

WE HAVE MET  
LENIN

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WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!







*W. Pieck (Lenin)*

# WE HAVE MET LENIN

C. ZETKIN  
SEN-KATAYAMA  
F. HECKERT  
W. GALLACHER  
V. KOLAROV  
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FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE  
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*Printed in the U.S.S.R.*



### PUBLISHERS' PREFACE

The material collected in this volume is not new. It consists of articles which were printed at various times in periodicals published in Russian and in other languages. Only a few slight changes have been introduced.

However, the problems touched upon by the representatives of the various Communist Parties in the reminiscences of their meetings with Lenin are still of vital interest.

Even from the random notes and reminiscences collected in the present volume, the reader will gain a view of the great figure of Lenin—the genius and leader of the world proletariat.



CLARA ZETKIN

**LENIN AT THE THIRD CONGRESS OF  
THE COMINTERN**

Lenin gets up to speak. The speech is a masterpiece of eloquence. No trace of rhetoric. He carries his points by the weight of clear thought, the inexorable logic of argument, the consistent, firmly held line. Like unhewn blocks of granite the sentences are hurled and fused into an integrated whole. Lenin does not want to dazzle, to enchant; he wants to convince. He convinces and thereby enchants. Not by beautiful, sonorous words which intoxicate, but by the luminous spirit which, without self-deception, comprehends the world of social phenomena in its reality and which, with ruthless truthfulness, reveals "what is."

Like lashes of a whip, like crashing blows of a sword, Lenin's words fall on those who have turned the "hunting for a theory" into a sort of sport, and do not understand what will lead us to victory.

"Only if in the struggle we get on our side the majority of the working people, and not the majority of the workers alone, but the majority of the exploited and oppressed, only then shall we really triumph."

Everyone feels that the decisive blow has been struck. When I shook Lenin's hand in enthusiasm I could not refrain from saying:



"Do you know, Comrade Lenin, that a speaker at a meeting in the most out of the way place would be shy of speaking as simply, as plainly, as you do? He would be afraid of not being 'educated' enough. I know only one counterpart to your way of speaking. It is Tolstoy's great art. Like him, you have the broad, unified, firm line of thought, the sense of inexorable truth. That is beauty. Perhaps it is a peculiarly Slav characteristic?"

"I don't know," Lenin replied. "I only know that when I was appearing 'as the speaker' I always thought of the workers and peasants rather than of my audience. I wanted them to understand me. Wherever a Communist speaks he must think of the masses, must speak for them. But it's good that nobody heard your national psychological hypothesis, or they might say: 'Look, look, the old man lets himself get caught by compliments.' We must be careful so that nobody may suspect that the two old people are hatching a plot against the 'left.' The 'Lefts', of course, are innocent of intrigue."

And laughing heartily Lenin left the hall and went to his work.

## SEN-KATAYAMA

### WITH COMRADE LENIN

I met Comrade Lenin three times; but my recollections are rather scanty. The first time I met him at a sitting of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets in the Bolshoi Theatre on the evening of December 25, 1921; the second time—in February 1922—in his study in the Kremlin; and the last time—on November 13, 1922—in the Andrei Hall in the Kremlin, during the Fourth Congress of the Communist International.

#### I

It will be in place to explain here how I happened to be present at that session of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. Ever since 1916 I had been active in the Left Wing movement in America and had taken part in publishing the weekly *Revolutionary Age* and the monthly *Class Struggle* which interpreted the Russian Revolution to the American workers. . . . I had come to Moscow from Mexico, where I had been working at the time, to attend the Congress of the Toilers of the Far East.

Lenin was not there yet when I delivered my short speech of greetings. The Bolshoi Theatre was crowded to overflowing. I saw that all were greatly excited and impatient to hear the expected speech of Comrade Lenin.

When Comrade Lenin appeared in the hall, all rose and ap-



plauded for several minutes. When the chairman called upon the speaker and Lenin mounted the rostrum, all rose again and hailed him with a protracted ovation.

Since I knew no Russian, my observations on that evening were of a limited nature. Comrade Lenin was very much at ease when he spoke, and the entire audience listened to him with absorbed attention, maintaining a profound quiet.

Comrade Lenin spoke for about three hours, with never a sign of fatigue, hardly ever changing his voice, never swerving from the line of thought he was pursuing, expounding argument after argument; and the entire audience, it seemed, hung on every word of his, listening with bated breath. Comrade Lenin did not resort to any rhetoric, or oratorical gestures. But he possessed an extraordinary fascination. As soon as he started to speak, absolute quiet reigned and all eyes were riveted on him. In all those three long hours I did not see a single person in the vast audience fidgeting or coughing. Lenin held the audience entranced. To them his speech seemed to last a very short time.

Comrade Lenin is the greatest orator I have ever heard in my life. When he finished his speech, the whole audience rose, cheered again and sang the *International*.

After this sitting I had an interview with Comrade Lenin who shook my hand warmly, addressing me by my name, which he pronounced so correctly and confidently as if he had known me for a long time before.

## II

The second time I met Comrade Lenin during the first congress of the revolutionary organizations of the Far East, in February 1922.

The congress took place in Moscow and was attended by delegates from China, Japan, Indonesia and Mongolia. There were 125 delegates. The congress had asked Comrade Lenin to attend its meetings and offer his advice. But, owing to bad health, Comrade Lenin was unable to satisfy the request of the congress and he invited us, the delegates, to visit him in his apartment.

We waited several minutes for Comrade Lenin to come in. Except for myself, none of the delegates had ever seen him before. Comrade Lenin entered the room, shook hands with every delegate, settled down in an arm-chair, and began to talk to the delegates of each country in turn, discussing with them the questions pertaining to their respective countries, as well as the questions relating to the Far East as a whole. One of the questions that was brought up in the conversation was that of the united front. Comrade Lenin stressed the necessity of uniting the revolutionary workers of the Far Eastern countries and said, looking at me:

"You advocated the united front in the Far Eastern countries."

He must have read my article in which I maintained that the Korean and Japanese workers must form a united front against Japanese imperialism which equally oppressed and exploited the workers of both countries.

Comrade Lenin was in a very good mood on that evening and he looked well. He spoke English quite freely and was very attentive to every one of us. He possessed the ability of listening well, and had a word of encouragement for everyone. We all felt entirely at home with him. He was a real master of conversation. During this brief, but very important conversation with the members of the congress, Comrade Lenin gave every delegation many useful suggestions and good advice.

When the conversation was over, I was the last one to take my leave, and therefore I had an opportunity to exchange a few words with Comrade Lenin.

"I hear that you are leaving Moscow for a rest in the country," I said.

Comrade Lenin answered:

"Yes."

"I wish you a quiet rest and to return in better health."

Comrade Lenin replied:

"I must have a good rest because I must work; we all must work."

### III

The third and last time I shook Comrade Lenin's hand was during the Fourth Congress of the Comintern—to be exact, on November 13, 1922. The subject of his report at this congress was "Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of the World Revolution."

The great Andrei Hall was overcrowded. There was an atmosphere of tense expectation as everybody eagerly awaited Lenin's appearance. When the leader of the Russian Revolution and of the world proletariat entered the hall, he was met with enthusiastic ovations and endless cheering. All rose to acclaim Comrade Lenin. The delegates sang the *International*.

When Comrade Lenin mounted the rostrum he shook hands with every member of the Presidium. I felt that his hand was not the same as it had been on the previous occasion; I realized that he had been ill for a long time and that he had had to make a big effort to come to greet the congress.

But when he began to speak he appeared quite well. Lenin spoke in German. He looked at his watch several times, timing himself so as to speak not longer than one hour. All those present listened with great attention, and there was perfect quiet in the hall.

When he finished, the entire hall applauded loudly. He sat down among the leading comrades and for several minutes carried on a conversation with them. Then he rose to leave. The whole audience also rose and remained standing until he left the hall.

\* \* \*

In conclusion I want to say that, although I met Comrade Lenin only three times, this was a great joy to me; it was the greatest happiness for me when I shook his hand. Many comrades learned under him and worked under his personal guidance. But there are millions who would want to have seen him, to have heard him, to have talked to him, but who never had the chance. To remember each occasion one had of meeting Comrade Lenin personally, and to tell about such meetings to others—that should be our real duty to the Party and the Revolution. That is why I jotted down these my reminiscences of Comrade Lenin.



FRITZ HECKERT

### MY MEETINGS WITH V. I. LENIN

In the years 1908-1912 I lived in Switzerland. In Zurich I made friends with a Russian youth by the name of Alex who had escaped from exile in Siberia. He took an active part in the wide discussions and debates that were taking place in 1908 against the god-seekers and others, and through him I gained some idea about the activity of Lenin. Each time when he came home after a debate he told me in detail about how Bogdanov, Lunacharsky and the others were wrong, and how right Lenin was.

Once I accompanied Alex to the small Russian library on University Street in Zurich, where it was his turn that day to work as librarian. Suddenly he pointed out to me a pedestrian who was walking on the other side of the street, and said in a voice full of excitement:

"You see that short man there—that's our leader, Lenin."

That was how I first saw Lenin.

From Alex's nightly stories, which he told in a broken German interspersed with Russian words, I knew something about the struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks and about Lenin's position. The struggle and the political discussions in the colonies of the Russian emigrants in Zurich, Berne and Geneva naturally penetrated into our ranks as well. These



V. I. Lenin in 1900.

discussions reverberated also at the meetings of the Central Emigrants' Committee in Zurich, in which I held the post of secretary at the time; the Committee had frequent occasions to deal with the Russian emigrants.

\* \* \*

A few days after war had been declared I read a newspaper item to the effect that the leader of the Russian Bolsheviks condemned the German Social Democrats in sharp terms for voting in the Reichstag on August 4, 1914, in favour of granting war credits. It was at that time that Lenin's influence began to penetrate to a greater extent into Germany through the journal *Vorbote* which was being imported by illegal means, and we became acquainted, not only with Lenin's position against the war, but also with his views and criticism of German Social-Democracy and of Kautsky.

In 1915 I had hoped to meet Lenin personally at the Zimmerwald Conference, but unfortunately the police made my trip to Zimmerwald impossible.

Thus I could find out about Lenin's speeches at Zimmerwald only from what others told me.

It became clear to me at that time that on a number of fundamental questions we, the Spartacus Bund, entertained different views from those held by the comrades of the *Bremer Arbeiterpolitik*.\* On a number of important questions they were closer

\* The *Bremer Arbeiterpolitik* was the organ of the Bremen Left Radicals which appeared legally during the years 1914-18, since it adapted its language to the conditions of the military censorship. On many important questions, as, for instance, the question of breaking with the Kautskians and the question of the defence of the fatherland, the journal was closer to the Bolsheviks than the Spartacus Bund; but it pursued a Syndicalist line in trade union questions and inclined towards Federalism in the questions of the Party structure.

to Lenin, and our Spartacus leaders were not with Lenin. . . . It was then that I began to grasp the difference between the *Bremer Arbeiterpolitik* and the documents issued by the Spartacus Bund.

I could not understand why Rosa Luxemburg did not want to make common cause with the Bremen comrades. But when Junius' pamphlet (Junius was Rosa's pen name) appeared, and a few weeks later Lenin's criticism of this pamphlet in the *Vorbote*, we discussed Lenin's criticism in our circle. Some of our comrades at once agreed with Lenin.

As I have already said, I had seen Lenin only once through the window of the Russian library in Zurich. After the November Revolution in 1918 I had a great desire to talk to Lenin about our German affairs.

I enthusiastically hailed Lenin's appeal for the formation of a new International to unite all the revolutionary parties and groups.

At that time quite a number of Lenin's works was circulating in Germany. True, the translations were bad, and the formulations in German sometimes entirely distorted the sense of the original. Still, we learned a great deal about Lenin's ideas on the main questions. Some of his works were printed in Germany and were widely read.

Clara Zetkin visited me shortly before I joined the newly organized Communist Party of Germany. She lived near Stuttgart at the time. During this visit she told me that her acquaintance with Lenin dated back to the Stuttgart Congress in 1907.

I was very anxious to meet as soon as possible the man who, as had been proven by the October Revolution, was able to achieve much more than we of the Spartacus Bund in Germany, although up to that time it had been thought that Germany

would be the first country in which the proletarian revolution would triumph.

\* \* \*

In the autumn of 1920, the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany split. Its Left wing, which had a great working-class following, joined the Communist Party. We became a mass party. Among many of the Left-wing Independents the opinion still prevailed that it was not absolutely necessary to win the majority of the working class in order to carry out a real revolution, but that it could be accomplished by a determined minority. No wonder therefore that in the United Communist Party, too, there were many who held the view that the time had come to get even with the bourgeoisie and the Social-Democrats for all the injuries of the past.

Our bourgeois opponents took advantage of these sentiments and provoked an armed clash in Central Germany, in Leuna and Mansfeld. We suffered cruel defeat, which immediately brought about the splitting off of a great number of those who had only recently joined our Party. We, however, failed to realize the entire significance of this defeat and its effects.

We thought that the defeat in Central Germany was a minor matter and that in the long run it would even lead to the strengthening of our Party. We elaborated this view into a whole theory which we called "The Theory of Offensive"\*: we argued

\* According to the "Theory of Offensive" which emerged in connection with the battles in Central Germany in March 1921, the Communist vanguard of the proletariat was to start an armed insurrection independently, in order to "break the passivity" of the proletariat by its example and thus draw the working class into the fight. At the Third Congress of the Communist International the exponents of the "theory of offensive" in several Sections of the C. I. attempted to



that since our Party was now the genuine mass party of the German proletariat, it was our duty "everywhere to find the enemy and deal him blows."

Since I was again liable to arrest, and the police were hunting me everywhere, the Party sent me to Moscow. On the way I met the Hungarian comrade Rakosi. He promised to introduce me to Lenin immediately after our arrival in Moscow, and to support my views. I felt that I was rather well armed. With the confidence I had in our Party and its fundamentally correct tactics, and with the "theory of offensive" in reserve, I was certain that I would make a good impression on Lenin.

\* \* \*

I was climbing up the flight of stairs leading to Lenin's apartment and, somehow, I was not aware how it happened that I suddenly found myself in Lenin's presence. He was in his study, sitting in a wicker chair. He addressed me in German and asked me to be seated. Then he said with a slight shade of irony in his voice:

"Well, Comrade Heckert, tell us about your heroic exploits in Central Germany."

I did not wait for the request to be repeated and related to him everything I had been thinking about. Then Lenin said:

"But I hear that you were beaten."

present a common front. But Lenin demolished this essentially anti-revolutionary theory which ran counter to the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism. The Third Congress proclaimed that the main task of the Communist Parties is to win the majority of the working class. The chief exponents of the "theory of offensive" in Germany subsequently followed either the Right path (Thalheimer, P. Froelich) or the path of the ultra-Lefts (Maslow and others) and in the end landed in the camp of counter-revolutionary Trotskyism.

I began to argue, trying to prove that that was not the case and that after the events in Central Germany our Party continued to grow and entrench itself.

"So that's how it is," Lenin said, "it would be interesting to know how you can prove it."

Rakosi tried to come to my support, but Lenin made a sharp rejoinder. Then he turned to me and said:

"You fell into the trap of a provocation, you got a sound drubbing, and the Party will pay for it dearly."

We left Lenin's study crestfallen. I realized now that if our German delegation made any impression with its "theory of offensive," it would be a bad one.

Shortly after that other delegates arrived from Germany to attend the Third Congress of the Comintern. Again we all went to see Lenin. He received us in the same study. We again laid before him all our arguments, though we were not as sure of ourselves as we had been before. Some of the authors of the "theory of offensive" already entertained certain doubts with regard to one formulation or another. Lenin again scattered all our arguments to the winds, this time speaking in even sharper terms. When he asked:

"What did you imagine the workers were going to think if you led them into battle and they received blows, as was the case in Mansfeld?"

Wilhelm Kennen replied:

"The workers learn from the blows that they receive."

"Do they learn even now when they have lost their jobs?" Lenin asked. To which Kennen replied:

"The stomach electrifies their brains with revolutionary energy."

Lenin seized upon this phrase in order to ridicule our entire

position on these questions. Each time when he proved to us that our line on a question was groundless, wrong and dangerous he invariably added:

"To be sure, in your case it all comes from the electrification of the brains by the stomach. . . ."

Later, at one of the sessions in the Small Hall in the Kremlin, Lenin again explained to the entire delegation, among whom there were also comrades who had been opposed to the action in Central Germany, the whole absurdity of what we had perpetrated. He showed how it was that characters like the spy Ferry who tried to blow up the Obelisk of Victory, and others who threw bombs into toilets, had managed to worm into our ranks. Lenin said:

"The trap was obvious and distinct. But instead of taking the defensive and mobilizing the workers to repulse the attacks of the bourgeoisie, and in this way showing the masses that you were right, you invented the absurd 'theory of offensive' which furnishes the police and all the reactionary authorities an opportunity to represent you as the instigators of the very attack against which the people must be defended!"

As a result of this sharp rebuke we immediately discontinued the propaganda of the "theory of offensive."

But Lenin chastized us not only for the events in Central Germany, but in general—for the clumsiness, lack of flexibility and dogmatic rigidity which we displayed in our policies. He condemned our behaviour at the Heidelberg Congress\* which repelled so many honest workers from the Comintern. He condemned our passivity, and our refusal to work in the reformist

\* The congress of the Communist Party of Germany held in Heidelberg in 1919. At this congress a group was expelled, which subsequently joined the Communist Labour Party of Germany.

trade unions. Of course, the delegates of the "Communist Labour Party", which was affiliated to the Comintern as an organization of sympathizers, also got their due.

At the preparatory meetings preceding the congress, which were held in the hall of the Hotel Continental on Theatre Square, Lenin again exposed all our weaknesses and errors.

Clara Zetkin bitterly attacked us and practically took up Lenin's position. We, on our part, sharply attacked Clara; particularly I was very very sharp in my speech. As it happened, the following day was Clara's sixtieth birthday. Naturally we had to congratulate our old revolutionary who was marching in the front ranks of our struggle. We got a large bouquet of roses. But then the question came up as to who was going to make the congratulatory speech at the congress. The choice fell on me. I was trying to get out of this somehow and adduced scores of all kinds of excuses. Then Lenin slipped his arm in mine and said:

"Comrade Heckert, you pursued a wrong policy in Germany—that's a reason to be sore. Clara told you that your policy was a bad one. Perhaps not every one of the words she used was appropriate. But you also spoke against Clara very sharply and unjustly last night. So make amends for it today with a bouquet of roses."

I did everything I could. Clara also thanked me when she accepted the bouquet which I handed her. When I descended the rostrum, Lenin said jokingly:

"Now you see, everything went off smoothly. . . ."

\* \* \*

A small exhibition of so-called "revolutionary" artists was being shown in the Hotel Continental. On the background of gaudy daubing there was all kinds of junk, old rags, fragments of crockery, a piece of stove pipe and like objects fastened to canvases—and all this trash was supposed to represent the new art. I was plainly indignant. When I argued with a comrade who was trying to prove that there was some sense in this so-called "art," Lenin who was standing behind me shook his head and said:

"Well, you see, Comrade Heckert, this kind of thing happens in our country, too."

\* \* \*

In 1921 (I think it was a few weeks before the Third Congress of the Comintern) some comrades took me along with them to listen to a lecture by Lenin in the Column Hall of the Dom Soyuzov.

The hall was filled to overflowing. Lenin spoke of the necessity for a new economic policy and the conclusions that had to be drawn from it. In this question, too, we Communists of the West were slow to grasp the issues involved. There were some comrades in the hall who considered the New Economic Policy alien to the Revolution. Lenin said in his speech that we Communists must learn to trade, that we could no longer advance by the methods of War Communism. He further said that the Bolsheviks still lacked the ability to trade, but that they were sure to learn.

Many of those present felt greatly offended at this. They did not want, you see, to be "degraded" and reduced to the role of "tradespeople." One Russian comrade whose acquaintance I had made in Germany where he had come to take care of the

work connected with the liberation of the Russian prisoners of war was violently opposed to the N.E.P. He specially came to this meeting from Sverdlovsk where he was in charge of an arms plant. He strongly resented Lenin's demand that the Bolsheviks learn to trade, and immediately took the floor to attack Lenin in purely partisan fashion for his "opportunism." There was another "hero" of the same brand who spoke against Lenin. But how mercilessly and scathingly they were routed by Lenin!

A few days after this meeting I again had the opportunity of discussing with Lenin the problems of the German Party.

After the Third World Congress, and particularly after our congress in Jena, Friesland who had formerly fought Levi as a Left got together a group of Right elements who tried to have the decisions of our Party and of the World Congress reversed in the spirit of Levi. In order to make sure of a majority in the Central Committee in favour of this "coup d'état," Friesland who was General Secretary of our Party for a short time after the congress contrived to have Wilhelm Pieck and myself sent to Moscow right after the Jena Congress. In the beginning of November we learned of Friesland's designs, and we tried to see Lenin and get his advice.

On November 10 we visited Lenin in his study in the Kremlin and informed him of the details of this opportunist plot against the Party. Lenin listened to us attentively and then told us that we must return to Germany immediately in order to wrest the Party free from the hands of Friesland and Co. He warned us that our Party would have to face and overcome even more complicated situations. Encouraged by Lenin's friendly advice we left for Berlin that same evening. Friesland and his group of conspirators were fairly knocked off their feet with astonishment when we appeared at the meeting of the Central Committee.



As a result, it was not the comrades who remained loyal to the Comintern that were ousted from the Party, but Friesland and his followers.

\* \* \*

The last time I saw Lenin was after the first attack of his illness, at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern.

It was then that I realized what great love was cherished for the founder of the Comintern, not only by the Bolsheviks, but by the foreign comrades as well.

On many an evening when Lenin was unable to attend the congress, we marched directly from the session to the house in which Lenin lived, singing the "Bandiera Rossa." The Italians always took part in these nocturnal serenades, and their melodious voices were heard above all the others. And when we would see Lenin's silhouette as it appeared behind the window we would be gloriously happy, forgetting entirely that by our noise we were only disturbing the rest of the man who was seriously ill.

One evening, as we were walking down Troitsky Bridge after the usual serenading, we met Stalin. We formed a circle around him and expressed our enthusiasm by lifting him on our hands.

Like all the other comrades, I was of course hoping that Lenin would soon get well and again take into his hands the leadership of our world Communist Party. For a long time past I had been convinced that he was the most remarkable revolutionary leader I had ever met.

When I heard of Lenin's death I was thunderstruck, and for a long time I could not reconcile myself to the idea that Lenin had departed from us. Our enemies had written so many

times: "Lenin is dead." Perhaps this was another of their lies. But, alas, this time the sad report turned out to be true.

The first time after Lenin's death, as I was again watching the May First demonstration from the height of his mausoleum in the Red Square, this was what I felt with every fibre of my being:

Lenin is not dead; he lives and will continue to live in our struggle for the victory of Communism throughout the world. He lives in the grand Socialist construction of the Land of Soviets, he lives in the revolutionary struggles of the Communists in all countries. His cause is in the faithful hands of Lenin's world Party which is led by our greatest leader—the brilliant Stalin.

W. GALLACHER

### REMINISCENCES OF LENIN

In 1920 I got appointed by the comrades in Glasgow, associated with the Clyde workers' committee (Shop Stewards Movement) to attend the Second Congress of the Communist International. We were at that time "Left" sectarian and refused to participate in the discussions taking place between the B.S.P. and the S.L.P. on the questions of the formation of a Communist Party in Britain. We had the project in view of starting a "pure" Communist Party in Scotland, a party that would not under any circumstances touch either the Labour Party or parliamentary activity.

As I hadn't a passport and as there was little likelihood of getting one I set out for Newcastle, where after a week's effort I succeeded with the assistance of a Norwegian comrade, who was a fireman, in getting safely stowed away on a ship for Bergen. From Bergen I travelled up to Vords, from Vords to Murmansk and from there to Leningrad.

When I arrived at Leningrad, the congress which had opened there was in session in Moscow to where it had been transferred after the opening.

In Smolny I was made comfortable in a room while some of the comrades tried to find an interpreter. While I was writing one of them came in and handed me "Left-Wing Communism,

an Infantile Disorder," which had just been printed in English. I started reading it quite casually, but when I came to the section dealing with Britain and saw what it had to say about me, I sat up with a jolt. I had come away from Glasgow with the notion that our case against the Labour Party and against participation in parliament was so sound, so unassailable, that all I would have to do would be to put a few well-rehearsed arguments and the B.S.P. and S.L.P. would be wiped off the mat. It was a real shock to find that already, before I had been anywhere near the congress, all the fancy building I had been doing was knocked into complete ruin. But at that time all the questions raised by Lenin were far from being clear to me, as was evident later in my speeches at the congress.

I got to Moscow on a Saturday at midday, was taken to a hotel just in time to be taken to a "subbotnik." I got a job till eight at night stacking pig-iron in a foundry. On Sunday I was persuaded to play a football match and got myself kicked all over the field for an hour and a half. At night I met and had a very interesting talk with a young French comrade named Lefebvre, who had been lost along with another companion and three fishermen between Murmansk and Vords.

On Monday, with other delegates, I made my way to the Kremlin and to my first acquaintance with an international congress.

In the main hall groups of delegates were standing chatting and arguing.

We passed through into the side room where delegates sat drinking tea, writing reports or preparing speeches. I was introduced to delegates from this and that country and then I got into a group and someone said:

"This is Comrade Lenin," just like that.

I held out my hand and said, "Hello!" I was stuck for anything else to say.

He said, with a smile, as he was told that I was Comrade Gallacher from Glasgow:

"We are very pleased to have you at our congress."

I said something about being glad to be there and then we went on talking about other things. I kept saying to myself: "Christ, there's war everywhere, there are internal problems and external problems that would almost seem insurmountable. Yet here is a comrade supremely confident that the Bolsheviks can carry through to victory." Lenin joked and laughed with the comrades and occasionally when I said something he would look at me in a quaint way. I later discovered that this was in consequence of my English. He had difficulty in understanding it.

I immediately felt that I was talking, not to some "far-away great" man hedged around with an impassable barrier of airs, but to Lenin, the great Party comrade who had a warm smile and cheery word for every proletarian fighter.

When I got going in the discussions on the political resolution and the trade union resolution, I got a very rough handling. Some of my best arguments were simply riddled. My opponents, when I got up to speak, never missed a chance of "cutting in." Naturally I would snap back at them and things sometimes got very hot. As I felt the ground slipping away from beneath my feet I got very bad tempered. But Lenin, while carrying on an irreconcilable criticism in principle of my line, would always take the opportunity of saying something helpful, something that took away a lot of the soreness from the difficult position my wrong ideas had rushed me into.

In the Political Commission the same thing was going on as in the open sessions. Every time I got up to speak I would

say things in such an offensive way that interruptions would start and then two or three of us would be at it hammer and tongs.

On several occasions at these sittings Lenin passed me short pencilled notes explaining a point or showing me where I was wrong.

When the sitting would finish I'd tear up my own notes and I tore up Lenin's along with them. It seems incredible now that I could do such a thing, but I never thought of it at the time. Towards the end of the Political Commission, when I had been very aggressive about the B.S.P. and S.L.P., he passed me across a note which in a very short caustic way gave an estimation of these groups. At night I mentioned in confidence to one or two comrades that Lenin had given me a note about the B.S.P. and S.L.P. which if I had shown them would have made them blink.

"Where is it?" one of them asked.

"Oh, I tore it up," I casually replied.

"You what? You tore up a note in Lenin's handwriting?"

He was aghast.

"I tore up several," I said, "but they were personal and I didn't think he'd want me to keep them."

This fellow, who turned out later to be a thorough renegade, got me to promise if I got another that I would give it to him.

Two days later, in the Political Commission, in the midst of a breeze and while I was speaking, someone made a reference to "Infantile Sickness."

"Yes," I said, "I've read it, but I'm no infant. It's all right to treat me as one and slap me around when I'm not here but when I'm here you'll find I'm an old hand at the game."



This latter phrase caught Lenin's attention and some time later, when Willie Paul visited Russia, Lenin repeated it to him with a quite creditable Scotch accent. When I sat down after this effort he passed me a note which read, "When I wrote my little book, I hadn't met you." I gave that note to the aforementioned renegade to my present great regret.

While insistent in carrying through his political line Lenin gave both in the open sessions and in the Political Commission every conceivable assistance to myself and other comrades in order to help us to political clarity.

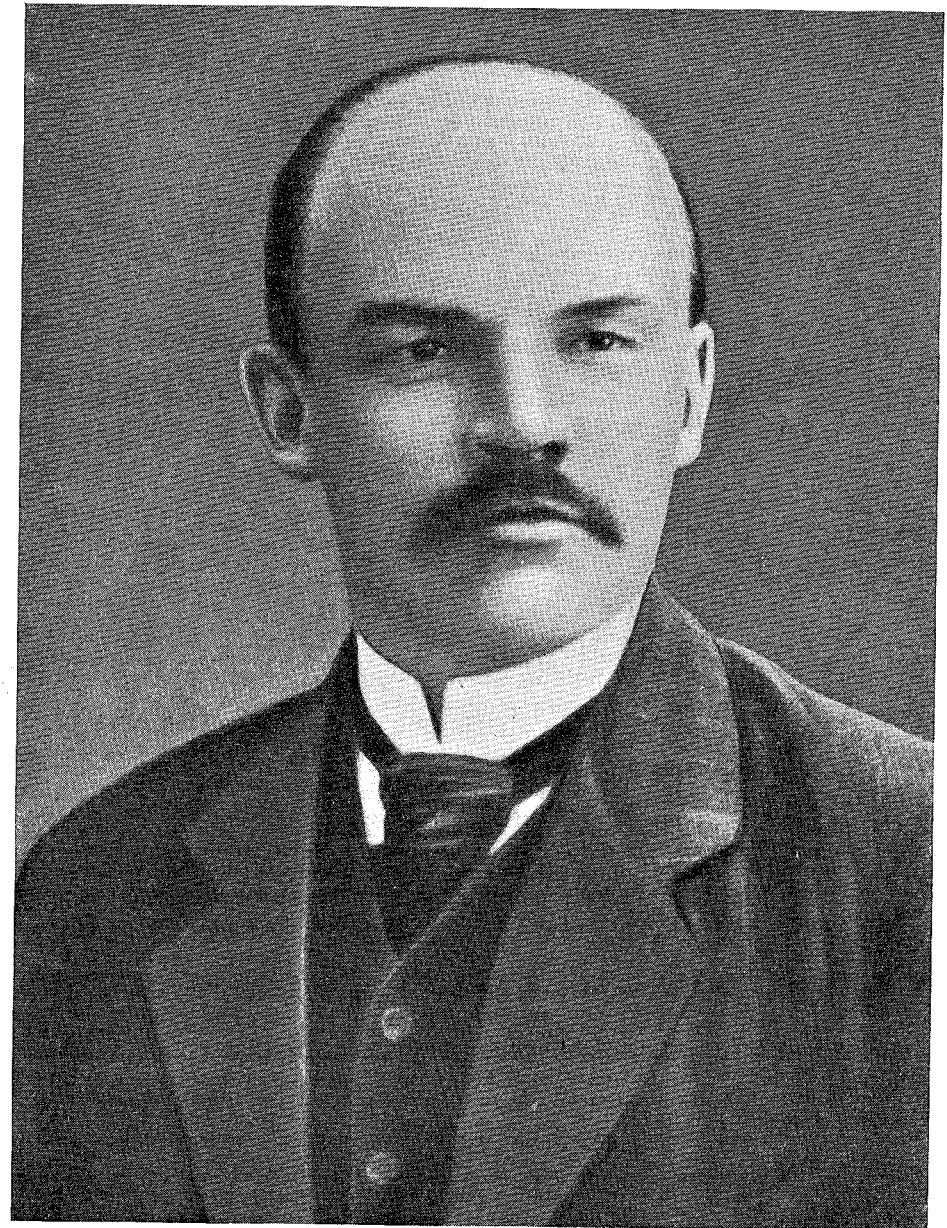
Then when I went to visit him at home I had my greatest experience. I sat down before him and we talked of the building of a party and its role in leading the revolutionary struggle. I had never thought much about the Party before, but I began then to get a real understanding of what a Communist Party should be.

Lenin was dead against the project for a separate party in Scotland. I would have to work, join up in the newly-formed party in Britain. I made objections, I couldn't work with this one or the other one.

"If you put the revolution first," he said, "you won't find any difficulty. For the revolution you will work with all sorts of people, for a part of the way at any rate. But if you start off by shutting yourself away from everyone, instead of getting in amongst them and fighting for the time of revolutionary advance, you won't get anywhere. Get into the Party and fight for the line of the Communist International and you'll have the strength of the Communist International behind you."

In all our talk the "revolution" was the living, throbbing theme of all that was said.

I had never had an experience like it. I couldn't think of



V. I. Lenin in 1910.

Lenin personally. I couldn't think of anything but the revolution and the necessity of advancing the revolution whatever the cost might be. This ever since to me seemed to be the outstanding quality of Lenin's great genius. He never thought of himself, he was the living embodiment of the revolutionary struggle and he carried with him wherever he went the inspiration of his own great conviction.

During the course of the congress I had another very close friend, Artem, who was killed in an accident the following year. Artem, or Sergeyev, as he was more commonly known, used to talk a lot with me of the experiences they had had in the early days of the Party. He was only about 19 or 20 when Lenin broke with the Mensheviks. He was absolutely devoted to Lenin and the Party. In the course of one of our talks he said to me, "We have another great leader Comrade Stalin. Often when there is an exceptionally difficult problem before the Political Bureau, all eyes will turn to Stalin. In a few well-chosen sentences he will give his solution and it's always clear and decisive." That was the first time I'd ever heard the name of Stalin. When I returned to Glasgow and reported my impressions of the congress it was the first time any of the Glasgow comrades heard his name. It was not till I was over again in 1923 that I had the opportunity of meeting Stalin and learning at first hand how correct the estimation of Sergeyev was.

It was arranged that John Reed and I should go to Baku to the Toilers of the East Congress there. Then a message came to the hotel, Lenin wanted to see me. Off I went to the Kremlin.

"When can you go home?" he asked me.

"I'm going to Baku," I replied.

He smiled and nodded his head in a negative way.

"There's a big movement developing in Britain," he said. "Councils of Action have been set up to stop the attack that is being made against us. You ought to get back as quickly as possible. Do you agree?"

"I agree," I answered.

"When can you go then?" he asked.

"Tomorrow, if you like," I replied.

He smiled broader than ever.

"Why not tonight?" he said. "You could catch the night train."

"All right," I said, "tonight, I've got nothing to pack."

"Good," he said, standing up and holding out his hand, "be very careful on the way back, and when you get to Britain we'll look to you as a loyal fighter for the revolution and the Communist International."

We shook hands very warmly, then I went on my way. That is the last memory I have of our great Comrade Lenin.

## V. KOLAROV

### LENIN IN ZIMMERWALD

The Central Committee of the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party (Tessnyaks) received an official invitation signed by Grimm to attend the first international Socialist conference against the war, which was to be held in August 1915 in Switzerland. At the same time, Comrade Blagoyev received a letter from Lenin in which the latter briefly outlined the state of affairs with regard to the calling of this conference and urged our Party to participate in it.

The internationalist position of the Tessnyaks was known abroad through their articles in the Party press, the speeches of their fraction in Parliament, and the mass struggle which the Tessnyak Party conducted against Bulgaria's entry into the war. On the initiative of the Tessnyak Party, the second conference of the Balkan Social-Democratic Federation which dealt with the struggle against the war in the Balkans was held in June 1915 in Bucharest. The decisions of this conference reflected the position of the Party before Bulgaria's entry into the war.

At that time, because of the isolation of the country and the censorship, we had seen no authentic documents that could acquaint us with Lenin's point of view, which was a matter of the greatest interest to us after Plekhanov's renegacy.

I was elected delegate to the conference and was instructed



to adhere to the line which was laid down in the decisions of the second Balkan conference.

On my way to Switzerland I stopped off in Vienna where I saw Victor Adler and Fritz Adler. To the old man I said nothing about the purpose of my journey. In the course of our conversation in his room in the editorial offices of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, he frankly approved of the conduct of the German Social-Democrats and added that if the Austrian Government were to convene the Parliament and ask it to vote a grant for the war, the Social-Democratic fraction would undoubtedly do so. In his opinion there would be a "mutual amnesty of the Social-Democratic Parties" after the war, and the Second International would once again assume its former role. The criticism of the Party on the part of the "youngsters," including his son Fritz, did not reckon with the real state of affairs: what they were out for would not lead to anything substantial.

But I did acquaint young Adler with the object of my journey. He made a fuss about their not having been told of this before and promised to talk the matter over with his comrades of the opposition, but nothing came of it after all: they were afraid of the old man and did not dare to send a delegate.

The international conference took place, as is well known, in Zimmerwald.

It was only here that I met the Russian delegates. They came separately, by different routes. Lenin came on foot with a tourist's knapsack on his back.

I had met Lenin previously at the international congresses at Stuttgart (1907) and Copenhagen (1910).

The revolutionary Social-Democrats who had assembled at the conference stigmatized the betrayal of the Second International, but the majority of them had no clear conception of the

profound causes of this betrayal and therefore could see no way out of the crisis created by it.

Only Lenin and the Bolsheviks understood the depths to which the Second International had fallen; at that time Lenin already had the creation of the Third International in his mind. But this project seemed so daring that it disconcerted the conference, which, in its majority, was still permeated with the traditions of the Second International, and notwithstanding the betrayal of the latter could not get it into their heads that it had collapsed for good.

Not only was Lenin the leader of his own group, he also took an extremely active part in the conference. He listened very attentively to the speeches of the foreign delegates, endeavoured to get behind the gist of their ideas, and sent them notes in order to ascertain their attitude towards those questions that were of fundamental importance. But he became really wrought up when the Russian Mensheviks, whom he knew so well, got up to speak.

Highly characteristic of his attitude towards the Russian Mensheviks was an episode which took place in January 1916, in Berne, at one of the sittings of the International Socialist Commission elected at Zimmerwald. I can still see Lenin—wrought up, flushed, and furious as a lion—exposing the duplicity and hypocrisy of the Mensheviks in the strongest language: abroad, he said, they pretended, in the person of Martov, to be "internationalists" and "revolutionaries," while in Russia they were carrying on a despicable policy of conciliation with Russian tsarism and capitalism. Martov's attempts to defend his party were drowned in the overwhelming flood of Lenin's criticism.

In the course of my speech at the conference I related that our Party had unmasked Plekhanov's attempts (in his letter

"On the War," which had been especially written for our Party) and those of Parvus (in his speech at a meeting in Sofia) to bring our Party round to the standpoint of social-patriotism. I gave an account of our experience in anti-war work during the Balkan War. Lenin listened very attentively to my account of the soldiers' risings in 1912-1913 and jotted down notes.

During the whole time that the conference lasted—about a week—Lenin worked without a break. While the other delegates found time to have socials and go for walks, to sing songs and enjoy themselves, he was always up to his eyes in work and showed himself only at the sittings of the conference.

When the conference terminated and the delegates had taken leave of each other, Lenin once more disappeared along the road to Berne with a knapsack on his back.

Despite the exceedingly strict customs examination on the borders I succeeded in bringing highly valuable material on the conference into Bulgaria; I also brought with me the printed documents of the Bolsheviks. It was after the Zimmerwald conference that the Bulgarian Tassnyaks began to feel the direct influence of Lenin.

THOS. BELL

### REMEMBRANCES OF LENIN

Early in 1921 I received instructions to go to Moscow as the first official representative of the C.P.G.B.

For an English worker to get a passport to leave the country at that time was extremely difficult. Having got the passport, as I did after some delay, I came up against another serious obstacle, that of visas to travel to another capitalist country. Judging from the difficulties I encountered there seemed to be an understanding or agreement among the Consulates as to certain applications from people going to the land of the Soviets. As a result I found it necessary to make arrangements to travel without papers, bag or baggage, which I did, and arrived in Moscow in the month of March, 1921, after a journey which took several weeks.

The apparatus of the Comintern in those days was confined to a small house in the Denezhney, off the Arbat, with a modest staff. In the intervals between meetings the delegates' time was occupied in studying the events of the Revolution, in international propaganda, and, of course, attending all manner of meetings of the Party and the Soviets.

It was at one of those Party meetings I first saw Lenin and heard him speak. The occasion was, I believe, a meeting of Party workers following the Tenth Party Congress held in the month of May, 1921, at which Lenin was expounding his views on the

tax in kind. I had been a little late in arriving, due to no fault of mine, and was immediately conducted to the door leading to the platform.

When I got inside, the platform, like the hall, was crowded almost to suffocation. People were craning their necks in the side wings and at the back of the platform to hear every word or catch a glimpse of the speaker. The speaker was Lenin. So interested and keen was everyone that comrades literally crowded round the rostrum, some leaning up against it.

It is always a difficult situation for a translator when meetings of such importance take place. The translator becomes so engrossed in the proceedings as to forget, at times, his charge. I am afraid this was the case on this occasion. The New Economic Policy had just been adopted, and the times were serious; in connection with which, deviations were discovered in the Party prior to the congress. Lenin had been triumphant at the Tenth Congress. Now the chief task was to get the whole Party to work, but before it could get down to work the opposition to this policy had to be overcome. Here was Lenin, dealing in Bolshevik fashion with the opposition, severely criticizing them and explaining the politically mistaken character of the assertions of the opposition and the harm done by them, as to provoke repeated bursts of laughter at their expense.

On the eve of the Third Congress of the C.I. a number of extended executive meetings of the E.C.C.I. were held in the hall directly opposite the Dom Soyuzov at the corner of Sverdlov Square. Serious discussions took place at those meetings on the Italian situation and the March uprising in Germany, as well as a number of problems connected with the Centrists who were knocking then at the doors of the C.I. Throughout these discussions I followed with intense interest how Lenin

was able in his speeches to brilliantly combine an irreconcilable adherence to principle and firmness with a surprising flexibility and tact, and could reach out the hand of comradeship and correct the wavering elements (the Italians behind Serrati at that time) and at the same time restrain the impetuosity of those ultra-lefts (Bordiga's followers) who tried to utilize the opportunist mistakes made by their Party to advance their own sectarian line.

Every student of Lenin's life and work knows how he loved to have conversations with simple workers and his habit of closely questioning them. This practice of ascertaining the feelings of the masses he invariably carried out in the workers' circles he attended and led in Petersburg. After the proletariat seized power nothing delighted Lenin more than to have conversations, put questions and listen eagerly for every scrap of information from comrades coming from abroad concerning the living and working conditions of the toilers and their moods. This was one of the channels which linked Lenin's life and policy with the lives and struggles of the working masses, enabling him to better sense every mood and to formulate the correct Party tactics and slogans that finally brought victory.

Lenin knew England and the working class movement there very well. In his study of imperialism he gave a profound analysis of the role of the English bourgeoisie in the period of imperialist expansion and of parasitic, decaying and moribund capitalism. Again and again in articles and speeches he returns to the strategy and tactics of the English bourgeoisie in corrupting the upper strata of the workers' movement, the labour aristocracy, and through them exerting pressure on the wider mass of the proletariat.

Lenin's articles never were nor could be of a character which

set problems formally and theoretically; he always directed the revolutionary workers to the political tasks of the current revolutionary struggle. He loved, when he was in London, to visit the workers' quarters, go to Socialist meetings and study the English workers' movement.

This practice of conversations, of listening to what workers had to say, continued up to his untimely death.

In 1921, despite his responsible duties as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, as leader of the Party and the Revolution, whenever a workers' delegate arrived from a brother party abroad he insisted on having a personal conversation at the earliest opportunity.

An iron-moulder by occupation, of Scotland, I had been active in the workers' movement since 1900, as propagandist, instructing workers' circles, strike leader, trade union and Party worker, and assisted to form the C.P.G.B. I had known and met most of the labour leaders and had come almost straight from the foundry floor. I mention these details because in my conversation with Lenin I was free not only to speak of our Party, of the labour leaders, the various streams in the workers' movement, but also about the living conditions and moods of the workers, which made up the substance of our talk.

It was on or about the 3rd of August, 1921 that I had a real comradely talk with Lenin. Our conversation took place in his room in the far corner of the building formerly used as the High Courts of Moscow situated in the Kremlin. Up the narrow unpretentious stairs we entered a room occupied by a staff of stenographers and typists. After announcement of our arrival we were invited to Lenin's room. No fuss or bureaucratic formalities, and punctual to the minute. The furniture consisted of a heavy writing desk against the wall and

two bookshelves, one immediately behind the chair used when working, so that he had only to turn and reach for any book desired.

Rising to greet us with a hearty handshake, Lenin assisted in drawing a couple of chairs near the corner of his desk, inviting us to be comfortable, and we settled down to a real comradely talk. His first enquiry was as to our welfare. How we were in health, where did we live, had we a good room, did we have enough to eat, etc. To all of which enquiries we were able to give him satisfactory assurances.

He was very interested to know how I had travelled, legally or illegally, and chuckled with amusement at some incidents I had to relate about my journey. Formalities over, he begged to be excused for not having been able to give much attention to the English situation since his illness. Drawing his chair closer he rested his right elbow on his desk and with his right hand shading his right eye he proceeded to listen to me intently as if not to lose anything this new comrade might have to say.

Our conversation turned on the situation in England, particularly the labour leaders; who they were; their characteristics and the support they had amongst the workers; of the Whiteguard Russians abroad and their counter-revolutionary role.

Notwithstanding his assertion that he had not been able to follow events closely in England, he astonished me by taking down from his bookshelf some of the recent publications from England which he certainly had been reading, for example, Bertrand Russell's *Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* and R.W. Postgate's *Revolution and Bolshevik Theory*.

He enquired about Postgate, who he was, if a Party comrade, etc. (Postgate was then in our Party and sub-editor of our Party



organ, *The Communist*. Subsequently, in 1923, he left the C.P.G.B. to collaborate with his father-in-law, George Lansbury, in the new *Lansbury's Weekly*.)

With regard to Postgate's book, *Revolution*, Lenin classed this as a mere catalogue of documents, important in themselves, but how much better, he thought, it would have been if the author had given us the material events of the respective periods, treating each period from the standpoint of the class struggle and knitting all the documents together.

We talked about the Trade Unions and the Labour Party and their relative strength and influence in the working-class movement; about our Communist Party, who was who, and its influence among the workers. Lenin was extremely interested in the miners' movement, particularly in South Wales, and I promised to give him more information from time to time. On returning to my room I jotted down in detail everything that had transpired during our talk.

A few days afterwards (on August 7th) I sent Lenin a letter in keeping with my promise. In this letter I informed him about the Annual Conference of the South Wales Miners' Federation and its decision to affiliate to the Third International.

These notes gave interesting details of the communal kitchens in Fifehire among the miners, the manner in which the funds were raised by the workers; the support given by the local Co-operative movement, and the part played by the marines drafted into the colliery districts to quell strikes. I gave several particulars of how the workers fraternized with the sailors and expressed the hope that he would find them interesting. Lenin found such details sufficiently interesting as to write a reply almost by return. To this letter I sent another giving my views and some new information I had received. Almost

immediately I left for England and our correspondence was interrupted. When I returned in 1922 he was already ill.

Here is the letter I received in full:—

"To Comrade Thomas Bell (Lux 154.)

Dear Comrade,

I thank you very much for your letter (dated 7/8). I have read nothing concerning the english movement last months because of my illness and overwork.

It is extremely interesting what you communicate. Perhaps it is *the beginning* of a real proletarian mass movement in Great Britain *in the communist sense*. I am afraid we have till now in England few very feeble propagandist societies for communism (inclusive the British Communist Party) but no really *mass* communist movement.

If the South Wales Miners' Federation has decided on 24/VII to affiliate to the III. Int. [ernational] by a majority of 120 to 63—perhaps it is the beginning of a new era. (How much miners there are in England? More than 500,000?—25,000? How much in South Wales? How much miners were really represented in Cardiff, 24/VII, 1921?

If these miners are not too small minority, if they fraternize with soldiers and begin *a real* "class war,"—we must do all our possible to *develop* this movement and strengthen it.

Economic measures (like communal kitchens) are good but are not much important *now, before* the victory of the proletarian revolution in England. *Now the political* struggle is the most important.

English capitalists are shrewd, clever, astute. They *will*

support (directly and indirectly) communal kitchens *in order to divert the attention from political aims.*

What is important,—is (if I am not mistaken)

1) To create a very good, really proletarian, really mass *communist party* in this part of England,—that is such party which will *really* be the *leading* force in *all* labour movement in this part of the country. (Apply the resolution on organization and work of the party adopted by the 3 congress to this part of your country).

2) To start a daily paper of the working class, for the working class in this part of the country.

To start it not as a business (as usually newspapers are started in capitalist countries), not with big sum of money, not in ordinary and usual manner,—but as an *economic and political tool* of the *masses* in their struggle.

Either the miners of this district are capable to pay halfpenny daily (for the beginning *weekly*, if you like) for their own daily (or weekly) newspaper (be it very small, it is not important)—or *there is no beginning of the really communist mass movement in this part of your country.*

If the Communist Party of this district cannot collect few £ in order to publish *small leaflets daily* as a beginning of the really *proletarian* communist newspaper—if it so, if *every* miner will not pay a penny for it, then there is *not serious* not genuine affiliation to the III. Int. [ernational].

English government will apply the shrewdest means in order to suppress every beginning of this kind. Therefore we must be (in the beginning) very prudent. The paper must be *not too revolutionary* in the beginning. If you will have three editors, at least one must be non-Communist x) (x) at least two genuine workers). If 9/10 of the

workers do not buy this paper, if 2/3 workers (120/120 63) do not pay special contributions f. [or] i. [instance] 1 penny weekly) for *their* paper, it will be no workers' newspaper.

I should be very glad to have few lines from you concerning this theme and beg to apologise for my bad English.

with communist greetings,

Lenin."

As a matter of fact the C.P. was extremely weak then in South Wales. Amongst the miners there was a radical movement. Many trade union workers at that time were following the Russian Revolution with deep proletarian sympathy, but still not Communist. Lenin understood this. That is why he proposed the elementary step, though exceptionally important as far as the whole work of the Party was concerned, of starting a small paper to be published and maintained by those who were for support to the Third International. That this was not done was due primarily to the fact that this vote was not the result of a sustained Communist influence, to the feeble condition of the Party and its failure to grasp the political significance of such a measure. Indeed, it was not till nine years after, in 1930, that the Party was able to launch a national daily paper.

As for applying the organizational theses of the Third Congress of the C.I., it was not till the autumn of 1922 that a beginning was made to apply these theses. This work has still to be completed.

Lenin has left us a rich heritage in economic and political science, and in revolutionary literature, from which the English workers, and especially the Communists, should with great advantage study today and draw the necessary conclusions in the struggle for a Soviet Britain.

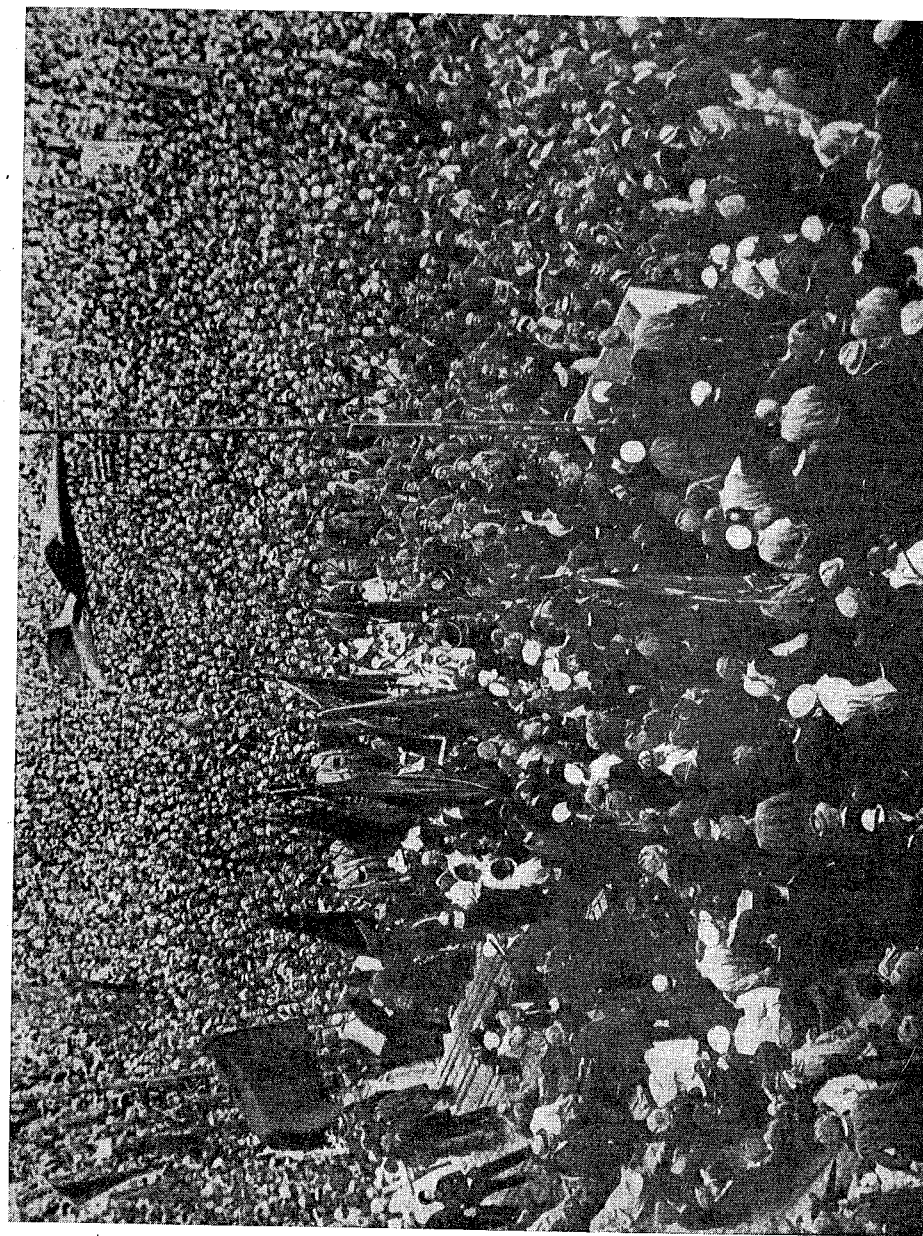
M. CACHIN

### MEETINGS WITH LENIN

At its Strassbourg Congress in February 1920 the Socialist Party of France decided by an overwhelming majority (4,330 against 337) to leave the Second International, whose tactics did not answer the requirements of the international revolutionary situation. The congress authorized the secretary of the Party, Frossard, and me, the editor-in-chief of *l'Humanité*, "to open negotiations with the leading bodies of the Communist International immediately" with the aim of uniting all labour parties ready for revolutionary action.

On this mission, Frossard and myself set out on June 1, 1920, to the land of the proletarian revolution. As the war which Poland was waging against Soviet Russia was then at its height we were obliged to take a roundabout route via the Baltic, arriving in Moscow only on June 15.

During our stay in Moscow we were in daily contact with the working class circles, with the leadership of the Comintern and with the delegates from the various capitalist countries who had already arrived to take part in the Second Congress of the Communist International. After our many talks with the leaders of the Third International, the members of the Executive Committee, and Lenin particularly, strongly urged that we should stay on for the congress as guests. This we reported to party headquarters in Paris. Having received party permission,



A meeting on the occasion of the II Congress of the Communist International

we went to the Kremlin, where the Second Congress of the Communist International was assembled in the magnificent hall in which the emperors and empresses of tsarist Russia had been coronated in times gone by.

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Before speaking of this congress, which is so deeply impressed on my mind, I must revert to our lengthy negotiations in Moscow concerning the conditions under which the French Socialist Party could affiliate to the Third International.

Our first talk with the leading comrades took place after a ceremonial meeting of the Moscow Soviet in the Bolshoi Theatre, at which we spoke.

When this meeting concluded we met with the leaders of the Communist International in one of the ante-rooms of the theatre and there it was agreed that we should make our report on the situation in the Socialist Party of France at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Comintern which was to take place on June 19.

All the leaders of the Third International, headed by Lenin, were present at this meeting.

In his speech Lenin first of all thanked the Socialist Party of France and its two representatives for their initiative in approaching the Third International. He attached very great importance to the sending of the French delegation since he had a very high opinion of the splendid revolutionary traditions of the French people.

Then, as far as I remember, Lenin spoke about the great difference between the opportunist tactics of our Socialist Party at that time and the Communist International's slogan of the



dictatorship of the proletariat and said that it was essential for the French Party fully to realize this.

"This", said Lenin, "by no means signifies that we are asking you to make a revolution immediately. It would be out of the question to make such a demand either of the French, or of the Italians and the German 'Independents'" (the latter were also carrying on negotiations about affiliating to the Communist International at that time).

"But what is the most essential and important condition for joint action and permanent collaboration with the Communist International is to break with certain wrong methods of work. Take *l'Humanité*," said Lenin holding up an opened copy of the paper, "which we read here with the closest attention. There is no unity at all in this newspaper. On the contrary, contradictory statements clash with each other in its pages, and often on the very same page. Some, like you," said Lenin, turning to us, "take up the cudgels for the proletarian revolution in Russia; others come out openly against it and assist the imperialists of their country in every way to fight it. Some preach the most flagrant opportunism; others try to combat this harmful policy. How, then, can you expect the workers to make head or tail of these contradictory statements? A party newspaper must educate, explain things, popularize the ideas which will lead the working people to their emancipation. But these ideas must be clearly and precisely formulated, and their propagation must be entrusted only to honest, devoted sons of the working class.

"In reading *l'Humanité*," said Lenin, "it always gives me great pleasure to see your subscription lists in support of strikers or to the fund for carrying on party work. Then let the will to struggle of the great French people inspire you. Your first duty is to give them a clear program which will unite their forces,

which will correctly analyse the facts of our era, when the capitalist order is becoming more rotten every day. Do not entrust your newspaper propaganda or your verbal propaganda to any but those comrades who are equipped with Marxist theory, who have proved themselves, who are loyal to the cause of the proletariat. In short, if *l'Humanité* wishes to carry out its mission let it become logical and free from internal contradictions!

"In the Parties affiliated to the Communist International all Party members must submit to strict discipline. The leadership of the Parties must be built up on the principle of democratic centralization. The decisions of the central bodies must be carried out by the elected and leading officers in all the lower bodies.

"The Imperialist War and its aftermath shook the economic foundations in all countries, called forth an extreme exacerbation of the class struggle and an increase in the revolutionary events all over the world. And we must prepare the proletariat to meet this new era in full readiness.

"It would be idle to ask ourselves whether the revolution will come now or later. Our sole task is to educate the proletariat of all countries so that events should not take them unawares, so that when the moment arrives, they can take control over these events.

"You say you are short of men! We are short of men too. But we are going forward and men are springing up like dragon's teeth. What is required is boundless confidence and faith in the inexhaustible forces of the proletariat. Do not attribute to the masses the weaknesses, faults or cowardice of opportunist leaders who shirk struggle.

"You Frenchmen must very well understand our tactics, which are inspired by the revolutions accomplished by the people

of your country in the past. Then let the proletarians of France follow the revolutionary traditions of their predecessors and ancestors; let nothing deter them. And let them believe in the future!

"The 'Independents' of Germany have already announced that they have left the Second International and wish to open negotiations with regard to affiliating with our International. We replied that their acknowledgment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet power was still verbal and that the Russian Communist Party found that the only correct course for it was not to join with them 'but *to wait* until the revolutionary masses of French and German workers *correct* the weakness, mistakes, prejudices and inconsistency of such parties as the Independents and the Longuet followers.' Make our reply known in your country. Give it publicity in all your newspapers, let it be made known to all your local organizations, to all the working people of France and the working people of other countries. Then call a congress where you will state our point of view. You may tell us: 'That will be difficult.' It was not easy here either. But we put up a fight and we won." The words of the concluding part of Lenin's historical speech are engraven on my memory.

This sitting of the Executive Committee of the Communist International lasted for over five hours; then the discussion on the terms of admittance to the Comintern was continued on June 25, 28 and 29, and again on July 14, 18, and 22. This shows how seriously and deeply the question was discussed.

We could see from the very first day of our arrival in Soviet Russia that our Russian comrades regarded the initiative of the Socialist Party of France and of the other Socialist Parties of the Western countries with regard to affiliating to the Communist International as a noteworthy event. It was unanimously

acknowledged that the responsible leaders of the French Party had from the outset displayed constant co-operation and had done a great deal in the matter of defending the October Socialist Revolution.

Just before our departure, after numerous meetings which often lasted late into the night, it was decided that the French delegates should make every effort to get their party to affiliate to the Communist International.

On their part, while insisting that we adhere strictly and resolutely to the terms of affiliation to the Communist International, the Russian comrades assured us of their whole-hearted support and the co-operation of the Communist International which it subsequently unfailingly extended to the Communist Party of France.

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I should like to add a few words on our brief participation in the transactions of the Second Congress where the discussion of the terms of admittance to the International was resumed.

By way of paying honour to the old city of Petrograd which had been the cradle of the Socialist revolution and which had so faithfully preserved its revolutionary traditions, it was decided to open the Second Congress of the Communist International in that city. The delegates who had already arrived in Moscow, took the train for Petrograd on July 18. From the station in Petrograd to Smolny, which had been the headquarters of the general staff of the proletarian revolution during the October days, to which we set off immediately, was rather a good distance. But Petrograd was short of transport facilities, the city had become extremely impoverished and was suffering great privations after so many years of war and the blockade. Never-

theless, a whole train of street cars decorated with greenery was assembled for the conveyance of the congress delegates.

At the first session of the Second Congress of the Comintern—July 19—Lenin made a long speech about the international situation and the fundamental tasks of the Communist International. In his speech Lenin spoke of the inevitable downfall of capitalism and about the role of the proletarian party in the victorious revolution. Let international capitalism vilify and vituperate the land of the proletarian revolution, he said; let it try to rack this land with the tortures of blockade, freeze it and starve it—capitalism cannot defeat Bolshevism, capitalism itself will be defeated. Before the imperialist war the Second International included only the proletariat of Europe and America. But in Asia and Africa too hundreds of millions of men and women are being oppressed by imperialism. The Communist International must come to the assistance of the oppressed peoples and lands, and this assistance will deal the final blow to imperialism, the last stage of capitalism. The Communist International must embrace the whole world. It must be free from any kind of spinelessness, from the anarchy and disunity characteristic of the Second International.

After opening in Petrograd, the congress continued in the Moscow Kremlin, concluding its work on August 7. Our Russian comrades had invited to the congress all those who from the very outbreak of the imperialist war and during it had striven to carry on a determined fight in their own countries against the war and against the offensive of capital. The Russian comrades suggested that we analyse, study and adopt the methods of struggle thanks to which the capitalists and landowners had been vanquished in Soviet Russia.

As is well known the decisions of the Second Congress de-

fined with the utmost care the exact terms of affiliation to the Communist International.

The results of the work of the Second Congress were very considerable since they enabled the proletariat of four countries, Germany, Italy, France and Czechoslovakia, to create their own Communist Parties, which played a great part in European and world politics.

The congress corrected the mistakes of certain Communists who "denied the necessity for working in bourgeois parliaments, in reactionary trade unions, wherever there are millions of workers who are still being duped by the capitalists and their lackeys in the ranks of the workers". (*Lenin.*)

Under pressure of the revolutionary working masses the largest parties of the Second International left it; the proletarian masses turned for inspiration to Soviet Russia and the Russian Revolution. In all the capitalist countries, the working people followed the heroic struggle of the people of Soviet Russia with enthusiasm and admiration. They saw that neither blockade nor the aggression of the land and sea forces of the interventionists could break the heroic bravery of the Russian Bolsheviks. The power which the workers and peasants had won had remained firm, the interventionists were beaten. The Bolsheviks had shown the whole world that the working class was now the most powerful lever of progress. Thus, by the very fact of its existence, the Soviet power made the proletarians of all countries more confident in their own strength. This is the invaluable service rendered by the Russian proletariat to the world proletariat. And that is why proletarians of all countries extend their hands towards Soviet Russia, turned towards the Third International.

During our stay in Russia we acquired a much better understanding of the meaning of this great historic event. At the

beginning of July 1920, we informed the National Council of the French Socialist Party, meeting in Boulogne, that we were unhesitatingly and whole-heartedly in favour of affiliation to the new Communist International.

\* \* \*

On the eve of our departure for France we asked to see Lenin so that we could take leave of him and tell him our impressions. He received us most cordially on July 28 in his simple little study in the Kremlin. Our talk lasted an hour and a half.

First of all he asked us about the situation in France, a country which he knew very well. He told us again that he greatly admired the past history of our country, the French and in particular the Parisian proletariat. He characterized the Communists as modern Jacobins. He was convinced that the methods of the Communist International had a great future in France, since they were truly in the revolutionary traditions of our country.

At the time we were talking to Lenin, the victorious Red Army was completing the clean-up of the Polish bands which had invaded the Ukraine. The French and British imperialists who had organized the Polish aggression then took steps to stop the victorious onrush of the Red troops and save White Poland from utter defeat. The imperialists of both countries sent picked divisions to Warsaw, great quantities of munitions and the last word in death-dealing weapons.

In France, the Dunkirk dockers had refused to load the guns which were being sent to Poland, and Lenin asked us to convey warm thanks to the French workers. Lenin said, incidentally, that if the workers and peasants of Poland themselves

wanted Socialism and were ready to call in the Red Army, an offensive could be made. If not, then the Poles should be approached with the most favourable peace terms, even more favourable than those which the diplomats of British imperialism were demanding for them.

Towards the end of his talk with us Lenin said that capitalist Europe, after attacking the Soviet Republic with all the means at its disposal for three years, had not been able to win out.

"Now we will be relatively at peace with the outer world. We will use this peace to reconstruct our exhausted country and to make her invincible."

He asked us what our impressions were. We replied that the memory which we preserved of Soviet Russia would be indelible. We told him that in spite of the terrible havoc caused by the war, we had everywhere seen enthusiasm, bravery and belief in the future, which were sound guarantees of victory.

Lenin was very pleased with our reply. He told us how eager he was for France to form a large Communist Party of its own quickly, and that he would follow its development with the closest attention. At the end of our conversation he expressed his regret at not having been able to talk to us before and for a longer time.

The next day we left for Paris, where we arrived on August 11.

\* \* \*

We decided to report to the proletarians of Paris immediately on the mission that had been entrusted to us, and the secretariat of the Party organized a meeting in the Paris circus, which was then the largest premises in the capital. Over forty thousand



working people came to our meeting. It was with great difficulty that we made our way through the crowd to the platform, and I must say that never in this great city had there been such a thrilling, lively and stirring meeting as this popular gathering which for many hours expressed its admiration of the October Socialist Revolution about which we had brought first-hand information and such good news.

Needless to say, in fulfilment of our promise, we began to conduct on the pages of *l'Humanité* and throughout France propaganda for affiliation to the Communist International. From August 15, 1920, to September 25 we toured the whole country; we put before the people all the documents, all the decisions of the Second Congress of the Communist International. The congress proposals were discussed for over four months throughout the country, even in the most remote villages. Never was there a more earnest and thorough discussion. And when the question of affiliation to the Communist International came up at the congress of the Socialist Party of France which was held at Tours (December 1920), the congress declared by a two-thirds majority for complete and unconditional adherence to Lenin's theses on the fundamental tasks of the Second Congress and the tactics which had led on the territory of former tsarist Russia to the victory of the Soviets—the mightiest and most progressive power of all times.

G. MONMOUSSEAU

### MY INTERVIEW WITH LENIN

(from his reminiscences)

I had been thoroughly imbued with anarcho-syndicalist ideology. I considered that the methods and conditions of the Soviet Revolution were characteristic solely of Russia. I completely rejected the idea that the French Communist Party should and could play the role in France that the Party of Lenin had played, and was playing, in the U.S.S.R. My visit to the country of liberty and genuine democracy changed my convictions.

\* \* \*

After five days in the railway carriage—I believe the journey from Sebez to Moscow alone took two days—we arrived in Moscow, laden with all kinds of foodstuffs which earnest friends had advised us to take with us in view of the difficulties of obtaining supplies in Soviet Russia. I must confess that, notwithstanding the undoubted difficulties that still existed, these precautions proved to be entirely unnecessary.

The streets of Moscow were thronged with workers who seemed to emanate a spirit of freedom and cheer, even though they were poorly clothed.

The proletarians of the Soviet Republic, who had won power and crushed the counter-revolution in the civil war, were now just as heroically working in dilapidated factories with old, run-down machinery that had been hastily repaired to rehabilitate the industry of the land of the proletarian dictatorship. This first contact with the Soviet Revolution roused in me an unforgettable feeling of excitement and enthusiasm.

\* \* \*

Everyone will understand the emotion I felt when I heard that Lenin had sent for Comrade Semard and myself. This emotion calmed down only during the interview itself, thanks to Lenin's simplicity.

I still remember the contradictory feelings which I experienced at the time. To meet the leader of the October Revolution and not to "betray" my mandate, *i. e.*, to support, by means of my own arguments, a thesis which could be disproved both from the point of view of theory and from the point of view of the experience of the international labour movement! But this proved to be not nearly so terrible, and, indeed, not terrible at all. I neither had to defend my mandate nor did I find myself in a position which was contradictory to my own convictions.

\* \* \*

I remember that in that modest office in the Kremlin (which I once more saw intact in the Lenin Museum subsequently) the great leader of the proletarian revolution asked us how it was that Semard and I worked in accord despite the fact that Semard was a member of the Communist Party while I was a former anarchist and a non-Party member.

We replied that this agreement was based on the fact that we both stood for a policy of consistent class struggle and that together we opposed the anarchists, who were fighting the dictatorship of the proletariat; that together we opposed certain doubtful elements in the leadership of the Communist Party who deceived the Comintern, helped the anarchists, and did not see to it that the principles of the class struggle were observed.

Lenin knew all this very well; and that was why he wanted to create such conditions as would make it possible for the Communist Party to become a real Bolshevik mass party.

"We agree with you, Monmousseau," said Lenin, "about the necessity of removing all doubtful elements from the Communist Party. But how can you expect to transform this Party if the leaders of the revolutionary trade union movement hold aloof from the Communist Party and do not join it? Why don't you and your comrades join the Party in order to help transform it? What must be done to get the most active trade unionists to join the Party?"

This was what interested Lenin most of all during our interview.

During our interview we touched on other questions as well, but I must confess that my thoughts were concentrated on this one point, which was the main one for me. That is why I do not recall what other matters we discussed.

The joy which I felt in connection with the result of our interview overwhelmed every other impression, and I left Lenin's office armed for the struggle—including the struggle against my own ideology.

\* \* \*

The death of Lenin affected me very deeply not only because of the memories of my interview with him, but because I was afraid that the Revolution, deprived of such a leader, would not be able to cope with its colossal internal difficulties and with the blows of its enemies.

But the Bolshevik Party, created by Lenin, won historic victories of world-wide importance under the leadership of Stalin, the faithful companion-in-arms of Lenin and brilliant continuer of his work. It is quite natural that the name of Stalin should be inseparable from that of Lenin in the minds and hearts of the proletarian millions who, under the guidance of the Comintern, are fighting to throw off the yoke of capital the world over.

ROBERT MINOR.

### WITH LENIN

I do not remember where I first met Lenin. It might have been in the ball-room of the Metropole Hotel where the All-Russian Central Executive Committee was meeting. In any case, Comrade Sverdlov was there, the chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, one of the first Russian Bolshevik leaders I met.

I remember standing apart and looking at the group of leaders gathered around the platform—the leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution! I remember how thrilled I was and how keen I was to know their names. At first I could only judge by appearances.

A Russian comrade who had been in America was kind enough to point out Lenin to me. My whole sense of proportion, so to speak, was upset. Lenin turned out to be a short, modest looking man. He was standing in a corner resting his foot on something. He was dressed very simply: he wore an ordinary cap and he was even without the glistening topboots which were worn very much at that time. In short, he was nothing like my idea of a great man. I looked at him hard, thinking I might be mistaken.

But no, this was the Lenin I had seen in photographs.

I was struck by the animation of his features, the way they changed when he was engaged in conversation. Little by little my attention became centered on him. Everything else receded, melted away, fitted into its place: the proportions were restored.

Without understanding a single word of what had been said at the meeting I left the hall engrossed in my impressions of the one man, Lenin.

. . . I do not know how Lenin managed to find time for me in the difficult months of spring and summer 1918. But I think it should be ascribed to the deep interest he displayed throughout the Russian Revolution in the revolutionary movement of the "outside world", and the attitude of the Socialists of other countries. On this occasion (I think it was the end of April) I was in his place for about 15 minutes.

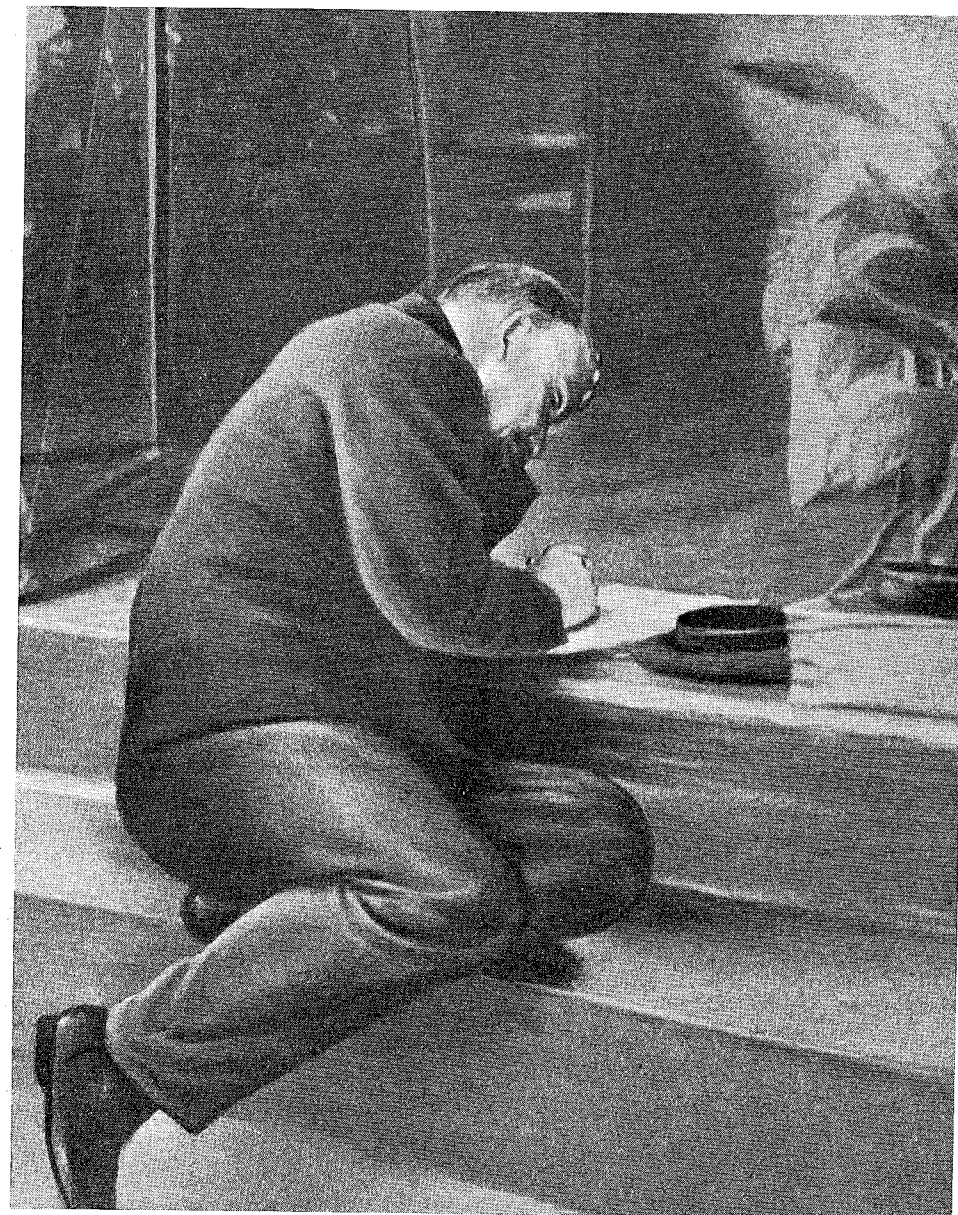
Lenin himself said little, he knew how to make the other fellow talk, while he did the listening.

He was interested in the slightest detail of how the working class of the U.S.A. was reacting to the Revolution. He asked me what was the attitude of the trade unions to the Bolshevik Revolution. I told him how appreciative the militant workers in the A.F. of L. were of the action of the workers and sailors of Petrograd in helping to save Tom Mooney's\* life by making President Wilson intervene and have the death sentence commuted.

Then, on behalf of the trade unions affiliated to the Mooney Defense Committee I expressed my thanks to Lenin as the head of the Bolshevik Party for this fine act of international solidarity. Lenin said nothing, but his eyes sparkled.

We spoke of the reactionary attitude of the leaders of the A. F. of L. whose executive (like that of the Socialist Party)

\* Tom Mooney, a member of the American Socialist Party and a prominent American trade unionist, was arrested in 1916 on a trumped-up charge of throwing a bomb during a war parade. After a fake trial he was sentenced to death which was later, due to the protests of the indignant masses, commuted to life imprisonment. Tom Mooney was finally released on January 8, 1939, after 22 years in prison, an innocent man.



V. I. Lenin at the III Congress of the Communist International taking notes on the speeches.



had refused to defend Tom Mooney, and the attitude of the trade union bosses who had taken an active part in the framing up of the strikers' leader Mooney and getting the death sentence passed on him. I mentioned that old Gompers had supported the trade union leaders of San Francisco when they framed up Mooney.

We discussed the prospects of the revolution in Europe. Lenin mentioned the lack of reliable information and touched upon the technical methods of getting information from abroad. I must say I was astonished when I heard the leader of the world revolution expatiating on little things like paper, paste board, ink and other "trivialities" and technicalities.

At this first meeting of ours, Lenin started off in Russian. I had to tell him that I did not speak Russian, but I knew French. At first Lenin said that he did not know enough English so we spoke French for a time, then Lenin dropped into German, after which, to my surprise, he continued in faultless English without making a single mistake and only stopping now and then to search for a word (all our subsequent conversations were in English and I do not remember Lenin making a single grammatical mistake).

Lenin seemed to be quite unaffected by his high position, and this feeling of surprise at his unassuming manner grew upon me the more I got to know of his role as the greatest leader of mankind at this greatest moment in history.

Once, when I was putting my coat on to go home my elbow caught a big revolving bookcase and some heavy books fell on the floor. Lenin immediately knelt down and began to pick them up, while he went on talking.

One day in autumn 1921 I had to send a letter to him urgently. I gave it to a youngster about 12 years of age, the

son of a Red Army man killed at the front and told him to take it to the Kremlin. I explained that the letter was addressed to Comrade Lenin which he must deliver at once, wait for a reply and come back right away.

This made a great impression on the lad and he was off like a shot. I waited and waited, hour after hour, but there was still no sign of my messenger. At last, when it was quite dark, the youngster came back with an air of great importance. I went for him:

"Where have you been all this time?"

"Oh", said the youngster, "*I have been talking to Comrade Lenin!*"

Later I was told in the Kremlin that this actually had been the case. The youngster had refused to give the letter to anyone but Lenin: He waited till the end of the meeting after which Comrade Lenin kept him for quite a time asking how the children of fallen Red Army men were being looked after.

\* \* \*

About this letter. It was a long missive covering about three pages. When I saw Lenin again the first thing he said was:

"First of all, Comrade Minor, you should know that when you send such a long letter to a busy man like me you should write the subject of the letter very concisely, telegraph style, in the top left hand corner. Then you must point out what your own suggestions are. Don't you think that's the proper way?"

What always surprised me was that whenever I needed an appointment with Comrade Lenin (I went to see him a dozen times or so if not more), I always managed to see him (excepting one occasion when Lenin was at a meeting of the Political Bu-

reau). Lenin made a point of getting in touch with people coming from abroad, even if they had not played an important part in things. *Comrade Lenin had a way of organizing his time* to make the most of it.

Once I made quite a *faux pas*: In my surprise at Lenin finding time to see me and settle in a few minutes a question which I could not get other people to settle in as many days, I exclaimed:

"Comrade Lenin, you have more time than anyone in all Moscow!"

Of course, I did not mean this literally. But Lenin raised his eyebrows.

"No, Comrade Minor," he said, "I have not more time than other people."

And I read on his face what a gigantic burden this great leader had on his shoulders, a burden which undoubtedly was responsible for the death of this great world figure at the age of fifty-four.

\* \* \*

Directly after the Third Congress of the Communist International some American comrades and myself visited Lenin at midnight (he could not get free any earlier), to discuss with him what forms of organization the Party should take in the existing situation, and the question of getting out the *Daily Worker*, a plan which had not yet been realized, and other points.

Lenin made us some excellent suggestions on these questions. I cannot recall the exact formulations; his views are well-known and set down with his own hand, and I would rather not misquote him.

One of the comrades present, who held pronounced factional views of an ultra-Left character, kept interrupting Lenin. Lenin paused each time and let him have his say patiently before he continued.

Another comrade who had his doubts about the advisability of taking part in election campaigns, asked Lenin:

"What do you think: should we take part in elections to fill *administrative* posts, hadn't we better restrict ourselves to the elections of *legislative* bodies? In that case the Communists would not take responsibility for the administration of capitalist bodies."

Comrade Lenin replied:

"I think Eichhorn made pretty good use of an administrative post." (He had in mind the Left Social-Democrat Eichhorn, who at the first stage of the German revolution, in 1918, was the Berlin commissioner of police. The workers in the Spartacus League took advantage of this to get rifles.)

\* \* \*

The last time I saw Comrade Lenin was at the end of 1921. I had to return to America, and I asked him if I might introduce the comrade who was to take my place. Comrade Lenin took a great interest in people coming from the U.S.A. He was particularly interested in every symptom of the turn of the American-born workers to the revolutionary policy, at a time when the Communist Party of the U.S.A. depended largely for support on the revolutionary emigrant sections of the working class. Lenin's first question to the comrade I brought was:

"Are you an American?"

"Yes," the comrade replied.

"*An American American?*" said Comrade Lenin.

"Yes," was the reply.

"Where were you born, in America?"

"Yes."

"And your father?"

When he heard that this comrade's father was the son of a European farmer who had emigrated to America, Comrade Lenin said: "Ah, ha . . .", then added with a twinkle in his eye:

"But Minor here is an *American American*. Comrade Minor, your father was born in America and your mother too? Isn't that so?" and went on: "And your grandfathers? On both sides?"

"Born in America."

"Very good. Tell me, how many generations of your people were born in America?"

I replied that my forebears lived in America long before the Revolutionary War of Independence. Then Comrade Lenin asked:

"*And what did they do during the American Revolution?*"

I replied that as far as I knew, they had all taken part in it.

"Ah ha," he said. "That might help you some time if you ever get put on trial."

We had a long discussion on the factional struggle in the Communist Party of the U.S.A., Comrade Lenin asking most of the questions. I do not remember if it was then or another time he asked me what this struggle was all about and I replied very clumsily that this was a struggle between the "dreamers" of the revolution and the "realists." At the word "realists" Lenin's face darkened.

"I hope you mean realists in the best sense of the term," said Comrade Lenin.

### I HAD THE PLEASURE OF SEEING AND LISTENING TO LENIN

In 1922, quite unexpectedly for me, the Young Communist League of Austria elected me delegate to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern and the Third Congress of the Young Communist International.

As I was the only delegate from our League, my comrades impressed upon me before my departure: "Mind, you will see Lenin, you will hear him speak: Don't let anything miss you because when you come back you will have to tell us every least thing about him."

When I came to Moscow, however, I did not see Lenin for some time, as he was ill; and although his speech on "Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of the World Revolution" was on the agenda of the congress, many delegates feared that he would not come, that the state of his health would not permit him to deliver this speech. At last the day arrived when this speech was due; the next point on the agenda was the speech, and just then Lenin appeared at the congress.

That day all the delegates arrived particularly early and the place was packed. I managed to get a seat for myself down front. Suddenly there was a stir in the hall—all the delegates assembled in the vast Andrei Hall of the Kremlin rose to their feet. Lenin made his way to the rostrum rapidly, but for a long time he was

not given the chance to speak; the stirring strains of the *International* resounded through the hall. When the general excitement had somewhat subsided, the chairman pronounced the words which were so pregnant of meaning to all of us:

"Comrade Lenin will now speak."

Lenin spoke in German. He spoke simply, clearly, comprehensibly—everything he said penetrated deep into the mind. I had expected that I would be unable to grasp much of Lenin's speech in view of my meagre political knowledge at that time, but I was very pleasantly surprised to find that I understood absolutely everything he said.

It was only later that I comprehended that Lenin's great art lay precisely in this ability to speak of the most intricate subjects in simple language which could be understood by everybody.

Lenin's German was also simple and clear; now and again, when he could not find the appropriate German word, he used the Russian word instead, which was at once translated by one of the comrades present. But Lenin was not always satisfied with the translation immediately: sometimes the word used did not convey his meaning accurately enough. It was only when the right word was found and announced that Lenin continued his speech.

In this speech Lenin depicted with the utmost precision and lucidity the perspectives for the possibility of building up socialism in a single country.

This was a historic speech of tremendous importance, not only for that time, but for the future in the fight to build up socialism in the Soviet Union.

Lenin spoke for about an hour. His speech ended amidst a storm of applause.

This applause expressed all the ardent affection of the delegates, all their admiration for the leader of the world proletarian revolution.

Lenin looked very tired as he was leaving, and we saw what a tremendous physical effort, what exertion, this speech had entailed.

I shall never forget that hour. I can compare it only to those similar occasions later on when I was able to hear Stalin.

## WILHELM PIECK

### AT LENIN'S FUNERAL

January 22, 1924. Moscow. A room in the Lux. 11 a.m. The telephone rings. A comrade is asking: Is it true that Lenin died? People say that he died last night.

No, it cannot be true! I heard only the day before that Lenin's health was improving. Rashly I call up Clara Zetkin in the Kremlin, to find out whether the report is true. Clara has heard nothing. They were afraid to break the news to her. A few minutes later Clara, sobbing, confirms that the report is true.

Lenin is dead. In a short while the streets are crowded with people. All are in the grip of a great sorrow. Workers—men and women—stream from the factories to the centre of the city. Here they stand silent, as if crushed beneath the weight of a heavy load.

\* \* \*

January 23, 1924. The house in Gorki where Lenin died. An hour and a half's ride from Moscow.

The earth is covered with a thick layer of snow. It is a cold and bright winter day. Lenin lies in the room. His face is a pale yellow, but the skin is smooth—there is practically not a wrinkle left. How hard it is to become reconciled to the thought that he



is no longer! Silent, with tears in their eyes, veterans of the Civil War carry him out of the room. The mournful cortège, carrying the dead leader, wend their way along a narrow path across an open snow-covered field to the railway station. Crowds of people—old and young—have assembled near the station. The heartrending strains of the funeral march float in the air.

Moscow. Hundreds of thousands of people line the streets. An endless procession is moving to the House of Trade Unions where Lenin lies in his bier. Old Bolsheviks—Lenin's closest friends and associates—stand in the first guard of honour. Comrade Stalin and other members of the Political Bureau are among them. Comrade Krupskaya stands by the side of her dead husband.

It is bitterly cold outside. Thirty degrees and more below zero. Day and night masses of people flock to the centre of the city. They stand in the street for hours on end. Bonfires are burning. And in endless lines the people march past the bier holding the remains of the dead Lenin. For four days and four nights they never stop marching. It is something unsurpassed and awe-inspiring!

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January 26, 1924. The Second Congress of Soviets. The Bolshoi Theatre with its immense parterre and five tiers of boxes and galleries is filled to overflowing. Here are the representatives of the Soviets. On the large stage sit the members of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Comrade Krupskaya speaks. Her few simple words produce a soul-stirring impression—tragic and at the same time elevating. Stalin delivers his historical speech—the oath. Kalinin

speaks, followed by representatives of the Soviets—workers, peasants, men and women. Then the congress files past Lenin's bier, weighed down by heavy sorrow and the burthens of the morrow.

\* \* \*

January 27, 1924. Red Square. In its centre, close to the Kremlin wall, stands Lenin's tomb. 4 p.m. The guns fire a salute. The bells in the Kremlin tower chime. Factory sirens whistle. The whole Land of Soviets holds its breath.

Lenin is carried to his final resting place. Workers, peasants, Red Army men from Moscow and environs stand in close ranks on the vast square. The strains of the mournful funeral march sung by a mighty chorus of voices hover over the square. It kept ringing in my ears when I was sitting in the train that night on the way to Germany.

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Lenin's mausoleum on the Red Square in Moscow. There Lenin sleeps his eternal sleep. But his cause lives. Lenin's great Party lives and, led by the continuator of Lenin's cause—the brilliant and beloved Stalin—it carries on the victorious fight.