

*Emma Goldman*

**My Further  
Disillusionment in Russia**

1924

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## Preface

The annals of literature tell of books expurgated, of whole chapters eliminated or changed beyond recognition. But I believe it has rarely happened that a work should be published with more than a third of it left out and without the reviewers being aware of the fact. This doubtful distinction has fallen to the lot of my work on Russia.

The story of that painful experience might well make another chapter, but for the present it is sufficient to give the bare facts of the case.

My manuscript was sent to the original purchaser in two parts, at different times. Subsequently the publishing house of Doubleday, Page & Co. bought the rights to my work, but when the first printed copies reached me I discovered to my dismay that not only had my original title, "My Two Years in Russia," been changed to "My Disillusionment in Russia," but that the last twelve chapters were entirely missing, including my Afterword which is, at least to myself, the most vital part.

There followed an exchange of cables and letters, which gradually elicited the fact that Doubleday, Page & Co. had secured my MSS. from a literary agency in the good faith that it was complete. By some conspiracy of circumstances the second instalment of my work either failed to reach the original purchaser or was lost in his office. At any rate, the book was published without any one's suspecting its incompleteness.

The present volume contains the chapters missing from the first edition, and I deeply appreciate the devotion of my friends who have made the appearance of this additional issue possible — in justice to myself and to my readers.

The adventures of my MSS. are not without their humorous side, which throws a peculiar light on the critics. Of almost a hundred American reviewers of my work only two sensed its incompleteness. And, incidentally, one of them is not a "regular" critic but a librarian. Rather a reflection on professional acumen or conscientiousness.

It were a waste of time to notice the "criticism" of those who have either not read the book or lacked the wit to realize that it was unfinished. Of all the alleged "reviews" only two deserve consideration as written by earnest and able men: those of Henry Alsberg and H. L. Mencken.

Mr. Alsberg believes that the present title of my book is more appropriate to its contents than the name I had chosen. My disillusionment, he asserts, is not only with the Bolsheviki but with the Revolution itself. In support of this contention he cites Bukharin's remark to the effect that "a revolution cannot be accomplished without terror, disorganization, and even wanton destruction, any

more than an omelette can be made without breaking the eggs.” But it seems not to have occurred to Mr. Alsberg that, though the breaking of the eggs is necessary, no omelette can be made if the yolk be thrown away. And that is precisely what the Communist Party did to the Russian Revolution. For the yolk they substituted Bolshevism, more specifically Leninism, with the result as shown in my book — a result that is gradually being realized as an entire failure by the world at large.

Mr. Alsberg also believes that it was not “grim necessity, the driving need to preserve not the Revolution but the remnants of civilization, which forced the Bolsheviki to lay hands on every available weapon, the Terror, the Tcheka, suppression of free speech and press, censorship, military conscription, conscription of labour, requisitioning of peasants’ crops, even bribery and corruption.” Mr. Alsberg evidently agrees with me that the Communists employed all these methods; and that, as he himself states, “the ‘means’ largely *determines* the ‘end’” — a conclusion the proof and demonstration of which are contained in my book. The only mistake in this viewpoint, however — a most vital one — is the assumption that the Bolsheviki were forced to resort to the methods referred to in order to “preserve the remnants of civilization.” Such a view is based on an entire misconception of the philosophy and practice of Bolshevism. Nothing can be further from the desire or intention of Leninism that the “preservation of the remnants of civilization.” Had Mr. Alsberg said instead “the preservation of the Communist dictatorship, of the political absolutism of the Party”, he would have come nearer the truth, and we should have no quarrel on the matter. We must not fail to consider that the Bolsheviki *continue* to employ exactly the same methods to-day as they did in what Mr. Alsberg calls “the moments of grim necessity, in 1919, 1920, and 1921.”

We are in 1924. The military fronts have long ago been liquidated; internal counterrevolution is suppressed; the old bourgeoisie is eliminated; the “moments of grim necessity” are past. In fact, Russia is being politically recognized by various governments of Europe and Asia, and the Bolsheviki are inviting international capital to come to their country whose natural wealth, as Tchicherin assures the world capitalists, is “waiting to be exploited.” The “moments of grim necessity” are gone, but the Terror, the Tcheka, suppression of free speech and press, and all the other Communist methods enumerated by Mr. Alsberg *still remain in force*. Indeed, they are being applied even more brutally and barbarously since the death of Lenin. Is it to “preserve the remnants of civilization,” as Mr. Alsberg claims, or to strengthen the weakening Party dictatorship?

Mr. Alsberg charges me with believing that “had the Russians made the Revolution à la Bakunin instead of à la Marx” the result would have been different and more satisfactory. I plead guilty to the charge. In truth, I not only believe so; I am certain of it. The Russian Revolution — more correctly, Bolshevik methods

— conclusively demonstrated how a revolution should *not* be made. The Russian experiment has proven the fatality of a political party usurping the functions of the revolutionary people, of an omnipotent State seeking to impose its will upon the country, of a dictatorship attempting to “organize” the new life. But I need not repeat here the reflections summed up in my concluding chapter. Unfortunately they did not appear in the first edition of my work. Otherwise Mr. Alsberg might perhaps have written differently.

Mr. Mencken in his review believes me a “prejudiced witness,” because I — an Anarchist — am opposed to government, whatever its form. Yet the whole first part of my book entirely disproves the assumption of my prejudice. I defended the Bolsheviki while still in America, and for long months in Russia I sought every opportunity to cooperate with them and to aid in the great task of revolutionary upbuilding. Though an Anarchist and an anti-governmentalist, I had not come to Russia expecting to find my ideal realized. I saw in the Bolsheviki the symbol of the Revolution and I was eager to work with them in spite of our differences. However, if lack of aloofness from the actualities of life means that one cannot judge things fairly, then Mr. Mencken is right. One could not have lived through two years of Communist terror, of a régime involving the enslavement of the whole people, the annihilation of the most fundamental values, human and revolutionary, of corruption and mismanagement, and yet have remained aloof or “impartial” in Mr. Mencken’s sense. I doubt whether Mr. Mencken, though not an Anarchist, would have done so. Could he, being human?

In conclusion, the present publication of the chapters missing in the first edition comes at a very significant period in the life of Russia. When the “Nep,” Lenin’s new economic policy, was introduced, there rose the hope of a better day, of a gradual abolition of the policies of terror and persecution. The Communist dictatorship seemed inclined to relax its strangle-hold upon the thoughts and lives of the people. But the hope was short-lived. Since the death of Lenin the Bolsheviki have returned to the terror of the worst days of their régime. Despotism, fearing for its power, seeks safety in bloodshed. More timely even than in 1922 is my book to-day.

When the first series of my articles on Russia appeared, in 1922, and later when my book was published, I was bitterly attacked and denounced by American radicals of almost every camp. But I felt confident that the time would come when the mask would be torn from the false face of Bolshevism and the great delusion exposed. The time has come even sooner than I anticipated. In most civilized lands — in France, England, Germany, in the Scandinavian and Latin countries, even in America the fog of blind faith is gradually lifting. The reactionary character of the Bolshevik régime is being realized by the masses, its terrorism and persecution of non-Communist opinion condemned. The torture of the political victims of the

dictatorship in the prisons of Russia, in the concentration camps of the frozen North and in Siberian exile, is rousing the conscience of the more progressive elements the world over. In almost every country societies for the defense and aid of the politicals imprisoned in Russia have been formed, with the object of securing their liberation and the establishment of freedom of opinion and expression in Russia.

If my work will help in these efforts to throw light upon the real situation in Russia and to awaken the world to the true character of Bolshevism and the fatality of dictatorship — be it Fascist or Communist — I shall bear with equanimity the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of foe or friend. And I shall not regret the travail and struggle of spirit that produced this work, which now, after many vicissitudes, is at last complete in print.

Emma Goldman.

Berlin, June, 1924.

## Chapter 1. Odessa

At the numerous stations between Kiev and Odessa we frequently had to wait for days before we managed to make connections with trains going south. We employed our leisure in visiting the small towns and villages, and formed many acquaintances. The markets were especially of interest to us.

In the Kiev province by far the greater part of the population is Jewish. They had suffered many pogroms and were now living in constant terror of their repetition. But the will to live is indestructible, particularly in the Jew; otherwise centuries of persecution and slaughter would long since have destroyed the race. Its peculiar perseverance was manifest everywhere: the Jews continued to trade as if nothing had happened. The news that Americans were in town would quickly gather about us crowds of people anxious to hear of the New World. To them it was still a "new" world, of which they were as ignorant as they had been fifty years before. But not only America — Russia itself was a sealed book to them. They knew that it was a country of pogroms, that some incomprehensible thing called revolution had happened, and that the Bolsheviki would not let them ply their trade. Even the younger element in the more distant villages was not much better informed.

The difference between a famished population and one having access to food supplies was very noticeable. Between Kiev and Odessa products were extremely cheap as compared with northern Russia. Butter, for instance, was 250 rubles a pound as against 3,000 in Petrograd; sugar 350 rubles, while in Moscow it was 5,000. White flour, almost impossible to obtain in the capitals, was here sold at 80 rubles a pound. Yet all along the journey we were besieged at the stations by hungry people, begging for food. The country possessed plenty of supplies, but evidently the average person had no means of purchase. Especially terrible was the sight of the emaciated and ragged children, pleading for a crust of bread at the car windows.

While in the neighbourhood of Zhmerenka we received the appalling news of the retreat of the Twelfth Army and the quick advance of the Polish forces. It was a veritable rout in which the Bolsheviki lost great stores of food and medical supplies, of which Russia stood so much in need. The Polish operations and the Wrangel attacks from the Crimea threatened to cut our journey short. It had been our original purpose to visit the Caucasus but the new developments made travel farther than Odessa impracticable. We still hoped, however, to continue our trip provided we could secure an extension of time for our car permit, which was to expire on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

We reached Odessa just after a fire had completely destroyed the main telegraph and electric stations, putting the city in total darkness. As it would require considerable time to make repairs, the situation increased the nervousness of the city, for darkness favoured counter-revolutionary plots. Rumours were afloat of Kiev having been taken by the Poles and of the approach of Wrangel.

It was our custom to pay our first official visit to the *Ispolkom* (Executive Committee) in order to familiarize ourselves with the situation and the general work scheme of the local institutions. In Odessa there was a *Revkom* instead, indicating that the affairs of the city had not yet been sufficiently organized to establish a Soviet and its Executive Committee. The Chairman of the *Revkom* was a young man, not over thirty, with a hard face. After scrutinizing our documents carefully and learning the objects of our mission he stated that he could not be of any assistance to us. The situation in Odessa was precarious, and as he was busy with many pressing matters, the Expedition would have to look out for itself. He gave us permission, however, to visit the Soviet institutions and to collect whatever we might be able to procure. He did not consider the Petrograd Museum and its work of much importance. He was an ordinary worker appointed to a high government position, not over-intelligent and apparently antagonistic to everything "intellectual."

The prospects did not look promising, but, of course, we could not leave Odessa without making a serious effort to collect the rich historical material which we knew to be in the city. Returning from the *Revkom* we happened to meet a group of young people who recognized us, they having lived in America before. They assured us that we could expect no aid from the Chairman who was known as a narrow fanatic embittered against the *intelligentsia*. Several of the group offered to introduce us to other officials who would be able and willing to assist us in our efforts. We learned that the Chairman of Public Economy in Odessa was an Anarchist, and that the head of the Metal Trade Unions was also an Anarchist. The information held out hope that we might accomplish something in Odessa, after all.

We lost no time in visiting the two men, but the result was not encouraging. Both were willing to do everything in their power, but warned us to expect no returns because Odessa, as they phrased it, was The City of Sabotage.

It must unfortunately be admitted that our experience justified that characterization. I had seen a great deal of sabotage in various Soviet institutions in every city I had visited. Everywhere the numerous employees deliberately wasted their time while thousands of applicants spent days and weeks in the corridors and offices without receiving the least attention. The greater part of Russia did nothing else but stand in line, waiting for the bureaucrats, big and little, to admit them to their sanctums. But bad as conditions were in other cities, nowhere did I



find such systematic sabotage as in Odessa. From the highest to the lowest Soviet worker everyone was busy with something other than the work entrusted to him. Office hours were supposed to begin at ten, but as a rule no official could be found in any of the departments till noon or even later. At three in the afternoon the institutions closed, and therefore very little work was accomplished.

We remained in Odessa two weeks, but so far as material collected through official channels was concerned, we got practically nothing. Whatever we accomplished was due to the aid of private persons and members of outlawed political parties. From them we received valuable material concerning the persecution of the Mensheviki and the labour organizations where the influence of the former was strongest. The management of several unions had been entirely suspended at the time we arrived in Odessa, and there began a complete reorganization of them by the Communists, for the purpose of eliminating all opposing elements.

Among the interesting people we met in Odessa were the Zionists, including some well known literary and professional men. It was at Doctor N—'s house that we met them. The Doctor himself was the owner of a sanatorium located on a beautiful spot overlooking the Black Sea and considered the best in the South. The institution had been nationalized by the Bolsheviki, but Doctor N — was left in charge and was even permitted to take in private patients. In return for that privilege he had to board and give medical attention to Soviet patients for one third of the established price.

Late into the night we discussed the Russian situation with the guests at the Doctor's house. Most of them were antagonistic to the Bolshevik régime. "Lenin let loose the motto 'Rob the robbers,' and at least here in the Ukraina his followers have carried out the order to the letter," said the Doctor. It was the general opinion of the gathering that the confusion and ruin which resulted were due to that policy. It robbed the old bourgeoisie but did not benefit the workers. The Doctor cited his sanatorium as an illustration. When the Bolsheviki took it over they declared that the proletariat was to own and enjoy the place, but not a single worker had since been received as patient, not even a proletarian Communist. The people the Soviet sent to the sanatorium were members of the new bureaucracy, usually the high officials. The Chairman of the Tcheka, for instance, who suffered from nervous breakdown, had been in the institution several times. "He works sixteen hours a day sending people to their death," the doctor commented. "You can easily imagine how it feels to take care of such a man."

One of the Bundist writers present held that the Bolsheviki were trying to imitate the French Revolution. Corruption was rampant; it put in the shade the worst crimes of the Jacobins. Not a day passed but that people were arrested for trading in Tsarist or Kerensky money; yet it was an open secret that the Chairman of the Tcheka himself speculated in valuta. The depravity of the Tcheka was a

matter of common knowledge. People were shot for slight offences, while those who could afford to give bribes were freed even after they had been sentenced to death. It repeatedly happened that the rich relatives of an arrested man would be notified by the Tcheka of his execution. A few weeks later, after they had somewhat recovered from their shock and grief, they would be informed that the report of the man's death was erroneous, that he was alive and could be liberated by paying a fine, usually a very high one. Of course, the relatives would strain every effort to raise the money. Then they would suddenly be arrested for attempted bribery, their money confiscated and the prisoner shot.

One of the Doctor's guests, who lived in the "Tcheka Street" told of the refinements of terrorism practised to awe the population. Almost daily he witnessed the same sights: early in the morning mounted Tchekists would dash by, shooting into the air — a warning that all windows must be closed. Then came motor trucks loaded with the doomed. They lay in rows, faces downward, their hands tied, soldiers standing over them with rifles. They were being carried to execution outside the city. A few hours later the trucks would return empty save for a few soldiers. Blood dripped from the wagons, leaving a crimson streak on the pavement all the way to the Tcheka headquarters.

It was not possible that Moscow did not know about these things, the Zionists asserted. The fear of the central power was too great to permit of the local Tcheka doing anything not approved by Moscow. But it was no wonder that the Bolsheviki had to resort to such methods. A small political party trying to control a population of 150,000,000 which bitterly hated the Communists, could not hope to maintain itself without such an institution as the Tcheka. The latter was characteristic of the basic principles of Bolshevik conception: the country must be *forced* to be *saved* by the Communist Party. The pretext that the Bolsheviki were defending the Revolution was a hollow mockery. As a matter of fact, they had entirely destroyed it.

It had grown so late that the members of our expedition could not return to the car, fearing difficulty in locating it, because of the dark night. We therefore remained at the home of our host, to meet next day a group of men of national reputation, including Bialeck, the greatest living Jewish poet, known to Jews the world over. There was also present a literary investigator, who had made a special study of the question of pogroms. He had visited seventy-two cities, collecting the richest material to be had on the subject. It was his opinion that, contrary to accepted notion, the pogrom wave during the civil war period, between the years 1918 and 1921, under the various Ukrainian governments, was even worse than the most terrible Jewish massacres under the Tsars. There had taken place no pogroms during the Bolshevik régime, but he believed that the atmosphere created by them intensified the anti-Jewish spirit and would some day break out

in the wholesale slaughter of the Jews. He did not think that the Bolsheviki were particularly concerned in defending his race. In certain localities of the South the Jews, constantly exposed to assault and pillage by robber bands and occasionally by individual Red soldiers, had appealed to the Soviet Government for permission to organize themselves for self-defence, requesting that arms be given them. But in all such cases the Government refused.

It was the general sentiment of the Zionists that the continuation of the Bolsheviki in power meant the destruction of the Jews. The Russian Jews, as a rule, were not workers. From time immemorial they had engaged in trade; but business had been destroyed by the Communists, and before the Jew could be turned into a worker he would deteriorate, as a race, and become extinct. Specific Jewish culture, the most priceless thing to the Zionists, was frowned upon by the Bolsheviki. That phase of the situation seemed to affect them even more deeply than pogroms.

These intellectual Jews were not of the proletarian class. They were bourgeois without any revolutionary spirit. Their criticism of the Bolsheviki did not appeal to me for it was a criticism from the Right. If I had still believed in the Communists as the true champions of the Revolution I could have defended them against the Zionist complaints. But I myself had lost faith in the revolutionary integrity of the Bolsheviki.

## Chapter 2. Returning to Moscow

In a country where speech and press are so completely suppressed as in Russia it is not surprising that the human mind should feed on fancy and out of it weave the most incredible stories. Already, during my first months in Petrograd, I was amazed at the wild rumours that circulated in the city and were believed even by intelligent people. The Soviet press was inaccessible to the population at large and there was no other news medium. Every morning Bolshevik bulletins and papers were pasted on the street corners, but in the bitter cold few people cared to pause to read them. Besides, there was little faith in the Communist press. Petrograd was therefore completely cut off, not only from the Western world but even from the rest of Russia. An old revolutionist once said to me: "We not only don't know what is going on in the world or in Moscow; we are not even aware of what is happening in the next street." However, the human mind will not be bottled up all the time. It must have and generally finds an outlet. Rumours of attempted raids on Petrograd, stories that Zinoviev had been ducked in "Sovietsky soup" by some factory workers and that Moscow was captured by the Whites were afloat.

Of Odessa it was related that enemy ships had been sighted off the coast, and there was much talk of an impending attack. Yet when we arrived we found the city quiet and leading its ordinary life. Except for the large markets, Odessa impressed me as a complete picture of Soviet rule. But we had not been gone a day from the city when, on our return to Moscow, we again met the same rumours. The success of the Polish forces and the hasty retreat of the Red Army furnished fuel to the over-excited imagination of the people. Everywhere the roads were blocked with military trains and the stations filled with soldiers spreading the panic of the rout.

At several points the Soviet authorities were getting ready to evacuate at the first approach of danger. The population, however, could not do that. At the railroad stations along the route groups of people stood about discussing the impending attack. Fighting in Rostov, other cities already in the hands of Wrangel, bandits holding up trains and blowing up bridges, and similar stories kept everybody in a panic. It was of course impossible to verify the rumours. But we were informed that we could not continue to Rostov-on-the-Don, that city being already within the military zone. We were advised to start for Kiev and thence return to Moscow. It was hard to give up our plan of reaching Baku, but we had no choice. We could not venture too far, especially as our car permit was to expire within a short time. We decided to return to Moscow via Kiev.

When we left Petrograd, we had promised to bring back from the South some sugar, white flour, and cereals for our starved friends who had lacked these necessities for three years. On the way to Kiev and Odessa we found provisions comparatively cheap; but now the prices had risen several hundred per cent. From an Odessa friend we learned of a place twenty versts [about thirteen miles] from Rakhno, a small village near Zhmerenka, where sugar, honey, and apple jelly could be had at small cost. We were not supposed to transport provisions to Petrograd, though our car was immune from the usual inspection by the Tcheka. But as we had no intention of selling anything, we felt justified in bringing some food for people who had been starving for years. We had our car detached at Zhmerenka, and two men of the expedition and myself went to Rakhno.

It was no easy matter to induce the Zhmerenka peasants to take us to the next village. Would we give them salt, nails, or some other merchandise? Otherwise they would not go. We lost the best part of a day in a vain search, but at last we found a man who consented to drive us to the place in return for Kerensky rubles. The journey reminded me of the rocky road of good intentions: we were heaved up and down, jerked back and forth, like so many dice. After a seemingly endless trip, aching in every limb, we reached the village. It was poor and squalid, Jews constituting the main population. The peasants lived along the Rakhno road and visited the place only on market days. The Soviet officials were Gentiles.

We carried a letter of introduction to a woman physician, the sister of our Odessa Bundist friend. She was to direct us how to go about procuring the provisions. Arriving at the Doctor's house we found her living in two small rooms, ill kept and unclean, with a dirty baby crawling about. The woman was busy making apple jelly. She was of the type of disillusioned intellectual now so frequently met in Russia. From her conversation I learned that she and her husband, also a physician, had been detailed to that desolate spot. They were completely isolated from all intellectual life, having neither papers, books, nor associates. Her husband would begin his rounds early in the morning and return late at night, while she had to attend to her baby and household, besides taking care of her own patients. She had only recently recovered from typhus and it was hard for her to chop wood, carry water, wash and cook and look after her sick. But what made their life unbearable was the general antagonism to the intelligentsia. They had it constantly thrown up to them that they were bourgeois and counter-revolutionists, and they were charged with sabotage. It was only for the sake of her child that she continued the sordid life, the woman said; "otherwise it were better to be dead."

A young woman, poorly clad, but clean and neat, came to the house and was introduced as a school teacher. She at once got into conversation with me. She was a Communist, she announced, who was "doing her own thinking." "Moscow

may be autocratic," she said, "but the authorities in the towns and villages here beat Moscow. They do as they please." The provincial officials were flotsam washed ashore by the great storm. They had no revolutionary past — they had known no suffering for their ideals. They were just slaves in positions of power. If she had not been a Communist herself, she would have been eliminated long ago, but she was determined to make a fight against the abuses in her district. As to the schools, they were doing as best they could under the circumstances, but that was very little. They lacked everything. It was not so bad in the summer, but in the winter the children had to stay home because the class rooms were not heated. Was it true that Moscow was publishing glowing accounts of the great reduction in illiteracy? Well, it was certainly exaggerated. In her village the progress was very slow. She had often wondered whether there was really much to so-called education. Supposing the peasants should learn to read and write. Would that make them better and kinder men? If so, why is there so much cruelty, injustice, and strife in countries where people are not illiterate? The Russian peasant cannot read or write, but he has an innate sense of right and beauty. He can do wonderful things with his hands and he is no more brutal than the rest of the world.

I was interested to find such an unusual viewpoint in one so young and in such an out-of-the-way place. The little teacher could not have been more than twenty-five. I encouraged her to speak of her reactions to the general policies and methods of her party. Did she approve of them, did she think them dictated by the revolutionary process? She was not a politician, she said; she did not know. She could judge only by the results and they were far from satisfactory. But she had faith in the Revolution. It had uprooted the very soil, it had given life a new meaning. Even the peasants were not the same — no one was the same. Something great must come of all the confusion.

The arrival of the Doctor turned the conversation into other channels. When informed of our errand he went in search of some tradesmen, but presently he returned to say that nothing could be done: it was the eve of Yom Kippur, and every Jew was in the synagogue. Heathen that I am, I did not know that I had come on the eve of that most solemn fast day. As we could not remain another day, we decided to return without having accomplished our purpose.

Here a new difficulty arose. Our driver would not budge unless we got an armed guard to accompany us. He was afraid of bandits: two nights previously, he said, they had attacked travellers in the forest. It became necessary to apply to the Chairman of the Militia. The latter was willing to help us, but all his men were in the synagogue, praying. Would we wait until the services were over?

At last the people filed out from the synagogue and we were given two armed militiamen. It was rather hard on those Jewish boys, for it was a sin to ride on Yom Kippur. But no inducement could persuade the peasant to venture through the

woods without military protection. Life is indeed a crazy quilt made of patches. The peasant, a true Ukrainian, would not have hesitated a moment to beat and rob Jews in a pogrom; yet he felt secure in the protection of Jews against the possible attack of his own coreligionists.

We rode into the bright fall night, the sky dotted with stars. It was soothingly still, with all nature asleep. The driver and our escort discussed the bandits, competing in bloodcurdling stories of the outrages committed by them. As we reached the dark forest I reflected that their loud voices would be the signal of our approach for any highwaymen who might be lying in wait. The soldiers stood up in the wagon, their rifles ready for action; the peasant crossed himself and lashed the horses into a mad gallop, keeping up the pace till we reached the open road again. It was all very exciting but we met no bandits. They must have been sabotaging that night.

We reached the station too late to make connections and had to wait until the morning. I spent the night in the company of a girl in soldier uniform, a Communist. She had been at every front, she declared, and had fought many bandits. She was a sort of Playboy of the Eastern World, romancing by the hour. Her favourite stories were of shooting. "A bunch of counterrevolutionists, White Guards and speculators," she would say; "they should all be shot." I thought of the little school teacher, the lovely spirit in the village, giving of herself in hard and painful service to the children, to beauty in life; and here, her comrade, also a young woman, but hardened and cruel, lacking all sense of revolutionary values — both children of the same school, yet so unlike each other.

In the morning we rejoined the Expedition in Zhmerenka and proceeded to Kiev, where we arrived by the end of September, to find the city completely changed. The panic of the Twelfth Army was in the air; the enemy was supposed to be only 150 versts [about ninety-nine miles] away and many Soviet Departments were being evacuated, adding to the general uneasiness and fright. I visited Wetoshkin, the Chairman of the *Revkom*, and his secretary. The latter inquired about Odessa, anxious to know how they were doing there, whether they had suppressed trade, and how the Soviet Departments were working. I told him of the general sabotage, of the speculation and the horrors of the Tcheka. As to trade, the stores were closed and all signs were down, but the markets were doing big business. "Indeed? Well, you must tell this to Comrade Wetoshkin," the Secretary cried gleefully. "What do you suppose — Rakovsky was here and told us perfect wonders about the accomplishments of Odessa. He put us on the rack because we had not done as much. You must tell Wetoshkin all about Odessa; he will enjoy the joke on Rakovsky."

I met Wetoshkin on the stairs as I was leaving the office. He looked thinner than when I had last seen him, and very worried. When asked about the impending

danger, he made light of it. "We are not going to evacuate," he said, "we remain right here. It is the only way to reassure the public." He, too, inquired about Odessa. I promised to call again later, as, I had no time just then, but I did not have the chance to see Wetoshkin again to furnish that joke on Rakovsky. We left Kiev within two days.

At Bryansk, an industrial centre not far away from Moscow, we came upon large posters announcing that Makhno was again with the Bolsheviki, and that he was distinguishing himself by daring exploits against Wrangel. It was startling news, in view of the fact that the Soviet papers had constantly painted Makhno as a bandit, counter-revolutionary, and traitor. What had happened to bring about this change of attitude and tone? The thrilling adventure of having our car held up and ourselves carried off as prisoners, by the Makhnovtsi did not come off. By the time we reached the district where Makhno had been operating in September, he was cut off from us. It would have been very interesting to meet the peasant leader face to face and hear at first hand what he was about. He was undoubtedly the most picturesque and vital figure brought to the fore by the Revolution in the South — and now he was again with the Bolsheviki. What had happened? There was no way of knowing until we should reach Moscow.

From a copy of the *Izvestia* that fell into our hands en route, we learned the sad news of the death of John Reed. It was a great blow to those of us who had known Jack. The last time I saw him was at the guest house, the Hotel International, in Petrograd. He had just returned from Finland, after his imprisonment there, and was ill in bed. I was informed that Jack was alone and without proper care, and I went up to nurse him. He was in a bad state, all swollen and with a nasty rash on his arms, the result of malnutrition. In Finland he had been fed almost exclusively on dried fish and had been otherwise wretchedly treated. He was a very sick man, but his spirit remained the same. No matter how radically one disagreed with Jack, one could not help loving his big, generous spirit, and now he was dead, his life laid down in the service of the Revolution, as he believed.

Arriving in Moscow I immediately went to the guest house, the *Delovoi Dvor*, where stayed Louise Bryant, Jack's wife. I found her terribly distraught and glad to see one who had known Jack so well. We talked of him, of his illness, his suffering and his untimely death. She was much embittered because, she claimed, Jack had been ordered to Baku to attend the Congress of the Eastern peoples when he was already very ill. He returned a dying man. But even then he could have been saved had he been given competent medical attention. He lay in his room for a week without the doctors making up their mind as to the nature of his illness. Then it was too late. I could well understand Louise's feelings, though I was convinced that everything humanly possible had been done for Reed. I knew that whatever else might be said against the Bolsheviki, it could not be charged



that they neglect those who serve them. On the contrary, they are generous masters. But Louise had lost what was most precious to her.

During the conversation she asked me about my experiences and I told her of the conflict within me, of the desperate effort I had been making to find my way out of the chaos, and that now the fog was lifting, and I was beginning to differentiate between the Bolsheviki and the Revolution. Ever since I had come to Russia I had begun to sense that all was not well with the Bolshevik régime, and I felt as if caught in a trap. “How uncanny!” Louise suddenly gripped my arm and stared at me with wild eyes. “‘Caught in a trap’ were the very words Jack repeated in his delirium.” I realized that poor Jack had also begun to see beneath the surface. His was the free, unfettered spirit striving for the real values of life. It would be chafed when bound by a dogma which proclaimed itself immutable. Had Jack lived he would no doubt have clung valiantly to the thing which had caught him in the trap. But in the face of death the mind of man sometimes becomes luminous: it sees in a flash what in man’s normal condition is obscure and hidden from him. It was not at all strange to me that Jack should have felt as I did, as everyone who is not a zealot must feel in Russia — caught in a trap.

## Chapter 3. Back in Petrograd

The expedition was to proceed to Petrograd the next day, but Louise begged me to remain for the funeral. Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, several friends rode with her to the Trade Union House where Reed's body lay in state. I accompanied Louise when the procession started for the Red Square. There were speeches — much cold stereotyped declamation about the value of Jack Reed to the Revolution and to the Communist Party. It all sounded mechanical, far removed from the spirit of the dead man in the fresh grave. One speaker only dwelt on the real Jack Reed — Alexandra Kollontay. She had caught the artist's soul, infinitely greater in its depth and beauty than any dogma. She used the occasion to admonish her comrades. "We call ourselves Communists," she said, "but are we really that? Do we not rather draw the life essence from those who come to us, and when they are no longer of use, we let them fall by the wayside, neglected and forgotten? Our Communism and our comradeship are dead letters if we do not give out of ourselves to those who need us. Let us beware of such Communism. It slays the best in our ranks. Jack Reed was among the best."

The sincere words of Kollontay displeased the high Party members. Bukharin knitted his brows, Reinstein fidgeted about, others grumbled. But I was glad of what Kollontay had said. Not only because what she said expressed Jack Reed better than anything else said that day, but also because it brought her nearer to me. In America we had repeatedly tried to meet but never succeeded. When I reached Moscow, in March, 1920, Kollontay was ill. I saw her only for a little while before I returned to Petrograd. We spoke of the things that were troubling me. During the conversation Kollontay remarked: "Yes, we have many dull sides in Russia." "Dull," I queried; "nothing more?" I was unpleasantly affected by what seemed to me a rather superficial view. But I reassured myself that Kollontay's inadequate English caused her to characterize as "dull" what to me was a complete collapse of all idealism.

Among other things Kollontay had then said was that I could find a great field for work among the women as very little had been attempted up to that time to enlighten and broaden them. We parted in a friendly manner, but I did not sense in her the same feeling of warmth and depth that I had found in Angelica Balabanova. Now at the open grave of Reed her words brought her closer to me. She, too, felt deeply, I thought.

Louise Bryant had fallen in a dead faint and was lying face downward on the damp earth. After considerable effort we got her to her feet. Hysterical, she was taken in the waiting auto to her hotel and put to bed. Outside, the sky was clothed

in gray and was weeping upon the fresh grave of Jack Reed. And all of Russia seemed a fresh grave.

While in Moscow we found the explanation of the sudden change of tone of the Communist press toward Makhno. The Bolsheviki, hard pressed by Wrangel, sought the aid of the Ukrainian *povstantsi* army. A politico-military agreement was about to be entered into between the Soviet Government and Nestor Makhno. The latter was to cooperate fully with the Red Army in the campaign against the counterrevolutionary enemy. On their side, the Bolsheviki accepted the following conditions of Makhno:

1. The immediate liberation and termination of persecution of all Makhnovtsi and Anarchists, excepting cases of armed rebellion against the Soviet Government.
2. Fullest liberty of speech, press and propaganda for Makhnovtsi and Anarchists, without, however, the right of calling for armed uprisings against the Soviet Government, and subject to military censorship.
3. Free participation in Soviet elections; the right of Makhnovtsi and Anarchists to be candidates, and to hold the fifth All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets.

The agreement also included the right of the Anarchists to call a congress in Kharkov, and preparations were being made to hold it in the month of October. Many Anarchists were getting ready to attend it and were elated over the outlook. But my faith in the Bolsheviki had received too many shocks. Not only did I believe that the Congress would not take place, but I saw in it a Bolshevik ruse to gather all the Anarchists in one place in order to destroy them. Yet the fact was that several Anarchists, among them the well-known writer and lecturer Volin, had already been released and were now free in Moscow.

We left for Petrograd to deliver to the Museum the carload of precious material we had gathered in the South. More valuable still was the experience the members of the Expedition had been enriched with through personal contact with people of various shades of opinion, or of no opinion, and the impressions of the social panorama as it was being unrolled day by day. That was a treasure of far greater worth than any paper documents. But better insight into the situation intensified my inner struggle. I longed to close my eyes and ears — not to see the accusing hand which pointed to the blind errors and conscious crimes that were stifling the Revolution. I wanted not to hear the compelling voice of facts, which no personal attachments could silence any longer. I knew that the Revolution and the Bolsheviki, proclaimed as one and the same, were opposites, antagonistic in aim and purpose. The Revolution had its roots deep down in the life of the people. The Communist State was based on a scheme forcibly applied by a political party. In the contest the Revolution was being slain, but the slayer also was gasping

for breath. I had known in America that the Interventionists, the blockade and the conspiracy of the Imperialists were wrecking the Revolution. But what I had not known then was the part the Bolsheviki were playing in the process. Now I realized that they were the grave-diggers.

I was oppressively conscious of the great debt I owed to the workers of Europe and America: I should tell them the truth about Russia. But how could I speak out when the country was still besieged on several fronts? It would mean working into the hands of Poland and Wrangel. For the first time in my life I refrained from exposing grave social evils. I felt as if I were betraying the trust of the masses, particularly of the American workers, whose faith I dearly cherished.

Arrived in Petrograd, I went to live temporarily in the Hôtel International. I intended to find a room somewhere else, determined to accept no privileges at the hands of the Government. The International was filled with foreign visitors. Many had no idea of why or wherefore they had come. They had simply flocked to the land they believed to be the paradise of the workers. I remember my experience with a certain I. W. W. chap. He had brought to Russia a small supply of provisions, needles, thread, and other similar necessities. He insisted that I let him share with me. "But you will need every bit of it yourself," I told him. Of course, he knew there was great scarcity in Russia. But the proletariat was in control and as a worker he would receive everything he needed. Or he would "get a piece of land and build a homestead. He had been fifteen years in the Wobbly movement and he "didn't mind settling down." What was there to say to such an innocent? I had not the courage to disillusion him. I knew he would learn soon enough. It was pathetic, though, to see such people flood starving Russia. Yet they could not do her the harm the other kind was doing — creatures from the four corners of the earth to whom the Revolution represented a gold mine. There were many of them in the International. They all came with legends of the wonderful growth of Communism in America, Ireland, China, Palestine. Such stories were balm to the hungry souls of the men in power. They welcomed them as an old maid welcomes the flattery of her first suitor. They sent these impostors back home well provided financially and equipped to sing the praises of the Workers' and Peasants' Republic. It was both tragic and comic to observe the breed all inflated with "important conspiratory missions."

I received many visitors in my room, among them my little neighbour from the Astoria with her two children, a Communist from the French Section, and several of the foreigners. My neighbour looked sick and worn since I had seen her last in June, 1920. "Are you ill?" I inquired on one occasion. "Not exactly," she said; "I am hungry most of the time and exhausted. The summer has been hard: as inspectress of children's homes I have to do much walking. I return home completely exhausted. My nine-year-old girl goes to a children's colony, but

I would not risk sending my baby boy there because of his experience last year, when he was so neglected that he nearly died. I had to keep him in the city all summer, which made it doubly hard for me. Still, it would not have been so bad had it not been for the *subotniki* and *voskresniki* (Communist Saturday and Sunday voluntary work-days). They drain my energies completely. You know how they began — like a picnic, with trumpets and singing, marching and festivities. We all felt inspired, especially when we saw our leading comrades take pick and shovel and pitch in. But that is all a matter of the past. The *subotniki* have become gray and spiritless, beneath an obligation imposed without regard to inclination, physical fitness, or the amount of other work one has to do. Nothing ever succeeds in our poor Russia. If I could only get out to Sweden, Germany, anywhere, far away from it all.” Poor little woman, she was not the only one who wanted to forsake the country. It was their love for Russia and their bitter disappointment which made most people anxious to run away.

Several other Communists I knew in Petrograd were even more embittered. Whenever they called on me they would repeat their determination to get out of the Party. They were suffocating — they said — in the atmosphere of intrigue, blind hatred, and senseless persecution. But it requires considerable will power to leave the Party which absolutely controls the destiny of more than a hundred million people, and my Communist visitors lacked the strength. But that did not lessen their misery, which affected even their physical condition, although they received the best rations and they had their meals at the exclusive Smolny dining room. I remember my surprise on first finding that there were two separate restaurants in Smolny, one where wholesome and sufficient food was served to the important members of the Petrograd Soviet and of the Third International, while the other was for the ordinary employees of the Party. At one time there had even been three restaurants. Somehow the Kronstadt sailors learned of it. They came down in a body and closed two of the eating places. “We made the Revolution that all should share alike,” they said. Only one restaurant functioned for a time but later the second was opened. But even in the latter the meals were far superior to the Sovietsky dining rooms for the “common people.”

Some of the Communists objected to the discrimination. They saw the blunders, the intrigues, the destruction of life practised in the name of Communism, but they had not the strength and courage to protest or to disassociate themselves from the Party responsible for the injustice and brutality. They would often unburden themselves to me of the matters they dared not discuss in their own circles. Thus I came to know many things about the inner workings of the Party and the Third International that were carefully hidden from the outside world. Among them was the story of the alleged Finnish White conspiracy, which resulted in the killing in Petrograd of seven leading Finnish Communists. I had read about it in the Soviet

papers while I was in the Ukraina. I remember my feeling of renewed impatience with myself that I should be critical of the Bolshevik régime at a time when counter-revolutionary conspiracies were still so active. But from my Communist visitors I learned that the published report was false from beginning to end. It was no White conspiracy but a fight between two groups of Bolsheviki: the moderate Finnish Communists in control of the propaganda carried on from Petrograd, and the Left Wing working in Finland. The Moderates were Zinoviev adherents and had been put in charge of the work by him. The Lefts had repeatedly complained to the Third International about the conservatism and compromises of their comrades in Petrograd and the harm they were doing to the movement in Finland. They asked that these men be removed. They were ignored. On the 31st of August, 1920, the Lefts came to Petrograd and proceeded to the headquarters of the Moderates. At the session of the latter they demanded that the Executive Committee resign and turn over all books and accounts to them. Their demand refused, the young Finnish Communists opened fire, killing seven of their comrades. The affair was heralded to the world as a counter-revolutionary conspiracy of White Finns.

The third anniversary of the October Revolution was celebrated November 7<sup>th</sup> (October 25<sup>th</sup> old style), on the Uritsky Square. I had seen so many official demonstrations that they had lost interest for me. Still I went to the Square hoping that a new note might be sounded. It proved a rehash of the thing — I had heard over and over again. The pageant especially was a demonstration of Communist poverty in ideas. Kerensky and his cabinet, Tchernov and the Constituent Assembly, and the storming of the Winter Palace again served as puppets to bring out in strong relief the rôle of the Bolsheviki as “saviours of the Revolution.” It was badly played and poorly staged, and fell flat. To me the celebration was more like the funeral than the birth of the Revolution.

There was much excitement in Petrograd all through the month of November. Numerous rumours were afloat about strikes, arrests, and dashes between workers and soldiery. It was difficult to get at the facts. But the extraordinary nary session called by the Party in the First House of the Soviet indicated a serious situation. In the early part of the afternoon the whole square in front of the Astoria was lined with autos of the influential Communists who had been summoned to attend the special conference. The following morning we learned that in obedience to the Moscow decree the Petrograd session had decided to mobilize a number of important Bolshevik workers for the factories and shops. Three hundred Party members, some of them high government officials and others holding responsible positions in the Petro-Soviet, were immediately ordered to work, to prove to the proletariat that Russia was indeed a Workers’ Government. The plan was expected to allay the growing discontent of the proletarians and to counteract the

influence of the other political parties among them. Zorin was one of the three hundred.

However, the toilers would not be deceived by this move. They knew that most of the mobilized men continued to live in the Astoria and came to work in their autos. They saw them warmly dressed and well shod, while they themselves were almost naked and living in squalid quarters without light or heat. The workers resented the pretense. The matter became a subject of discussion in the shops, and many unpleasant scenes followed. One woman, a prominent Communist, was so tormented in the factory that she went into hysterics and had to be taken away. Some of the mobilized Bolsheviki, among them Zorin and others, were sincere enough, but they had grown away from the toilers and could not stand the hardships of factory life. After a few weeks Zorin collapsed and had to be removed to a place of rest. Though he was generally liked, his collapse was interpreted by the workers as a ruse to get away from the misery of the proletarian's existence. The breach between the masses and the new Bolshevik bureaucracy had grown too wide. It could not be bridged.

## Chapter 4. Archangel and Return

On November 28<sup>th</sup> the expedition again got under way, this time with three members only: Alexander Berkman, the Secretary, and myself. We travelled by way of Moscow to Archangel, with stops in Vologda and Yaroslavl. Vologdahad been the seat of various foreign embassies, unofficially engaged in aiding the enemies of the Revolution; We expected to find historic material there, but we were informed that most of it had been destroyed or otherwise wasted. The Soviet institutions were uninteresting: it was a plodding, sleepy provincial town. In Yaroslavl, where the so-called Savinkov uprising had taken place two years previously, no significant data were found.

We continued to Archangel. The stories we had heard of the frozen North made us rather apprehensive. But, much to our relief, we found that city no colder than Petrograd, and much drier.

The Chairman of the Archangel *Ispolkom* was pleasant type of Communist, not at all officious or stern. As soon as we had stated our mission he set the telephone going. Every time he reached some official on the wire he would address him as “dear *tovarishtch*,” and inform him that “dear *tovarishtchi* from the Centre” had arrived and must be given every assistance. He thought that our stay would be profitable because many important documents had remained after the Allies had withdrawn. There were files of old newspapers published by the Tchaikovsky Government and photographs of the brutalities perpetrated upon the Communists by the Whites. The Chairman himself had lost his whole family, including his twelve-year-old sister. As he had to leave the next day to attend the Conference of Soviets in Moscow, he promised to issue an order giving us access to the archives.

Leaving the *Ispolkom* to begin our rounds, we were surprised by three sleighs waiting for us, thanks to the thoughtfulness of the Chairman. Tucked up under fur covers and with bells tinkling, each member of the Expedition started in a different direction to cover the departments assigned to him. The Archangel Soviet officials appeared to have great respect for the “Centre”; the word acted like magic, opening every door.

The head of the Department of Education was a hospitable and kindly man. After explaining to me in detail the work done in his institution he called to his office a number of employees, informed them of the purpose of the Expedition and asked them to prepare the material they could gather for the Museum. Among those Soviet workers was a nun, a pleasant-faced young woman. What a strange thing, I thought, to find a nun in a Soviet office! The Chairman noticed my surprise. He had quite a number of nuns in his department, he said. When the monasteries



had been nationalized the poor women had no place to go. He conceived the idea of giving them a chance to do useful work in the new world. He had found no cause to regret his action: he did not convert the nuns to Communism, but they became very faithful and industrious workers., and the younger ones had even expanded a little. He invited me to visit the little art studio where several nuns were employed.

The studio was a rather unusual place — not so much because of its artistic value as on account of the people who worked there; two old nuns who had spent forty and twenty-five years, respectively, in monasteries; a young White officer, and an elderly workingman. The last two had been arrested as counter-revolutionists and were condemned to death, but the Chairman rescued them in order to put them to useful work. He wanted to give an opportunity to those who through ignorance or accident were the enemies of the Revolution. A revolutionary period, he remarked, necessitated stern measures, even violence; but other methods should be tried first. He had many in his department who had been considered counter-revolutionary, but now they were all doing good work. It was the most extraordinary thing I had heard from a Communist. “Aren’t you considered a sentimental bourgeois?” I asked. “Yes, indeed,” he replied smilingly, “but that is nothing. The main thing is that I have been able to prove that my sentimentalism works, as you can see for yourself.”

The carpenter was the artist of the studio. He had never been taught, but he did beautiful carving and was a master in every kind of wood work. The nuns made colour drawings of flowers and vegetables, which were used for demonstration by lecturers in the villages. They also painted posters, mainly for the children’s festivals.

I visited the studio several times alone so that I might speak freely to the carpenter and the nuns. They had little understanding of the elemental facts that had pulled them out of their moorings. The carpenter lamented that times were hard because he was not permitted to sell his handiwork. “I used to earn a good bit of money, but now I hardly get enough to eat,” he would say. The sisters did not complain; they accepted their fate as the will of God. Yet there was a change even in them. Instead of being shut away in a nunnery they were brought in touch with real life, and they had become more human. Their expression was less forbidding, their work showed signs of kinship with the world around them. I noticed it particularly in their drawings of children and children’s games. There was a tenderness about them that spoke of the long-suppressed mother instinct struggling for expression. The former White officer was the most intelligent of the four — he had gone through Life’s crucible. He had learned the folly and crime of intervention, he said, and would never lend his aid to it again. What had convinced him? The interventionists themselves. They had been in Archangel

and they carried on as if they owned the city. The Allies had promised much, but they had done nothing except enrich a few persons who speculated in the supplies intended to benefit the population. Everyone gradually turned against the interventionists. I wondered how many of the countless ones shot as counter-revolutionists would have been won over to the new régime and would now be doing useful work if somebody had saved their lives.

I had seen so many show schools that I decided to say nothing about visiting educational institutions until some unexpected moment when one could take them by surprise. For our first Saturday in Archangel a special performance of Leonid Andreyev's play, "Savva," had been arranged. For a provincial theatre, considering also the lack of preparation, the drama was fairly well done.

After the performance I told the Chairman of the Department, X — , that I would like to visit his schools early next morning. Without hesitation he consented and even offered to call for the other members of the Expedition. We visited several schools and in point of cleanliness, comfort, and general cheerfulness, I found them a revelation. It was also beautiful to see the fond relationship that existed between the children and X — . Their joy was spontaneous and frank at the sight of him. The moment he appeared they would throw themselves upon him, shouting with delight; they climbed on him and clung to his neck. And he? Never once did I see such a picture in any school in Petrograd or Moscow. He threw himself on the floor, the children about him, and played and frolicked with them as if they were his own. He was one of them; they knew it, and they felt at home with him.

Similar beautiful relationships I found in every school and children's home we visited. The children were radiant when X — appeared. They were the first happy children I had seen in Russia. It strengthened my conviction of the significance of personality and the importance of mutual confidence and love between teacher and pupil. We visited a number of schools that day. Nowhere did I find any discrimination; everywhere the children had spacious dormitories, spotlessly clean rooms and beds, good food and clothes. The atmosphere of the schools was warm and intimate.

We found in Archangel many historic documents, including the correspondence between Tchaikovsky, of the Provisional Government, and General Miller, the representative of the Allies. It was pathetic to read the pleading, almost cringing words of the old pioneer of the revolutionary movement in Russia, the founder of the Tchaikovsky circles, the man I had known for years, by whom I had been inspired. The letters exposed the weakness of the Tchaikovsky régime and the arbitrary rule of the Allied troops. Particularly significant was the farewell message of a sailor about to be executed by the Whites. He described his arrest and cross-examination and the fiendish third degree applied by an English army

officer at the point of a gun. Among the material collected by us were also copies of various revolutionary and Anarchist publications issued *sub rosa*. From the Department of Education we received many interesting posters and drawings, as well as pamphlets and books, and a collection of specimens of the children's work. Among them was a velvet table cover painted by the nuns and portraying Archangel children in gay colours, presented as their greeting to the children of America.

The schools and the splendid man at their head were not the only noteworthy features of Archangel. The other Soviet institutions also proved efficient. There was no sabotage, the various bureaus worked in good order, and the general spirit was sincere and progressive.

The food distribution was especially well organized. Unlike most other places, there was no loss of time or waste of energy connected with procuring one's rations. Yet Archangel was not particularly well supplied with provisions. One could not help thinking of the great contrast in this regard between that city and Moscow. Archangel probably learned a lesson in organization from contact with Americans — the last thing the Allies intended.

The Archangel visit was so interesting and profitable that the Expedition delayed its departure, and we remained much longer than originally planned. Before leaving, I called on X—. If anything could be sent him from "the Centre," what would he like most, I asked. "Paints and canvas for our little studio," he replied. "See Lunacharsky and get him to send us some." Splendid, gracious personality!

We left Archangel for Murmansk, but we had not gone far when we were overtaken by a heavy snowstorm. We were informed that we could not reach Murmansk in less than a fortnight, a journey which under normal conditions required three days. There was also danger of not being able to return to Petrograd on time, the snow often blocking the roads for weeks. We therefore decided to turn back to Petrograd. When we came within seventy-five versts [about fifty miles] of that city we ran into a blizzard. It would take days before the track would be cleared sufficiently to enable us to proceed. Not cheerful news, but fortunately we were supplied with fuel and enough provisions for some time.

It was the end of December, and we celebrated Christmas Eve in our car. The night was glorious, the sky brilliant with stars, the earth clad in white. A small pine tree, artfully decorated by the Secretary and enthroned in our diner, graced the occasion. The glow of the little wax candles lent a touch of romance to the scene. Gifts for our fellow travellers came all the way from America; they had been given us by friends in December, 1919, when we were on Ellis Island awaiting deportation. A year had passed since then, an excruciating year.

Arriving in Petrograd we found the city agitated by the heated discussion of the role of the trade unions. Conditions in the latter had resulted in so much discontent

among the rank and file that the Communist Party was at last forced to take up the issue. Already in October the trade union question had been brought up at the sessions of the Communist Party. The discussions continued all through November and December, reaching their climax at the Eighth All-Russian Congress of the Soviets. All the leading Communists participated in the great verbal contest which was to decide the fate of the labour organizations. The theses discussed disclosed four different views. First, that of the Lenin-Zinoviev faction, which held that the main "function of the trade unions under the proletarian dictatorship is to serve as schools of Communism." Second, the group represented by the old Communist Ryasanov, which insisted that the trade unions must function as the forum of the workers and their economic protector. Trotsky led the third faction. He believed that the trade unions would in the course of time become the managers and controllers of the industries, but for the present the unions must be subject to strict military discipline and be made entirely subservient to the needs of the State. The fourth and most important tendency was that of the Labour Opposition, headed by Madame Kollontay and Schliapnikov, who expressed the sentiment of the workers themselves and had their support. This opposition argued that the governmental attitude toward the trade unions had destroyed the interest of the toilers in economic reconstruction of the country and paralysed their productive capacity. They emphasized that the October Revolution had been fought to put the proletariat in control of the industrial life of the country. They demanded the liberation of the masses from the yoke of the bureaucratic State and its corrupt officialdom and opportunity for the exercise of the creative energies of the workers. The Labour Opposition voiced the discontent and aspirations of the rank and file.

It was a battle royal, with Trotsky and Zinoviev chasing each other over the country in separate special trains, to disprove each other's contentions. In Petrograd, for instance, Zinoviev's influence was so powerful that it required a big struggle before Trotsky received permission to address the Communist Local on his views in the controversy. The latter engendered intense feeling and for a time threatened to disrupt the Party.

At the Congress, Lenin denounced the Labour Opposition as "anarcho-syndicalist, middle-class ideology" and advocated its entire suppression. Schliapnikov, one of the most influential leaders of the Opposition, was referred to by Lenin as a "peevish Commissar" and was subsequently silenced by being made a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Madame Kollontay was told to hold her tongue or get out of the Party; her pamphlet setting forth the views of the Opposition was suppressed. Some of the lesser lights of the Labour Opposition were given a vacation in the Tcheka, and even Ryasanov, an old and tried Communist, was suppressed for six months from all union activities.

Soon after our arrival in Petrograd we were informed by the Secretary of the Museum that a new institution known as the *Ispart* had been formed in Moscow to collect material about the history of the Communist Party. This organization also proposed to supervise all future expeditions of the Museum of the Revolution and to place them under the direction of a political Commissar. It became necessary to go to Moscow to ascertain the facts in the case. We had seen too many evils resulting from the dictatorship of the political Commissar, the ever-present espionage and curtailment of independent effort. We could not consent to the change which was about to be made in the character of our expedition.

## Chapter 5. Death and Funeral of Peter Kropotkin

When I reached Moscow in January, 1921, I learned that Peter Kropotkin had been stricken with pneumonia. I immediately offered to nurse him, but as one nurse was already in attendance and the Kropotkin cottage was too small to accommodate extra visitors, it was agreed that Sasha Kropotkin, who was then in Moscow, should go to Dmitrov to find out whether I was needed. I had previously arranged to leave for Petrograd the next day. Till the moment of departure I waited for a call from the village; none coming, I concluded that Kropotkin was improving. Two days later, in Petrograd, I was informed by Ravitch that Kropotkin had grown worse and that I was asked to come to Moscow at once. I left immediately, but unfortunately my train was ten hours overdue, so that I reached Moscow too late to connect with Dmitrov. There were at the time no morning trains to the village and it was not till the eve of February 7<sup>th</sup> that I was at last seated in a train bound for the place. Then the engine went off for fuel and did not return until 1 A. M. of the next day. When I finally arrived at the Kropotkin cottage, on February 8<sup>th</sup>, I learned the terrible news that Peter had died about an hour before. He had repeatedly called for me, but I was not there to render the last service to my beloved teacher and comrade, one of the world's greatest and noblest spirits. It had not been given to me to be near him in his last hours. I would at least remain until he was carried to his final resting place.

Two things had particularly impressed me on my two previous visits to Kropotkin: his lack of bitterness toward the Bolsheviki, and the fact that he never once alluded to his own hardships and privations. It was only now, while the family was preparing for the funeral, that I learned some details of his life under the Bolshevik regime. In the early part of 1918 Kropotkin had grouped around him some of the ablest specialists in political economy. His purpose was to make a careful study of the resources of Russia, to compile, these in monographs and to turn them to practical account in the industrial reconstruction of the country. Kropotkin was the editor-in-chief of the undertaking. One volume was prepared, but never published. The Federalist League, as this scientific group was known, was dissolved by the Government and all the material confiscated.

On two occasions were the Kropotkin apartments in Moscow requisitioned and the family forced to seek other quarters. It was after these experiences that the Kropotkins moved to Dmitrov, where old Peter became an involuntary exile. Kropotkin, in whose home in the past had gathered from every land all that

was best in thought and ideas, was now forced to lead the life of a recluse. His only visitors were peasants and workers of the village and some members of the intelligentsia, whose wont it was to come to him with their troubles and misfortunes. He had always kept in touch with the world through numerous publications, but in Dmitrov he had no access to these sources. His only channels of information now were the two government papers, *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. He was also greatly handicapped in his work on the new Ethics while he lived in the village. He was mentally starved, which to him was greater torture than physical malnutrition. It is true that he was given a better *payck* than the average person, but even that was insufficient to sustain his waning strength. Fortunately he occasionally received from various sources assistance in the form of provisions. His comrades from abroad, as well as the Anarchists of the Ukraina, often sent him food packages. Once he received some gifts from Makhno, at that time heralded by the Bolsheviki as the terror of counter-revolution in Southern Russia. Especially did the Kropotkins feel the lack of light. When I visited them in 1920 they were considering themselves fortunate to be able to have even one room lit. Most of the time Kropotkin worked by the flicker of a tiny oil lamp that nearly drove him blind. During the short hours of the day he would transcribe his notes on a typewriter, slowly and painfully pounding out every letter.

However, it was not his own discomfort which sapped his strength. It was the thought of the Revolution that had failed, the hardships of Russia, the persecutions, the endless *raztreks*, which made the last two years of his life a deep tragedy. On two occasions he attempted to bring the rulers of Russia to their senses: once in protest against the suppression of all non-Communist publications; the other time against the barbaric practice of taking hostages. Ever since the Tcheka had begun its activities, the Bolshevik Government had sanctioned the taking of hostages. Old and young, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, even children, were kept as hostages for the alleged offence of one of their kin, of which they often knew nothing. Kropotkin regarded such methods as inexcusable under any circumstances.

In the fall of 1920, members of the Social Revolutionist Party that had succeeded in getting abroad threatened retaliation if Communist persecution of their comrades continued. The Bolshevik Government announced in its official press that for every Communist victim it would execute ten Social Revolutionists. It was then that the famous revolutionist Vera Figner and Peter Kropotkin sent their protest to the powers that be in Russia. They pointed out that such practices were the worst blot on the Russian Revolution and an evil that had already brought terrible results in its wake: history would never forgive such methods.

The other protest was made in reply to the plan of the Government to "liquidate" all private publishing establishments, including even those of the coöperatives,

The protest was addressed to the Presidium of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, then in session. It is interesting to note that Gorki, himself an official of the Commissariat of Education, had sent a similar protest. In this statement Kropotkin called attention to the danger of such a policy to all progress, in fact, to all thought, and emphasized that such State monopoly would make creative work utterly impossible. But the protests had no effect. Thereafter Kropotkin felt that it was useless to appeal to a government gone mad with power.

During the two days I spent in the Kropotkin household I learned more of his personal life than during all the years that I had known him. Even his closest friends were not aware that Peter Kropotkin was an artist and a musician of much talent. Among his effects I discovered a collection of drawings of great merit. He loved music passionately and was himself a musician of unusual ability. Much of his leisure he spent at the piano.

And now he lay on his couch, in the little workroom, as if peacefully asleep, his face as kindly in death as it had been in life. Thousands of people made pilgrimages to the Kropotkin cottage to pay homage to this great son of Russia. When his remains were carried to the station to be taken to Moscow, the whole population of the village attended the impressive funeral procession to express their last affectionate greeting to the man who had lived among them as their friend and comrade.

The friends and comrades of Kropotkin decided that the Anarchist organizations should have exclusive charge of the funeral, and a Peter Kropotkin Funeral Commission was formed in Moscow, consisting of representatives of the various Anarchist groups. The Committee wired Lenin, asking him to order the release of all Anarchists imprisoned in the capital in order to give them the opportunity to participate in the funeral.

Owing to the nationalization of all public conveyances, printing establishments, etc., the Anarchist Funeral Commission was compelled to ask the Moscow Soviet to enable it to carry out successfully the funeral programme. The Anarchists being deprived of their own press, the Commission had to apply to the authorities for the publication of the matter necessary in connection with the funeral arrangements. After considerable discussion permission was secured to print two leaflets and to issue a four-page bulletin in commemoration of Peter Kropotkin. The Commission requested that the paper be issued without censorship and stated that the reading matter would consist of appreciations of our dead comrade, exclusive of all polemical questions. This request was categorically refused. Having no choice, the Commission was forced to submit and the manuscripts were sent in for censorship. To forestall the possibility of remaining without any memorial issue because of the delaying tactics of the Government, the Funeral Commission resolved to open, on its own responsibility, a certain Anarchist printing office



that had been sealed by the Government. The bulletin and the two leaflets were printed in that establishment.

In answer to the wire sent to Lenin the Central Committee of the All-Russian Executive of the Soviets resolved "to propose to the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission (*Veh-Tcheka*) to release, according to its judgment, the imprisoned Anarchists for participation in the funeral of Peter A. Kropotkin." The delegates sent to the Tcheka were asked whether the Funeral Commission would guarantee the return of the prisoners. They replied that the question had not been discussed. The Tcheka thereupon refused to release the Anarchists. The Funeral Commission, informed of the new development in the situation, immediately guaranteed the return of the prisoners after the funeral. Thereupon the Tcheka replied that "there are no Anarchists in prison who, in the judgment of the Chairman of the Extraordinary Commission, could be released for the funeral."

The remains of the dead lay in state in the Hall of Columns in the Moscow Labour Temple. On the morning of the funeral the Kropotkin Funeral Commission decided to inform the assembled people of the breach of faith on the part of the authorities and demonstratively to withdraw from the Temple all the wreaths presented by official Communist bodies. Fearing public exposure, the representatives of the Moscow Soviet definitely promised that all the Anarchists imprisoned in Moscow would immediately be released to attend the funeral. But this promise was also broken, only seven of the Anarchists being released from the "inner jail" of the Extraordinary Commission. None of the Anarchists imprisoned in the Butyrki attended the funeral. The official explanation was that the twenty Anarchists incarcerated in that prison refused to accept the offer of the authorities. Later I visited the prisoners to ascertain the facts in the case. They informed me that a representative of the Extraordinary Commission insisted on *individual* attendance, making exceptions in some cases. The Anarchists, aware that the promise of temporary release was *collective*, demanded that the stipulations be kept. The Tcheka representative went to the telephone to consult the higher authorities, so he said. He did not return.

The funeral was a most impressive sight. It was a unique demonstration never witnessed in any other country. Long lines of members of Anarchist organizations, labour unions, scientific and literary societies and student bodies marched for over two hours from the Labour Temple to the burial place, seven versts [nearly five miles] distant. The procession was headed by students and children carrying wreaths presented by various organizations. Anarchist banners of black and scarlet Socialist emblems floated above the multitude. The mile-long procession entirely dispensed with the services of the official guardians of the peace. Perfect order was kept by the multitude itself spontaneously forming in several rows, while students and workers organized a live chain on both sides of the marchers.

Passing the Tolstoi Museum the cortege paused, and the banners were lowered in honour of the memory of another great son of Russia. A group of Tolstoians on the steps of the Museum rendered Chopin's Funeral March as an expression of their love and reverence for Kropotkin.

The brilliant winter sun was sinking behind the horizon when the remains of Kropotkin were lowered into the grave, after speakers of many political tendencies had paid the last tribute to their great teacher and comrade.

## Chapter 6. Kronstadt

In February, 1921, the workers of several Petrograd factories went on strike. The winter was an exceptionally hard one, and the people of the capital suffered intensely from cold, hunger, and exhaustion. They asked an increase of their food rations, some fuel and clothing. The complaints of the strikers, ignored by the authorities, presently assumed a political character. Here and there was also voiced a demand for the Constituent Assembly and free trade. The attempted street demonstration of the strikers was suppressed, the Government having ordered out the military *kursanti*. Lisa Zorin, who of all the Communists I had met remained closest to the people, was present at the breaking up of the demonstration. One woman became so enraged over the brutality of the military that she attacked Lisa. The latter, true to her proletarian instincts, saved the woman from arrest and accompanied her home. There she found the most appalling conditions. In a dark and damp room there lived a worker's family with its six children, half-naked in the bitter cold. Subsequently Lisa said to me: "I felt sick to think that I was in the Astoria." Later she moved out.

When the Kronstadt sailors learned what was happening in Petrograd they expressed their solidarity with the strikers in their economic and revolutionary demands, but refused to support any call for the Constituent Assembly. On March 1<sup>st</sup>, the sailors organized a mass meeting in Kronstadt, which was attended also by the Chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, Kalinin (the presiding officer of the Republic of Russia), the Commander of the Kronstadt Fortress, Kuzmin, and the Chairman of the Kronstadt Soviet, Vassiliev. The meeting, held with the knowledge of the Executive Committee of the Kronstadt Soviet, passed a resolution approved by the sailors, the garrison, and the citizens' meeting of 16,000 persons. Kalinin, Kuzmin, and Vassiliev spoke against the resolution, which later became the basis of the conflict between Kronstadt and the Government. It voiced the popular demand for Soviets elected by the free choice of the people. It is worth reproducing that document in full, that the reader may be enabled to judge the true character of the Kronstadt demands. The Resolution read:

Having heard the Report of the Representatives sent by the General Meeting of Ship Crews to Petrograd to investigate the situation there, Resolved:

1. In view of the fact that the present Soviets do not express the will of the workers and the peasants, immediately to hold new elections by secret ballot,

the preelection campaign to have full freedom of agitation among the workers and peasants;

2. To establish freedom of speech and press for workers and peasants, for Anarchists and left Socialist parties;
3. To secure freedom of assembly for labour unions and peasant organizations;
4. To call a non-partisan Conference of the workers, Red Army soldiers and sailors of Petrograd, Kronstadt, and of Petrograd Province, no later than March 10, 1921;
5. To liberate all political prisoners of Socialist parties, as well as all workers, peasants, soldiers, and sailors imprisoned in connection with the labour and peasant movements;
6. To elect a Commission to review the cases of those held in prisons and concentration camps;
7. To abolish all *politotdeli*<sup>1</sup> because no party should be given special privileges in the propagation of its ideas or receive the financial support of the Government for such purposes, Instead there should be established educational and cultural commissions, locally elected and financed by the Government.
8. To abolish immediately all *zagryaditelniye otryadi*,<sup>2</sup>
9. To equalize the rations of all who work, with the exception of those employed in trades detrimental to health;
10. To abolish the Communist fighting detachments in all branches of the Army, as well as the Communist guards kept on duty in mills and factories. Should such guards or military detachments be found necessary, they are to be appointed in the Army from the ranks, and in the factories according to the judgment of the workers;
11. To give the peasants full freedom of action in regard to their land, and also the right to keep cattle, on condition that the peasants manage with their own means; that is, without employing hired labour;
12. To request all branches of the Army, as well as our comrades the military *kursanti*, to concur in our resolutions;
13. To demand that the press give the fullest publicity to our resolutions;
14. To appoint a Travelling Commission of Control;
15. To permit free *kustarnoye*<sup>3</sup> production by one's own efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> Political bureaus

<sup>2</sup> Armed units organized by the Bolsheviki for the purpose of suppressing traffic and confiscating foodstuffs.

<sup>3</sup> Individual small-scale

On March 4<sup>th</sup> the Petrograd Soviet was to meet and it was generally felt that the fate of Kronstadt would be decided then. Trotsky was to address the gathering, and as I had not yet had an opportunity to hear him in Russia, I was anxious to attend. My attitude in the matter of Kronstadt was still undecided. I could not believe that the Bolsheviki would deliberately fabricate the story about General Kozlovsky as the leader of the sailors. The Soviet meeting, I expected, would clarify the matter.

Tauride Palace was crowded and a special body of *kursanti* surrounded the platform. The atmosphere was very tense. All waited for Trotsky. But when at 10 o'clock he had not arrived, Zinoviev opened the meeting. Before he had spoken fifteen minutes I was convinced that he himself did not believe in the story of Kozlovsky. "Of course Kozlovsky is old and can do nothing," he said, "but the White officers are back of him and are misleading the sailors." Yet for days the Soviet papers had heralded General Kozlovsky as the moving spirit in the "uprising." Kalinin, whom the sailors had permitted to leave Kronstadt unmolested, raved like a fishmonger. He denounced the sailors as counter-revolutionists and called for their immediate subjugation. Several other Communists followed suit. When the meeting was opened for discussion, a workingman from the Petrograd Arsenal demanded to be heard. He spoke with deep emotion and, ignoring the constant interruptions, he fearlessly declared that the workers had been driven to strike because of the Government's indifference to their complaints; the Kronstadt sailors, far from being counter-revolutionists, were devoted to the Revolution. Facing Zinoviev he reminded him that the Bolshevik authorities were now acting toward the workers and sailors just as the Kerensky Government had acted toward the Bolsheviki. "Then *you* were denounced as counter-revolutionists and German agents," he said; "we, the workers and sailors, protected you and helped you to power. Now you denounce us and are ready to attack us with arms. Remember, you are playing with fire."

Then a sailor spoke. He referred to the glorious revolutionary past of Kronstadt, appealed to the Communists not to engage in fratricide, and read the Kronstadt resolution to prove the peaceful attitude of the sailors. But the voice of these sons of the people fell on deaf ears. The Petro-Soviet, its passions roused by Bolshevik demagoguery, passed the Zinoviev resolution ordering Kronstadt to surrender on pain of extermination.

The Kronstadt sailors were ever the first to serve the Revolution. They had played an important part in the revolution of 1905; they were in the front ranks in 1917. Under Kerensky's regime they proclaimed the Commune of Kronstadt and opposed the Constituent Assembly. They were the advance guard in the October Revolution. In the great struggle against Yudenitch the sailors offered the strongest defense of Petrograd, and Trotsky praised them as the "pride and

glory of the Revolution.” Now, however, they had dared to raise their voice in protest against the new rulers of Russia. That was high treason from the Bolshevik viewpoint. The Kronstadt sailors were doomed.

Petrograd was aroused over the decision of the Soviet; some of the Communists even, especially those of the French Section, were filled with indignation. But none of them had the courage to protest, even in the Party circles, against the proposed slaughter. As soon as the PetroSoviet resolution became known, a group of well-known literary men of Petrograd gathered to confer as to whether something could not be done to prevent the planned crime. Someone suggested that Gorki be approached to head a committee of protest to the Soviet authorities. It was hoped that he would emulate the example of his illustrious countryman Tolstoi, who in his famous letter to the Tsar had raised his voice against the terrible slaughter of workers. Now also such a voice was needed, and Gorki was considered the right man to call on the present Tsars to bethink themselves. But most of those present at the gathering scouted the idea. Gorki was of the Bolsheviki, they said; he would not do anything. On several previous occasions he had been appealed to, but refused to intercede. The conference brought no results. Still, there were some persons in Petrograd who could not remain silent. They sent the following letter to the Soviet of Defense:

*To The Petrograd Soviet of Labour and Defense, Chairman Zinoviev:*

To remain silent now is impossible, even criminal. Recent events impel us Anarchists to speak out and to declare our attitude in the present situation.

The spirit of ferment and dissatisfaction manifest among the workers and sailors is the result of causes that demand our serious attention. Cold and hunger have produced dissatisfaction, and the absence of any opportunity for discussion and criticism is forcing the workers and sailors to air their grievances in the open.

White-guardist bands wish and may try to exploit this dissatisfaction in their own class interests. Hiding behind the workers and sailors they throw out slogans of the Constituent Assembly, of free trade, and similar demands.

We Anarchists have long since exposed the fiction of these slogans, and we declare to the whole world that we will fight with arms against any counter-revolutionary attempt, in cooperation with all friends of the Social Revolution and hand in hand with the Bolsheviki.

Concerning the conflict between the Soviet Government and the workers and sailors, we hold that it must be settled not by force of arms but by means of comradely, fraternal revolutionary agreement. Resort to bloodshed

on the part of the Soviet Government will not — in the given situation — intimidate or quiet the workers. On the contrary, it will serve only to aggravate matters and will strengthen the bands of the Entente and of internal counter-revolution.

More important still, the use of force by the Workers' and Peasants' Government against workers and sailors will have a reactionary effect upon the international revolutionary movement and will everywhere result in incalculable harm to the Social Revolution.

Comrades Bolsheviki, bethink yourselves before it is too late. Do not play with fire: you are about to make a most serious and decisive step.

We hereby submit to you the following proposition: Let a Commission be selected to consist of five persons, inclusive of two Anarchists. The Commission is to go to Kronstadt to settle the dispute by peaceful means. In the given situation this is the most radical method. It will be of international revolutionary significance.

*Petrograd,*

*March 5, 1921.*

Alexander Berkman.

Emma Goldman

Perkus.

Petrovsky.

But this protest was ignored.

On March 7<sup>th</sup> Trotsky began the bombardment of Kronstadt, and on the 17<sup>th</sup> the fortress and city were taken, after numerous assaults involving terrific human sacrifice. Thus Kronstadt was “liquidated” and the “counterrevolutionary plot” quenched in blood. The “conquest” of the city was characterized by ruthless savagery, although not a single one of the Communists arrested by the Kronstadt sailors had been injured or killed by them. Even before the storming of the fortress the Bolsheviki summarily executed numerous soldiers' of the Red Army whose revolutionary spirit and solidarity caused them to refuse to participate in the bloodbath.

Several days after the “glorious victory” over Kronstadt Lenin said at the Tenth Congress of the Communist Party of Russia: “The sailors did not want the counter-revolutionists' but they did not want us, either.” And — irony of Bolshevism! —

at that very Congress Lenin advocated free trade — a more reactionary step than any charged to the Kronstadt sailors.

Between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> of March several regiments of the Petrograd garrison and all the sailors of the port were disarmed and ordered to the Ukraina and the Caucasus. The Bolsheviki feared to trust them in the Kronstadt situation: at the first psychological moment they might make common cause with Kronstadt. In fact, many Red soldiers of the Krasnaya Gorka and the surrounding garrisons were also in sympathy with Kronstadt and were forced at the point of guns to attack the sailors.

On March 17<sup>th</sup> the Communist Government completed its “victory” over the Kronstadt proletariat and on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March it commemorated the martyrs of the Paris Commune. It was apparent to all who were mute witnesses to the outrage committed by the Bolsheviki that the crime against Kronstadt was far more enormous than the slaughter of the Communards in 1871, for it was done in the name of the Social Revolution, in the name of the Socialist Republic. History will not be deceived. In the annals of the Russian Revolution the names of Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Dibenko will be added to those of Thiers and Gallifet.

Seventeen dreadful days, more dreadful than anything I had known in Russia. Agonizing days, because of my utter helplessness in the face of the terrible things enacted before my eyes. It was just at that time that I happened to visit a friend who had been a patient in a hospital for months. I found him much distressed. Many of those wounded in the attack on Kronstadt had been brought to the same hospital, mostly *kursanti*. I had opportunity to speak to one of them. His physical suffering, he said, was nothing as compared with his mental agony. Too late he had realized that he had been duped by the cry of “counter-revolution.” There were no Tsarist generals in Kronstadt, no White Guardists — he found only his own comrades, sailors and soldiers who had heroically fought for the Revolution.

The rations of the ordinary patients in the hospitals were far from satisfactory, but the wounded *kursanti* received the best of everything, and a select committee of Communist members was assigned to look after their comfort. Some of the *kursanti*, among them the man I had spoken to, refused to accept the special privileges. “They want to pay us for murder, they said. Fearing that the whole institution would be influenced by these awakened victims, the management ordered them removed to a separate ward, the “Communist ward,” as the patients called it.

Kronstadt broke the last thread that held me to the Bolsheviki. The wanton slaughter they had instigated spoke more eloquently against them than aught else. Whatever their pretences in the past, the Bolsheviki now proved themselves the most pernicious enemies of the Revolution. I could have nothing further to do with them.



## Chapter 7. Persecution of Anarchists

In a country State-owned and controlled as completely as Russia it is almost impossible to live without the “grace” of the Government. However, I was determined to make the attempt. I would accept nothing, not even bread rations, from the hands stained with the blood of the brave Kronstadt sailors. Fortunately, I had some clothing left me by an American friend; it could be exchanged for provisions. I had also received some money from my own people in the United States. That would enable me to live for some time.

In Moscow I procured a small room formerly occupied by the daughter of Peter Kropotkin. From that day on I lived like thousands of other Russians, carrying water, chopping wood, washing and cooking, all in my little room. But I felt freer and better for it.

The new economic policy turned Moscow into a vast market place. Trade became the new religion. Shops and stores sprang up overnight, mysteriously stacked with delicacies Russia had not seen for years. Large quantities of butter, cheese, and meat were displayed for sale; pastry, rare fruit, and sweets of every variety were to be purchased. In the building of the First House of the Soviet one of the biggest pastry shops had been opened. Men, women, and children with pinched faces and hungry eyes stood about gazing into the windows and discussing the great miracle: what was but yesterday considered a heinous offence was now flaunted before them in an open and legal manner. I overheard a Red soldier say: “Is this what we made the Revolution for? For this our comrades had to die?” The slogan, “Rob the robbers,” was now turned into “Respect the robbers,” and again was proclaimed the sanctity of private property.

Russia was thus gradually resurrecting the social conditions that the great Revolution had come to destroy. But the return to capitalism in no way changed the Bolshevik attitude toward the Left elements. Bourgeois ideas and practices were to be encouraged to develop the industrial life of Russia, but revolutionary tendencies were to be suppressed as before.

In connection with Kronstadt a general raid on Anarchists took place in Petrograd and Moscow. The prisons were filled with these victims. Almost every known Anarchist had been arrested; and the Anarchist book stores and printing offices of “Golos Truda” in both cities were sealed by the Tcheka. The Ukrainian Anarchists who had been arrested on the eve of the Kharkov Conference (though guaranteed immunity by the Bolsheviks under the Makhno agreement) were brought to Moscow and placed in the Butyrki; that Romanov dungeon was again serving its old purpose — even holding some of the revolutionists incarcerated

there before. Presently it became known that the politicals in the Butyrki had been brutally assaulted by the Tcheka and secretly deported to unknown parts. Moscow was much agitated by this resurrection of the worst prison methods of Tsarism. Interpellation on the subject was made in the Moscow Soviet, the indignation of the deputies being so great that the Tcheka representative was shouted off the platform. Several Moscow Anarchist groups sent a vigorous protest to the authorities, which document I quote in part:

The undersigned Anarcho-syndicalist organizations after having carefully considered the situation that has developed lately in connection with the persecution of Anarchists in Moscow, Petrograd, Kharkov, and other cities of Russia and the Ukraine, including the forcible suppression of Anarchist organizations, clubs, publications, etc., hereby express their decisive and energetic protest against this despotic crushing of not only every agitational and propagandistic activity, but even of all purely cultural work by Anarchist organizations.

The systematic man-hunt of Anarchists in general, and of Anarcho-syndicalists in particular, with the result that every prison and jail in Soviet Russia is filled with our comrades, fully coincided in time and spirit with Lenin's speech at the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party. On that occasion Lenin announced that the most merciless war must be declared against what he termed "petty bourgeois Anarchist elements" which, according to him, are developing even within the Communist Party itself owing to the "anarcho-syndicalist tendencies of the Labour Opposition." On that very day that Lenin made the above statements numbers of Anarchists were arrested all over the country, without the least cause or explanation. No charges have been preferred against any one of the imprisoned comrades, though some of them have already been condemned to long terms without hearing or trial, and in their absence. The conditions of their imprisonment are exceptionally vile and brutal. Thus one of the arrested, Comrade Maximov, after numerous vain protests against the incredibly unhygienic conditions in which he was forced to exist, was driven to the only means of protest left him — a hunger strike. Another comrade, Yarchuk, released after an imprisonment of six days, was soon rearrested without any charges being preferred against him on either occasion.

According to reliable information received by us, some of the arrested Anarchists are being sent to the prisons of Samara, far away from home and friends, and thus deprived of what little comradely assistance they might have been able to receive nearer home. A number of other comrades have been forced by the terrible conditions of their imprisonment to declare a hunger strike. One of them, after hungering twelve days, became dangerously ill.

Even physical violence is practised upon our comrades in prison. The statement of the Anarchists in the Butyrki prison in Moscow, signed by thirty-eight

comrades, and sent to the Executive Committee of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission on March 16<sup>th</sup>, contains, among other things, the following statement: "On March 15<sup>th</sup> Comrade T. Kashirin was brutally attacked and beaten in the prison of the Special Department of the Extraordinary Commission by your agent Mago and assistants, in the presence of the prison warden Dookiss."

Besides the wholesale arrests of and the physical violence toward our comrades, the Government is waging systematic war against our educational work. It has closed a number of our clubs, as well as the Moscow office of the publishing establishment of the Anarcho-syndicalist organization *Golos Truda*. A similar man-hunt took place in Petrograd on March 15<sup>th</sup>. Numbers of Anarchists were arrested, without cause, the printing house of *Golos Truda* was closed, and its workers imprisoned. No charges have been preferred against the arrested comrades, all of whom are still in prison.

These unbearably autocratic tactics of the Government towards the Anarchists are unquestionably the result of the general policy of the Bolshevik State in the exclusive control of the Communist Party in regard to Anarchism, Syndicalism, and their adherents.

This state of affairs is forcing us to raise our voices in loud protest against the panicky and brutal suppression of the Anarchist movement by the Bolshevik Government. Here in Russia our voice is weak. It is stifled. The policy of the ruling Communist Party is designed to destroy absolutely every possibility or effort of Anarchist activity or propaganda. The Anarchists of Russia are thus forced into the condition of a complete moral hunger strike, for the Government is depriving us of the possibility to carry out even those plans and projects which it itself only recently promised to aid.

Realizing more clearly than ever before the truth of our Anarchist ideal and the imperative need of its application to life we are convinced that the revolutionary proletariat of the world is with us.

After the February Revolution Russian Anarchists returned from every land to Russia to devote themselves to revolutionary activity. The Bolsheviki had adopted the Anarchist slogan, "The factories to the workers, the land to the peasants," and thereby won the sympathies of the Anarchists. The latter saw in the Bolsheviki the spokesmen of social and economic emancipation, and joined forces with them.

Through the October period the Anarchists worked hand in hand with the Communists and fought with them side by side in the defense of the Revolution. Then came the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, which many Anarchists considered a betrayal of the Revolution. It was the first warning for them that all was not well with the Bolsheviki. But Russia was still exposed to foreign intervention, and the Anarchists felt that they must continue together to fight the common enemy.

In April, 1918, came another blow. By order of Trotsky the Anarchist headquarters in Moscow were attacked with artillery, some Anarchists wounded, a large number arrested, and all Anarchist activities "liquidated." This entirely unexpected outrage served to further to alienate the Anarchists from the ruling Party. Still the majority of them remained with the Bolsheviki: they felt that, in spite of internal persecution to turn against the existing regime was to work into the hands of the counter-revolutionary forces. The Anarchists participated in every social, educational, and economic effort; they worked even in the military departments to aid Russia. In the Red Guards, in the volunteer regiments, and later in the Red Army; as organizers and managers of factories and shops; as chiefs of the fuel bureaus; as teachers — everywhere the Anarchists held difficult and responsible positions. Out of their ranks came some of the ablest men who worked in the foreign office with Tchicherin and Kharakan, in the various press bureaus, as Bolshevik diplomatic representatives in Turkestan, Bokhara, and the Far Eastern Republic. Throughout Russia the Anarchists worked with and for the Bolsheviki in the belief that they were advancing the cause of the Revolution. But the devotion and zeal of the Anarchists in no way deterred the Communists from relentlessly persecuting the Anarchist movement.

The peculiar general situation and the confusion of ideas created in all revolutionary circles by the Bolshevik experiment divided the Anarchist forces in Russia into several factions, thereby weakening their effect upon the course of the Revolution. There were a number of groups, each striving separately and striving vainly against the formidable machine which they themselves had helped to create. In the dense political fog many lost their sense of direction: they could not distinguish between the Bolsheviki and the Revolution. In desperation some Anarchists were driven to underground activities, even as they had been during the regime of the Tsars. But such work was more difficult and perilous under the new rulers and it also opened the door to the sinister machinations of provocators. The more mature Anarchist organizations, such as the *Nabat*, in the Ukraina, *Golos Truda* in Petrograd and Moscow, and the *Voyni Trud* group — the last two of Anarcho-syndicalist tendency — continued their work openly, as best they could.

Unfortunately, as was unavoidable under the circumstances, some evil spirits had found entry into the Anarchist ranks — debris washed ashore by the Revolutionary tide. They were types to whom the Revolution meant only destruction, occasionally even for personal advantage. They engaged in shady pursuits and, when arrested and their lives threatened, they often turned traitors and joined the Tcheka. Particularly in Kharkov and Odessa thrived this poisonous weed. The Anarchists at large were the first to take a stand against this element. The Bolsheviki, always anxious to secure the services of the Anarchist derelicts, systematically

perverted the facts. They maligned, persecuted, and hounded the Anarchist movement as such. It was this Communist treachery and despotism which resulted in a bomb's being thrown during the session of the Moscow Section of the Communist Party in September, 1919. It was an act of protest, members of the various political tendencies cooperating in it. The Anarchist organizations *Golos Truda* and *Voylni Trud* in Moscow publicly expressed their condemnation of such methods, but the Government replied with reprisals against all Anarchists. Yet, in spite of their bitter experiences and martyrdom under the Bolshevik regime, most of the Anarchists clung tenaciously to the hand that smote them. It needed the outrage upon Kronstadt to rouse them from the hypnotic spell of the Bolshevik superstition.

Power is corrupting, and Anarchists are no exception. It must in truth be admitted that a certain Anarchist element became demoralized by it; by far the largest majority retained their integrity. Neither Bolshevik persecution nor oft-attempted bribery of good position with all its special privileges succeeded in alienating the great bulk of Anarchists from their ideals. As a result they were constantly harassed and incarcerated. Their existence in the prisons was a continuous torture: in most of them still obtained the old regime and only the collective struggle of the politicals occasionally succeeded in compelling reforms and improvements. Thus it required repeated "obstructions" and hunger strikes in the Butyrki before the authorities were forced to make concessions. The politicals succeeded in establishing a sort of university, organized lectures, and received visits and food parcels. But the Tcheka frowned upon such "liberties." Suddenly, without warning, an end was put to decent treatment; the Butyrki was raided and the prisoners, numbering more than 400, and belonging to various revolutionary wings, were forcibly taken from their cells and transferred to other penal institutions. A message received at the time from one of the victims, dated April 27<sup>th</sup>, reads:

Concentration Camp, Ryazan.

On the night of April 25<sup>th</sup> we were attacked by Red soldiers and armed Tchekists and ordered to dress and get ready to leave the Butyrki. Some of the politicals, fearing that they were to be taken to execution, refused to go and were terribly beaten. The women especially were maltreated, some of them being dragged down the stairs by their hair. Many have suffered serious injury. I myself was so badly beaten that my whole body feels like one big sore. We were taken out by force in our night-clothes and thrown into wagons. The comrades in our group knew nothing of the whereabouts of the rest of the politicals, including Mensheviks, Social Revolutionists, Anarchists, and Anarcho-syndicalists.

Ten of us, among them Fanya Baron, have been brought here. Conditions in this prison are unbearable. No exercise, no fresh air; food is scarce and filthy; everywhere awful dirt, bedbugs, and lice. We mean to declare a hunger strike for better treatment. We have just been told to get ready with our things. They are going to send us away again. We do not know where to.

[Signed] T.

Upon the circumstances of the Butyrki raid becoming known the students of the Moscow University held a protest meeting and passed resolutions condemnatory of the outrage. Thereupon the student leaders were arrested and the University closed. The non-resident students were ordered to leave Moscow within three days on the pretext of lack of rations. The students volunteered to give up their *payok*, but the Government insisted on their quitting the capital. Later, when the University was re-opened, Preobrazhensky, the Dean, admonished the students to refrain from any political expressions on pain of being expelled from the University. Some of the arrested students were exiled, among them several girl students, for the sole crime of being members of a circle whose aim was to study the works of Kropotkin and other Anarchist authors. The methods of the Tsar were resurrected by his heirs to the throne in Bolshevik Russia.

After the death of Peter Kropotkin his friends and comrades decided to found a Kropotkin Museum in commemoration of the great Anarchist teacher and in furtherance of his ideas and ideals. I removed to Moscow to aid in the organization of the proposed memorial, but before long the Museum Committee concluded that for the time being the project could not be realized. Everything being under State monopoly nothing could be done without application to the authorities. To accept Government aid would have been a deliberate betrayal of the spirit of Kropotkin who throughout his life consistently refused State assistance. Once when Kropotkin was ill and in need, the Bolshevik Government offered him a large sum for the right to publish his works. Kropotkin refused. He was compelled to accept rations and medical assistance when sick, but he would neither consent to his works being published by the State nor accept any other aid from it. The Kropotkin Museum Committee took the same attitude. It accepted from the Moscow Soviet the house Kropotkin had been born in, and which was to be turned into a Kropotkin Museum; but it would ask the Government for nothing more. The house at the time was occupied by a military organization; it would require months to get it vacated and then no means would be at hand to have it renovated. Some of the Committee members felt that a Kropotkin Museum was out of place in Bolshevik Russia as long as despotism was rampant and the prisons filled with political dissenters.

While I was in Petrograd on a short visit, the Moscow apartment in which I had a room was raided by the Tcheka. I learned that the customary trap had been set and everyone arrested who called at the place during the *zassada*. I visited Ravitch to protest against such proceedings, telling her that if the object was to take me into custody I was prepared for it. Ravitch had heard nothing of the matter, but promised to get in touch with Moscow. A few days later I was informed that the Tchekists had been withdrawn from the apartment and that the arrested friends were about to be released. When I returned to my room some time later most of them had been freed. At the same time a number of Anarchists were arrested in various parts of the capital and no news of their fate or of the cause of their arrest could be learned. Several weeks later, on August 30<sup>th</sup>, the Moscow *Izvestia* published the official report of the Veh-Tcheka concerning "Anarchist banditism," announcing that ten Anarchists had been shot as "bandits" without hearing or trial.

It had become the established policy of the Bolshevik Government to mask its barbaric procedure against Anarchists with the uniform charge of banditism. This accusation was made practically against all arrested Anarchists and frequently even against sympathizers with the movement. A very convenient method of getting rid of an undesirable person: by it any one could be secretly executed and buried.

Among the ten victims were two of the best known Russian Anarchists, whose idealism and life-long devotion to the cause of humanity had stood the test of Tsarist dungeons and exile, and persecution and suffering in other countries. They were Fanya Baron, who several months before had escaped from the Ryazan prison, and Lev Tcherny who had spent many years of his life in *katorga* and exile, under the old regime. The Bolsheviks did not have the courage to say that they had shot Lev Tcherny; in the list of the executed he appeared as "Turchaninoff," which — though his real name — was unfamiliar to some even of his closest friends. Tcherny was known throughout Russia as a gifted poet and writer. In 1907 he had published an original work on "Associational Anarchism," and since his return from Siberia in 1917 he had enjoyed wide popularity among the workers of Moscow as a lecturer and founder of the "Federation of Brain Workers." He was a man of great gifts, tender and sympathetic in all his relationships. No person could be further from banditism.

The mother of Tcherny had repeatedly called at the Ossoby Otdel (Special Department of the Tcheka) to learn the fate of her son. Every time she was told to come next day; she would then be permitted to see him. As established later, Tcherny had already been shot when these promises were being made. After his death the authorities refused to turn his body over to his relatives or friends

for burial. There were persistent rumours that the Tcheka had not intended to execute Tcherny, but that he died under torture.

Fanya Baron was of the type of Russian woman completely consecrated to the cause of humanity. While in America she gave all her spare time and a goodly part of her meagre earnings in a factory to further Anarchist propaganda. Years afterward, when I met her in Kharkov, her zeal and devotion had become intensified by the persecution she and her comrades had endured since their return to Russia. She possessed unbounded courage and a generous spirit. She could perform the most difficult task and deprive herself of the last piece of bread with grace and utter selflessness. Under harrowing conditions of travel, Fanya went up and down the Ukraina to spread the Nabat, organize the workers and peasants, or bring help and succour to her imprisoned comrades. She was one of the victims of the Butyrki raid, when she had been dragged by her hair and badly beaten. After her escape from the Ryazan prison she tramped on foot to Moscow, where she arrived in tatters and penniless. It was her desperate condition which drove her to seek shelter with her husband's brother, at whose house she was discovered by the Tcheka. This big-hearted woman, who had served the Social Revolution all her life, was done to death by the people who pretended to be the advance guard of revolution. Not content with the crime of killing Fanya Baron, the Soviet Government put the stigma of banditism on the memory of their dead victim.



## Chapter 8. Travelling Salesmen of the Revolution

Great preparations were being made by the Communists for the Third Congress of the Third International and the First Congress of the Red Trade Union International. A preliminary committee had been organized in the summer of 1920, while delegates from various countries were in Moscow. How much the Bolsheviks depended upon the First Congress of the Red Trade Union International was apparent from a remark of an old Communist. "We haven't the workers in the Third International," he said; "unless we succeed in welding together the proletariat of the world into the R.T.U.I., the Third International cannot last very long."

The Hôtel de Luxe, renovated the previous year, became the foreign guest house of the Third International and was put in festive attire. The delegates began to arrive in Moscow.

During my stay in Russia I came across three classes of visitors who came to "study the Revolution." The first category consisted of earnest idealists to whom the Bolsheviks were the symbol of the Revolution. Among them were many emigrants from America who had given up everything they possessed to return to the promised land. Most of these became bitterly disappointed after the first few months and sought to get out of Russia. Others, who did not come as Communists, joined the Communist Party for selfish reasons and did in Rome as the Romans do. There were also the Anarchist deportees who came not of their own choice. Most of them strained every effort to leave Russia after they realized the stupendous deception that had been imposed on the world.

In the second class were journalists, newspapermen, and some adventurers. They spent from two weeks to two months in Russia, usually in Petrograd or Moscow, as the guests of the Government and in charge of Bolshevik guides. Hardly any of them knew the language and they never got further than the surface of things. Yet many of them have presumed to write and lecture authoritatively about the Russian situation. I remember my astonishment when I read in a certain London daily that the teachings of Jesus were "being realized in Russia." A preposterous falsehood of which none but a charlatan could be guilty. Other writers were not much nearer the truth. If they were at all critical of the Bolsheviks they were so at the expense of the whole Russian people, whom they charged with being "crude, primitive savages, too illiterate to grasp the meaning of the Revolution." According to these writers it was the Russian people who imposed

upon the Bolsheviki their despotic and cruel methods. It did not occur to those so-called investigators that the Revolution was made by those primitive and illiterate people, and not by the present rulers in the Kremlin. Surely they must have possessed some quality which enabled them to rise to revolutionary heights — a quality which, if properly directed, would have prevented the wreck and ruin of Russia. But that quality has persistently been overlooked by Bolshevik apologists who sacrifice all truth in their determination to find extenuating circumstances for the mess made by the Bolsheviki. A few wrote with understanding of the complex problems and with sympathy for the Russian people. But their voice was ineffectual in the popular craze that Bolshevism had become.

The third category — the majority of the visitors, delegates, and members of various commissions — infested Russia to become the agents of the ruling Party. These people had every opportunity to see things as they were, to get close to the Russian people, and to learn from them the whole terrible truth. But they preferred to side with the Government, to listen to its interpretation of causes and effects. Then they went forth to misrepresent and to lie deliberately in behalf of the Bolsheviki, as the Entente agents had lied and misrepresented the Russian Revolution.

Nor did the sincere Communists realize the disgrace of the situation — not even Angelica Balabanova. Yet she had good judgment of character and knew how to appraise the people who flocked to Russia. Her experience with Mrs. Clare Sheridan was characteristic. The lady had been smuggled into Russia before Moscow realized that she was the cousin of Winston Churchill. She was obsessed by the desire “to sculp” prominent Communists. She had also begged Angelica to sit for her. “Lenin, Trotsky, and other leaders are going to; aren’t you?” she pleaded. Angelica, who hated sensationalism in any form, resented the presence in Russia of these superficial visitors. “I asked her,” she afterward related, “if she would have thought of ‘sculpting’ Lenin three years ago when the English Government denounced him as a German spy. Lenin did not make the Revolution. The Russian people made it. I told this Mrs. Sheridan that she would do better to ‘sculp’ Russian workingmen and women who were the real heroes of the Revolution. I know she did not like what I said. But I don’t care. I can’t stand people to whom the Russian struggle is mere copy for poor imitations or cheap display.”

Now the new delegates were beginning to arrive. They were royally welcomed and feted. They were taken to show schools, children’s homes, colonies, and model factories. It was the traditional Potemkin villages that were shown the visitors. They were graciously received and “talked to” by Lenin and Trotsky, treated to theatres, concerts, ballets, excursions, and military parades. In short, nothing was left undone to put the delegates into a frame of mind favourable to the

great plan that was to be revealed to them at the Red Trade Union and the Third International Congresses. There were also continuous private conferences where the delegates were subjected to a regular third degree, Lozovsky — prominent Bolshevik labour leader — and his retinue seeking to ascertain their attitude to the Third International, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and similar subjects. Here and there was a delegate who refused to divulge the instructions of his organization on the ground that he was pledged to report only to the Congress. But such naive people reckoned without their host. They soon found themselves ostracized and at the Congress they were given no opportunity to make themselves heard effectively.

The majority of the delegates were more pliable. They learned quickly that pledges and responsibilities were considered bourgeois superstitions. To show their ultra-radicalism they quickly divested themselves of them. They became the echoes of Zinoviev, Lozovsky, and other leaders.

The American delegates to the Red Trade Union International were most conspicuous by their lack of personality. They accepted without question every proposition and suggestion of the Chair. The most flagrant intrigues and political machinations and brazen suppression of those who would not be cajoled or bullied into blind adherence found ready support by the American Communist crew and the aides they had brought with them.

The Bolsheviks know how to set the stage to produce an impression. In the staging of the two Congresses held in July, 1921, they outdid themselves. The background for the Congress of the Third International was the Kremlin. In the royal halls where once the all-powerful Romanovs had sat, the awed delegates hung with bated breath upon every word uttered by their pope, Lenin, and the other Grand Seigneurs of the Communist Church. On the eve of the Congress a great meeting was held in the big theatre to which only those whose passports had been approved by the All-Russian Tcheka were admitted. The streets leading to the theatre were turned into a veritable military camp.

Tchekists and soldiers on foot and on horseback created the proper atmosphere for the Communist conclave. At the meeting resolutions were passed extending fraternal greetings to “the revolutionists in capitalist prisons.” At that very moment every Russian prison was filled with revolutionists but no greetings were sent to them. So all-pervading was Moscow hypnotism that not a single voice was raised to point out the farce of Bolshevik sympathy for political prisoners.

The Red Trade Union Congress was set on a less pretentious scale in the House of the Trade Unions. But no details were overlooked to get the proper effects. “Delegates” from Palestine and Korea — men who had not been out of Russia for years — delegates from the great industrial centres of Bokhara, Turkestan, and Adzerbeydzhan, packed the Congress to swell the Communist vote and help

carry every Communist proposition. They were there to teach the workers of Europe and America how to reconstruct their respective countries and to establish Communism after the world revolution.

The plan perfected by Moscow during the year 1920–21, and which was a complete reversal of Communist principles and tactics, was very skilfully and subtly unrolled — by slow degrees — before the credulous delegates. The Red Trade Union International was to embrace all revolutionary and syndicalist organizations of the world, with Moscow as its Mecca and the Third International as its Prophet. All minor revolutionary labour organizations were to be dissolved and Communist units formed instead within the existing conservative trade union bodies. The very people who a year ago had issued the famous Bull of twenty-one points, they who had excommunicated every heretic unwilling to submit to the orders of the Holy See — the Third International — and who had applied every invective to labour in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 21/2 Internationals, were now making overtures to the most reactionary labour organizations and “resoluting” against the best efforts of the revolutionary pioneers in the Trade Union movement of every country.

Here again the American delegates proved themselves worthy of their hire. Most of them had sprung from the Industrial Workers of the World; had indeed arisen to “fame and glory” on the shoulders of that militant American labour body. Some of the delegates had valiantly escaped to safety, unselfishly preferring the Hotel de Luxe to Leavenworth Penitentiary, leaving their comrades behind in American prisons and their friends to refund the bonds they had heroically forfeited. While Industrial Workers continued to suffer persecution in capitalistic America, the renegade I. W. W.’s living in comfort and safety in Moscow maligned and attacked their former comrades and schemed to destroy their organization. Together with the Bolsheviki they were going to carry out the job begun by the American Vigilantes and the Ku Klux Klan to exterminate the I. W. W. *Les extrêmes ce touchent.*

While the Communists were passing eloquent resolutions of protest against the imprisonment of revolutionaries in foreign countries, the Anarchists in the Bolshevik prisons of Russia were being driven to desperation by their long imprisonment without opportunity for a hearing or trial. To force the hand of the Government the Anarchists incarcerated in the Taganka (Moscow) decided on a hunger strike to the death. The French, Spanish, and Italian Anarcho-syndicalists, when informed of the situation, promised to raise the question at an early session of the Labour Congress. Some, however, suggested that the Government be first approached on the matter. Thereupon a Delegate Committee was chosen, including the well-known English labour leader, Tom Mann, to call upon the Little Father in the Kremlin. The Committee visited Lenin. The latter refused to

have the Anarchists released on the ground that “they were too dangerous,” but the final result of the interview was a promise that they would be permitted to leave Russia; should they, however, return without permission, they would be shot. The next day Lenin’s promise was substantiated by a letter of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, signed by Trotsky, reiterating what Lenin had said. Naturally the threat of shooting was omitted in the official letter.

The hunger strikers in the Taganka accepted the conditions of deportation. They had for years fought and bled for the Revolution and now they were compelled to become Ahasueruses in foreign lands or suffer slow mental and physical death in Bolshevik dungeons. The Moscow Anarchist groups chose Alexander Berkman and A. Shapiro as their representatives on the Delegates’ Committee to arrange with the Government the conditions of the release and deportation of the imprisoned Anarchists.

In view of this settlement of the matter the intention of a public protest at the Congress was abandoned by the delegates. Great was their amazement when, just before the close of the Congress, Bukharin — in the name of the Central Committee of the Communist Party — launched into a scurrilous attack on the Anarchists.

Some of the foreign delegates, outraged by the dishonourable proceeding, demanded an opportunity to reply. That demand was finally granted to a representative of the French delegation after Chairman Lozovsky had exhausted every demagogic trick in a vain attempt to silence the dissenters.

At no time during the protracted negotiations on behalf of the imprisoned Anarchists and the last disgraceful proceedings at the Red Trade Union Congress did the American Communist delegates make a protest. Loudly they had shouted for political amnesty in America, but not a word had they to say in favour of the liberation of the politicals in Russia. One of the group, approached on behalf of the hunger strikers, exclaimed: “What are a few lives or even a few hundred of them as against the Revolution!” To such Communist minds the Revolution had no bearing on justice and humanity.

In the face of abject want, with men, women, and children hungrily watching the white bread baked for the Luxe Hotel in its adjoining bakery, one of the American fraternal delegates wrote to a publication at home that “the workers in Russia control the industries and are directing the affairs of the country; they get everything free and need no money.” This noble delegate lived in the palatial home of the former Sugar King of Russia and enjoyed also the hospitality of the Luxe. He indeed needed no money. But he knew that the workers lacked even the basic necessities and that without money they were as helpless in Russia as in any other country, the week’s *payok* not being sufficient for two days’ existence. Another delegate published glowing accounts dwelling on the absence of prostitution and

crime in Moscow. At the same time the Tcheka was daily executing hold-up-men, and on the Tverskaya and the Pushkin Boulevard, near the Luxe Hotel, street women mobbed the delegates with their attentions. Their best customers were the very delegates who waxed so enthusiastic about the wonders of the Bolshevik régime.

The Bolsheviki realized the value of such champions and appreciated their services. They sent them forth into the world generously equipped in every sense, to perpetuate the monstrous delusion that the Bolsheviki and the Revolution are identical and that the workers have come into their own "under the proletarian dictatorship." Woe to those who dare to tear the mask from the lying face. In Russia they are put against the wall, exiled to slow death in famine districts, or banished from the country. In Europe and America such heretics are dragged through the mire and morally lynched. Everywhere the unscrupulous tools of the great disintegrator, the Third International, spread distrust and hatred in labour and radical ranks. Formerly ideals and integrity were the impulse to revolutionary activity. Social movements were founded upon the inner needs of each country. They were maintained and supported by the interest and zeal of the workers themselves. Now all this is condemned as worthless. Instead the golden rain of Moscow is depended on to produce a rich crop of Communist organizations and publications. Even uprisings may be organized to deceive and mislead the people as to the quality and strength of the Communist Party. In reality, everything is built on a foundation that crumbles to pieces the moment Moscow withdraws its financial support.

During the two Congresses held in July, 1921, the friends and comrades of Maria Spiridonova circulated a manifesto which had been sent by them to the Central Committee of the Communist Party and to the main representatives of the Government, calling attention to the condition of Spiridonova and demanding her release for the purpose of adequate medical treatment and care.

A prominent foreign woman delegate to the Third Congress of the Communist International was approached. She promised to see Trotsky, and later it was reported that he had said that Spiridonova was "still too dangerous to be liberated." It was only after accounts of her condition had appeared in the European Socialist press that she was released, on condition that she return to prison on her recovery. Her friends in whose care she is at present face the alternative of letting Spiridonova die or turning her over to the Tcheka.

## Chapter 9. Education and Culture

The proudest claims of the Bolsheviki are education, art, and culture. Communist propaganda literature and Bolshevik agents at home and abroad constantly sing the praises of these great achievements.

To the casual observer it may indeed appear that the Bolsheviki have accomplished wonders in this field. They have organized more schools than existed under the Tsar, and they have made them accessible to the masses. This is true of the larger cities. But in the provinces the existing schools met the opposition of the local Bolsheviki, who closed most of them on the alleged ground of counter-revolutionary activities, or because of lack of Communist teachers. While, then, in the large centres the percentage of children attending schools and the number of higher educational institutions is greater than in the past, the same does not apply to the rest of Russia. Still, so far as quantity is concerned, the Bolsheviki deserve credit for their educational work and the general diffusion of education.

In the case of the theatres no reservations have been made. All were permitted to continue their performances when factories were shut down for want of fuel. The opera, ballet, and Lunacharsky's plays were elaborately staged, and the *Proletcult* — organized to advance proletarian culture — was generously subsidized even when the famine was at its height. It is also true that the Government printing presses were kept busy day and night manufacturing propaganda literature and issuing the old classics. At the same time the imagists and futurists gathered unmolested in Café Domino and other places. The palaces and museums were kept up in admirable condition. In any other starved, blockaded, and attacked country all this would have been a very commendable showing.

In Russia, however, two revolutions had taken place. To be sure, the February Revolution was not far-reaching. Still, it brought about political changes without which there might not have been an October. It also released great cultural forces from the prisons and Siberia a valuable element without which the educational work of the Bolsheviki could not have been undertaken.

It was the October Revolution which struck deepest into the vitals of Russia. It uprooted the old values and cleared the ground for new conceptions and forms of life. Inasmuch as the Bolsheviki became the sole medium of articulating and interpreting the promise of the Revolution, the earnest student will not be content merely with the increase of schools, the continuation of the ballet, or the good condition of the museums. He will want to know whether education, culture, and art in Bolshevik Russia symbolize the spirit of the Revolution, whether they

serve to quicken the imagination and broaden the horizon; above all, whether they have released and helped to apply the latent qualities of the masses.

Critical inquiry in Russia is a dangerous thing. No wonder so many newcomers avoided looking beneath the surface. To them it was enough that the Montessori system, the educational ideas of Professor Dewey, and dancing by the Dalcroze method have been “adopted” by Russia. I do not contend against these innovations. But I insist that they have no bearing whatever on the Revolution; they do not prove that the Bolshevik educational experiment is superior to similar efforts in other countries, where they have been achieved without a revolution and the terrible price it involves.

State monopoly of thought is everywhere interpreting education to suit its own purpose. Similarly the Bolsheviks, to whom the State is supreme, use education to further their own ends. But while the monopoly of thought in other countries has not succeeded in entirely checking the spirit of free inquiry and critical analysis, the “proletarian dictatorship” has completely paralysed every attempt at independent investigation. The Communist criterion is dominant. The least divergence from official dogma and opinion on the part of teachers, educators, or pupils exposes them to the general charge of counter-revolution, resulting in discharge and expulsion, if nothing more drastic.

In a previous chapter I have mentioned the case of the Moscow University students expelled and exiled for protesting against Tcheka violence toward the political prisoners in the Butyrki. But it was not only such “political” offences that were punished. Offences of a purely academic nature were treated in the same manner. Thus the objection of some professors to Communist interference in the methods of instruction was sternly suppressed. Teachers and students who supported the professors were severely punished. I know a professor of sociology and literature, a brilliant scholar and a Revolutionist, who was discharged from the Moscow University because, as an Anarchist, he encouraged the critical faculty of his pupils. He is but one instance of the numerous cases of non-Communist intellectuals who, under one pretext or another, are systematically hounded and finally eliminated from Bolshevik institutions. The Communist “cells” in control of every classroom have created an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion in which real education cannot thrive.

It is true that the Bolsheviks have striven to carry education and culture into the Red Army and the villages. But here again the same conditions prevail. Communism is the State religion and, like all religions, it discourages the critical attitude and frowns upon independent inquiry. Yet without the capacity for parallelism and opportunity for verification education is valueless.

The *Proletcult* is the pet child of the Bolsheviks. Like most parents, they claim for their offspring extraordinary talents. They hold it up as the great genius who



is destined to enrich the world with new values. Henceforth the masses shall no longer drink from the poisonous well of bourgeois culture. Out of their own creative impulse and through their own efforts the proletariat shall bring forth great treasures in literature, art, and music. But like most child prodigies, the *Proletcult* did not live up to its early promise. Before long it proved itself below the average, incapable of innovation, lacking originality, and without sustaining power. Already in 1920 I was told by two of the foremost foster-fathers of the *Proletcult*, Gorki and Lunacharsky, that it was a failure.

In Petrograd, Moscow, and throughout my travels I had occasion to study the efforts of the *Proletcult*. Whether expressed in printed form, on the stage, in clay or colour, they were barren of ideas or vision, and showed not a trace of the inner urge which impels creative art. They were hopelessly commonplace. I do not doubt that the masses will some day create a new culture, new art values, new forms of beauty. But these will come to life from the inner necessity of the people themselves, and not through an arbitrary will imposed upon them.

The mechanistic approach to art and culture and the *idée fixe* that nothing must express itself outside of the channels of the State have stultified the cultural and artistic expression of the Russian people. In poetry and literature, in drama, painting, and music not a single epic of the Revolution has been produced during five years. This is the more remarkable when one bears in mind how rich Russia was in works of art and how close her writers and poets were to the soul of the Russian people. Yet in the greatest upheaval in the world's history no one has come forward with pen or brush or lyre to give artistic expression to the miracle or to set to music the storm that carried the Russian people forward. Works of art, like new-born man, come in pain and travail. Verily the five years of Revolution should have proved very rich spiritually and creatively. For in those years the soul of Russia has gone through a thousand crucifixions. Yet in this regard Russia was never before so poor and desolate.

The Bolsheviki claim that a revolutionary period is not conducive to creative art. That contention is not borne out by the French Revolution. To mention only the Marseillaise, the great music of which lives and will live. The French Revolution was rich in spiritual effort, in poetry, painting, science, and in its great literature and letters. But, then, the French Revolution was never so completely in the bondage of one dogmatic idea as has been the case with Russia. The Jacobins indeed strove hard to fetter the spirit of the French Revolution and they paid dearly for it. The Bolsheviki have been copying the destructive phases of the French Revolution. But they have done nothing that can compare with the constructive achievements of that period.

I have said that nothing outstanding has been created in Russia. To be exact, I must except the great revolutionary poem, "Twelve," by Alexander Blok. But

even that gifted genius, deeply inspired by the Revolution, and imbued with the fire that had come to purify all life, soon ceased to create. His experience with the Tcheka (he was arrested in 1919), the terrorism all about him, the senseless waste of life and energy, the suffering and hopelessness of it all depressed his spirit and broke his health. Soon Alexander Blok was no more.

Even a Blok could not create with an iron band compressing his brain — the iron band of Bolshevik distrust, persecution, and censorship. How far-reaching the latter was I realized from a document the Museum Expedition had discovered in Vologda. It was a “very confidential, secret” order issued in 1920 and signed by Ulyanova, the sister of Lenin and chief of the Central Educational Department. It directed the libraries throughout Russia to “eliminate all non-Communist literature, except the Bible, the Koran, and the classics including even Communist writings dealing with problems which were being “solved in a different way” by the existing régime. The condemned literature was to be sent to paper mills “because of the scarcity of paper.”

Such edicts and the State monopoly of all material, printing machinery, and mediums of circulation exclude every possibility of the birth of creative work. The editor of a little coöperative paper published a brilliant poem, unsigned. It was the cry of a tortured poet’s soul in protest against the continued terror. The editor was promptly arrested and his little shop closed. The author would probably have been shot had his whereabouts been known. No doubt there are many agonized cries in Russia, but they are muffled cries. No one may hear them or interpret their meaning. The future alone has the key to the cultural and artistic treasures now hidden from the Argus eyes of the Department of Education and the numerous other censorial institutions.

Russia is now the dumping ground for mediocrities in art and culture. They fit into the narrow groove, they dance attendance on the allpowerful political commissars. They live in the Kremlin and skim the cream of life, while the real poets — like Blok and others — die of want and despair.

The void in literature, poetry, and art is felt most in the theatres, the State theatres especially. I once sat through five hours of acting in the Alexandrovsky Theatre in Petrograd when “Othello” was staged, with Andreyeva, Gorki’s wife, as Desdemona. It is hard to imagine a play more atrociously presented. I saw most of the other plays in the State theatre and not one of them gave any hint of the earthquake that had shaken Russia. There was no new note in interpretation, scenery, or method. It was all commonplace and inadequate, innocent even of the advancement made in dramatic art in bourgeois countries, and utterly inconsequential in the light of the Revolution.

The only exception was the Moscow Art Theatre. Its performance of Gorki’s “Night’s Lodging” was especially powerful. Real art was also presented in the

Stanislavsky Studio. These were the only oases in the art desert of Russia. But even the Art Theatre showed no trace of the great revolutionary events Russia was living through. The repertoire which had made the Art Theatre famous a quarter of a century before still continued night after night. There were no new Ibsens, Tolstois, or Tchekovs to thunder their protest against the new evils, and if there had been, no theatre could have staged them. It was safer to interpret the past than to voice the present. Yet, though the Art Theatre kept strictly within the past, Stanislavsky was often in difficulties with the authorities. He had suffered arrest and was once evicted from his studio. He had just moved into a new place when I visited him with Louise Bryant who had asked me to act as her interpreter. Stanislavsky looked forlorn and discouraged among his still unpacked boxes of stage property. I saw him also on several other occasions and found him almost hopeless, about the future of the theatre in Russia. "The theatre can grow only through inspiration from new works of art," he would say; "without it the interpretive artist must stagnate and the theatre deteriorate." But Stanislavsky himself was too much the creative artist to stagnate. He sought other forms of interpretation. His newest venture was an attempt to bring singing and dramatic acting into coöperative harmony. I attended a dress rehearsal of such a performance and found it very impressive. The effect of the voice was greatly enhanced by the realistic finesse which Stanislavsky achieved in dramatic art. But these efforts were entirely the work of himself and his little circle of art students; they had nothing to do with the Bolsheviki of the *Proletcult*.

There are some other innovations, begun long before the advent of the Bolsheviki and permitted by them to continue because they have no bearing on the Russian actuality. The Kamerney Theatre registers its revolt against the imposition of the play upon the acting, against the limitation of expression involved in the orthodox interpretation of dramatic art. It achieves noteworthy results by the new mode of acting, complemented by original scenery and music, but mostly in plays of a lighter genre.

Another unique attempt is essayed by the Semperante Theatre. It is based on the conception that the written drama checks the growth and diversity of the interpretive artist. Plays should therefore be improvised, thereby affording greater scope to spontaneity, inspiration, and mood of the artist. It is a novel experiment, but as the improvised plays must also keep within the limits of the State censorship, the work of the Semperantists suffers from a lack of ideas.

The most interesting cultural endeavour I met in Kiev was the work of the Jewish *Kulturliga*. Its nucleus was organized in 1918 to minister to the needs of pogrom victims. They had to be provided for, sheltered, fed, and clothed. Young Jewish literary men and an able organizer brought the *Kulturliga* to life. They did not content themselves with ministering only to the physical needs of

the unfortunates. They organized children's homes, public schools, high schools, evening classes; later a seminary and art school were added. When we visited Kiev the *Kulturliga* owned a printing plant and a studio, besides its other educational institutions, and had succeeded in organizing 230 branches in the Ukraina. At a literary evening and a special performance arranged in honour of the Expedition we were able to witness the extraordinary achievements of the, *Kulturliga*.

At the literary evening Perez's poem "The Four Seasons" was rendered by recitative group singing. The effect was striking. Nature at the birth of spring, birds sending forth their joyous song of love, the mystery and romance of mating, the ecstasy of renewing and becoming, the rumbling of the approaching storm, the crash of the mighty giants struck by lightning, rain softly falling, the leaves fluttering to earth, the somberness and pathos of autumn, the last desperate resistance of Nature against death, the trees shrouded in white — all were made vivid and alive by the new form of collective recitative. Every nuance of Nature was brought out by the group of artists on the improvised little stage of the *Kulturliga*.

The next day we visited the art school. The children's classes were the more interesting. There was no discipline, no rigid rules, no mechanistic control of their art impulses. The children did drawing, painting, and modelling — mostly Jewish motifs: a pogromed city, by a boy of fourteen; a devout Jew in his tales praying in the synagogue, mortal fear of the pogrom savages written in his every feature; an old Jewish woman, the tragic remnant of a whole family slaughtered; and similar scenes from the life of the Russian Jew. The efforts were often crude, but there was about them nothing of the stilted manner characteristic of the *Proletcult*. There was no attempt to impose a definite formula on art expression.

Later we attended the studio. In a bare room, without scenery, lighting, costumes, or make-up, the artists of the *Kulturliga* gave several one-act plays and presented also an unpublished work found among the effects of a playwright. The performance had an artistic touch and finish I had rarely seen before. The play is called "The End of the World." The wrath of God rolls like thunder across the world, commanding man to prepare for the end. Yet man heeds not. Then all the elements are let loose, pursuing one another in wild fury; the storm rages and shrieks, and man's groans are drowned in the terrific hour of judgment. The world goes under, and all is dead.

Then something begins to move again. Black shadows symbolizing half beast, half man, with distorted faces and hesitating movements, crouch out of their caves. In awe and fear they stretch their trembling hands toward one another. Haltingly at first, then with growing confidence, man attempts in common effort with his fellows to lift himself out of the black void. Light begins to break. Again a thunderous voice rolls over the earth. It is the voice of fulfilment.

It was a stirring artistic achievement.

When the *Liga* was first organized the Bolsheviki subsidized its work. Later, when they returned to Kiev after its evacuation by Denikin, they gave very scanty support to the educational institutions of the *Kulturliga*. This unfriendly attitude was due to the *Yevkom*, the Jewish Communist Section, which intrigues against every independent Jewish cultural endeavour. When we left Kiev the ardent workers of the *Liga* were much worried about the future of the organization. I am not in a position to say at this writing whether the *Liga* was able to continue its work or was closed altogether. However, laudable as were the innovations of the *Kulturliga* and the attempts of the Kamerney and Semperante at new modes of expression, they could not be considered as having any bearing on the Revolution.

State support to so-called art is given mostly to Lunacharsky's dramatic ventures and other Communist interpretations of culture. When I first met Lunacharsky I thought him much less the politician than the artist. I heard him lecture at the Sverdlov University before a large audience of workingmen and women, popularizing the origin and development of art. It was done splendidly. When I met him again he was so thoroughly in the meshes of Party discipline and so completely shorn of his power that every effort of his was frustrated. Then he began to write plays. That was his undoing. He could not employ the material of the actual reality, and the February Revolution, Kerensky, and the Constituent Assembly had already been caricatured to a thread. Lunacharsky turned to the German Revolution. He wrote "The Smith and the Councillor," a sort of burlesque. The play is so amateurish and commonplace that no theatre outside of Russia would have cared to present it. But Lunacharsky was in control of the theatres — why not exploit them for his own works? The play was staged at great cost, at a time when millions on the Volga were starving. But even that could have been forgiven if the play had any meaning or contained anything suggestive of the tragedy of Russia. Instead, it lacked all life and was rich only in vulgar scenes portraying Ludendorff, the renegade Social Democratic President, a degenerate aristocrat, and a princess of the *demimonde*. The drunken men frantically scramble for the possession of the woman, literally tearing her clothing off her back. A revolting scene, yet in the whole audience of teachers and members of the Department of Education not a single protest was voiced against the affront to the taste and intelligence of revolutionary Russia. On the contrary, they applauded the playwright, for those sycophants depended on Lunacharsky for their rations. They could not afford to be critical.

Vanity and power break the strongest character, and Lunacharsky is not strong. It is his lack of will which makes him submit, against his better judgment, to the galling discipline and espionage placed over him. Perhaps he avenges himself

by forcing upon the public at large and the actors under his charge his dramatic works.

After a careful analysis of the educational and cultural efforts of the Bolsheviks the earnest student will come to the following conclusions: first, there is quantity rather than substance in the education of Russia to-day; secondly, the theatres, the ballet, and the museums receive generous support from the Government, but the reason for it is not so much love of art as the necessity of finding some outlet for the checked and stifled aspirations of the people.

The political dictatorship of the Bolsheviks with one stroke suppressed the social phase of life in Russia. There was no forum even for the most inoffensive social intercourse, no clubs, no meeting places, no restaurants, not even a dance hall. I remember the shocked expression of Zorin when I asked him if the young people could not occasionally meet for a dance free from Communist supervision. "Dance halls are gathering places for counter-revolutionists; we closed them," he informed me. The emotional and human needs of the people were considered dangerous to the régime.

On the other hand, the dreadful existence — hunger, cold, and darkness — was sapping the life of the people. Gloom and despair by day, congestion, lack of light and heat at night, and no escape from it all. There was, of course, the political life of the Communist Party — a life stern and forbidding, a life without colour or warmth. The masses had no contact with or interest in that life, and they were not permitted to have anything of their own. A people bottled up is a menace. Some outlet had to be provided, some relief from the black despair. The theatre, the opera, and the museum were that relief. What if the theatres gave nothing new? What if the opera had bad singing? And the ballet continued to move in the old toe circles? The places were warm; they had light. They furnished the opportunity for human association and one could forget the misery and loneliness — one might even forget the Tcheka. The theatre, the opera, the ballet, and the museum became the safety valve of the Bolshevik régime. And as the theatres gave nothing of protest, nothing new or vital, they were permitted to continue. They solved a great and difficult problem and furnished excellent copy for foreign propaganda.

## Chapter 10. Exploiting the Famine

Late in the summer of 1921 there came the harrowing news of the famine. To those who had kept in touch with inner affairs the information was not quite unexpected. We had learned during the early part of the summer that a large proportion of the population was doomed to death from starvation. At that time a group of scientific agriculturists had assembled in Moscow. Their report showed that, owing to bureaucratic centralization, and corruption and delay in seed distribution, timely and sufficient sowing had been prevented. The Soviet press kept the report of the agricultural conference from the public. But in July items began to appear in the *Pravda* and the *Izvestia* telling of the terrible drought in the Volga region and the fearful conditions in the famine-stricken districts.

Immediately various groups and individuals came forward ready to coöperate with the Government in coping with the calamity. The Left Wing elements — Anarchists, Social Revolutionists, and Maximalists — offered to organize relief work and to collect funds. But they received no encouragement from the Soviet authorities. On the other hand, elements of the Right, the Cadets (Constitutional Democrats), were received with open arms. Kishkin, Minister of Finance under Kerensky, Mine. Kuskova, Prokopovitch, and other prominent Conservatives, who had bitterly fought the Revolution, were accepted by the Bolsheviki. These people had been denounced as counter-revolutionists and repeatedly arrested and imprisoned, yet they were given preference and permitted to organize the group known as the Citizens' Committee. When the latter refused to work under the guardianship of the Moscow Soviet, insisting upon complete autonomy and the right to publish its own paper, the Government consented. Such discrimination in favour of reactionaries as against those who had faithfully stood by the Revolution could be explained only in two ways. First, the Bolsheviki considered it dangerous to grant the Left elements free access to the peasantry; secondly, it was necessary to make an impression on Europe, which could be effectively done by means of the conservative group. This became clear before the Citizens' Committee began its relief work.

In the beginning the Committee received the entire support of the Government. A special building was assigned for its headquarters and It was granted the right to issue its own paper, called *Pomoshtch* (Succour). Members of the Committee were also promised permission to go to Western Europe for the purpose of arousing interest and getting support for the famine stricken. Two numbers of the paper were issued. Its appearance caused significant comment: it was an exact reproduction, in size, type, and general form, of the old *Vyedomosti*, the most reactionary

sheet under the former regime. The publication was, of course, very guarded in its tone.; But between the lines one could read its antagonism to the ruling Party. Its first issue contained a letter from the Metropolitan Tikhon, wherein he commanded the faithful to send their contributions to him. He assured his flock that he was to have complete control of the distribution of the donations. The Citizens' Committee was, given *carte blanche* in carrying on its work, and the fact was heralded by the Bolsheviki as proof of their liberality and willingness to cooperate with all elements in famine relief.

Presently the Soviet Government entered into an agreement with the American Relief Administration, and other European organizations regarding aid for the Volga sufferers, and then the headquarters of the Citizens' Committee were raided, the paper suppressed, and the leading members of the Committee thrown into the Tcheka on the usual charge of counterrevolution. Now it was reasonably certain that Mme. Kuskova and her co-workers were no more counter-revolutionary when they were permitted to organize Volga relief than they had been at any time since 1917. Why, then, did the Communist State accept them while rejecting the assistance of true revolutionists? For no other reason than propaganda purposes. When the Citizens' Committee had served that purpose it was kicked overboard in true Bolshevik fashion. Only one person the Tcheka dared not touch — Vera Nikolayevna Figner, the venerable revolutionist. Great humanitarian that she is, she joined the Citizens' Committee and devoted herself to its work with the same zeal that had made her so effective as one of the leading spirits of the *Narodnaya Volya*. Twenty-two years of living death in Schlüsselburg had failed to/ destroy her ardour. When the Citizens' Committee was arrested, Vera Nikolayevna demanded to share the same fate, but the Tcheka knew the spiritual influence of this woman in Russia and abroad, and she was left in peace. The other members of the Citizens' Committee were kept in prison for a long time, then exiled to remote parts of Russia and finally deported.

Except for the foreign organizations doing relief work in Russia, the Soviet Government could now stand before the world as the sole dispenser of support to the starving in the famine district. Kalinin, the marionette President of the Socialist Republic, equipped with much propaganda literature and surrounded by a large staff of Soviet officials and foreign correspondents, made his triumphal march through the stricken territory. It was widely heralded throughout the world, and the desired effect was achieved. But the real work in the famine region was carried on not so much by the official machine as by the great host of unknown men and women from the ranks of the proletariat and the intelligentsia. Most devotedly and with utter consecration they gave of their own depleted energies. Many of them perished from typhus, exposure, and exhaustion; some were slain by the power of darkness which now, even more than in Tolstoi's time, holds



many sections of Russia in its grip. Doctors, nurses, and relief workers were often killed by the unfortunates they had come to aid, as evil spirits who had willed the famine and the misfortunes of Russia. These were the real heroes and martyrs, unknown and unsung.

## Chapter 11. The Socialist Republic Resorts to Deportation

The Tcheka had succeeded in terrorizing the whole people. The only exceptions were the politicals, whose courage and devotion to their ideals defied the Bolsheviks as it had the Romanovs. I knew many of those brave spirits, and I saw in them the only hope to sustain one amid the general wreckage. They were the living proof of the powerlessness of terror against an Ideal.

Typical of this class was a certain Anarchist who had long been sought for by the Tcheka as an important Makhnovetz. He was a member of the military staff of the revolutionary *povstantsi* of the Ukraina and the close friend and counsellor of Makhno. He had already known him intimately when they were together in *katorga* in the days of the Tsar. He had shared all the hardships and danger of the *povstantsi* life and participated in their campaigns against the enemies of the Revolution. After the defeat of Wrangel and the last treachery of the Bolshevik toward Makhno, when the latter's army had become scattered and many of its members killed, this man succeeded in escaping the Bolshevik net. He determined to come to Moscow, there to write a history of Makhnovstchina. It was a perilous journey, made under most difficult conditions, with death constantly treading his footsteps. Under an assumed name he secured a tiny room in the environs of the capital. He lived in most abject poverty, always in danger of his life, visiting his wife in the city only under cover of darkness. Once in every twenty four hours he would come to the appointed place for a little respite and his sole meal of the day, consisting of potatoes, herring, and tea. Every moment he risked being recognized, for he was well known in Moscow, and recognition meant summary execution. His wife also, if discovered, would have met the same fate — the devoted woman who, though with child at the time, had followed him to Moscow. After a desperate hunt for employment she found a position in *acréche*, but as pregnant women were not accepted in such institutions, she had to disguise her condition. All day long she had to be on her feet, attending to her duties, and living in constant fear for the safety of her husband.

When the baby was born the situation became more aggravated. The woman was harassed by her superiors because she had obtained the position without their knowledge of her condition. Petty officialdom and hard work exhausted her energies and the daily anxiety about the man she loved nearly drove her frantic. Yet never a sign of all that troubled her when the man would visit her.

Many evenings I spent with this couple. They were entirely cut off from the outside world and former friends, all alone save for the fear of discovery and death

which was their constant companion. In the dreary, damp room, the baby asleep, we passed many hours talking in subdued voices about the Ukrainian peasantry and the Makhno movement. My friend was familiar with every phase of it from personal experience, which he was now incorporating into his book on Makhno. He was absorbed in that work, which was for the first time to give to the world the truth about Makhno and the *povstantsi*. Deeply concerned about his wife and child, he was entirely oblivious to his own safety, though knowing that every day the Tcheka net was drawn closer about him. With great difficulty he was finally prevailed upon to leave his beloved Russia, as the only way of saving his family. What a commentary on the Socialist Republic, whose bravest and truest sons must keep in hiding or forsake their native soil!

Life in Russia had become to me a constant torture; the need of breaking my two years' silence was imperative. During all the summer I was in the throes of a bitter conflict between the necessity of leaving and my inability to tear myself away from what had been an ideal to me. It was like the tragic end of a great love to which one clings long after it is no more.

In the midst of my struggle there happened an event which further served to demonstrate the complete collapse of the Bolsheviki as revolutionists. It was the announcement of the return to Russia of the Tsarist General Slastchev, one of the most reactionary and brutal militarists of the old régime. He had fought against the Revolution from its very beginning and had led some of the Wrangel forces in the Crimea. He was guilty of fiendish barbarities to war prisoners and infamous as a maker of pogroms. Now Slastchev recanted and was returning to "his Fatherland." This arch counter-revolutionist and Jew-baiter, together with several other Tsarist generals and White guardists, was received by the Bolsheviki with military honours. No doubt it was just retribution that the antiSemite had to salute the Jew Trotsky, his military superior. But to the Revolution and the Russian people the triumphal return of the imperialists was an outrage.

The old general had changed his colours but not his nature. In his letter to the officers and men of the Wrangel Army he delivered himself of the following:

I, Slastchev Krimsky, command you to return to your Fatherland and into the fold of the Red Army. Our country needs our defense against her enemies. I command you to return.

As a reward for his newly fledged love of the Socialist Fatherland Slastchev "Krimsky" was commissioned to quell the Karelian peasants who demanded self-determination, and Slastchev had the opportunity of giving full play to the autocratic powers he was vested with.

Military receptions and honours for the man who had been foremost in the attempt to crush the Revolution, and imprisonment or death for the lovers of liberty 1 At the same time the true sons of Russia, who had defended the Revolution against every attack and had aided the Bolsheviki to political power, were made homeless by deportation to foreign lands. A more tragic débâcle history has never before witnessed. The first to be deported by the “revolutionary” Government were ten Anarchists, most of them known in the international revolutionary movement as tried idealists and martyrs for their cause. Among them was Volin, a highly cultured man, a gifted writer and lecturer, who had been editor of various Anarchist publications in Europe and America. In Russia, where he returned in 1917, he helped to organize the Ukrainian Confederation of *Nabat* and’ was for a time lecturer for the Soviet Department of Education in Kharkov. Volin had been a member of an Anarchist partisan military unit that fought against Austro-German occupation, and for a considerable time he also conducted educational and cultural work in the Makhno Army. During the year 1921 he was imprisoned by the Bolsheviki and deported after the hunger strike of the Taganka Anarchists which lasted ten and a half days.

In the same group was G. Maximoff, an Anarchist of many years’ standing. Before the Revolution he had been active among the students of the Petrograd University and also among the peasants. He participated in all the revolutionary struggles beginning with the February Revolution, was one of the editors of *Golos Truda* and member of the All-Russian Secretariat of Anarcho-syndicalists. He is an able and popular writer and lecturer.

Mark Mratchny, another of the deported, has been an Anarchist since 1907. At the time when Hetman Skoropadsky ruled Ukraina with the help of German bayonets, Mratchny was a member of the Revolutionary Bureau of the students of Kharkov. He held the position of instructor in the Soviet School Department of Kharkov, and later in Siberia. He edited the *Nabat* during the period of agreement between Makhno and the Bolsheviki, and was later arrested together with the other Anarchists who had come to Kharkov for the Anarchist Conference.

Among the deported was also Yartchuk, famous as one of the leaders of the Kronstadt sailors in the uprising of July, 1917, a man who enjoyed exceptional influence among the sailors and workers and whose idealism and devotion are matters of historic record. In the group there were also several students — mere youths who had participated in the Anarchist hungerstrike in the Taganka prison.

To remain longer in Bolshevik Russia had become unbearable. I was compelled to speak out, and decided to leave the country. Friends were making arrangements to open a *sub rosa* passage abroad, but just as all preparations were completed we were informed of new developments. Berlin Anarchists had made a demand upon the Soviet Government that passports be issued for Alexander Berkman, A.

Shapiro, and myself, to enable us to attend the International Anarchist Congress which was to convene in Berlin in December, 1921. Whether due to that demand or for other reasons, the Soviet Government finally issued the required papers and on December 1, 1921, I left Russia in the company of Alexander Berkman and A. Shapiro. It was just one year and eleven months since I had set foot on what I believed to be the promised land. My heart was heavy with the tragedy of Russia. One thought stood out in bold relief: I must raise my voice against the crimes committed in the name of the Revolution. I would be heard regardless of friend or foe.

## Chapter 12. Afterword

### I

Non-Bolshevik Socialist critics of the Russian failure contend that the Revolution could not have succeeded in Russia because industrial conditions had not reached the necessary climax in that country. They point to Marx, who taught that a social revolution is possible only in countries with a highly developed industrial system and its attendant social antagonisms. They therefore claim that the Russian Revolution could not be a social revolution, and that historically it had to evolve along constitutional, democratic lines, complemented by a growing industry, in order to ripen the country economically for the basic change.

This orthodox Marxian view leaves an important factor out of consideration — a factor perhaps more vital to the possibility and success of a social revolution than — even the industrial element. That is the psychology of the masses at a given period. Why is there, for instance, no social revolution in the United States, France, or even in Germany? Surely these countries have reached the industrial development set by Marx as the culminating stage. The truth is that industrial development and sharp social contrasts are of themselves by no means sufficient to give birth to a new society or to call forth a social revolution. The necessary social consciousness, the required mass psychology is missing in such countries as the United States and the others mentioned. That explains why no social revolution has taken place there.

In this regard Russia had the advantage of other more industrialized and “civilized” lands. It is true that Russia was not as advanced industrially as her Western neighbours. But the Russian mass psychology, inspired and intensified by the February Revolution, was ripening at so fast a pace that within a few months the people were ready for such ultra-revolutionary slogans as “All power to the Soviets” and “The land to the peasants, the factories to the workers.”

The significance of these slogans should not be under-estimated. Expressing in a large degree the instinctive and semi-conscious will of the people, they yet signified the complete social, economic, and industrial reorganization of Russia. What country in Europe or America is prepared to interpret such revolutionary mottoes into life? Yet in Russia, in the months of June and July, 1917, these slogans became popular and were enthusiastically and actively taken up, in the form of direct action, by the bulk of the industrial and agrarian population of more than 150 millions. That was sufficient proof of the “ripeness” of the Russian people for the social revolution.

As to economic “preparedness” in the] Marxian sense, it must not be forgotten that Russia is preëminently an agrarian country. Marx’s dictum presupposes the industrialization of the peasant and farmer population in every highly developed society, as a step toward social fitness for revolution. But events in Russia, in 1917, demonstrated that revolution does not await this process of industrialization and — what is more important — cannot be made to wait. The Russian peasants began to expropriate the landlords and the workers took possession of the factories without taking cognizance of Marxian dicta. This popular action, by virtue of its own logic, ushered in the social revolution in Russia, upsetting all Marxian calculations. The psychology of the Slav proved stronger than socialdemocratic theories.

That psychology involved the passionate yearning for liberty nurtured by a century of revolutionary agitation among all classes of society. The Russian people had fortunately remained politically unsophisticated and untouched by the corruption and confusion created among the proletariat of other countries by “democratic” liberty and self-government. The Russian remained, in this sense, natural and simple, unfamiliar with the subtleties of politics, of parliamentary trickery, and legal makeshifts. On the other hand, his primitive sense of justice and right was strong and vital, without the disintegrating finesse of pseudo-civilization. He knew what he wanted and he did not wait for “historic inevitability” to bring it to him: he employed direct action. The Revolution to him was a fact of life, not a mere theory for discussion.

Thus the social revolution took place in Russia in spite of the industrial backwardness of the country. But to make the Revolution was not enough. It was necessary for it to advance and broaden, to develop into economic and social reconstruction. That phase of the Revolution necessitated fullest play of personal initiative and collective effort. The development and success of the Revolution depended on the broadest exercise of the creative genius of the people, on the coöperation of the intellectual and manual proletariat. Common interest is the *leit motif* of all revolutionary endeavour, especially on its constructive side. This spirit of mutual purpose and solidarity swept Russia with a mighty wave in the first days of the OctoberNovember Revolution. Inherent in that enthusiasm were forces that could have moved mountains if intelligently guided by exclusive consideration for the well-being of the whole people. The medium for such effective guidance was on hand: the labour organizations and the coöperatives with which Russia was covered as with a network of bridges combining the city with the country; the Soviets which sprang into being responsive to the needs of the Russian people; and, finally, the intelligentsia whose traditions for a century expressed heroic devotion to the cause of Russia’s emancipation.

But such a development was by no means within the programme of the Bolsheviks. For several months following October they suffered the popular forces to manifest themselves, the people carrying the Revolution into ever-widening channels. But as soon as the Communist Party felt itself sufficiently strong in the government saddle, it began to limit the scope of popular activity. All the succeeding acts of the Bolsheviks, all their following policies, changes of policies, their compromises and retreats, their methods of suppression and persecution, their terrorism and extermination of all other political views — all were but the *means to an end*: the retaining of the State power in the hands of the Communist Party. Indeed, the Bolsheviks themselves (in Russia) made no secret of it. The Communist Party, they contended, is the advance guard of the proletariat, and the dictatorship must rest in its hands. Alas, the Bolsheviks reckoned without their host — without the peasantry, whom neither the *razvyoriska*, the Tcheka, nor the wholesale shooting could persuade to support the Bolshevik régime. The peasantry became the rock upon which the bestlaid plans and schemes of Lenin were wrecked. But Lenin, a nimble acrobat, was skilled in performing within the narrowest margin. The new economic policy was introduced just in time to ward off the disaster which was slowly but surely overtaking the whole Communist edifice.

## II

The “new economic policy” came as a surprise and a shock to most Communists. They saw in it a reversal of everything that their Party had been proclaiming — a reversal of Communism itself. In protest some of the oldest members of the Party, men who had faced danger and persecution under the old régime while Lenin and Trotsky lived abroad in safety, left the Communist Party embittered and disappointed. The leaders then declared a lockout. They ordered the clearing of the Party ranks of all “doubtful” elements. Everybody suspected of an independent attitude and those who did not accept the new economic policy as the last word in revolutionary wisdom were expelled. Among them were Communists who for years had rendered most devoted service. Some of them, hurt to the quick by the unjust and brutal procedure, and shaken to their depths by the collapse of what they held most high, even resorted to suicide. But the smooth sailing of Lenin’s new gospel had to be assured, the gospel of the sanctity of private property and the freedom of cutthroat competition erected upon the ruins of four years of revolution.

However, Communist indignation over the new economic policy merely indicated the confusion of mind on the part of Lenin’s opponents. What else but



mental confusion could approve of the numerous acrobatic political stunts of Lenin and yet grow indignant at the final somersault, its logical culmination? The trouble with the devout Communists was that they clung to the Immaculate Conception of the Communist State which by the aid of the Revolution was to redeem the world. But most of the leading Communists never entertained such a delusion. Least of all Lenin.

During my first interview I received the impression that he was a shrewd politician who knew exactly what he was about and that he would stop at nothing to achieve his ends. After hearing him speak on several occasions and reading his works I became convinced that Lenin had very little concern in the Revolution and that Communism to him was a very remote thing. The centralized political State was Lenin's deity, to which everything else was to be sacrificed. Someone said that Lenin would sacrifice the Revolution to save Russia. Lenin's policies, however, have proven that he was willing to sacrifice both the Revolution and the country, or at least part of the latter, in order to realize his political scheme with what was left of Russia.

Lenin was the most pliable politician in history. He could be an ultra-revolutionary, a compromiser and conservative at the same time. When like a mighty wave the cry swept over Russia, "All power to the Soviets!" Lenin swam with the tide. When the peasants took possession of the land and the workers of the factories, Lenin not only approved of those direct methods but went further. He issued the famous motto, "Rob the robbers," a slogan which served to confuse the minds of the people and caused untold injury to revolutionary idealism. Never before did any real revolutionist interpret social expropriation as the transfer of wealth from one set of individuals to another. Yet that was exactly what Lenin's slogan meant. The indiscriminate and irresponsible raids, the accumulation of the wealth of the former bourgeoisie by the new Soviet bureaucracy, the chicanery practised toward those whose only crime was their former status, were all the results of Lenin's "Rob the robbers" policy. The whole subsequent history of the Revolution is a kaleidoscope of Lenin's compromises and betrayal of his own slogans.

Bolshevik acts and methods since the October days may seem to contradict the new economic policy. But in reality they are links in the chain which was to forge the all-powerful, centralized Government with State Capitalism as its economic expression. Lenin possessed clarity of vision and an iron will. He knew how to make his comrades in Russia and outside of it believe that his scheme was true Socialism and his methods the revolution. No wonder that Lenin felt such contempt for his flock, which he never hesitated to fling into their faces. "Only fools can believe that Communism is possible in Russia now," was Lenin's reply to the opponents of the new economic policy.

As a matter of fact, Lenin was right. True Communism was never attempted in Russia, unless one considers thirty-three categories of pay, different food rations, privileges to some and indifference to the great mass as Communism.

In the early period of the Revolution it was comparatively easy for the Communist Party to possess itself of power. All the revolutionary elements, carried away by the ultrarevolutionary promises of the Bolsheviki, helped the latter to power. Once in possession of the State the Communists began their process of elimination. All the political parties and groups which refused to submit to the new dictatorship had to go. First the Anarchists and Left Social Revolutionists, then the Mensheviki and other opponents from the Right, and finally everybody who dared aspire to, an opinion of his own. Similar was the fate of all independent organizations. They were either subordinated to the needs of the new State or destroyed altogether, as were the Soviets, the trade unions and the coöperatives — three great factors for the realization of the hopes of the Revolution.

The Soviets first manifested themselves in the revolution of 1905. They played an important part during that brief but significant period. Though the revolution was crushed, the Soviet idea remained rooted in the minds and hearts of the Russian masses. At the first dawn which illuminated Russia in February, 1917, the Soviets revived again and came into bloom in a very short time. To the people the Soviets by no means represented a curtailment of the spirit of the Revolution. On the contrary, the Revolution was to find its highest, freest practical expression through the Soviets. That was why the Soviets so spontaneously and rapidly spread throughout Russia. The Bolsheviki realized the significance of the popular trend and joined the cry. But once in control of the Government the Communists saw that the Soviets threatened the supremacy of the State. At the same time they could not destroy them arbitrarily without undermining their own prestige at home and abroad as the sponsors of the Soviet system. They began to shear them gradually of their powers and finally to subordinate them to their own needs.

The Russian trade unions were much more amenable to emasculation. Numerically and in point of revolutionary fibre they were still in their childhood. By declaring adherence to the trade unions obligatory the Russian labour organizations gained in physical stature, but mentally they remained in the infant stage. The Communist State became the wet nurse of the trade unions. In return, the organizations served as the flunkies of the State. "A school for Communism," said Lenin in the famous controversy on the functions of the trade unions. Quite right. But an antiquated school where the spirit of the child is fettered and crushed. Nowhere in the world are labour organizations as subservient to the will and the dictates of the State as they are in Bolshevik Russia.

The fate of the coöperatives is too well known to require elucidation. The coöperatives were the most essential link between the city and the country. Their

value to the Revolution as a popular and successful medium of exchange and distribution and to the reconstruction of Russia was incalculable. The Bolsheviki transformed them into cogs of the Government machine and thereby destroyed their usefulness and efficiency.

### III

It is now clear why the Russian Revolution, as conducted by the Communist Party, was a failure. The political power of the Party, organized and centralized in the State, sought to maintain itself by all means at hand. The central authorities attempted to force the activities of the people into forms corresponding with the purposes of the Party. The sole aim of the latter was to strengthen the State and monopolize all economical, political, and social activities — even all cultural manifestations. The Revolution had an entirely different object, and in its very character it was the negation of authority and centralization. It strove to open everlarger fields for proletarian expression and to multiply the phases of individual and collective effort. The aims and tendencies of the Revolution were diametrically opposed to those of the ruling political party.

Just as diametrically opposed were the methods of the Revolution and of the State. Those of the former were inspired by the spirit of the Revolution itself: that is to say, by emancipation from all oppressive and limiting forces; in short, by *libertarian principles*. The methods of the State, on the contrary — of the Bolsheviki State as of every government — were based on coercion, which in the course of things necessarily developed into systematic violence, oppression, and terrorism. Thus two opposing tendencies struggled for supremacy: the Bolsheviki State against the Revolution. That struggle was a life-and-death struggle. The two tendencies, contradictory in aims and methods, could not work harmoniously: the triumph of the State meant the defeat of the Revolution.

It would be an error to assume that the failure of the Revolution was due entirely to the character of the Bolsheviki. Fundamentally, it was the result of the principles and methods of Bolshevism. It was the authoritarian spirit and principles of the State which stifled the libertarian and liberating aspirations. Were any other political party in control of the government in Russia the result would have been essentially the same. It is not so much the Bolsheviki who killed the Russian Revolution as the Bolsheviki idea. It was Marxism, however modified; in short, fanatical governmentalism. Only this understanding of the underlying forces that crushed the Revolution can present the true lesson of that world-stirring event. The Russian Revolution reflects on a small scale the century-old struggle of the libertarian principle against the authoritarian. For what is progress

if not the more general acceptance of the principles of liberty as against those of coercion? The Russian Revolution was a libertarian step defeated by the Bolshevik State, by the temporary victory of the reactionary, the governmental idea.

That victory was due to a number of causes. Most of them have already been dealt with in the preceding chapters. The main cause, however, was not the industrial backwardness of Russia, as claimed by many writers on the subject. That cause was cultural which, though giving the Russian people certain advantages over their more sophisticated neighbours, also had some fatal disadvantages. The Russian was “culturally backward” in the sense of being unspoiled by political and parliamentary corruption. On the other hand, that very condition involved, inexperience in the political game and a naive faith in the miraculous power of the party that talked the loudest and made the most promises. This faith in the power of government served to enslave the Russian people to the Communist Party even before the great masses realized that the yoke had been put around their necks.

The libertarian principle was strong in the initial days of the Revolution, the need for free expression all-absorbing. But when the first wave of enthusiasm receded into the ebb of everyday prosaic life, a firm conviction was needed to keep the fires of liberty burning. There was only a comparative handful in the great vastness of Russia to keep those fires lit the Anarchists, whose number was small and whose efforts, absolutely suppressed under the Tsar, had had no time to bear fruit. The Russian people, to some extent instinctive Anarchists, were yet too unfamiliar with true libertarian principles and methods to apply them effectively to life. Most of the Russian Anarchists themselves were unfortunately still in the meshes of limited group activities and of individualistic endeavour as against the more important social and collective efforts. The Anarchists, the future unbiased historian will admit, have played a very important rôle in the Russian Revolution — a rôle far more significant and fruitful than their comparatively small number would have led one to expect. Yet honesty and sincerity compel me to state that their work would have been of infinitely greater practical value had they been better organized and equipped to guide the released energies of the people toward the reorganization of life on a libertarian foundation.

But the failure of the Anarchists in the Russian Revolution — in the sense just indicated does by no means argue the defeat of the libertarian idea. On the contrary, the Russian Revolution has demonstrated beyond doubt that the State idea, State Socialism, in all its manifestations (economic, political, social, educational) is entirely and hopelessly bankrupt. Never before in all history has authority, government, the State, proved so inherently static, reactionary, and even counter-revolutionary in effect. In short, the very antithesis of revolution.

It remains true, as it has through all progress, that only the libertarian spirit and method can bring man a step further in his eternal striving for the better, finer, and freer life. Applied to the great social upheavals known as revolutions, this tendency is as potent as in the ordinary evolutionary process. The authoritarian method has been a failure all through history and now it has again failed in the Russian Revolution. So far human ingenuity has discovered no other principle except the libertarian, for man has indeed uttered the highest wisdom when he said that liberty is the mother of order, not its daughter. All political tenets and parties notwithstanding, no revolution can be truly and permanently successful unless it puts its emphatic veto upon all tyranny and centralization, and determinedly strives to make the revolution a real revaluation of all economic, social, and cultural values. Not mere substitution of one political party for another in the control of the Government, not the masking of autocracy by proletarian slogans, not the dictatorship of a new class over an old one, not political scene shifting of any kind, but the complete reversal of all these authoritarian principles will alone serve the revolution.

In the economic field this transformation must be in the hands of the industrial masses: the latter have the choice between an industrial State and anarcho-syndicalism. In the case of the former the menace to the constructive development of the new social structure would be as great as from the political State. It would become a dead weight upon the growth of the new forms of life. For that very reason syndicalism (or industrialism) alone is not, as its exponents claim, sufficient unto itself. It is only when the libertarian spirit permeates the economic organizations of the workers that the manifold creative energies of the people can manifest themselves, and the revolution be safeguarded and defended. Only free initiative and popular participation in the affairs of the revolution can prevent the terrible blunders committed in Russia. For instance, with fuel only a hundred versts [about sixty-six miles] from Petrograd there would have been no necessity for that city to suffer from cold had the workers' economic organizations of Petrograd been free to exercise their initiative for the common good. The peasants of the Ukraina would not have been hampered in the cultivation of their land had they had access to the farm implements stacked up in the warehouses of Kharkov and other industrial centres awaiting orders from Moscow for their distribution. These are characteristic examples of Bolshevick governmentalism and centralization, which should serve as a warning to the workers of Europe and America of the destructive effects of Statism.

The industrial power of the masses, expressed through their libertarian associations — Anarchosyndicalism — is alone able to organize successfully the economic life and carry on production. On the other hand, the coöperatives, working in

harmony with the industrial bodies, serve as the distributing and exchange media between city and country, and at the same time link in fraternal bond the industrial and agrarian masses. A common tie of mutual service and aid is created which is the strongest bulwark of the revolution — far more effective than compulsory labour, the Red Army, or terrorism. In that way alone can revolution act as a leaven to quicken the development of new social forms and inspire the masses to greater achievements.

But libertarian. industrial organizations and the coöperatives are not the only media in the interplay of the complex phases of social life. There are the cultural forces which, though closely related to the economic activities, have yet their own functions to perform. In Russia the Communist State became the sole arbiter of all the needs of the social body. The result, as already described, was complete cultural stagnation and the paralysis of all creative endeavour. If such a débâcle is to be avoided in the future, the cultural forces, while remaining rooted in the economic soil, must yet retain independent scope and freedom of expression. Not adherence to the dominant political party but devotion to the revolution, knowledge, ability, and — above all — the creative impulse should be the criterion of fitness for cultural work. In Russia this was made impossible almost from the beginning of the October Revolution, by the violent separation of the intelligentsia and the masses. It is true that the original offender in this case was the intelligentsia, especially the technical intelligentsia, which in Russia tenaciously clung — as it does in other countries — to the coat-tails of the bourgeoisie. This element, unable to comprehend the significance of revolutionary events, strove to stem the tide by wholesale sabotage. But in Russia there was also another kind of intelligentsia — one with a glorious revolutionary past of a hundred years. That part of the intelligentsia kept faith with the people, though it could not unreservedly accept the new dictatorship. The fatal error of the Bolsheviki was that they made no distinction between the two elements. They met sabotage with wholesale terror against the intelligentsia as a class, and inaugurated a campaign of hatred more intensive than the persecution of the bourgeoisie itself — a method which created an abyss between the intelligentsia and the proletariat and reared a barrier against constructive work.

Lenin was the first to realize that criminal blunder. He pointed out that it was a grave error to lead the workers to believe that they could build up the industries and engage in cultural work without the aid and coöperation of the intelligentsia. The proletariat had neither the knowledge nor the training for the task, and the intelligentsia had to be restored in the direction of the industrial life. But the recognition of one error never safeguarded Lenin and his Party from immediately committing another. The technical intelligentsia was called back on terms which added disintegration to the antagonism against the régime.

While the workers continued to starve, engineers, industrial experts, and technicians received high salaries, special privileges, and the best rations. They became the pampered employees of the State and the new slave drivers of the masses. The latter, fed for years on the fallacious teachings that muscle alone is necessary for a successful revolution and that only physical labour is productive, and incited by the campaign of hatred which stamped every intellectual a counter-revolutionist and speculator, could not make peace with those they had been taught to scorn and distrust.

Unfortunately Russia is not the only country where this proletarian attitude against the intelligentsia prevails. Everywhere political demagogues play upon the ignorance of the masses, teach them that education and culture are bourgeois prejudices, that the workers can do without them, and that they alone are able to rebuild society. The Russian Revolution has made it very clear that both brain and muscle are indispensable to the work of social regeneration. Intellectual and physical labour are as closely related in the social body as brain and hand in the human organism. One cannot function without the other.

It is true that most intellectuals consider themselves a class apart from and superior to the workers, but social conditions everywhere are fast demolishing the high pedestal of the intelligentsia. They are made to see that they, too, are proletarians, even more dependent upon the economic master than the manual worker. Unlike the physical proletarian, who can pick up his tools and tramp the world in search of a change from a galling situation, the intellectual proletarians have their roots more firmly in their particular social environment and cannot so easily change their occupation or mode of living. It is therefore of utmost importance to bring home to the workers the rapid proletarianization of the intellectuals and the common tie thus created between them. If the Western world is to profit by the lessons of Russia, the demagogic flattery of the masses and blind antagonism toward the intelligentsia must cease. That does not mean, however, that the toilers should depend entirely upon the intellectual element. On the contrary, the masses must begin right now to prepare and equip themselves for the great task the revolution will put upon them. They should acquire the knowledge and technical skill necessary for managing and directing the intricate mechanism of the industrial and social structure of their respective countries. But even at best the workers will need the coöperation of the professional and cultural elements. Similarly the latter must realize that their true interests are identical with those of the masses. Once the two social forces learn to blend into one harmonious whole, the tragic aspects of the Russian Revolution would to a great extent be eliminated. No one would be shot because he "once acquired an education." The scientist, the engineer, the specialist, the investigator, the educator, and the creative artist, as well as the carpenter, machinist, and the rest, are all part and parcel of the

collective force which is to shape the revolution into the great architect of the new social edifice. Not hatred, but unity; not antagonism, but fellowship; not shooting, but sympathy — that is the lesson of the great Russian débâcle for the intelligentsia as well as the workers. All must learn the value of mutual aid and libertarian coöperation, Yet each must be able to remain independent in his own sphere and in harmony with the best he can yield to society. Only in that way will productive labour and educational and cultural endeavour express themselves in ever newer and richer forms. That is to me the all-embracing and vital moral taught by the Russian Revolution.

## IV

In the previous pages I have tried to point out why Bolshevik principles, methods, and tactics failed, and that similar principles and methods applied in any other country, even of the highest industrial development, must also fail. I have further shown that it is not only Bolshevism that failed, but Marxism itself. That is to say, the STATE IDEA, the authoritarian principle, has been proven bankrupt by the experience of the Russian Revolution. If I were to sum up my \*hole argument in one sentence I should say: The inherent tendency of the State is to concentrate, to narrow, and monopolize all social activities; the nature of revolution is, on the contrary, to grow, to broaden, and disseminate itself in ever-wider circles. In other words, the State is institutional and static; revolution is fluent, dynamic. These two tendencies are incompatible and mutually destructive. The State idea killed the Russian Revolution and it must have the same result in all other revolutions, unless the *libertarian idea prevail*.

Yet I go much further. It is not only Bolshevism, Marxism, and Governmentalism which are fatal to revolution as well as to all vital human progress. The main cause of the defeat of the Russian Revolution lies much deeper. It is to be found in the whole Socialist conception of revolution itself.

The dominant, almost general, idea of revolution — particularly the Socialist idea — is that revolution is a violent change of social conditions through which one social class, the working class, becomes dominant over another class, the capitalist class. It is the conception of a purely physical change, and as such it involves only political scene shifting and institutional rearrangements. Bourgeois dictatorship is replaced by the “dictatorship of the proletariat” — or by that of its “advance guard,” the Communist Party; Lenin takes the seat of the Romanovs, the Imperial Cabinet is rechristened Soviet of People’s Commissars, Trotsky is appointed Minister of War, and a labourer becomes the Military Governor General of Moscow. That is, in essence, the Bolshevik conception of revolution, as translated into actual



practice. And with a few minor alterations it is also the idea of revolution held by all other Socialist parties.

This conception is inherently and fatally false. Revolution is indeed a violent process. But if it is to result only in a change of dictatorship, in a shifting of names and political personalities, then it is hardly worth while. It is surely not worth all the struggle and sacrifice, the stupendous loss in human life and cultural values that result from every revolution. If such a revolution were even to bring greater social well being (which has not been the case in Russia) then it would also not be worth the terrific price paid: mere improvement can be brought about without bloody revolution. It is not palliatives or reforms that are the real aim and purpose of revolution, as I conceive it.

In my opinion — a thousandfold strengthened by the Russian experience — the great mission of revolution, of the SOCIAL REVOLUTION, is a *fundamental transvaluation of values*. A transvaluation not only of social, but also of human values. The latter are even preëminent, for they are the basis of all social values. Our institutions and conditions rest upon deep-seated ideas. To change those conditions and at the same time leave the underlying ideas and values intact means only a superficial transformation, one that cannot be permanent or bring real betterment. It is a change of form only, not of substance, as so tragically proven by Russia.

It is at once the great failure and the great tragedy of the Russian Revolution that it attempted (in the leadership of the ruling political party) to change only institutions and conditions while ignoring entirely the human and social values involved in the Revolution. Worse yet, in its mad passion for power, the Communist State even sought to strengthen and deepen the very ideas and conceptions which the Revolution had come to destroy. It supported and encouraged all the worst anti-social qualities and systematically destroyed the already awakened conception of the new revolutionary values. The sense of justice and equality, the love of liberty and of human brotherhood — these fundamentals of the real regeneration of society — the Communist State suppressed to the point of extermination. Man's instinctive sense of equity was branded as weak sentimentality; human dignity and liberty became a bourgeois superstition; the sanctity of life, which is the very essence of social reconstruction, was condemned as anrevolutionary, almost counter-revolutionary. This fearful perversion of fundamental values bore within itself the seed of destruction. With the conception that the Revolution was only a means of securing political power, it was inevitable that all revolutionary values should be subordinated to the needs of the Socialist State; indeed, exploited to further the security of the newly acquired governmental power. "Reasons of State," masked as the "interests of the Revolution and of the People," became the sole criterion of action, even of feeling. Violence, the tragic inevitability of revolutionary

upheavals, became an established custom, a habit. and was presently enthroned as the most powerful and “ideal” institution. Did not Zinoviev himself canonize Dzerzhinsky, the head of the bloody Tcheka, as the “saint of the Revolution”? Were not the greatest public honours paid by the State to Uritsky, the founder and sadistic chief of the Petrograd Tcheka? “Reasons of State,” masked as the “interests of the Revolution and of the People,” became the sole criterion of action, even of feeling. Violence, the tragic inevitability of revolutionary upheavals, became an established custom, a habit. and was presently enthroned as the most powerful and “ideal” institution. Did not Zinoviev himself canonize Dzerzhinsky, the head of the bloody Tcheka, as the “saint of the Revolution”? Were not the greatest public honours paid by the State to Uritsky, the founder and sadistic chief of the Petrograd Tcheka?

This perversion of the ethical values soon crystallized into the all-dominating slogan of the Communist Party: THE END JUSTIFIES ALL MEANS. Similarly in the past the Inquisition and the Jesuits adopted this motto and subordinated to it all morality. It avenged itself upon the Jesuits as it did upon the Russian Revolution. In the wake of this slogan followed lying, deceit, hypocrisy and treachery, murder, open and secret. It should be of utmost interest to students of social psychology that two movements as widely separated in time and ideas as Jesuitism and Bolshevism *reached exactly similar results* in the evolution of the principle. that the end justifies all means. The historic parallel, almost entirely ignored so far, contains a most important lesson for all coming revolutions and for the whole future of mankind.

There is no greater fallacy than the belief that aims and purposes are one thing, while methods and tactics are another. This conception is a potent menace to social regeneration. All human experience teaches that methods and means cannot be separated from the ultimate aim. The means employed become, through individual habit and social practice, part and parcel of the final purpose; they influence it, modify it, and presently the aims and means become identical. From the day of my arrival in Russia I felt it, at first vaguely, then ever more consciously and clearly. The great and inspiring aims of the Revolution became so clouded with and obscured by the methods used by the ruling political power that it was hard to distinguish what was temporary means and what final purpose. Psychologically and socially the means necessarily influence and alter the aims. The whole history of man is continuous proof of the maxim that to divest one’s methods of ethical concepts means to Sink into the depths of utter demoralization. In that lies the real tragedy of the Bolshevik philosophy as applied to the Russian Revolution. May this lesson not be in vain.

No revolution can ever succeed as a factor of liberation unless the MEANS used to further it be identical in spirit and tendency with the PURPOSES to be

achieved. Revolution is the negation of the existing, a violent protest against man's inhumanity to man with all the thousand and one slaveries it involves. It is the destroyer of dominant values upon which a complex system of injustice, oppression, and wrong has been built up by ignorance and brutality. It is the herald of NEW VALUES, ushering in a transformation of the basic relations of man to man, and of man to society. It is not a mere reformer, patching up some social evils; not a mere changer of forms and institutions; not only a re-distributor of social well-being. It is all that, yet more, much more. It is, first and foremost, the TRANSVALUATOR, the bearer of new values. It is the great TEACHER Of the NEW ETHICS, inspiring man with a new concept of life and its manifestations in social relationships. It is the mental and spiritual regenerator.

Its first ethical precept is the identity of means used and aims sought. The ultimate end of all revolutionary social change is to establish the sanctity of human life, the dignity of man, the right of every human being to liberty and well being. Unless this be the essential aim of revolution, violent social changes would have no justification. For *external* social alterations can be, and have been, accomplished by the normal processes of evolution. Revolution, on the contrary, signifies not mere *external* change, but *internal*, basic, fundamental change. That internal change of concepts and ideas, permeating ever-larger social strata, finally culminates in the violent upheaval known as revolution. Shall that climax reverse the process of transvaluation, turn against it, betray it? That is what happened in Russia. On the contrary, the revolution itself must quicken and further the process of which it is the cumulative expression; its main mission is to inspire it, to carry it to greater heights, give it fullest scope for expression. Only thus is revolution true to itself.

Applied in practice it means that the period of the actual revolution, the so-called transitory stage, must be the introduction, the prelude to the new social conditions. It is the threshold to the NEW LIFE, the new HOUSE OF MAN AND HUMANITY As such it must be of the spirit of the new life, harmonious with the construction of the new edifice.

To-day is the parent of to-morrow. The present casts its shadow far into the future. That is the law of life, individual and social. Revolution that divests itself of ethical values thereby lays the foundation of injustice, deceit, and oppression for the future society. The *means* used to *prepare* the future become its *cornerstone*. Witness the tragic condition of Russia. The methods of State centralization have paralysed individual initiative and effort; the tyranny of the dictatorship has cowed the people into slavish submission and all but extinguished the fires of liberty; organized terrorism has depraved and brutalized the masses and stifled every idealistic aspiration; institutionalized murder has cheapened human life, and all sense of the dignity of man and the value of life has been eliminated; coercion

at every step has made effort bitter, labour a punishment, has turned the whole of existence into a scheme of mutual deceit, and has revived the lowest and most brutal instincts of man. A sorry heritage to begin a new life of freedom and brotherhood.

It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that revolution is in vain unless inspired by its ultimate ideal. Revolutionary methods must be in tune with revolutionary aims. The means used to further the revolution must harmonize with its purposes. In short, the ethical values which the revolution is to establish in the new society must be *initiated* with the revolutionary activities of the so-called transitional period. The latter can serve as a real and dependable bridge to the better life only if built of the same material as the life to be achieved. Revolution is the mirror of the coming day; it is the child that is to be the Man of To-morrow.

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Emma Goldman  
My Further Disillusionment in Russia  
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