegram sent at the time by Makhno requesting the presence of Emma Goldman and myself at the conferences did not reach us. It was not forwarded by the Foreign Office.

Our anxiety about Henry Alsberg is relieved: he is now safely in Riga, having been permitted to leave Russia after his forced return from the south. Albert Boni and Pat Quinlan are in the Cheka, no definite reason for their detention being assigned. Mrs. Harrison, my erstwhile neighbor in the Kharitonensky, is held as a British spy. Nuorteva, Soviet representative in New York, was deported from the States and is now at the head of the British-American bureau in the Foreign Office. Rosenberg, the bad-tempered and ill-mannered confidential secretary of Chicherin, all-powerful and cordially disliked, is about to leave for the Far East, "on an important mission," as he informs me. Incidentally, as if by afterthought, he refers to the "funeral tomorrow," and with a shock I learn of the death of John Reed. The Expedition is to leave this evening for Petrograd, but we decide to postpone our departure in order to pay the last tribute to our dead friend.

A fresh grave along the Kremlin wall, opposite the Red Square, the honored resting place of the revolutionary martyrs. I stand at the brink, supporting Louise Bryant who has entirely abandoned herself to her grief. She had hastened from America to meet Jack after a long separation. Missing him in Petrograd, she proceeded to Moscow only to learn that Reed had been ordered to Baku to the Congress of Eastern Peoples. He had not quite recovered from the effects of his imprisonment in Finland and he was unwilling to undertake the arduous journey. But Zinoviev insisted; it was imperative, he said, to have America represented, and like a good Party soldier Jack obeyed. But his weakened constitution could not withstand the hardships of Russian travel and its fatal infections. Reed was brought back to Moscow critically ill. In spite of the efforts of the best physicians he died on October 16.

The sky is wrapped in gray. Rain and sleet are in the air. Between the speakers' words the rain strikes Jack's coffin, punctuating the sentences as if driving nails into the casket. Clear and rounded like the water drops are the official eulogies falling upon the hearing with dull meaninglessness. Louise cowers on the wet ground. With difficulty I persuade her to rise, almost forcing her to her feet. She seems in a daze, oblivious to the tribute of the Party mourners. Bukharin, Reinstein, and representatives of Communist sections of Europe and America praise the advance guard of world revolution, while Louise is desperately clutching at the wooden coffin. Only young Feodosov, who had known and loved Jack and shared quarters with him, sheds a ray of warmth through the icy sleet. Kollontai speaks of the fine manhood and generous soul that was Jack. With painful sincerity she questions herself —did not John Reed succumb to the neglect of true comradeship. …

The Museum is highly pleased with the success of our Expedition. In token of appreciation the Board of Directors requested us, to continue our work in the Crimea, now entirely freed from White forces. The mandate for the car has been prolonged till the close of the year.

But the independent, nonpartisan character of the Museum activities is apparently displeasing to Communist circles in Moscow. They contend that the capital, rather than Petrograd, should be the home of such an institution. The idea is sponsored, it is said, in opposition to the growing power of Zinoviev. Certain influences are at work to curtail the Museum's sphere of action. With surprise we learn that a special body has been created in the center with exclusive authority to collect material concerning the history of the Russian Communist Party. The new organization, known as the Ispart, by virtue or its Communist character, claims control over the Museum and has announced its intention of directing future expeditions.

The situation threatens the efficiency of our work. By request of the Museum, I have repeatedly visited Moscow in an endeavor to reach an amicable understanding. Lunacharsky, with whom I have discussed the matter, admits the justice of our position. But the Ispart continues to assert its supremacy, claims the right to our car, and insists on controlling the expeditions by placing a political commissar in charge.

The attitude of the Ispart is inimical to free initiative and best effort. It is also indicative of a lack of confidence. If persisted in, it would exclude my further cooperation. Under no conditions could I consent to the supervision of a commissar, whose duties are virtually identical with spying and denunciation.

Several of my colleagues in the Expedition, including Emma Goldman, share this viewpoint.

During the negotiations it has been suggested that we visit the Far North to gather the historic data of the period of Allied occupation and the Provisional Government of Tchaikovsky. The Ispart professes no interest in the undertaking and foregoes control over it. We welcome the opportunity and decide to make a short journey to Archangel via Moscow, where formalities are to be completed.

In the capital we find our friends in great consternation. The Bolsheviki, it is charged, have treacherously broken their agreement with Makhno. No sooner had the *povstantsi* helped to defeat Wrangel than Trotsky ordered their disarmament. They were surrounded and attacked by Red forces, but succeeded in extricating themselves, and now open warfare has again been declared. Meanwhile the Anarchists, unaware of these developments, had gathered from all parts of the country in Kharkov, where a conference was to be held December Ist, in accordance with Makhno's agreement with the Bolsheviki. All of them, together with many local Anarchists, were arrested, among them my friends Volin and Baron, widely known as men of high idealism and revolutionary devotion. The greatest fear is felt for their safety.

XXXVI
In the Far North

December, 1920. —Yaroslavl, an ancient city, is picturesque on the banks of the Volga. Very impressive are its cathedrals and monasteries, fine specimens of the architectural art of northeastern Russia of feudal times. But desolate is the sight of the many demolished buildings and churches. On the opposite side of the river the whole district is wrecked by artillery and fire. Dismal reminders of the harrowing days of June, 1918, when the counterrevolutionary insurrection led by Savinkov, once famous terrorist, was crushed. More than a third of the city was destroyed, its population reduced by half.

The shadow of that tragedy broods darkly over Yaroslavl. The hand laid upon the rebels was so heavy, its imprint is still felt. The people are cowed, terrified at the very mention of the ghastly days of June.

Through Vologda we reach Archangel, at the mouth of the Northern Dvina, almost within the Arctic Circle. The city is situated on the right bank, separated from the railroad station by the river which we cross on foot. The ice is dotted with peasant sleighs, some drawn by reindeer with huge, crooked antlers. The drivers are entirely wrapped in furs, only their narrow dark eyes and flat Lapland noses visible.

The streets are clean, the small frame houses well kept. “We have learned from the Occupation,” Kulakov, Chairman of the Ispelkom, comments. He is a young man, tall, clean featured, and of quick intelligence. The Whites killed his entire family, including his young sister, but Kulakov has preserved his mental balance and humanity.

Comparative order prevails in the Soviet institutions. The long queues so characteristic of Bolshevik managements are almost entirely absent. The natives have acquired method and efficiency; “from the example of the Americans,” they frankly admit. There is scarcity of provisions, but the *pyock* is more equitable, distribution more systematic than elsewhere. The Communists are the dominant factor, but they are encouraging the cooperation of the other elements of the population. Experience has taught them to economize human life. Many former White officers are employed, even in responsible positions. Their services are very satisfactory, I am told; particularly in the schools they are of help. Even monks and nuns have been given opportunity to serve the people. Some art workshops are managed by former inmates of monasteries, still in their religious garb, sewing and embroidering for the children and instructing them in the art.

The orphan homes and asylums we have visited, unannounced, are clean and tidy, the inmates warmly dressed and of healthy appearance, their relations with the teachers very harmonious, even affectionate.

Speculation in food has entirely ceased. The old marketplace is almost deserted; only small articles of apparel are offered for sale. The distributing Soviet centers still have some of the provisions, mostly canned goods, left by the American Mission, which is remembered with respect, almost with regret. But considerable sentiment is felt against the English, who are charged with political partisanship in the civil struggle of the North. The story is told of the destruction of huge supplies, sunk in the Dvina in the very sight of the starved population, by order of General Rollins, who was in charge of the British evacuation.

The cordial cooperation of Kulakov and other Communist officials has enabled us to collect valuable material on the history of the Provisional Government of the Northern District. A pitiful picture it presents of Tchaikovsky, once the "grandfather of the Russian Revolution." Foreswearing his glorious past, he served as the vassal of Kolchak, whom he servilely acknowledged as the "Supreme Ruler of Russia." So impotent, however, was the role of Tchaikovsky that his regime is contemptuously referred to as the "Government of Miller," the commander-in-chief of the counterrevolutionary forces which escaped to Norway soon after the British evacuation.

Though comprising but a small part of the population, the workers of Archangel (about 3,000 out of a total of 50,000) have played a decisive part in the history of the city and district. In the union gatherings I have come in touch with intelligent proletarian groups whose independence and self-reliance is the key to the local situation. Far from "the center" and small in number, the Bolsheviki are vitally dependent on the labor element in the management of affairs. Party dictatorship has been mitigated by the actual participation of the toilers. Their influence is restraining and salutary.

Betchin, the Chairman of the Union Soviet, personifies the history and spirit of the whole revolutionary epoch. Tall and stockily built, of plain speech and convincing honesty, he is typical of the Northern worker. In his person the Provisional Government had sought to suppress the rebellious element of the Archangel proletariat. Popular labor man and member of the local Duma, Betchin was indicted for treason. The central figure of the celebrated trial known by his name, he was condemned to a living death in the terrible prison at Iokange in the frozen North. But his conviction served to consolidate the wavering ranks against the Provisional Government; his name became the slogan of the united opposition. Its

rising waves drove the Allies from Archangel and Murmansk, and abolished Tchaikovsky's regime.

With much difficulty I persuaded the modest Betchin to donate his picture and autobiographic sketch to the "revolutionary gallery" of the Museum. His friends informed me that upon his return to prison he insisted that his portraits be removed from the union headquarters. In appreciation of our mission he presented us with the old crimson banner of the Soviet, battle-scarred in numerous campaigns.

"We are working in harmony with the several factions in the unions," Betchin said. "The welfare of the people is our sole aim, and on that platform we can all agree, whatever our political predilections."

With a smile of indulgent reminiscence he admitted his former adherence to the Social-Democrats. "But we have no more Mensheviki here," he hastened to add; "we all joined the Bolsheviki long ago."

"The comrade from the center probably doesn't know how it happened," his assistant remarked. "Revolutionary life sometimes plays curious pranks. You see," he continued, "word had reached us that the Mensheviki and S.R.'s in Moscow had gone over to the Bolsheviki. We decided to do the same. That's how we happen to be Communists now. But the report later proved false," he concluded with a touch of disappointment.

"We have never regretted it," Betchin said soberly.

There is no direct railroad line between Archangel and Murmansk, and we are compelled to make the long journey back to Vologda in order to reach the Coast. In Petrosavodsk we learn that owing to the unusually severe snowstorms the trip cannot be undertaken at present. It is Christmas Eve; before the end of the year we are pledged to return to Petrograd. To our great regret the journey further north must be abandoned.

XXXVII
Early Days of 1921

The military fronts have been liquidated; civil war is at an end. The country breathes a sigh of relief. The Entente has ceased to finance counterrevolution, but the blockade still continues. It is now generally realized that the hope of near revolution in Europe is visionary. The proletariat of the West, involved in a severe struggle with growing reaction at home, can give no aid to Russia. The Soviet Republic is thrown upon its own resources.

All thoughts are turned to economic reconstruction. Communist circles and the official press are agitated by the discussion of the role of the workers in the present situation. It is admitted that militarization of labor has failed. Far from proving productive, as had been claimed, its effects have been disorganizing and demoralizing. The new part to be assigned to the proletariat is the burning problem, but there is no unity of opinion among the leading Bolsheviki. Lenin contends that the unions are not prepared to manage the industries: their main mission is to serve as "schools of Communism," with gradually increasing participation in the economic field. Zinoviev and his following side with Lenin and elaborate his views. But Trotsky dissents, insisting that the workers will for a long time to come be unfit to manage the industries. He demands a "labor front," subject to the iron discipline of a military campaign. In opposition to this conception, the labor elements advocate the immediate democratization of industrial government. The exclusion of the unions from a decisive role in the economic life, they maintain, is the true cause of the deplorable situation. They are confident that the revolutionary proletariat, who has defeated all armed opposition, will also conquer the enemy on the economic field. But the workers must be given the opportunity: they will learn by doing.

Throughout the country rages the discussion, on the solution of which depends the economic future of the people.

Many of the Anarchists arrested in Kharkov on the eve of the suppressed Conference have been brought to Moscow. Some of them are in the Butirki; others are held incommunicado in the "inner jail" of the Cheka. Volin, A. Baron, and Lea, the wife of my friend Yossif the Emigrant, are among them. Yossif is reported dead. With the consent of the Kharkov authorities, accompanied by two friends, he had gone to the Makhno camp to aid in arranging the conditions of agreement. On the way all three disappeared —killed, it is assumed, just as they entered a village

that was being pogromed. There are rumors of Bolshevik responsibility for the tragedy, but I cannot believe them guilty of such treachery.

By the aid of Angelica Balabanova we intercede in behalf of the victims of the broken truce between the Soviet Government and Makhno. Almost all of them come within the Communist definition of *ideini* Anarchists (of ideas); and Lenin had assured me that the Party is cordially disposed toward them. The efforts of Angelica have secured for me an appointment with Latsis, head of the "Department of Secret Operations" of the Veh-Cheka, in charge of the cases. But calling at the agreed hour, I am informed that Latsis, aware of the purpose of my visit, had left orders not to admit me.

Still believing in the possibility of establishing more amicable relations between the Soviet Government and the Anarchists, I appealed to influential Communists. The great task of rebuilding the country, I urge, necessitates mutual understanding and cooperation. But my Bolshevik friends scorn the suggestion as Utopian, though some of them are willing to aid in the liberation of certain individuals by serving as their "guarantee." At last I decide to address myself to Lenin. In a written communication I present to him the situation and set forth the reasons —revolutionary, ethical, and utilitarian —for the release of the politicals in the interests of the common cause.

In vain I await a reply. The prison doors remain closed. More arrests take place in various parts of the country.

February 13 —Peter Kropotkin died on the 8th instant. Though not entirely unexpected, the news came to me as a great shock. I hastened from Petrograd to Dmitrov, where a number of personal friends of the dead man were already gathered. Almost the entire village accompanied the remains to the train bound for Moscow. Little children strewed the way with pine branches, and touching tribute was paid by the simple country folk to the man beloved in their midst.

The Soviet Government offered to take charge of the funeral, but the family of Kropotkin and his comrades have declined. They feel that Peter, who throughout his life denied the State, should not in death be insulted by its attentions. The Funeral Commission formed by the Moscow Anarchist organizations requested Lenin to permit the imprisoned comrades of the dead to attend the funeral of their friend and teacher. Lenin consented, and the Central Committee of the Party recommended to the Cheka the temporary release of the Anarchists. Delegated by the Commission to arrange the matter, I was given opportunity to visit the prisoners in the Butirki. Over a score of them gathered about me, pale, martyred faces, with eager eyes and palpitating interest in the life they are deprived of.

In the “inner jail” of the Cheka I was permitted to see A. Baron, the spokesman of the Anarchists imprisoned there. Accompanying me was Yartchuk, himself but recently released. “You’ll probably be with us again soon,” the magistrate remarked to him with a sardonic grimace.

Owing to the nationalization of all conveyances, printing facilities, and materials, the Commission has been compelled to apply to the Moscow Soviet to enable it to carry out the funeral program. After considerable delay, permission has been secured to issue a one-day, four-page in memoriam paper, but the authorities insist that the manuscripts —though exclusively devoted to appreciations of Kropotkin as scholar, man, and Anarchist —be submitted to censorship.

The Cheka refused to release the Anarchist prisoners without a guarantee of the Funeral Commission for their return. That guarantee secured, the Extraordinary Commission informed me that “upon examination it was found that there are no Anarchists that could be freed.” There followed an intensive exchange of “opinions” between the Moscow Soviet, in the person of Kamenev, its president, and the Cheka, which has finally resulted in the solemn promise to permit all the imprisoned Moscow Anarchists to attend the funeral.

In the Hall of Columns in the Union House the remains of Peter Kropotkin lie in state. A continuous procession of workers, students, and peasants passes before the bier to pay the last tribute to the dead. Outside a vast mass is waiting to accompany the remains to their resting place. All is in readiness; the requiem has been sung, the time set for starting has already passed. But the Anarchist prisoners have not come. Urgent inquiries at the Cheka elicit contradictory information: the collective guarantee of the Commission is not satisfactory, we are told —the men refuse to attend the funeral —they have already been released.

It is past noon. The funeral is delayed. It is apparent that the Cheka is sabotaging our agreement. We decide to protest by demonstratively removing the Government and Communist wreaths from the Hall. The threat of a public scandal quickly brings the authorities to terms, and within a quarter of an hour the seven prisoners of the “inner jail” arrive. We are assured that the Butirki Anarchists have been freed and will presently join us.[50]

The long procession slowly winds its way to the cemetery. The students, arms linked, form a living chain on both sides of the great multitude. The sun is bright upon the hard, glistening snow. Black Anarchist banners, interspersed with flashes of scarlet, flutter above like mournful arms of love.

A Kropotkin Museum is to be founded in memory of the great Anarchist scientist and teacher. The committee of Anarchist organizations in charge of the undertaking has requested Emma Goldman and myself to aid in its organization. Our further cooperation with the Museum of the Revolution has become impossible owing to the arbitrary attitude of the Ispart. Moreover, the Kropotkin work is of greater immediate importance and of stronger appeal to my sympathies. I have severed my connection with the Museum to accept the secretaryship of the Kropotkin Memorial Commission.

XXXVIII
Kronstadt[51]

Petrograd, February, 1921. —The cold is extreme and there is intense suffering in the city. Snowstorms have isolated us from the provinces; the supply of provisions has almost ceased. Only half a pound of bread is being issued now. Most of the houses are unheated. At dusk old women prowl about the big woodpile near the Hotel Astoria, but the sentry is vigilant. Several factories have been closed for lack of fuel, and the employees put on half rations. They called a meeting to consult about the situation, but the authorities did not permit it to take place.

The Trubotchny millworkers have gone on strike. In the distribution of winter clothing, they complain, the Communists received undue advantage over the nonpartisans. The Government refuses to consider the grievances till the men return to work.

Crowds of strikers gathered in the street near the mills, and soldiers were sent to disperse them. They were *kursanti*, Communist youths of the military academy. There was no violence.

Now the strikers have been joined by the men from the Admiralty shops and Galernaya docks. There is much resentment against the arrogant attitude of the Government. A street demonstration was attempted, but mounted troops suppressed it.

February 27. —Nervous feeling in the city. The strike situation is growing more serious. The Patronny mills, the Baltiysky and Laferm factories have suspended operations. The authorities have ordered the strikers to resume work. Martial law in the city. The special Committee of Defense (Komitet Oboroni) is vested with exceptional powers, Zinoviev at its head.

At the Soviet session last evening a military member of the Defense Committee denounced the strikers as traitors to the Revolution. It was Lashevitch. He looked fat, greasy, and offensively sensuous. He called the dissatisfied workers “leeches attempting extortion” (*shkurniki*), and demanded drastic measures against them. The Soviet passed a resolution locking out the men of the Trubotchny mill. It means deprivation of rations —actual starvation.

February 28. —Strikers’ proclamations have appeared on the streets today. They cite cases of workers found frozen to death in their homes. The main demand is for winter clothing and more regular issue of rations. Some of the circulars protest

against the suppression of factory meetings. “The people want to take counsel together to find means of relief,” they state. Zinoviev asserts the whole trouble is due to Menshevik and Social Revolutionist plotting.

For the first time a political turn is being given to the strikes. Late in the afternoon a proclamation was posted containing larger demands. “A complete change is necessary in the policies of the Government,” it reads. “First of all, the workers and peasants need freedom. They don’t want to live by the decrees of the Bolsheviki; they want to control their own destinies. We demand the liberation of all arrested Socialists and nonpartisan workingmen; abolition of martial law; freedom of speech, press, and assembly for all who labor; free election of shop and factory committees, of labor union and Soviet representatives.”

March 1. —Many arrests are taking place. Groups of strikers surrounded by Chekists, on their way to prison, are a common sight. Much indignation in the city. I hear that several unions have been liquidated and their active members turned over to the Cheka. But proclamations continue to appear. The arbitrary stand of the authorities is having the effect of rousing reactionary tendencies. The situation is growing tense. Calls for the Utchredilka (Constituent Assembly) are being heard. A manifesto is circulating, signed by the “Socialist Workers of the Nevsky District,” openly attacking the Communist regime. “We know who is afraid of the Constituent Assembly,” it declares. “It is they who will no longer be able to rob us. Instead they will have to answer before the representatives of the people for their deceit, their thefts, and all their crimes.”

Zinoviev is alarmed; he has wired to Moscow for troops. The local garrison is said to be in sympathy with the strikers. Military from the provinces has been ordered to the city: special Communist regiments have already arrived. Extraordinary martial law has been declared today.

March 2. —Most disquieting reports. Large strikes have broken out in Moscow. In the Astoria I heard today that armed conflicts have taken place near the Kremlin and blood has been shed. The Bolsheviki claim the coincidence of events in the two capitals as proof of a counterrevolutionary conspiracy.

It is said that Kronstadt sailors have come to the city to look into the cause of trouble. Impossible to tell fact from fiction. The absence of a public press encourages the wildest rumors. The official papers are discredited.

March 3. —Kronstadt is disturbed. It disapproves of the Government’s drastic methods against the dissatisfied workers. The men of the warship *Petropavlovsk* have passed a resolution of sympathy with the strikers.

It has become known today that on February 28 a committee of sailors was sent to this city to investigate the strike situation. Its report was unfavorable to the authorities. On March 1 the crews of the First and Second Squadrons of the Baltic Fleet called a public meeting at Yakorny Square. The gathering was attended by sixteen thousand sailors, Red Army men, and workers. The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Kronstadt Soviet, the Communist Vassiliev, presided. The audience was addressed by Kalinin, President of the Republic, and by Kuzmin, Commissar of the Baltic Fleet. The attitude of the sailors was entirely friendly to the Soviet Government, and Kalinin was met on his arrival in Kronstadt with military honors, music, and banners.

At the meeting the Petrograd situation and the report of the sailors' investigating committee were discussed. The audience was outspoken in its indignation at the means employed by Zinoviev against the workers. President Kalinin and Commissar Kusmin berated the strikers and denounced the Petropavlovsk Resolution as counterrevolutionary. The sailors emphasized their loyalty to the Soviet system, but condemned the Bolshevik bureaucracy. The resolution was passed.

March 4. —Great nervous tension in the city. The strikes continue; labor disorders have again taken place in Moscow. A wave of discontent is sweeping the country. Peasant uprisings are reported from Tambov, Siberia, the Ukraine, and Caucasus. The country is on the verge of desperation. It was confidently hoped that with the end of civil war the Communists would mitigate the severe military regime. The Government had announced its intention of economic reconstruction, and the people were eager to cooperate. They looked forward to the lightening of the heavy burdens, the abolition of wartime restrictions, and the introduction of elemental liberties.

The fronts are liquidated, but the old policies continue, and labor militarization is paralyzing industrial revival. It is openly charged that the Communist Party is more interested in entrenching its political power than in saving the Revolution.

An official manifesto appeared today. It is signed by Lenin and Trotsky and declares Kronstadt guilty of mutiny (*myatezh*). The demand of the sailors for free Soviets is denounced as "a counterrevolutionary conspiracy against the proletarian Republic." Members of the Communist Party are ordered into the mills and factories to "rally the workers to the support of the Government against the traitors." Kronstadt is to be suppressed.

The Moscow radio station sent out a message addressed "to all, all, all":

> Petrograd is orderly and quiet, and even the few factories where accusations against the Soviet Government were recently voiced now understand that it is the work of provocators … just at this moment, when in America a new Republican regime is assuming the reins of government and showing inclination to take up business relations with Soviet Russia, the spreading of lying rumors and the organization of disturbances in Kronstadt have the sole purpose of influencing the American President and changing his policy toward Russia. At the same time the London Conference is holding its sessions, and the spreading of similar rumors must influence also the Turkish delegation and make it more submissive to the demands of the Entente. The rebellion of the *Petropavlovask* crew is undoubtedly part of a great conspiracy to create trouble within Soviet Russia and to injure our international position. … This plan is being carried out within Russia by a Tsarist general and former officers, and their activities are supported by the Mensheviki and Social Revolutionists.

The whole Northern District is under martial law and all gatherings are interdicted. Elaborate precautions have been taken to protect the Government institutions. Machine guns are placed in the Astoria, the living quarters of Zinoviev and other prominent Bolsheviki. These preparations are increasing general nervousness. Official proclamations command the immediate return of the strikers to the factories, prohibit suspension of work, and warn the populace against congregating in the streets.

The Committee of Defense has initiated a “cleaning” of the city. Many workers suspected of sympathizing with Kronstadt have been placed under arrest. All Petrograd sailors and part of the garrison thought to be “untrustworthy” have been ordered to distant points, while the families of Kronstadt sailors living in Petrograd are held as hostages. The Committee of Defense notified Kronstadt that “the prisoners are kept as ‘pledges’ for the safety of the Commissar of the Baltic Fleet, N. N. Kusmin, the Chairman of the Kronstadt Soviet, T. Vassiliev, and other Communists. If the least harm be suffered by our comrades, the hostages will pay with their lives.”

“We want no bloodshed,” Kronstadt wired in reply. “Not a single Communist has been harmed by us.”

The Petrograd workers are anxiously awaiting developments. They hope that the intercession of the sailors may turn the situation in their favor. The term of office of the Kronstadt Soviet is about to expire, and arrangements are being made for the coming elections.

On March 2 a conference of delegates took place, at which three hundred representatives of the ships, the garrison, the labor unions and factories were present, among them also a number of Communists. The Conference approved the Resolution passed by the mass-meeting the previous day. Lenin and Trotsky have declared it counterrevolutionary and proof of a White conspiracy.[52]

> Resolution of the General Meeting of the Crews of the First and Second Squadrons of the Baltic Fleet
>
> Held March 1, 1921
>
> Having heard the report of the representatives sent by the General Meeting of Ship Crews to Petrograd to investigate the situation there, Resolved:
>
> 1. In view of the fact that the present Soviets do not express the will of the workers and peasants, immediately to hold new elections by secret ballot, the pre-election campaign to have full freedom of agitation among the workers and peasants;
>
> 2. To establish freedom of speech and press for workers and peasants, for Anarchists and Left Socialist parties;
>
> 3. To secure freedom of assembly for labor unions and peasant organizations;
>
> 4. To call a nonpartisan Conference of the workers, Red Army soldiers and sailors of Petrograd, Kronstadt, and of Petrograd Province, no later than March 19, 1921;
>
> 5. To liberate all political prisoners of Socialist parties, as well as all workers, peasants, soldiers, and sailors imprisoned in connection with the labor and peasant movements;
>
> 6. To elect a Commission to review the cases of those held in prison and concentration camps;
>
> 7. To abolish all *politodeli* (political bureaus) because no party should be given special privileges in the propagation of its ideas or receive the financial support of the Government for such purposes. Instead there should be established educational and cultural commissions, locally elected and financed by the Government;
>
> 8. To abolish immediately all *zagraditelniye otryadi* (Armed units organized by the Bolsheviki for the purpose of suppressing traffic and confiscating foodstuffs and other products. The irresponsibility and arbitrariness of their methods were proverbial throughout the country).

9. To equalize the rations of all who work, with the exception of those employed in trades detrimental to health;

10. To abolish the Communist fighting detachments in all branches of the Army, as well as the Communist guards kept on duty in mills and factories. Should such guards or military detachments be found necessary, they are to be appointed in the Army from the ranks, and in the factories according to the judgment of the workers;

11. To give the peasants full freedom of action in regard to their land, and also the right to keep cattle, on condition that the peasants manage with their own means; that is, without employing hired labor;

12. To request all branches of the Army, as well as our comrades, the military *kursanti*, to concur in our resolutions;

13. To demand for the latter publicity in the press;

14. To appoint a Traveling Commission of Control;

15. To permit free *kustarnoye* (individual small scale) production by one's own efforts.

Resolution passed unanimously by Brigade Meeting, two persons refraining from voting.

Petrichenko, Chairman Brigade Meeting.

Perepelkin, Secretary.

Resolution passed by an overwhelming majority of the Kronstadt garrison.

Vassiliev, Chairman.

Kalinin and Vassiliev vote against the Resolution.

March 4. —Late at night. The extraordinary session of the Petro-Soviet in the Tauride Palace was packed with Communists, mostly youngsters, fanatical and intolerant. Admission by special ticket; a *propusk* (permit) also had to be secured to return home after interdicted hours. Representatives of shops and labor committees were in the galleries, the seats in the main body having been occupied by Communists. Some factory delegates were given the floor, but the moment they attempted to state their case, they were shouted down. Zinoviev repeatedly urged the meeting to give the opposition an opportunity to be heard, but his appeal lacked energy and conviction.

Not a voice was raised in favor of the Constituent Assembly. A millworker pleaded with the Government to consider the complaints of the workers who are cold and hungry. Zinoviev replied that the strikers are enemies of the Soviet regime. Kalinin declared Kronstadt the headquarters of General Kozlovsky's plot. A sailor reminded Zinoviev of the time when he and Lenin were hunted as counterrevolutionists by Kerensky and were saved by the very sailors whom they now denounce as traitors. Kronstadt demands only honest elections, he declared. He was not allowed to proceed. The stentorian voice and impassioned appeal of Yevdakimov, Zinoviev's lieutenant, wrought the Communists up to a high pitch of excitement. His resolution was passed amid a tumult of protest from the nonpartisan delegates and labor men. The resolution declared Kronstadt guilty of a counterrevolutionary attempt against the Soviet regime and demands its immediate surrender. It is a declaration of war.

March 5. —Many Bolsheviki refuse to believe that the Soviet resolution will be carried out. It were too monstrous a thing to attack by force of arms the "pride and glory of the Russian Revolution," as Trotsky christened the Kronstadt sailors. In the circle of their friends many Communists threaten to resign from the Party should such a bloody deed come to pass.

Trotsky was to address the Petro-Soviet last evening. His failure to appear was interpreted as indicating that the seriousness of the situation has been exaggerated. But during the night he arrived and today he issued an ultimatum to Kronstadt:

> The Workers' and Peasants' Government has decreed that Kronstadt and the rebellious ships must immediately submit to the authority of the Soviet Republic. Therefore, I command all who have raised their hand against the Socialist fatherland to lay down their arms at once. The obdurate are to be disarmed and turned over to the Soviet authorities. The arrested Commissars and other representatives of the Government are to be liberated at once. Only those surrendering unconditionally may count on the mercy of the Soviet Republic.
>
> Simultaneously I am issuing orders to prepare to quell the mutiny and subdue the mutineers by force of arms. Responsibility for the harm that may be suffered by the peaceful population will fall entirely upon the heads of the counterrevolutionary mutineers.
>
> This warning is final. Trotsky, … . Chairman Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic.
>
> Kamenev, Commander-in-Chief.

The city is on the verge of panic. The factories are closed, and there are rumors of demonstrations and riots. Threats against Jews are becoming audible. Military forces continue to flow into Petrograd and environs. Trotsky has sent another demand to Kronstadt to surrender, the order containing the threat: "I'll shoot you like pheasants." Even some Communists are indignant at the tone assumed by the Government. It is a fatal error, they say, to interpret the workers' plea for bread as opposition. Kronstadt's sympathy with the strikers and their demand for honest elections have been turned by Zinoviev into a counterrevolutionary plot. I have talked the situation over with several friends, among them a number of Communists. We feel there is yet time to save the situation. A commission in which the sailors and workers would have confidence, could allay the roused passions and find a satisfactory solution of the pressing problems. It is incredible that a comparatively unimportant incident, as the original strike in the Trubotchny mill, should be deliberately provoked into civil war with all the bloodshed it entails.

The Communists with whom I have discussed the suggestion all favor it, but dare not take the initiative. No one believes in the Kozlovsky story. All agree that the sailors are the staunchest supporters of the Soviets; their object is to compel the authorities to grant needed reforms. To a certain degree they have already succeeded. The *zagraditelniye otryadi*, notoriously brutal and arbitrary, have been abolished in the Petrograd province, and certain labor organizations have been given permission to send representatives to the villages for the purchase of food. During the last two days special rations and clothing have also been issued to several factories. The Government fears a general uprising. Petrograd is now in an "extraordinary state of siege"; being out of doors is permitted only till nine in the evening. But the city is quiet. I expect no serious upheaval if the authorities can be prevailed upon to take a more reasonable and just course. In the hope of opening the road to a peaceful solution, I have submitted to Zinoviev a plan of arbitration signed by persons friendly to the Bolsheviki:

> To the Petrograd Soviet of Labor and Defense,
> Chairman Zinoviev:
> To remain silent now is impossible, even criminal. Recent events impel us Anarchists to speak out and to declare our attitude in the present situation.
> The spirit of ferment manifest among the workers and sailors is the result of causes that demand our serious attention. Cold and hunger had produced discontent, and the absence of any opportunity for discussion and criticism is forcing the workers and sailors to air their grievances in the open.
> White-guardist bands wish and may try to exploit this dissatisfaction in their

own class interests. Hiding behind the workers and sailors they throw out slogans of the Constituent Assembly, of free trade, and similar demands.
We Anarchists have long exposed the fiction of these slogans, and we declare to the whole world that we will fight with arms against any counterrevolutionary attempt, in cooperation with all friends of the Social Revolution and hand in hand with the Bolsheviki.
Concerning the conflict between the Soviet Government and the workers and sailors, we hold that it must be settled not by force of arms, but by means of comradely agreement. Resorting to bloodshed, on the part of the Soviet Government, will not —in the given situation —intimidate or quieten the workers. On the contrary, it will serve only to aggravate matters and will strengthen the hands of the Entente and of internal counterrevolution.
More important still, the use of force by the Workers' and Peasants' Government against workers and sailors will have a demoralizing effect upon the international revolutionary movement and will result in incalculable harm to the Social Revolution.
Comrades Bolsheviki, bethink yourselves before it is too late! Do not play with fire: you are about to take a most serious and decisive step.
We hereby submit to you the following proposition: Let a Commission be selected to consist of five persons, inclusive of two Anarchists. The Commission is to go to Kronstadt to settle the dispute by peaceful means. In the given situation this is the most radical method. It will be of international revolutionary significance. Alexander Berkman
Emma Goldman
Perkus
Petrovsky
Petrograd, March 5, 1921.

March 6. —Today Kronstadt sent out by radio, A statement of its position. It reads:

Our cause is just, we stand for the power of Soviets, not parties. We stand for freely elected representatives of the laboring masses. The substitute Soviets manipulated by the Communist Party have always been deaf to our needs and demands; the only reply we have ever received was shooting. … Comrades! They deliberately pervert the truth and resort to most despicable defamation.
… In Kronstadt the whole power is exclusively in the hands of the revolutionary sailors, soldiers and workers —not with counterrevolutionists led by some Kozlovsky, as the lying Moscow radio tries to make you believe.
… Do not delay, Comrades! Join us, get in touch with us: demand admission to Kronstadt for your delegates. Only they will tell you the whole truth and will

expose the fiendish calumny about Finnish bread and Entente offers.
Long live the revolutionary proletariat and the peasantry!
Long live the power of freely elected Soviets.

March 7. —Distant rumbling reaches my ears as I cross the Nevsky. It sounds again, stronger and nearer, as if rolling toward me. All at once I realize that artillery is being fired. It is 6 p.m. Kronstadt has been attacked!

Days of anguish and cannonading. My heart is numb with despair; something has died within me. The people on the streets look bowed with grief, bewildered. No one trusts himself to speak. The thunder of heavy guns rends the air.

March 17. —Kronstadt has fallen today.

Thousands of sailors and workers lie dead in its streets. Summary execution of prisoners and hostages continues.

March 18. —The victors are celebrating the anniversary of the Commune of 1871. Trotsky and Zinoviev denounce Thiers and Gallifet for the slaughter of the Paris rebels. …

XXXIX
Last Links in the Chain

Pensively Pushkin stands on his stone pedestal, viewing life flowing by on the square bearing his name. On the boulevard the trees are smiling with budding green, and promenaders bask in the April sun. Familiar sight of Moscow streets, yet with a strange new atmosphere about the people. The vision of Kronstadt had flashed across the city; its dead embers lie ashen gray on the faces. I sense the disconsolate spirit in the procession of diverse type and attire —workmen in torn footgear, rags wrapped about their legs; students in black shirts belted at the waist, the tails fluttering in the breeze; peasants in *lapti* of woven straw, soldiers in long gray coats, and dark-skinned sons of the Caucasus in brighter colors. Young women mingle with them, in short skirts and bare legs, some wearing men's boots. Most of them are painted, even the little girls. Boldly they gaze at the men, inviting them with their eyes.

Gay music sounds from the garden nearby. At the little tables white-aproned waiters serve food and drinks to the guests. Groups gather at the gate sullenly watching the novel scene. "*Bourzhooi!* Damned speculators!" they mutter. The NEP[53] is at work.

All along the street stores have been opened, their windows washed, freshly painted signs announcing private ownership. Provisions in large quantity and variety are exposed to view. Resentfully men and women crowd on the sidewalk, their eyes devouring the tempting display. "No food for rations!" someone comments sarcastically. "That's what we've been shedding our blood for!" a soldier exclaims with an oath.

On the corner a feminine voice hails me, "Ah, the American *tovarish*!" It is Lena, my young acquaintance of the raid of the Okhotny market, over a year ago. She looks very fragile, her paleness accentuated by her crimsoned lips. There is unwonted self-consciousness in her manner, and the pink mounts her face under my gaze. "You see, I didn't manage to get away," she says wearily.

"Get away?" I asked in surprise.

"Don't you remember? It was America or —," she breaks off with a forced smile.

We are in front of a sumptuous delicatessen store. Men in starched shirts and white collars, looking offensively opulent, and elegantly dressed women carry their purchases with free, assured manner. Ragged children besiege them for alms. The

passersby scowl at them angrily. “How many times I was arrested for ‘speculation,’ ” Lena remarks bitterly.

Remembering my visit to her home, I inquire after her family. “Mother, Baby, and Yasha died from typhus,” she replies dully. “That’s what the certificate said, but I know it was starvation.”

“Your cousin?”

“Oh, she is doing well. With some Communist. I’m all alone in the world now.”

“Poor Lena,” escapes me.

“Oh, I don’t want your pity,” she cries disconsolately. “Wish I’d died with mother.”

Further on the Tverskaya I find “Golos Truda,” the Anarchist publishing house, closed, a Cheka seal on the lock. A man is peering through the window at the havoc wrought within by the raiders. His Red Army cap does not conceal the fresh scars on his head. With surprise I recognize Stepan, my Petrograd soldier friend. He had been wounded in the Kronstadt campaign, he informs me; the Petrograd hospitals were crowded, and he was sent to Moscow. Now he has been discharged, but he is so weak he is barely able to walk.

“We crossed the Neva at night,” he relates; “all in white shrouds like so many ghosts —you couldn’t tell us from the snow on the frozen river. Some of the boys didn’t want to advance,” he looks at me significantly. “The Communist detachment back of us trained machine guns on them —there was no hesitating. The artillery belched from our side; some shots fell short, striking the ice just in front of us. In a flash whole companies disappeared, guns and all, sunk into the deep. It was a frightful night.” He pauses a moment; then, bending close to me, he whispers: “In Kronstadt I learned the truth. It’s we who were the counterrevolutionists.”

The Universalist Club on the Tverskaya is deserted, its active members imprisoned since the Kronstadt events. Anarchists from various parts have been brought to the city, and are now in the Butirki and Taganka jails. In connection with the growing labor discontent severe reprisals are taking place against the revolutionary element and the Communist Labor Opposition which demands industrial democracy.

The situation handicaps the work of the Peter Kropotkin Memorial Committee, in the interests of which I have come to the capital. The Moscow Soviet passed a resolution to aid “Golos Truda” in the publication of the complete works of the great Anarchist thinker, but the Government closed the establishment. The Soviet also donated the house where Kropotkin was born as a home for the Museum, but

every attempt to get the place vacated by the Communist organization now occuping it has failed. The official attitude negates all our efforts.

April 15. —Unexpected visitors today. I sat in my room (in the apartment of a private family in Leontievsky Alley) when an official entered, accompanied by the house porter and two soldiers. He introduced himself as an agent of the newly organized department "for the improvement of the workers' mode of life," and I could not suppress a smile when he solemnly informed me that the campaign for the benefit of the proletarians is directed by the Cheka. Better quarters are to be put at the disposal of the toilers, he announced; my room is among those to be "requisitioned" for that purpose. I should have to leave within twenty-four hours.

In entire sympathy with his object, I called the official's attention to the utter impossibility of securing even bed space at such short notice. Permission and "assignments" must first be procured from the Housing Bureau, a procedure which at best takes a week's time; often it requires months. Without deigning a reply the Chekist stepped into the hallway; opening the first door at hand, he said curtly: "You can stay here in the meantime."

A burst of soapy vapor swept against us. Through the clouds of steam I discerned a bedstead, a little table, and a woman bending over the washtub.

"*Tovarish*, here lives —," the house porter remarked timidly.

"It's big enough for two," the official retorted.

"But it's occupied by a woman," I protested.

"You'll manage somehow," he laughed coarsely.

Days spent at the offices of the Housing Bureau bring no results. But a week passes, then another, and no tenants appear to claim my room. The department for the "improvement of the workers' mode of life" is apparently more interested in "requisitioning" occupied lodgings than in putting them at the disposal of the proletarians. Only influence in high places or a generous "gift" secures the favor.[54]

Unexpectedly a friendly Communist comes to the rescue. It is arranged that my room be assigned to the Kropotkin Memorial Commission for an office: being the secretary I am permitted to retain it as my living quarters.

April 30. —Dark rumors circulate in the city. Three hundred politicals are said to have disappeared from the Butirki prison. Removed by force at night, it is reported; some executed. The Cheka refuses information.

Several days pass in tortuous uncertainty —many of my friends are among the missing. People living in the neighborhood of the prison tell of frightful cries heard

that night and sounds of desperate struggle. The authorities profess complete ignorance.

Gradually the facts begin to leak out. It has become known that the fifteen hundred non-politicals in the Butirki had declared a hunger strike in protest against the unhygienic conditions. The cells were overcrowded and unspeakably filthy, the doors locked even by day, the toilet buckets seldom removed, poisoning the air with fetid smells. The sanitary commission had warned the administration of the imminent danger of an epidemic, but its recommendations were ignored. Then the strike broke out. On the fourth day some of the prisoners became hysterical. Unearthly yells and the rattling of iron doors shook the prison for hours, the uproar rousing the neighborhood in alarm. The politicals did not participate in the demonstration. Segregated in a separate wing, they had by collective action compelled concessions. Their situation was much more tolerable than that of the "common" prisoners. But their sense of human kinship determined them to intercede. Their expostulations finally induced the Cheka to declare the demands of the hunger strikers just and to promise immediate relief. Thereupon the "commoners" terminated their protest, and the incident was apparently closed.

But a few days later, on the night of April 25, a detachment of soldiers and Chekists suddenly appeared in the prison. One by one the cells of the politicals were attacked, the men beaten and the women dragged by their hair into the yard, most of them in their night clothes. Some of the victims, fearing they were being taken to execution, resisted. Butts of guns and revolvers silenced them. Overcome, they were forced into automobiles and taken to the railroad station.

Investigation by the Moscow Soviet has now elicited the information that the kidnapped politicals, comprising Mensheviki, Social Revolutionists of the Right and Left, and Anarchists, have been isolated in rigorous solitary in the most dreaded Tsarist prisons in Ryazan, Orlov, Yaroslavl, and Vladimir.

June. —Intensive preparations are being made for the reception of the foreign delegations. The Congress of the Comintern (Communist International) and first Conference of the Red Trade Unions are to be held simultaneously.

The city is in holiday attire. Red flags and banners decorate official buildings and the residences of prominent Bolsheviki. The filth of months is carted off the streets; swarms of child hucksters are being arrested; the beggars have disappeared from their customary haunts, and the Tverskaya is cleared of prostitutes. The main thoroughfares are emblazoned with revolutionary mottoes, and colored posters illustrate the "triumph of Communism."

In the Hotel Luxe, palatial hostelry of the capital, are quartered the influential representatives of the foreign Communist parties. The street in front is lined with automobiles; I recognize the Royce of Karakhan and Zinoviev's machine from the garages of the Kremlin. Frequent tours are arranged to places of historic interest and Bolshevik meccas, always under the guidance of attendants and interpreters selected by the Cheka. Within there is an atmosphere of feverish activity. The brilliant banquet hall is crowded. The velvety cushions and bright foliage of the smoking room are restful to the delegates of the Western proletariat.

On the sidewalk opposite the Hotel women and children lurk in the hallways. Furtively they watch the soldiers unloading huge loaves of bread from a truck. A few chunks have fallen to the ground —the urchins dart under the wagon in a mad scramble.

All traffic is suspended on the Theatre Square. Soldiers in new uniforms and polished boots, and mounted troopers form a double chain around the big square, completely shutting off access. Only holders of special cards, provided with photographs and properly attested, are permitted to pass to the Big Theatre. The Congress of the Comintern is in session.

July 4. —Polyglot speech fills my room far into the small hours of the morning. Delegates from distant lands call to discuss Russia and the Revolution. As in a dream they vision the glory of revelation and are thrilled with admiration for the Bolsheviki. With glowing fervor they dwell on the wondrous achievements of Communism. Like a jagged scalpel their naive faith tears at my heart where bleeding lie my own high hopes, the hopes of my first days in Russia, deflowered and blighted by the ruthless hand of dictatorship.

Most sanguine and confident are the latest arrivals, secluded in the atmosphere of the Luxe and entirely unfamiliar with the life and thought of the people. Fascinated and awed, they marvel at the genius of the Party and its amazing success. Tyranny and oppression in Russia are things of the past, they believe; the masses have become free, for the first time in the annals of man. Ignorance and poverty, the evil heritage of Tsardom and long civil war, will soon be outlived, and plenty shall be the birthright of everyone in the land where the disinherited have become the masters of life.

Occasionally in the discussion a discordant note is sounded by the new economic policy. The seeming deflection from avowed principles is perplexing. Does it not hold the menace of returning capitalism? A smile of benevolent superiority waves the timid questioner aside. The NEP is ingenious camouflage, he is assured. It is of

no particular significance —at most, it is a temporary expedient, an economic Brest-Litovsk in a way, to be swept away at the first blast of revolution in the West.

The more reflective among the delegates are disturbed. Life in revolutionary Russia is too reminiscent of home: some are well-fed and well-clad, others hungry and in rags; the wage system continues, and all things can be bought and sold. Apologetically, almost guiltily, they express the apprehension that legalization of commerce might cultivate the psychology of the trader, which Lenin always insisted must be destroyed. But they are resentfully terrified when a Hindu visitor suggests that the Cheka had apparently flogged the peasants into taking the whip into their own hands.

Day by day the problems of the Revolution are discussed with increasing understanding of the causes responsible for the great deviation from the road entered upon in October, 1917. But the pressing need of the present centers the greatest attention. “Though Syndicalists, we have joined the Third International,” the Spanish delegate announces; “we believe it the duty of all revolutionists to cooperate with the Bolsheviki at this critical period.”

“They won’t let us,” one of the Russians replies.

“All can help in the economic reconstruction,” the Spaniard urges.

“You think so?” the visiting Petrograd worker demands. “You’ve heard of the great strikes last winter, haven’t you? The wood famine was the main cause of the trouble, and the Communists themselves were responsible for it.”

“How is that?” a French delegate inquires.

“The usual Bolshevik methods. A man of proven organizing genius was at the head of the Petrograd fuel department. His name? Never mind —he’s an old revolutionist who spent ten years in Schlüsselburg under the old regime. He kept the city supplied with wood and coal; he even organized a branch in Moscow for the same purpose. He surrounded himself with a staff of efficient men; many of the American deportees were among them, and they succeeded where the Government had previously failed. But one day Dzerzhinsky got the notion that the fuel manager was permitted too much scope. The Moscow branch was liquidated, and in Petrograd a political commissar was placed over him, handicapping and interfering with his work. The famine was the result.”

“But why? Why was it done?” several delegates exclaim.

“He was an Anarchist.”

“There must have been some misunderstanding,” the Australian suggests.

"The policy of the Communists throughout the country," the Russian says sadly.

"Friends, let us forget past mistakes," the Frenchman appeals. "I'm sure closer contact can be brought about between the Government and the revolutionary elements. I'll speak to Lenin about it. We in France see no reason for this strife. All revolutionists should work together with the Bolsheviki."

"Most of them are in prison," a former sailor remarks bitterly.

"I don't mean those who took up arms against the Republic," the Frenchman retorts. "Counterrevolution, like that of Kronstadt, must be crushed, and —"

"Don't repeat Bolshevik lies," the sailor interrupts vehemently. "Kronstadt fought for free Soviets."

"I know only what I heard from Communist comrades," the Frenchman continues. "But I am convinced that all real revolutionists, like Left S.R.'s, Anarchists, and Syndicalists should work together with the Communist Party."

"Almost all of them in prison," the Petrograd man repeats.

"Impossible!" the Spanish delegate protests. "The Communists have assured me that only bandits and counterrevolutionists are in jail."

A small, slender woman in a faded jacket hastily enters the room. She is greatly agitated and very pale. "Comrades," she announces, "the thirteen Anarchists in the Taganka have gone on a hunger strike." With trembling voice she adds: "It's to the death."

July 9. —Opposition has developed at the Trade Union Congress against the domination of the Comintern. All important matters are first decided by the latter before being submitted to the labor men. The delegates resent the autocratic methods of the Communist chairman; the inequitable distribution of votes is a source of constant friction. The Bolsheviki are charged with "packing" the Congress with delegates from countries having no industrial movement. An atmosphere of disillusionment and bitterness pervades the sessions. The French delegation threatens to bolt.

Some of the Germans, Swedish, and Spanish members are perturbed by the general situation. They have come in contact with the actual conditions; they have sensed the spirit of popular discontent and caught a glimpse of the chasm between Communist claims and the reality. The hunger strikes of the politicals, in Moscow, Petrograd, and other cities have become a subject of great concern. The prisoners are undernourished and exhausted; the desperate decision jeopardizes their lives. It were criminal to permit such a tragedy. Moreover, it is felt that their protest is

justified. In defiance of the Soviet Constitution, the politicals have been kept in prison for months, some even for years, without charges being brought against them.

The foreign delegates propose to call the subject to the attention of the Congress. They will refuse to cooperate with the Bolsheviki, they assert, while their comrades remain in prison without cause. Fearing a serious rupture, some delegates secured an audience with Lenin. The latter declared that the Government would not tolerate opposition; hunger strikes cannot swerve it from its purpose, though all the politicals chose to starve to death. But he would agree to have the imprisoned Anarchists deported from Russia, he said. The matter is to be immediately submitted to the Central Committee of the Party.

July 10. —Eighth day of the Taganka hunger strike. The men very weak; most of them unable to walk; several have developed heart trouble. The young student Sheroshevsky is dying from consumption.

The Central Committee has taken action on Lenin's suggestion. A joint committee representing the Government and the foreign delegates has been formed to arrange the conditions of release and deportation of the Anarchists. But so far the conferences have brought no results. Dzerzhinsky and Unschlicht, now acting head of the Cheka, claim there are no real Anarchists in the prisons; just bandits, they declare. They have thrown the burden of proof upon the delegates by demanding that the latter submit a complete list of those to be released. The delegates feel that the matter is being sabotaged to gain time till the Trade Union Congress closes.

July 13. —At last we succeeded in holding a session this evening. Trotsky was absent, his place taken by Lunatcharsky as the representative of the Party. The conference was held in the Kremlin.

Unschlicht, a stocky young man, dark featured and morose, in every gesture expressed his resentment of "foreign interference" in his sphere. He would not speak directly to the delegates, addressing himself only to Lunacharsky. His frank discourtesy unpleasantly affected the foreigners, and the conference was conducted in a formal, stiff manner. After much wrangling the Committee reached an agreement, as a result of which the following communication was sent to the prisoners:

> Comrades, in view, of the fact that we have come to the conclusion that your hunger strike cannot accomplish your liberation, we hereby advise you to terminate it.

At the same time we inform you that definite proposals have been made to us by Comrade Lunacharsky, in the name of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. To wit:

1. All Anarchists held in the prisons of Russia, and who are now on a hunger strike, will be permitted to leave for any country they may choose. They will be supplied with passports and funds.

2. Concerning other imprisoned Anarchists or those out of prison, final action will be taken by the Party tomorrow. It is the opinion of Comrade Lunacharsky that the decision in their case will be similar to the present one.

3. We have received the promise endorsed by Unschlicht, that the families of the comrades to go abroad will be permitted to follow them if they so wish. For conspirative reasons some time will have to elapse before this is done.

4. The comrades going abroad will be permitted two or three days at liberty before their departure, to enable them to arrange their affairs.

5. They will not be allowed to return to Russia without the consent of the Soviet Government.

6. Most of these conditions are contained in the letter received by this delegation from the Central Committee of the Communist Party, signed by Trotsky.

7. The foreign comrades have been authorized to see to it that these conditions are properly carried out.

(Signatures)

Orlandi —Spain

Leval —Spain

Sirolle —France

Michel —France

A. Shapiro —Russia

The above is correct.

(Signed) Lunacharsky.

Kremlin, Moscow,
13/vii/1921.

Alexander Berkman declines to sign because

1. he is opposed to deportation on principle;

2. he considers the letter an arbitrary and unjustified curtailment of the original offer of the Central Committee, according to which all the Anarchists were to be permitted to leave Russia;

3. he demands more time at liberty for those to be released, to enable them to recuperate before deportation.

July 14. —The hunger protest was terminated last night. The prisoners are momentarily expecting to be freed. Extremely weakened and in highly nervous state after eleven days of striking.

Like a bombshell came Bukharin's attack upon the Anarchists in the closing hour of the Trade Union Congress. Though not a delegate, he secured the platform and in the name of the Communist Party denounced the hunger strikers as counterrevolutionists. The whole Anarchist movement of Russia, he declared, is criminal banditism waging warfare against the Soviet Republic; it is identical with Makhno and his *povstantsi* who are exterminating Communists and fighting against the Revolution.

The session was thrown into an uproar. The majority of delegates resented this breach of faith in view of the tacit agreement to eliminate the matter from the Congress. But the chairman refused to permit a rejoinder, declaring the subject closed. A storm of indignation swept the house.

The insistence of the Congress at last compelled a hearing, and a French delegate took the floor to reply to Bukharin's charges. In the name of the Revolution he solemnly protested against the sinister Machiavelian diplomacy of the Bolsheviki. To attack the opposition at the closing of the Congress, without an opportunity of defense, he declared, was an act of perfidy unworthy of a revolutionary party. Its sole purpose was to prejudice the departing delegates against the revolutionary minority and justify continued political persecution; its obviously desired effect to annul the conciliatory efforts of the joint Committee.

August 10. —Days and weeks are passing; the politicals still remain in prison. The conferences of the Joint Committee have practically ceased —rarely can the representatives of the Government be induced to attend. The promises of Lenin and Lunacharsky are broken. The Cheka has made the resolution of the Executive Committee of the Party ineffective.

The Congresses are closed, and most of the delegates have departed.

September 17. —At noon today the hunger strikers were released from the Taganka, two months after the Government had pledged their liberation. The men look worn and old, withered by anguish and privation. They have been put under surveillance and forbidden to meet their comrades. It is said weeks will pass before opportunity will be given them to leave the country. They are not permitted to work and they have no means of subsistence.[55] The Cheka declares that no other politicals will be freed. Arrests of revolutionists are taking place throughout the country.

September 30. —With bowed heart I seek a familiar bench in the park. Here little Fanya sat at my side. Her face was turned to the sun, her whole being radiant with idealism. Her silvery laughter rang with the joy of youth and life, but I trembled for her safety at every approaching step. "Do not fear," she kept reassuring me, "no one will know me in my peasant disguise."

Now she is dead. Executed yesterday by the Cheka as a "bandit."[56]

Gray are the passing days. One by one the embers of hope have died out. Terror and despotism have crushed the life born in October. The slogans of the Revolution are foresworn, its ideals stifled in the blood of the people. The breath of yesterday is dooming millions to death; the shadow of today hangs like a black pall over the country. Dictatorship is trampling the masses under foot. The Revolution is dead; its spirit cries in the wilderness.

High time the truth about the Bolsheviki were told. The whited sepulcher must be unmasked, the clay feet of the fetish beguiling the international proletariat to fatal will o' the wisps exposed. The Bolshevik myth must be destroyed.

I have decided to leave Russia.

XL
The Lessons of the "Bolshevik Myth"

I
My Personal Attitude and Reactions

Since my early youth, revolution —social revolution —was the great hope and aim of my life. It signified to me the Messiah who was to deliver the world from brutality, injustice, and evil, and pave the way for a regenerated humanity of brotherhood, living in peace, liberty, and beauty.

Without exaggeration I may say that the happiest day of my existence was passed in a prison cell —the day when the first news of the October Revolution and the victory of the Bolsheviki reached me in the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary. The night of my dungeon was illumined by the glory of the great dream coming true. The bars of steel melted away, the stone walls receded, and I trod on the golden fleece of the Ideal about to be realised. Then followed weeks and months of trepidation, and I lived in a ferment of hope and fear —fear lest reaction overwhelm the Revolution, hope of reaching the land of promise.

At last arrived the longed-for day, and I was in Soviet Russia. I came exultant with the Revolution, full of admiration for the Bolsheviki, and flushed with the joy of useful work awaiting me in the midst of the heroic Russian people.

I knew that the Bolsheviki were Marxists, believers in a centralised State which I, an Anarchist, deny in principle. But I placed the Revolution above theories, and it seemed to me that the Bolsheviki did the same. Though Marxists, they had been instrumental in bringing about a revolution that was entirely un-Marxian; that was indeed in defiance of Marxian dogma and prophecy. Ardent advocates of parliamentarism, they repudiated it in their acts. Having persistently demanded the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, they unceremoniously dissolved it when life proved its inadequacy. They abandoned their agrarian policy to adopt that of the Social Revolutionists, in response to the needs of the peasantry. They resolutely applied Anarchist methods and tactics when the exigency of the situation demanded them. In short, the Bolsheviki appeared *in practice* a thoroughly revolutionary party whose sole aim was the success of the Revolution; a party

possessing the moral courage and integrity to subordinate its theories to the common welfare.

Had not Lenin himself frequently asserted that he and his followers were ultimately Anarchists —that political power was to them but a temporary means of accomplishing the Revolution? The State was gradually to die off, to disappear, as Engels had taught, because its functions would become unnecessary and obsolete.

I therefore accepted the Bolsheviki as the sincere and intrepid vanguard of man's social emancipation. To work with them, to help in the fight against the enemies of the Revolution, to aid in securing its fruits to the people was my fervent aspiration.

In that state of mind I came to Soviet Russia. As I had so passionately avowed at our first meeting of welcome on the Russian frontier, I came prepared to ignore all theoretic differences of opinion. I came to work, not to discuss. To learn, not to teach. To learn and to help.

I did learn, and I tried to help. I learned day by day, through the long weeks and months, in various parts of the country. But what I saw and learned was in such crying contrast with my hopes and expectations as to shake the very foundation of my faith in the Bolsheviki. Not that I expected to find Russia a proletarian Eldorado. By no means. I knew how great the travail of a revolutionary period, how stupendous the difficulties to be overcome. Russia was besieged on numerous fronts; there was counterrevolution within and without; the blockade was starving the country and denying even medical aid to sick women and children. The people were exhausted by long war and civil strife; industry was disorganised, the railroads broken down. I fully realised the dire situation, with Russia shedding her last blood on the altar of the Revolution, while the world at large stood by a supine witness and the Allied Powers aided death and destruction.

I saw the desperate heroism of the people and the almost superhuman efforts of the Bolsheviki. Closely associated with them, on terms of personal friendship with the leading Communists, I shared their interests and hopes, helped in their work, and was inspired by their selfless devotion and entire absorption in the service of the Revolution. Lack of sympathy on the part of other revolutionary elements filled me with grief, even anger. I was impatient of criticism of the Bolsheviki at a time when they were beset by powerful enemies. Refusal of support I resented, condemned as criminal, and I exerted my utmost efforts to bring about better understanding and cooperation between the opposing revolutionary factions.

My closeness to the Bolsheviki, my frank partiality in their favor aggravated my friends and alienated my nearest comrades. But my faith in the Communists and

their integrity would not be influenced. It was proof even against the evidence of my own senses and judgment, of my impressions and experience.

Life, reality continuously challenged my faith. I saw inequality and injustice on every hand, humanity trampled in the dust, alleged exigency made the cloak of treachery, deceit, and oppression. I saw the ruling Party suppress the vital impulses of the Revolution, discourage popular initiative and self-reliance so essential to its growth. Yet I clung to my faith. Tenaciously I nursed the hope that back of the wrong principles and false tactics, back of the Government bureaucracy and Party autocracy there smoldered the will to idealism that would sweep away the black clouds of despotism as soon as the Soviet Government would be safe from Allied interference and counterrevolution. That spark of idealism would excuse to me all the mistakes and errors, the monstrous incompetency, the incredible corruption, even the crimes committed in the name of the Revolution.

For eighteen months, months of anguish and heartrending experience, I clung to that hope. And day by day the conviction kept growing that Bolshevism was proving fatal to the best interests of the Revolution; that political power had become the sole aim of the dominant Party; that the State with its barrack Communism was enslaving and destructive. I saw the Bolsheviki steadily gain momentum on the inclined plane of tyranny; the Party dictatorship become the irresponsible absolutism of a few overlords; the apostles of liberty turn executioners of the people.

Every day the damning evidence was accumulating. I saw the Bolsheviki reflect the Revolution as a monstrous grotesque; I saw tragic revolutionary necessity institutionalised into irresponsible terror, the blood of thousands shed without reason or measure. I saw the class struggle, long terminated, become a war of vengeance and extermination. I saw the ideals of yesterday betrayed, the meaning of the Revolution perverted, its essence caricatured into reaction. I saw the workers subdued, the whole country silenced by the Party dictatorship and its organised brutality. I saw entire villages laid waste by Bolshevik artillery. I saw the prisons filled —not with counterrevolutionists, but with workers and peasants, with proletarian intellectuals, with starving women and children. I saw the revolutionary elements persecuted, the spirit of October crucified on the Golgotha of the omnipotent Communist State.

Still I would not concede the appalling truth. Still the hope persisted that the Bolsheviki, though absolutely wrong in principle and practice, yet grimly held on to some shreds of the revolutionary banner. “Allied interference,” “the blockade and civil war,” “the necessity of the transitory stage” —thus I sought to placate

my outraged conscience. When the critical period will be past, the hand of despotism and terror would be lifted, and my sorely tried faith justified.

At last the fronts were liquidated, civil war ended, and the country at peace. But Communist policies did not change. On the contrary: more fanatical became repression, red terror grew to orgy, more ruthlessly the Juggernaut of the State spread death and devastation. The country groaned under the unbearable yoke of the Party dictatorship. But no relief would be given. Then came Kronstadt and its simultaneous echoes throughout the land. For years the people had suffered untold misery, privation, and hunger. For the sake of the Revolution they were still willing to bear and to suffer. Not for bread did they cry. Only for a breath of life, of liberty.

Kronstadt could have easily turned its guns against Petrograd and driven out the Bolshevik masters who were frightened and on the verge of flight. One decisive blow by the sailors, and Petrograd would have been theirs and with it Moscow. The entire country was ready to welcome the step. Never before were the Bolsheviki nearer to destruction. But Kronstadt, like the rest of Russia, did not intend war on the Soviet Republic. It wanted no bloodshed, it would not fire the first shot. Kronstadt demanded only honest elections, Soviets free from Communist domination. It proclaimed the slogans of October and revived the true spirit of the Revolution.

Kronstadt was crushed as ruthlessly as Thiers and Gallifet slaughtered the Paris Communards. And with Kronstadt the entire country and its last hope. With it also my faith in the Bolsheviki. That day I broke finally, irrevocably, with the Communists. It became clear to me that never, under any circumtances, could I accept that degradation of human personality and liberty, that Party chauvinism and State absolutism which had become the essence of the Communist dictatorship. I realised at last that Bolshevik idealism was a **Myth**, a dangerous delusion fatal to liberty and progress.

II
The Communist Dictatorship and the Russian Revolution

The October Revolution was not the legitimate offspring of traditional Marxism. Russia but little resembled a country in which, according to Marx, “the concentration of the means of production and the socialisation of the tools of labor

reached the point where they can no longer be contained within their capitalistic shell. The shell bursts. …"

In Russia "the shell" burst unexpectedly. It burst at a stage of low technical and industrial development, when centralisation of production had made little progress. Russia was a country with a badly organised system of transportation, with an insignificant bourgeoisie and weak proletariat, but with a numerically strong and socially important peasant population. It was a country in which, apparently, there could be no talk of "irreconcilable antagonism between the grown industrial labor forces and a fully ripened capitalist system."

But the combination of circumstances in 1917 involved, particularly for Russia, an exceptional state of affairs which resulted in the catastrophic breakdown of her whole industrial system. "It was easy," Lenin justly wrote at the time, "to begin the revolution in the peculiarly unique situation of 1917."

The specially favorable conditions were:

1. the possibility of blending the slogans of the Social Revolution with the popular demand for the termination of the imperialistic world war, which had produced great exhaustion and dissatisfaction among the masses;

2. the chance of remaining, at least for a certain period, outside the sphere of influence of the capitalistic European groups which continued the war;

3. the opportunity to begin, even during the short time of this respite, the work of internal organisation and to prepare the foundation for revolutionary reconstruction;

4. the unusually favorable position of Russia, in case of new aggression on the part of West European imperialism, due to her vast territory and insufficient means of communication;

5. the advantages of such a condition in the event of civil war; and

6. the possibility of almost immediately satisfying the demands of the peasantry for land, notwithstanding the fact that the essentially democratic viewpoint of the agricultural population was entirely different from the Socialist program of the "Party of the proletariat" which seized the reins of government.

Moreover, revolutionary Russia already had the benefit of a great experience —that of 1905, when the Tsarist autocracy succeeded in crushing the revolution for the very reason that the latter strove to be exclusively political and therefore could neither arouse the peasants nor inspire even a considerable part of the proletariat.

The world war, by exposing the complete bankruptcy of constitutional government, served to prepare and quicken the greatest movement of the people —a movement which, by virtue of its very essence, could develop only into a social revolution.

Anticipating the measures of the government, often even in defiance of the latter, the revolutionary masses by their own initiative began, long before the October days, to put in practice their social ideals. They took possession of the land, the factories, mines, mills, and the tools of production. They got rid of the more hated and dangerous representatives of government and authority. In their grand revolutionary outburst they destroyed every form of political and economic oppression. In the deeps of Russia the processes of the Social Revolution were intensively at work even before the October change took place in Petrograd and Moscow.

The Communist Party, aiming at the dictatorship, from the very beginning correctly judged the situation. Throwing overboard the democratic planks of its platform, it proclaimed the slogans of the Social Revolution in order to gain control of the movement of the masses. In the course of the development of the Revolution, the Bolsheviki gave concrete form to certain fundamental principles and methods of Anarchist Communism, as for instance: the negation of parliamentarism, expropriation of the bourgeoisie, tactics of direct action, seizure of the means of production, establishment of the system of Workers' and Peasants' Councils (Soviets).

Furthermore, the Communist Party exploited all the popular demands of the hour: termination of the war, all power to the revolutionary proletariat, the land for the peasants. This attitude of the Bolsheviki was of tremendous psychologic effect in hastening and stimulating the Revolution.

The latter was an organic process that sprang with elemental force from the very needs of the people, from the complex combination of circumstances which determined their existence. The Revolution instinctively followed the path marked out by the great popular outburst, naturally reflecting Anarchist tendencies. It destroyed the old State mechanism and proclaimed in political life the principle of the federation of Soviets. It employed the method of direct expropriation to abolish private capitalistic ownership. In the field of economic reconstruction the Revolution established shop and factory committees for the management of production. House committees looked after the proper assignment of living quarters.

It was evident that the only right and wholesome development —which could save Russia from her external enemies, free her from inner strife, broaden and deepen

the Revolution itself —lay in the direct creative initiative of the toiling masses. Only they who had for centuries borne the heaviest burdens could through conscious systematic effort find the road to a new, regenerated society.

But this conception was in irreconcilable conflict with the spirit of Marxism in its Bolshevik interpretation and particularly with Lenin's authoritative view of it.

For years trained in their peculiar "underground" doctrine, in which fervent faith in the Social Revolution was in some strange manner united with their no less fanatical faith in State centralisation, the Bolsheviki devised an entirely new system of tactics. It was to the effect that the preparation and consummation of the Social Revolution necessitates the organisation of a special conspirative staff, consisting exclusively of the theoreticians of the movement, vested with dictatorial powers for the purpose of clarifying and perfecting beforehand, by their own conspirative means, the class-consciousness of the proletariat.

The fundamental characteristic of Bolshevik psychology is distrust of the masses. Left to themselves, the people —according to the Bolsheviki —can rise only to the consciousness of the petty reformer. The masses must be made free by force. To educate them to liberty one must not hesitate to use compulsion and violence. The road that leads to liberty was therefore forsaken.

"Proletarian compulsion in all its forms," as Bukharin, one of the foremost Communist theoreticians wrote, "beginning with summary execution and ending with compulsory labor is, however paradoxical it may sound, a method of reworking the human material of the capitalistic epoch into Communist humanity."

Already in the first days of the Revolution, early in 1918, when Lenin first announced to the world his socioeconomic program in its minutest details, the roles of the people and of the Party in the revolutionary reconstruction were strictly separated and definitely assigned. On the one hand, an absolutely submissive Socialist herd, a dumb people; on the other, the omniscient, all-controlling Political Party. What is inscrutable to everyone is an open book to It. There is only one indisputable source of truth —the State. But the Communist State is, in essence and practice, the dictatorship of its Central Committee. Every citizen must be, first and foremost, the servant of the State, its obedient functionary, unquestioningly executing the will of his master. All free initiative, of the individual as well as of the collectivity, is eliminated from the vision of the State. The people's Soviets are transformed into sections of the ruling Party; the Soviet institutions become soulless offices, mere transmitters of the will of the center to the periphery. All expressions of State activity must be stamped with the approving seal of

Communism as interpreted by the faction in power. Everything else is considered superfluous, useless, and dangerous.

By its declaration *L'état c'est moi*, the Bolshevik dictatorship assumed entire responsibility for the Revolution in all its historic and ethical implications.

Having paralyzed the constructive efforts of the people, the Communist Party could henceforth count only on its own initiative. By what means, then, did the Bolshevik dictatorship expect to use to best advantage the resources of the Social Revolution? What road did it choose, not merely to subject the masses mechanically to its authority, but also to educate them, to inspire them with advanced Socialist ideas, and to stimulate them —exhausted as they were by long war, economic ruin, and police rule —with new faith in Socialist reconstruction? What did it substitute in place of the revolutionary enthusiasm which burned so intensely before?

Two things comprised the beginning and the end of the constructive activities of the Bolshevik dictatorship: 1) the theory of the Communist State, and 2) terrorism.

In his speeches about the Communist program, in discussions at conferences and congresses, and in his celebrated pamphlet on the *Infantile Sickness of "Leftism" in Communism*, Lenin gradually shaped that peculiar doctrine of the Communist State which was fated to play the dominant role in the attitude of the Party and to determine all the subsequent steps of the Bolsheviki in the sphere of practical politics. It is the doctrine of a zigzag political road: of "respites" and "tributes," agreements and compromises, profitable retreats, advantageous withdrawals and surrenders —a truly classical theory of compromise.

Compromise and bargaining, for which the Bolsheviki so unmercifully and justly denounced and stigmatised all the other factions of State Socialism, became the Bethlehem Star pointing the way to revolutionary reconstruction. Naturally, such methods could not fail to lead into the swamp of conformation, hypocrisy, and unprincipledness.

The Brest-Litovsk peace; the agrarian policy with its spasmodic changes from the poorest class of the peasantry to the peasant exploiter; the perplexed attitude toward the labor unions; the fitful policy in regard to technical experts, with its theoretical and practical swaying from collegiate management of industries to "one-man power;" nervous appeals to West European capitalism over the heads of the home and foreign proletariat; finally, the latest inconsistent and zigzaggy, but incontrovertible and assured restoration of the abolished bourgeoisie —such is the system of Bolshevism. A system of unprecedented shamelessness practiced on a monster scale, a policy of outrageous double-dealing in which the left hand of the

Communist Party consciously ignores and even denies, on principle, what its right hand is doing; when, for instance, it is proclaimed that the most important problem of the moment is the struggle against the small bourgeoisie (and, incidentally, in stereotyped Bolshevik phraseology, against Anarchist elements), while on the other hand are issued new decrees creating the techno-economic and psychological conditions necessary for the restoration and strengthening of that same bourgeoisie —that is the Bolshevik policy which will forever stand as a monument of the thoroughly false, thoroughly contradictory, concerned only in self-preservation opportunistic policy of the Communist Party dictatorship.

However loudly that dictatorship may boast about the great success of its political methods, it remains the most tragic fact that the worst and most incurable wounds of the Revolution were received at the hands of the Communist dictatorship itself.

Long ago Engels said that the proletariat does not need the State to protect liberty, but needs it for the purpose of *crushing its opponents*; and that when it will be possible to speak of liberty, there will be no government. The Bolsheviki adopted this maxim not only as their socio-political axiom during the "transition period," but gave it universal application.

Terrorism has always been the ultima ratio of government alarmed for its existence. Terrorism is tempting with its tremendous possibilities. It offers a mechanical solution, as it were, in hopeless situations. Psychologically it is explained as a matter of self-defense, as the necessity of throwing off responsibility the better to strike the enemy.

But the principles of terrorism unavoidably rebound to the fatal injury of liberty and revolution. Absolute power corrupts and defeats its partisans no less than its opponents. A people that knows not liberty becomes accustomed to dictatorship. Fighting despotism and counterrevolution, terrorism itself becomes their efficient school.

Once on the road of terrorism, the State necessarily becomes estranged from the people. It must reduce to the minimum the circle of persons vested with extraordinary powers, in the name of the safety of the State. And then is born what may be called the panic of authority. The dictator, the despot is always cowardly. He suspects treason everywhere. And the more terrified he becomes, the wilder rages his frightened imagination, incapable of distinguishing real danger from fancied. He sows broadcast discontent, antagonism, hatred. Having chosen this course, the State is doomed to follow it to the very end.

The Russian people remained silent, and in their name in the guise of mortal combat with counterrevolution —the Government initiated the most merciless war against all opponents of the Communist Party. Every vestige of liberty was torn out by the roots. Freedom of thought, of the press, of public assembly, self-determination of the worker and of his unions, the freedom of labor —all were declared old rubbish, doctrinaire nonsense, "bourgeois prejudices," or intrigues of reviving counterrevolution.

That was the Bolshevik reply to the revolutionary enthusiasm and deep faith which inspired the masses in the beginning of their great struggle for liberty and justice —a reply that expressed itself in the policy of compromise abroad and terrorism at home.

Thrust back from direct participation in the constructive work of the Revolution, harassed at every step, the victim of constant supervision and control by the Party, the proletariat became accustomed to consider the Revolution and its further fortunes the personal affair of the Communists. In vain did the Bolsheviki point to the world war as the cause of Russia's economic breakdown; in vain did they ascribe it to the blockade and the attacks of armed counterrevolution. Not in them was the real source of the collapse and debacle.

No blockade, no wars with foreign reaction could dismay or conquer the revolutionary people whose unexampled heroism, self-sacrifice, and perseverance defeated all its external enemies. On the contrary, civil war really helped the Bolsheviki. It served to keep alive popular enthusiasm and nurtured the hope that, with the end of war, the ruling Party will make effective the new revolutionary principles and secure the people in the enjoyment of the fruits of the Revolution. The masses looked forward to the yearned-for opportunity for social and economic liberty. Paradoxical as it may sound, the Communist dictatorship had no better ally, in the sense of strengthening and prolonging its life, than the reactionary forces which fought against it.

It was only the termination of the wars which permitted a full view of the economic and psychologic demoralisation to which the blindly despotic policy of the dictatorship brought Russia. Then it became evident that the most formidable danger to the Revolution was not outside, but *within* the country: a danger resulting from the very nature of the social and economic arrangements which characterise the system of Bolshevism.

Its distinctive features —inherent social antagonisms —are abolished only formally in the Soviet Republic. In reality those antagonisms exist and are very deep-seated. The exploitation of labor, the enslavement of the worker and peasant,

the cancellation of the citizen as a human being, as a personality, and his transformation into a microscopic part of the universal economic mechanism owned by the government; the creation of privileged groups favored by the State; the system of labor service and its punitive organs —these are the characteristics of Bolshevism.

Bolshevism, with its Party dictatorship and State Communism, is not and can never become the threshold of a free, non-authoritarian Communist society, because the very essence and nature of governmental, compulsory Communism excludes such an evolution. Its economic and political centralisation, its governmentalisation and bureaucratisation of every sphere of activity and effort, its inevitable militarisation and degradation of the human spirit mechanically destroy every germ of new life and extinguish the stimuli of creative, constructive work.

The historic struggle of the laboring masses for liberty necessarily and unavoidably proceeds outside the sphere of governmental influence. The struggle against oppression —political, economic, and social —against the exploitation of man by man, or of the individual by the government, is always simultaneously also a struggle against government as such. The political State, whatever its form, and constructive revolutionary effort are irreconcilable. They are mutually exclusive. Every revolution in the course of its development faces this alternative: to build freely, independently and despite of the government, or to choose government with all the limitation and stagnation it involves. The path of the Social Revolution, of the constructive self-reliance of the organised, conscious masses, is in the direction of non-government; that is, of Anarchy. Not the State, not government, but systematic and coordinated social reconstruction by the toilers is necessary for the upbuilding of the new society. Not the State and its police methods, but the solidaric cooperation of all working elements —the proletariat, the peasantry, the revolutionary intelligentsia —mutually helping each other in their voluntary associations, will emancipate us from the State superstition and bridge the passage between the abolished old civilisation and Free Communism. Not by order of some central authority, but organically, from life itself, must grow up the closely knit federation of the united industrial, agrarian, and other associations; by the workers themselves must they be organised and managed, and then —and only then —will the great aspiration of labor for social regeneration have a sound, firm foundation. Only such an organisation of the commonwealth will make room for the really free, creative, new humanity, and will be the actual threshold of nongovernmental, Anarchist Communism.

We live on the eve of tremendous social changes. The old forms of life are breaking and falling apart. New elements are coming into being, seeking adequate expression. The pillars of present-day civilisation are being shattered. The principles of private ownership, the conception of human personality, of social life and liberty are being transvalued. Bolshevism came to the world as the revolutionary symbol, the promise of the better day. To millions of the disinherited and enslaved it became the new religion, the beacon of social salvation. But Bolshevism has failed, utterly and absolutely. As Christianity, once the hope of the submerged, has driven Christ and his spirit from the Church, so has Bolshevism crucified the Russian Revolution, betrayed the people, and is now seeking to dupe other millions with its Judas kiss.

It is imperative to unmask the great delusion, which otherwise might lead the Western workers to the same abyss as their brothers in Russia. It is incumbent upon those who have seen through the myth to expose its true nature, to unveil the social menace that hides behind it —the red Jesuitism that would throw the world back to the dark ages and the Inquisition.

Bolshevism is of the past. The future belongs to man and his liberty.

Endnotes

1. Statue of Peter the Great ↩

2. Master. ↩

3. Well-to-do peasants. ↩

4. Requisition. ↩

5. Master. ↩

6. Raid. ↩

7. Communist Party. ↩

8. Political imprisoned in the Schlüsselburg Fortress. ↩

9. Your health. ↩

10. Show schools. ↩

11. Siberian jungle. ↩

12. Popular patronymic of Lenin. ↩

13. House. ↩

14. Chairman. ↩

15. Committee of Poverty organized by the Bolsheviki. ↩

16. Lenin. ↩

17. Sentinel. ↩

18. Fighting. ↩

19. From the Russian *subota*, Saturday. Applied to volunteers offering their labor Saturday after hours. ↩

20. Communist students of military academies training officers for the Red Army. ↩

21. On September 25, 1919, an “underground” group of Left Social Revolutionists and Anarchists exploded a bomb in the Leontievsky Pereulok house in which the Moscow Committee of the Communist Party was in session. ↩

22. Anarchists of ideas. ↩

23. The famous revolutionist who killed General Lukhomsky, the peasant flogger, and who was tortured by the Tsar’s officers and then sent to Siberia for life. Released by the Revolution of 1917, she became the leader of the Left Social Revolutionary wing, gaining a large following, especially among the peasantry. ↩

24. Lenin. ↩

25. Petrograd Fuel Department. ↩

26. President of the All-Russian Cheka. ↩

27. Popular name for Petrograd. ↩

28. Union of Communist Youth. ↩

29. Peasant Bands, called *Zelyonniy* (green) because of their habitat in forests. According to another version the appellation is derived from the name of one of their leaders. ↩

30. Nightmare. ↩

31. Chairman. ↩

32. A political prisoner condemned to hard labor. ↩

33. The fall of Robespierre —July 27, 1794. ↩

34. Masters. ↩

35. Old tradition. Yemilian Pugatchev, leader of the great peasant and Cossack uprising under Catherine II, was executed in 1775. ↩

36. Grandmother. ↩

37. Good one. ↩

38. Pious earlocks. ↩

39. Opprobrious term for the Jew. ↩

40. Father, leader. ↩

41. Took place in the village of Sentovo, Kherson province, July 27, 1919. ↩

42. Cabmen. ↩

43. Bagmen, traders. ↩

44. Der Bund —an organization of Jewish Socialists. ↩

45. Astrov later died in prison. ↩

46. Master. ↩

47. General Slastchev-Krinski was later received with special honors into the Red Army and sent by Trotsky to subdue the Karelian peasants (1922). ↩

48. In Atlanta, Georgia, where the author served two years for anti-militarist propaganda. ↩

49. See *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*, by Alexander Berkman, Mother Earth Publishing Association, New York, 1912. ↩

50. At the last moment the Cheka refused to release them. ↩

51. An exhaustive study of the Kronstadt tragedy, with the documents pertaining to it, will be found in the author's brochure, "The Kronstadt Rebellion," published by *Der Syndicalist*, Berlin, 1922. ↩

52. The historic document, suppressed in Russia, is here reproduced in full. ↩

53. Popular abbreviation of the "New Economic Policy" reestablishing capitalism. Introduced by the Tenth Congress of Soviets during the Kronstadt days. ↩

54. Several months later the entire Moscow Housing Department, comprising several hundred agents and chief commissars, was arrested an charges of graft. ↩

55. Not till January, 1922, were the released Taganka Anarchists deported to Germany. ↩

56. Fanya Baron and Lev Tchorny, Anarchist poet and author, were executed with eight other prisoners by the Moscow Cheka in September, 1921. ↩