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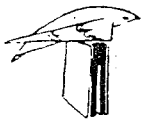

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LENIN THE GENIUS OF REVOLUTION

By J. Stalin

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

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

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

First fact. The period before the October uprising, when millions of workers, peasants and soldiers, lashed by the crisis in the rear and at the front, demanded peace and liberty ; when the militarists and the bourgeoisie were preparing for a military dictatorship in order to pursue the " war to the bitter end " ; when the whole of so-called " public opinion," all the so-called " socialist parties " were opposed to the Bolsheviks, charged them with being " German spies " ; when Kerensky tried, and to some extent succeeded, in driving the Bolshevik Party underground ; when the still powerful, disciplined army of the Austro-German coalition stood confronting our weary

and disintegrating armies, and when the West European "socialists" lived in happy alliance with their governments for the purpose of pursuing the "war to final victory . . ."

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

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

Second fact. During the first days after the October Revolution when the Council of People's Commissars tried to compel the mutinous general, Commander-in-Chief Dukhonin, to cease military operations and open negotiations for a truce with the Germans. I remember that Lenin, Krylenko (the future Commander-in-Chief) and I went to General Military Headquarters in Petrograd to speak by direct wire to Dukhonin. The situation was very tense. Dukhonin and the General Staff categorically refused to carry out the army orders of the Council of People's Commissars. The officers were entirely in the hands of the General Staff. As for the soldiers, it was impossible to foretell what the twelve million army, which was subordinate to the so-called army organizations which were hostile to the Soviet government, would say. In Petrograd itself, as is well known, the mutiny of the Junkers* was maturing. Moreover, Kerensky was marching on Petrograd. I remember that after a slight pause at the telegraph wire Lenin's face lit up with an extraordinary light. It was evident that he had come to some decision. "Come to the radio station," he said, "it will render us a service: we will issue a special order dismissing General Dukhonin, and appoint Krylenko in his place as Commander-in-Chief and appeal to the soldiers over the heads of the officers—to surround the generals, stop

* Military cadets.

military operations, establish contact with the Austro-German soldiers and take the cause of peace into their own hands."

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

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

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

ON THE EVE OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

By E. Rakhva

In September 1917, the atmosphere in Petrograd was already tense. The workers were beginning to act boldly. The activity of the masses had risen. One felt that big events were impending.

Through Nadezhda Konstantinovna* I received a note from Vladimir Ilyich. He was living at the time in Vyborg in the apartment of Comrade Lattuka (a Finn). The note instructed me to come to see him and arrange for his safe passage to Petrograd.

I did all that was required, and Vladimir Ilyich and I arrived in Petrograd safely.

He settled in an apartment, which, with his knowledge, had been found by Nadezhda Konstantinovna in the house of an employee at the Lanskaya tramway depot on the Vyborg Chaussee. I did not know the owners of the apartment. For reasons of secrecy, I, of course, did not inquire who they were. It was enough for me that Vladimir Ilyich knew them. On several occasions I saw an elderly woman, quite grey-haired, who, upon my knocking in an agreed manner, opened the door for me and in response to my inquiry whether Konstantin Petrovitch (*i.e.*, Lenin) was at home, admitted me into the apartment.

Subsequently, I was so busy I entirely forgot to inquire who the persons were who furnished Vladimir Ilyich with an

* Krupskaya, Lenin's wife. After the events of July 1917, Lenin had to go into hiding across the Finnish frontier. As conditions for the October Revolution were maturing Lenin decided to go to Petrograd. This had to be done secretly. Comrade Rakhva arranged Lenin's removal to Petrograd and acted as his bodyguard and special messenger until the October Revolution.—Ed.

asylum in those days when he removed from Finland to Petrograd.

Arriving in Petrograd, Vladimir Ilyich set feverishly to work. He wrote numerous articles for " Pravda " and received several comrades, most frequently Comrade Stalin. He attended several meetings summoned at his own initiative. Meetings were held with the members of the Central Committee.

A meeting was also held on October 10, in the premises of the Lessnoy District Duma, at which in addition to members of the Central Committee, many other responsible comrades were present. At this meeting Vladimir Ilyich definitely put the question of seizing power.

I accompanied him to all these meetings in the capacity of " bodyguard " or " convoy."

Events matured with great rapidity. Lenin wrote a letter which was to be circulated to the district organizations. I carried this letter and delivered it to Jenny Egorova who lived in the Vyborg district. She made copies of it on a typewriter and sent it round to the districts.*

My job was a particularly hard one, because owing to the bad means of communication, it was at times difficult to fulfil all Vladimir Ilyich's commissions. Yet I had to fulfil them; otherwise Vladimir Ilyich would have hauled me over the coals politely it is true, but very sternly.

Upon his instructions I visited factories and attended meetings, at which I noted the temper of the workers and took down the resolutions that were adopted. I visited soldiers' barracks for the same purpose, and in the evening Vladimir Ilyich would question me in detail regarding all I had seen and heard.

On October 25, I received information that the Kerensky government intended to raise the bridges over the River Neva. The patrols in the town were strengthened and the bridges were guarded by soldiers.

I decided to go and see Vladimir Ilyich at his apartment.

Upon my arrival I reported the impending events to him and pointed out that if the Kerensky troops raised the bridges,

* Vladimir Ilyich in this letter insisted that the Party must act decisively, declaring that " procrastination is fatal." I preserved the original of this letter for some time, but lost it during my stay in Finland.

the districts would be isolated from each other and would be defeated one by one. Only in the Vyborg district, I said, was power actually in the hands of the Red Guard, which, although not very satisfactorily, nevertheless was armed and fairly well consolidated. It had even organized a military staff. Vladimir Ilyich listened to all I had to say and then said :

" Yes, it must begin to-day."

We drank tea and took some food. Vladimir Ilyich began pacing the room from corner to corner in deep reflection.

Suddenly, he announced that it was essential to find Comrade Stalin, and that as quickly as possible. I protested that it was impossible. It was not certain whether he could be found at the offices of the " Pravda " ; perhaps he was at the Smolny. To get to the Smolny and back would require several hours, since in all probability the tramcars were no longer running. I should have to go on foot. I calculated that Comrade Stalin could not possibly arrive before midnight.

Having heard my arguments, Vladimir Ilyich proposed :

" Then let us both go to the Smolny."

I began to dissuade him from this plan, pointing out the extreme danger he would run if he were recognized. At the time I did not understand that by trying to dissuade Vladimir Ilyich from going to the Smolny I was committing a crime against the revolution. Nine years have since elapsed.* Owing to the remoteness of the crime I can plead the " statute of limitations," and I presume that the Central Control Commission will not call me to account for having concealed the fact.

But Vladimir Ilyich was not convinced by my arguments. He declared emphatically : " Let's go to the Smolny."

As a measure of precaution we decided to disguise him. As far as possible we changed his clothing, tied his cheeks in a rather dirty handkerchief and pressed an old cap on his head. I had two passes to the Smolny in my pocket, prepared for a possible emergency. The passes were very clumsily forged. The original names had been erased and replaced by the names of non-existing members of the Petrograd Soviet. The ink had run, so that the counterfeit was only too glaring. Nevertheless, for want of better ones, we decided to make our way through with the help of these " dud " passes.

* These reminiscences were written in 1926.—Ed.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening when we left the house and proceeded along the Samson Prospect.

About ten minutes later, at the very tramway stop, we were overtaken by a tramcar on its way to the depot. It was almost empty. We climbed on to the rear platform of the rear car and rode safely to the corner of Botkin Street where the tramcar switched towards the depot. We proceeded on foot. The Vyborg end of the Liteyny Bridge was guarded by a fairly large detachment of Red Guards. We passed the guard. Nobody accosted us or asked us anything. When we had passed the middle of the bridge we observed Kerensky soldiers at the other end. They were also standing guard and were demanding passes from all who crossed the bridge. We, of course, had no passes.

The soldiers were surrounded by a group of workers who were remonstrating with them rather vigorously. Although he saw that the workers were not being allowed across the bridge, Vladimir Ilyich nevertheless decided to try to make his way through. We approached the disputants. We found that like us, the majority of the workers had no passes.

According to the soldiers, they should have secured them at the Staff Headquarters. The workers were indignant and roundly abused the soldiers. We took advantage of their wrangling to slip through the guards on to the Liteyny Prospect, then turned down to Shpalernaya Street and proceeded on our way towards the Smolny.

We had already gone some distance along Shpalernaya Street when we observed two mounted Junkers coming towards us. Upon reaching us they commanded :

" Halt, show your passes ! "

I whispered to Vladimir Ilyich, " You go along ; I shall get rid of them."

I had two revolvers in my pocket. I started to argue in rough tones, declaring that nobody knew that passes had been introduced, and that we, too, were therefore unable to procure them in time. Vladimir Ilyich meanwhile quietly moved away from us. The Junkers threatened me with their whips and ordered me to follow them. This I refused to do. In the end they decided not to involve themselves with men they apparently regarded as tramps. And indeed, we pre-

sented the appearance of typical tramps. The Junkers passed on their way.

I caught up with Vladimir Ilyich, who had managed to put a fairly large distance between us, and we proceeded on our way together.

We arrived at the Smolny. The doors were besieged by a large crowd. Here it turned out that the passes of members of the Petrograd Soviet, which were formerly of a white colour, had now been changed to red. This was an obstacle of a more serious kind and to our misfortune we could not see any of our comrades in the waiting crowd. The crowd was indignant at not being allowed into the Smolny. I was most indignant of all and loudest in expressing my disgust. I waved our " dud " passes in the air and demanded to know why we, full members of the Petrograd Soviet, were not allowed through. I called upon the comrades standing in front to pay no attention to the pass inspectors, to push their way through, and that matters would be sorted out inside the Smolny. I started a crush, in the manner of pickpockets. The result was that the pass inspectors were literally swept aside. We passed into the Smolny and made our way up to the second floor. At a window at the end of the corridor near the assembly hall Vladimir Ilyich came to a halt and sent me to look for Comrade Stalin.

It was inconvenient to talk in the corridor so we passed into the room adjacent to the assembly hall.

Three men emerged from the assembly hall, where the Soviet was then in session, and came into our room. These were the cream of the Mensheviks, the leaders of their Party, Dan and Leiber, and with them, if I recall rightly, Gotz. One of them, I do not remember who, drew a pacakage from an overcoat hanging in the room and invited the others to share the food he had with him, a loaf, some butter, sausage and cheese. They were deep in conversation and completely ignored us. The package taken from the overcoat pocket was unwrapped at the other end of the table at which Vladimir Ilyich was seated. The person engaged with the package raised his head and recognized Lenin, in spite of the fact that the latter's face was bandaged. Terribly embarrassed, he hastily gathered up his repast, and all three returned to the assembly hall like whipped

curs. This incident put Vladimir Ilyich into a merry mood and he laughed most heartily.

We, too, went out and proceeded towards one of the rooms of the Smolny, where we were joined by many of the leaders of our Party. Immediately we proceeded to discuss the situation that had arisen.

Fighting was going on in the city. Rifle and machine-gun fire could be distinctly heard.

The session in the assembly hall came to an end. The Mensheviks hastened to leave, knowing that their game was up.

A meeting of the Petrograd Soviet was called for about midnight. The members of the Petrograd Soviet did not disperse.

" Vladimir Ilyich Lenin has the floor."

I find it impossible to describe the enthusiasm that this announcement provoked in the hall. At any rate, the rifle and machine-gun fire ceased to be audible ; it was drowned by the applause that continued for several minutes. At last Vladimir Ilyich was able to make himself heard.

When the meeting ended we proceeded to a lower floor, to which, in fulfilment of my duties as " bodyguard " I accompanied him.

The comrades disposed themselves on the chairs around the table. There was no chair for me, so I sat on the floor in a corner near the door, resting my chin on my knees.

The comrades were discussing the formation of a new government. The question arose at to what to call its members : the word Minister was regarded as unsuitable. Somebody proposed Commissars—People's Commissars. So it was decided. They then proceeded to make nominations for the various posts.

All this time I sat in my corner and listened.

My work was now finished. I had become " unemployed."

LENIN IN OCTOBER

By G. Sokolnikov*

I

The first meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks with Vladimir Ilyich, at which the question of the insurrection was discussed, was held on October 23 (old style, October 10) in the apartment of the Menshevik, Sukhanov. Sukhanov represented the typical frame of mind of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals who had taken on the colouring of "sympathizers" with socialism and internationalism, but who at the same time were horrified at Bolshevism and hated the dictatorship of the proletariat. Sukhanov did not suspect that his capacious dining-room was being used as a meeting place by the general staff which was planning the October "mutiny." It was his wife who had offered the apartment for the meeting of the Central Committee. Since the armed demonstration of July the Bolshevik Party was in a state of semi-illegality. A number of its leaders were in hiding. Kerensky's orders for their arrest were still in force. The Bolshevik papers were from time to time forbidden by the authorities. Not long prior to this meeting, Vladimir Ilyich had crossed from Finland into Petrograd. He considered the moment ripe for his intervention. He was afraid that the Central Committee might vacillate, which would lead to loss of time, and decided to take charge of the policy of the Central Committee himself.

The majority of the members of the Central Committee had not seen Vladimir Ilyich since the July defeat. In those days he kept closest contact with Stalin. From motives of secrecy the members of the Central Committee arrived at Sukhanov's apartment singly. All of us that evening were excited at the prospect of meeting Vladimir Ilyich. We were excited not only

* Formerly Soviet Ambassador in London, now Vice-Commissar for Foreign Affairs.—Ed.

because decisions were to be taken, the tremendous historical significance of which was clear to all, but also because at this meeting of the Bolshevik Central Committee, which for three months had been deprived of Vladimir Ilyich's direct guidance in its day-to-day work, we were to meet our undisputed leader. Had Lenin's directives been correctly carried out? Had the Central Committee rightly understood Lenin's line? How far were the mistakes committed by certain members of the Central Committee reparable?

At last, when practically all were assembled, Lenin appeared. His arrival literally roused an outburst of joy. Nobody could keep his place; we all jumped up and rushed towards him with loud greetings and friendly handshakes. The fact that Lenin had safely avoided arrest and escaped the vengeance of the Junkers, that his place of concealment had been kept secret with masterly skill, that Kerensky's sleuths had proven impotent, that Lenin was now in complete safety, surrounded by the love of the workers of Petrograd—all this explains the spirit of enthusiasm that prevailed in the room on Lenin's arrival. The sensation was kept alive the whole evening by his unfamiliar appearance: his beard and moustache had been shaved and his head was adorned by a grey wig. This grey wig was not a masterpiece of the wigmaker's art. It would slip from his head at the most inconvenient moments. At one time, on the street, the wig, together with the hat that covered it, was carried away by the wind. Such misadventures had developed in Lenin the habit of frequently stroking his wig with both hands. This gesture frequently punctuated the report he delivered in Sukhanov's apartment. When the excitement aroused by the reunion with Lenin had subsided, his "evangelical appearance" became a source of general hilarity and witticism. The steaming samovar on the table and all the other accessories of tea-drinking were intended to give the impression of a peaceful, domestic party in the event of undesirable visitors penetrating into the apartment.

The meeting of the Central Committee began. Lenin put the question of insurrection on the agenda of the meeting and on the agenda of the revolution. Without Lenin's presence and the pressure he exerted, would it have been possible to overcome the waverings of certain members of the Central Com-

mittee regarding the necessity for insurrection and for making immediate preparations for insurrection? Sooner or later insurrection would have become inevitable; it was the inevitable corollary of the pitch of intensity reached by the class struggle. But the longer it was delayed the less chances would there be for its success. The vigorous, bold and successful assumption of the offensive in October was due to Lenin's genius as a tactician and to defeat of the capitulationist and reformist moods among some comrades who strove to prevent the insurrection. This was one of Lenin's greatest political victories.

II

Preparations for insurrection in the days immediately preceding the October Revolution were undertaken almost without concealment. On October 22, the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet demanded recognition of its right to control every order issued by the General Staff of the Petrograd Military Area. Regiment after regiment adopted resolutions in which they declared that they would obey only the Military Revolutionary Committee and the Petrograd Soviet. Lenin's article in the "Rabochy Put" left no doubt as to the intentions of the Bolshevik Party. Even the publication in the newspapers of the differences prevailing among the members of the Bolshevik Central Committee on the question of insurrection only served as a sort of documentary evidence of the imminence of a revolutionary outbreak.

The Kerensky government took no timely and active measures of defence. It is very probable that it over-estimated its own powers and in stupid self-complacent reliance on the "might" of its coalition with the Cadets, was prepared to allow the preparations for the insurrection to go to some lengths in order to provide a justification for wreaking sanguinary vengeance on the proletariat.

At last, on the morning of October 24 (old style) Kerensky took action. The Bolshevik papers "Rabochy Put" and "Soldat" were closed down. The Provisional Government resolved to bring criminal proceedings against the members of the Military Revolutionary Committee. After this wise decision Kerensky made a speech in the Council of the Republic in

which he branded the Bolsheviks as accomplices of the Germans.

Meanwhile, the insurrection which had been appointed for the night of October 24, was being developed systematically in accordance with a broad plan of action. The basis of this plan was Lenin's thesis of an "attack" by the combined forces of the Petrograd workers, the garrison of the Baltic Fleet and the troops in the surrounding areas. On the evening of October 24, Lenin removed to the Smolny, and on the morning of October 25, Kerensky fled to Gatchina.

Lenin's arrival at the Smolny was effected secretly. Even on the very eve of the insurrection, Lenin was desirous that his appearance should not cause commotion and complications. Lenin still wore his wig and his face was tied in a broad handkerchief as though he were suffering from toothache. Disguised in this fashion, he was conducted along the corridors of the Smolny to the appointed room. The two or three members of the Menshevik-Socialist-Revolutionary Central Executive Committee of the Soviets (only a few hours remained before the opening of the Second Congress of Soviets) whom Lenin and his convoy encountered in the Smolny did not recognize him. Gotz stared at him a little too persistently. Did he recognize him? He did not.

Ilyich foresaw that the night would be a stormy one. He lay down to rest for a few short hours in the almost bare room to which he had been conducted. It contained several chairs and two tables. In one of the corners there were piles of newspapers and several heaps of leaflets. A couch was made up for Lenin of these newspapers. In a similar "newspaper couch" in another corner, the writer of these lines arranged himself. It was cold. We were obliged to cover ourselves with a thick blanket of newspapers on top of our overcoats.

While Lenin was resting on his improvised newspaper couch gathering fresh strength, at the meeting of the Central Executive Committee the Menshevik Dan was appealing to the masses not to respond to the call to insurrection. But Dan exerted himself in vain. Lenin's plan of insurrection was certain of success; and the success of the insurrection, in its turn, guaranteed that the power of the Congress of Soviets, the opening of which had been appointed for October 25, would be real, and not illusory.

At 2 p.m. the Military Revolutionary Committee moved its forces to the attack. The October struggle had begun.

Soon after the government had been overthrown, a delegation of soldiers from one of the regiments at the front called upon Lenin. Two of the delegates were conducted into Lenin's room; the others waited in the antechamber. When the delegates who had conversed with Lenin emerged, they were surrounded by their comrades who began to question them.

"What does Lenin look like?" asked one of the soldiers.

"What does he look like? Just like you and me, red-haired and pock-marked. As though he has just come from the plough."

Lenin produced a profound impression on the soldiers from the front. And indeed, the October upheaval was not merely a model of revolutionary tactics; it was also a classic example of the transformation of an imperialist war into a civil war.

LENIN DURING THE OCTOBER DAYS

By A. Bubnov*

I SHOULD like in this article to relate certain reminiscences which give a picture of what Lenin was like during the October days.

Just prior to the insurrection I met Vladimir Ilyich in the Vyborg district after he had arrived from Finland. Lenin wanted to speed up the insurrection and was very carefully studying the disposition of forces in Petrograd at the time and the technical preparations necessary for the insurrection. On October 10, Lenin made his first appearance at a meeting of the Central Committee of our Party (at the house of Sukhanov). On October 16, he attended a meeting of the Central Committee held in the premises of the Lesnoy District Duma to which a number of comrades had been invited. These two meetings were decisive, since they definitely settled the question of insurrection. Ilyich appeared at the Smolny on the eve of October 25. That night the whole of the Central Committee, including Ilyich, spent the night in Room 14 in the Smolny, arranging themselves on the floor and on chairs. Ilyich was in a hurry to seize the Winter Palace, and was extremely urgent in his inquiries when news was not forthcoming of the progress of the attack. On the morning of October 26, he made his first appearance at a meeting of the Military Revolutionary Committee.

After the insurrection, we members of the Central Committee used to meet Lenin in the Smolny, sometimes several times a day. These were the unforgettable days when masses of soldiers, workers and sailors flocked to the Smolny, when the guns roared outside Petrograd and when the vanguard action had begun which was to be the precursor of three years of bitter civil war.

Ilyich was then the embodiment of the determination of those masses to triumph at all cost. At the meetings of the Central Committee he severely attacked the waverers and brushed them mercilessly aside. In his room, as leader of the insurrection, he

* Now Commissar for Education of the U.S.S.R.—Ed.

carefully pondered on the events as they occurred and firmly plotted the course of victory. During his short periods of rest he animatedly conversed with comrades, strolling along the corridors, his hands planted firmly behind his back.

In those days of the upheaval, Ilyich was animated and merry; he seemed to glow with an internal light; he was self assured, firm and unshakable.

I will dwell on one incident in the life of the Party at the time, namely, that last moment when the Central Committee of the Party determined the final lines of the October Revolution. This was also the last phase in the struggle against the opponents of the October Revolution, Comrades Zinoviev and Kamenev. After the events of October 25 and 26, the All-Russian Executive Committee of Railroad Workers* began to play a game of compromise and procrastination, in which it tried to involve the Bolsheviks.

Regarding this incident the "Bulletin of the Central Committee (Bolsheviks)" wrote as follows: "The All-Russian Union of Railroad Workers has presented a demand for the creation of a coalition socialist ministry; in the event of the contending parties refusing to comply with this demand, it threatened a general strike. A conciliation commission has been formed consisting of representatives of the Central Executive Committee, the Central Committees of all the parties, the Committee for the Salvation of the Revolution, the Railroad Workers' Union and the Postal and Telegraph Workers' Union."

From October 30 to November 1, this "conciliation commission" engaged in interminable talk regarding the formation of "a socialist government made up of all Soviet parties." Differences of opinion and vacillations were betrayed in the Central Committee of our Party and also in our fraction within the Central Executive Committee.

Ilyich became tired of this futile procrastination and decided to put a definite stop to all vacillation. On November 2 (old style), the Central Committee, on the motion of Lenin, adopted a resolution sharply condemning the policy "of concessions to the ultimatums and threats of the minority of the soviets" and called upon "all sceptics and waverers to abandon their vacillations and whole-heartedly and with supreme energy

* In Russian abbreviated "ZVikzhel-Trans."

support the actions of the government." But the vacillations did not cease; the sceptics refused to hearken to the voice of the Central Committee of their Party and continued their efforts to conduct a policy of compromise. Thereupon, on November 3 (old style), Lenin drew up the text of a declaration to the Central Committee sharply criticizing the policy of compromise and interminable vacillation. Having drawn up this statement, he invited each member of the Central Committee separately to his room, read them the text of the declaration and invited them to sign it. The declaration was signed by the majority of the Central Committee. It was announced at the very next session of the Central Committee held, if I am not mistaken, on November 4.

The declaration levelled the accusation against the representatives of the minority that they "had conducted and were conducting a policy directed against the fundamental line of the Party and were demoralizing our own ranks by sowing hesitation at a time when the greatest firmness and steadfastness were demanded." The declaration further accused the opposition of planning "to compel the surrender of the Party institutions by siege, by sabotaging the work of the Party at a time when on the immediate results of that work depended the fate of the Party and the fate of the revolution." Fully convinced that the Party would unanimously support its Central Committee, the majority of the members declared that "the Party must definitely demand that the representatives of the opposition transfer their disruptive work outside of our Party organization. There is, and can be, no other issue."

The oppositionists could find no better reply than to retire from the Central Committee. And so we find Comrades Zinoviev and Kamenev, by declaring their retirement from the Central Committee, repeating after the October Revolution what they had done before the revolution, when in the face of the class enemy they publicly announced their opposition to the decision of the Central Committee of our Party, of October 10, regarding armed insurrection.

During the October days Lenin firmly led the masses to victory. At the same time he adopted most extreme measures against the sceptics and disrupters in order to safeguard the unity of the Party and secure the success of the revolution.

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

By F. Raskolnikov*

While delivering a lecture at the Circus Moderne on October 20 I caught a severe cold and was obliged to take to my bed. On the morning of October 26 a comrade entered my room and exclaimed: "Congratulations! The revolution has begun. The Winter Palace is taken and the whole of Petrograd is in our hands."

I leapt from my bed, consigned all medical treatment to the devil, and although physically weak and with a high temperature, hurried to the Smolny. The headquarters of the proletarian revolution was crowded as never before. In spite of the first flush of victory, the participators in the October insurrection were keenly aware that the revolution had only begun and that a stern struggle was to be faced. Kerensky had fled to the front; it was obvious that he would not rest at that and would endeavour to mobilize the regiments that were cut off from the stormy atmosphere of the rest of revolutionary Russia. It was also expected that the white guards would attempt an uprising within the country. Accordingly, all revolutionaries capable of bearing arms were called upon to secure ammunition. It was with these warlike preparations that the crowd of workers' and soldiers' representatives visiting the Smolny were chiefly concerned. The Smolny had been transformed into a military camp. Outside, under the colonnade, guns had been placed in position. Nearby stood machine-guns. A machine-gun was also placed further back in the hall with its muzzle levelled at the entrance. Machine-guns stood on nearly every landing, looking like toy cannon. The corridors now re-echoed, not with the searching, hesitating, gait of tiresome petitioners, to whom the walls of the Smolny had hitherto been

* Now Soviet Ambassador in Denmark.—Ed.

accustomed, but the hurried, noisy and merry footsteps of soldiers, workers, sailors and agitators. The revolutionary tide dashed through the wide entrance gates, swept in divided current to the various floors, streamed to the right and left along the vast straight corridors and was absorbed within the hundreds of rooms. Some came to conduct telephone conversations, some for information, for instructions, some in order to get into contact with neighbouring sections of the revolutionary front; then all flowed back into the general current, waving hastily signed mandates, on which the ink was not yet dry, banging doors that did not remain closed for a moment, leaping down the marble staircase three steps at a time, flinging themselves on to their horses, or on to the steps of overcrowded motor trucks or into plush-lined luxurious limousines, which were ready to bear their passengers, clad in ragged military coats or leather jackets, along the muddy streets of Petrograd to every corner of the proletarian capital.

In these corridors one caught the barely audible and confused rumour of the advance on Petrograd of troops faithful to the Provisional Government. Gossip in the city had already created miraculous legends regarding the inevitable and early fall of the new government. These fantastic rumours spread like lightning throughout the city, inspiring hope in the breasts of all counter-revolutionary elements and particularly of the Junkers. The counter-revolutionary students of the military academies and the two Cossack regiments quartered in Petrograd were the subject of the most watchful attention, since they were dangerous and inflammable centres of internal mutiny.

I mounted the staircase, which was decorated with our posters and slogans, to the upper floor and turned to the right along the corridor. In one of the side rooms I found Comrade V. A. Antonov-Ovseyenko.* He sat closely bent over the table, his near-sighted eyes almost touching a paper on which he was writing. His long, greying hair hung over his forehead, sometimes covering his eyes, and he would frequently brush it aside with an impatient gesture of the hand. Having finished writing one of those innumerable orders which it fell to his lot to write and sign in those historic days, he rapidly jumped to his feet, adjusted his spectacles, flung me a greeting, and hurried to

* Now Soviet Ambassador in Poland.—Ed.

deliver the note to be dispatched to its destination. His tired eyes spoke of the nervous tension of his work and of the unutterable fatigue of many sleepless nights.

"Ah, how are you? It is very good that you have come. I was beginning to think . . ." He did not complete the jest and extinguished the smile that had lurked for a moment in the corners of his drooping moustache.

Comrade Lenin unexpectedly entered. He was without beard and moustache; they had been shaved while he was in hiding. This circumstance, however, did not prevent my recognizing him at the first glance. He was in a good mood, but appeared to be even more serious and concentrated in mind than was his wont. Exchanging a few brief words with Comrade Antonov, Vladimir Ilyich left the room.

Bonch-Bruevich entered, panting and rosy from the frosty weather.

"There are pogroms in the air. I have a special flair for pogroms. You can smell them in the streets. Measures must be taken. Patrols must be sent out."

Vladimir Ilyich returned. As though quite casually he enquired:

"What measure would you take with regard to the bourgeois press?"

The question caught me unprepared. But I quickly collected myself and answered in the strain of an article which Vladimir Ilyich himself had written and which I had read not long before when I was in the Kresti.* I said that first we must ascertain what stocks of paper were available in the city and then distribute them among the journals of the various political currents according to the number of their followers. I failed to realize that this was a measure proposed during the Kerensky regime, and that after the revolution it had lost all significance. Lenin made no objections and left the room.

At that time a rumour was spread that a cycling corps was approaching Petrograd. The Military Revolutionary Committee commissioned me to meet them, to explain the situation to them and call upon them to unite with the insurrectionary

* Literally the Crosses—the name of a prison in Petrograd in which Comrade Raskolnikov had been incarcerated by the Kerensky government.—Ed.

workers and soldiers of Petrograd. It was intended to give them a ceremonial welcome, in order to dispose them in our favour by a warm comradely reception. In the office organized in the adjacent room the following mandate was written by hand on the blanks of the Military Department of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet: "The Military Revolutionary Committee delegates Comrade Raskolnikov to meet the troops arriving from the front at the Warsaw Station and appoints him commissar of arriving troops." The mandate was signed by N. Podvoysky.

I set off for the Warsaw Station, got into a passenger train and quickly arrived at Gatchina. No cycling troops were to be seen. I proceeded to the Gatchina Station of the Baltic Railroad in search of these mysterious cyclists. Approaching the station I observed a couple of aeroplanes of the Gatchina Air School circling in the air. The railroad track was empty. I cautiously sounded the railroad guard as to whether any troop trains had passed. He answered without any signs of suspicion that no military trains had passed in the direction of Petrograd. At the goods and passenger stations nobody knew anything of the movement of troops. Gatchina bore the appearance of a peaceful, even a sleepy town. The alarm proved to be a false one. Having waited about an hour, I boarded the first available train and returned to Petrograd. It was already twilight. I reported the result of my investigations and hastened to the assembly hall where the Congress of Soviets was in session. All the chandeliers and side-lights were burning. One's eye was immediately struck by the composition of the Congress: it was made up of workers and peasants, the folk to whom one felt so close.

The most prominent features at the sessions of the Menshevik-S. R. Soviets and at the First Congress of Soviets used to be the intelligentsia, the glistening epaulets of the officers and army doctors, the foreign phrases and parliamentary turns of speech. Here one saw a homogeneous dark grey mass of workers' topcoats, flecked with the khaki of soldiers' overcoats. I had never seen a more democratic assembly.

As I emerged from the Smolny accompanied by Comrade Roshal, we were hurriedly accosted by Comrade Volodarsky. He was agitated. Taking us by the arm, he exclaimed: "I

have something to talk to you about. Let us go." He led us to a closed automobile, in which was seated Comrade Shatov, an anarcho-syndicalist, who had whole-heartedly co-operated with us from the first days of the revolution. We took our places in the automobile and drove to the barracks of the Chasseurs. On the way Volodarsky announced that the Chasseurs must immediately go into action at Tsarskoye Selo, and that we must " work them up to the pitch."

At the barracks we hunted up the officer on duty, and requested him immediately to awaken the regimental committee and the company delegates. Our success in Petograd, had created such a situation that whatever the political sympathies of the officer on duty may have been, he could not refuse our demand. The hands of the clock pointed to two a.m., but in spite of the late hour about fifty comrades rapidly assembled. The first to address this not very large audience was Comrade Volodarsky. He delivered one of his most brilliant and talented speeches. This speech considerably elevated the spirit of the soldiers' delegates and created a favourable atmosphere for the succeeding orators. Comrade Volodarsky drew a picture of the political situation, pointed out that the conquests of the revolution were in a critical position, informed the comrades of the first decrees of the Soviet government, explained how tremendous was their significance for the workers and peasants and, in conclusion, called upon the gallant Regiment of Chasseurs to come forth in defence of the revolution. Following Comrade Volodarsky came Comrade Shatov, who also spoke with great passion. The meeting concluded with speeches by Roshal and myself.

The comrades, inspired by the sincere utterances of the orators, dispersed among the various companies, vowing to bring the regiment immediately into the vanguard of the revolution. And they kept their word. Early next morning the regiment set out for the front.

On October 27, I presented myself before the Military Command of the Petrograd district, the moving spirit of which was Chudnovsky. His hand in a sling, as the result of a wound received at the front, nervous and extraordinarily mobile in his movements, he was never at rest for a moment. Hardly had he finished signing a document than he would hasten to

the telephone or dash towards waiting visitors. Chudnovsky was a hero of the revolution, a knight without fear and without reproach. He never for a moment abandoned the reflective and cautious spirit of a Party worker, never lost the steadiness and equanimity of a political fighter ; yet at the same time he was inspired by a spirit of romance. I shall always remember Chudnovsky's countenance, pallid from an internal fire that was consuming him, his high brow covered with drops of sweat, still flushed with the creative flame, worn out, yet happy. Comrade G. I. Chudnovsky, as we know, perished heroically on the Southern Front in 1918.

On the morning of the 27th, I went to Comrade Chudnovsky to learn from him what the situation was at the front, where, according to rumour, Kerensky had formed an expeditionary corps for an attack on Petrograd. But neither in the District Command nor in the Smolny was exact information to be obtained. A young officer of the Ismailovsky Regiment was making arrangements with Chudnovsky for a visit to Gatchina. He was being sent there to learn the military situation and to organize the defence of Gatchina. He was required to leave immediately and an automobile was already awaiting him. I also felt tempted to proceed to the front. It seemed to me that there was nothing for me to do in Petrograd. I offered to go to the Ismailovsky Regiment to organize political work. I also calculated that in the event of Kerensky's troops proving unstable, by explaining to them the real situation in Petrograd it would be possible to win them over to our side. Comrade Chudnovsky regarded my proposal favourably.

We first drove to the Ismailovsky Regiment. In the quarters of the Regimental Committee a few solitary officers of the guards were wandering about in a state of helpless confusion. No members of the Regimental Committee were present. One received the impression that the Committee did not exist at all. And that in all probability was the case : the old members had fled and a new Bolshevik committee had not yet been elected. The Ismailovsky Regiment was regarded as one of the most conservative. Hastily performing our simple task, the Ismailovsky officer and I drove directly from the barracks to the Narva Gates, past the Putilov Works and then on to Gatchina.

My fellow-traveller created a strange impression on me. Both his exterior and mental outlook were typical of a lieutenant of the guards of the old regime. This, however, did not prevent him from flinging himself heart and soul into the revolution in search of strenuous activity. It is hard to say what it was that had appealed to him in the movement. Most probably some trifling thing had determined him. He might have been working on the side of the whiteguards with equal passion. There was something childishly naive in the service rendered to the proletarian revolution by this young, elegant officer, who, hardly realizing the significance of what was taking place, nevertheless worked with selfless devotion against his own class. Such praiseworthy eccentrics, among members of the class that was hostile to us, were rare in those days.

As we approached Krasnoye Selo, soldiers dashed into the road and signalled us to stop. Comrade Levinson, who led the Bolshevik movement in Krasnoye Selo, particularly in the 176th Reserve Regiment, where he served as a volunteer officer, approached our automobile and informed us that Gatchina had been occupied by the forces of the Provisional Government. We had no troops in Krasnoye Selo except the local 176th Reserve Regiment, which was heart and soul in favour of the October Revolution, and was ready at any moment to go into battle against the Kerensky bands.

Apart from the permanent Party, Soviet and regimental organizations, there was no Staff in Krasnoye Selo capable of assuming the conduct of military operations on any considerable scale. On the advice of Comrade Levinson we proceeded to Tsarskoye Selo, where it was most natural to expect that something in the nature of a body to guide operations existed. But there, too, no organization existed. In the local military quarters we found Colonel Valden, sitting alone. Valden, a pleasant middle-aged officer, was giving orders over the telephone with very little hope of their being executed. Severe wounds in the leg received in the war permitted him to move only with the help of a stick. Comrade Valden was one of the first of the military experts who honestly gave his services to the Soviet government. His name did not receive world-wide renown, either before or after the October Revolution. But in its most difficult moments, when temporary defeats threatened

to ruin our cause, this modest military worker unselfishly and devotedly placed his military knowledge and his experience as a staff officer at our disposal.

But, at the moment we found Comrade Valden alone; there was no organization of any kind at his disposal. I left the Ismailov officer to help him and drove back to Petrograd in Comrade Ulyantsev's automobile to report. Comrade Ulyantsev, a Kronstadt sailor who had served long sentences of hard labour as a political prisoner, had come to Tsarskoye Selo upon the instructions of the military organization and was now returning to Petrograd. We drove in darkness, in a grey, penetrating atmosphere and a dreary, drizzling rain. The abominable weather and the cheerless information we had gathered in Krasnoye Selo and Tsarkoye Selo did not dispose us towards optimism; but neither of us lost confidence that the mysterious morrow would bring victory to the Russian revolution.

Comrade Ulyantsev, who was in general an optimist, had not the slightest doubt regarding the future, although he was, of course, not oblivious of the defects of our organization. Comrade Ulyantsev subsequently met with a tragic end. In 1919, when in the rear of the bourgeois-nationalist Azerbaidjan, a Soviet government was formed in Mugan, Comrade Ulyantsev was one of its most active leaders. Some time prior to the fall of Mugan, Comrade Ulyantsev, while in command of the Red troops, heroically perished on the field of battle fighting for the world revolution.

A half-hour's drive brought us to the headquarters of the Military District Command. In spite of the late hour all the windows were brilliantly illuminated. In one of the rooms of this spacious building a meeting of " military workers " was in progress under the chairmanship of Comrade N. I. Podvoysky. Ulyantsev and I reported on the cheerless situation at the front. A decision was immediately taken to dispatch armoured cars and at the same time, in view of the insufficiency of this measure alone, to hasten the formation of workers' squads and to dispatch workers' regiments to the front.

The meeting had hardly concluded when I was summoned to Comrade Lenin.

Vladimir Ilyich was seated in a large room of the District

Command behind a long table which usually was covered by a green or red cloth, but now glared in its stark nakedness. This lent the room the cheerless appearance of a habitation abandoned by its owners. Lying before Lenin on the table was a map of Petrograd and its environs.

"What vessels of the Baltic Fleet are armed with heavy guns?" Lenin flung at me without preliminaries.

"Dreadnoughts of the *Petropavlovsk* type. They have twelve-inch guns with turret emplacements, apart from guns of smaller calibre."

"Very good," continued Lenin impatiently, hardly waiting for me to conclude. "If we find it necessary to bombard the environs of Petrograd, where could the vessels be placed? Could they be brought into the mouth of the Neva?"

I replied that in view of the displacement of the battleships and the shallowness of the sea channel, such large vessels could not be moved up the Neva; such an operation had chance of success only in very rare cases, when there was a high level of water in the sea channel.

"Then how can the defence of Petrograd be organized with the help of vessels from the Baltic Fleet?" Lenin enquired, gazing a me fixedly and intently awaiting my reply.

I pointed out that battleships could anchor between Kronstadt and the mouth of the sea channel, almost on a line with Peterhoff, where, apart from the direct protection of the approaches to Oranienbaum and Peterhoff, they would command a considerable sector of the river banks. Comrade Lenin was not satisfied with my reply and made me illustrate on the map the approximate range of the various calibres of guns. It was only then that he calmed down a little.

That day Vladimir Ilyich was in an unusually nervous state. The occupation of Gatchina by the Whiteguards had obviously produced a profound impression on him and filled him with disquietude for the fate of the proletarian revolution.

Comrade Lenin turned to me: "Ring up Kronstadt on the telephone and give orders for the immediate formation of another company of sailors. Everybody must be mobilized to the last man. The revolution is in a desperate position. If we do not display the greatest energy now, Kerensky and his bands will crush us."

I attempted to call up Kronstadt, but owing to the late hour was unable to get a reply. Vladimir Ilyich proposed that I should get into communication with the Kronstadt comrades by telegraph. We went to the telegraph room, where the direct wires hummed unceasingly. Comrade Podvoysky stood leaning on the table of one of the numerous apparatuses. We went up to him. Our thoughts involuntarily turned to the front where the fate of the revolution was being determined. Since the news of Kerensky's seizure of Gatchina, no real information from the front had been received. The fall of Gatchina affected everybody profoundly. But we all realized that the next few days would demand unlimited concentration of energy, colossal effort in the organization of reliable armed resistance and the mass departure for the front of all who were capable of bearing arms in Petrograd and the neighbouring towns.

"Yes," said Comrade Podvoysky, "the situation now is such that they will either hang us, or we shall hang them."

No one contradicted this opinion.

My attempt to get into communication with Kronstadt by direct wire also proved vain.

"Well, never mind," Vladimir Ilyich said, when I reported to him. "Listen, go to Kronstadt yourself to-morrow morning and give all the necessary orders on the spot for the immediate formation of a strong detachment with machine-guns and artillery. Remember that no time must be lost. Every minute is precious. . . ."

TWO TELEGRAMS

By Modest Ivanov

I

Ten o'clock in the morning of October 29 (old style), while sitting in my cabin on board the cruiser *Rossia*, I received the following telegram.

> "Modest Ivanov, Fourth-Rank Captain. Helsingfors. We request you to proceed immediately to Petrograd, Smolny. Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Ulyanov (Lenin)."

Although this invitation was not entirely unexpected, I had no clear idea of what the consequences would be.

I perused this apparently simple message several times and there suddenly arose in my mind the memory of the recent events of the revolution in the Baltic Fleet. In particular I recalled another telegram one I had received about two and a half months earlier from an entirely different person, or rather, from one of the leaders of another party. In appearance that first telegram was not unlike the telegram I received from Comrade Lenin, but how vastly different were the events that followed the two telegrams. Here is the text of the first telegram:

> "Chief of the Second Cruiser Division, Modest Ivanov. You are requested to report at the Admiralty in Petrograd immediately, Kerensky."

I shall now attempt to describe the events which led to the telegram received from Kerensky (that fortuitous but evil genius of Russia). I shall not dwell on the early period of the February Revolution, but in order that the second telegram

may be understood, I must say a few words regarding myself. In May I had been *elected* (by crews amounting to over three thousand men) Chief of the Second Cruiser Division of the Baltic Fleet. I emphasize the word elected, since owing to that fact I enjoyed the complete confidence of the sailors and, upon the instructions of the Commander of the Fleet, was able to bring the cruiser division out of Helsingfors and take up an advanced position in the Abo-Aland fiord.

The division consisted of four cruisers, the *Rossia*, *Gromoboy*, *Diana* and the *Aurora*. The *Aurora* was in Kronstadt for repairs. It is hardly necessary to explain that the revolutionary spirit in the division, as in the whole of the fleet, was growing and developing. The war with the Germans, or the imperialist war, had already lost all meaning, and the soldiers, who were one of the most important mass factors in the revolutionary events, were being transformed by the increasing penetration of Leninist ideas. The slogan, "Down with the war!" appeared more and more frequently in the resolutions adopted by the sailors at their meetings.

I must also point out that officially the fleet was under the orders of the Headquarters Staff, headed by the Commander of the Fleet, Rear-Admiral Razvozov, and the commissar attached to him, Onipko, a Socialist-Revolutionary. But, as a matter of fact, the master of the fleet was the Centrobalt.

The Centrobalt was the chief revolutionary organization controlling the whole life of the Baltic fleet.

The extent to which the authority of the Commander of the Fleet and his Staff had declined, may be judged by the fact that during such events as Kornilov's march on Petrograd, or the secession of Finland, the voice of the Commander and of his staff was entirely inaudible. The Centrobalt, on the other hand, reacted to every event in a most energetic fashion. The Centrobalt, consisted, of course, entirely of sailors.

But the war with the Germans nevertheless, still continued and although discipline in the fleet, the old tsarist discipline of blind subordination of rank to rank, had completely fallen, we were obliged to fight. I, for my part, with the support of the ship's committees, succeeded in creating a fairly stable situation within the Second Division and despatched various cruisers on expeditions in accordance with operative plans.

The, at first, extremely hostile attitude of the sailors towards the officers also gradually subsided.

In a word, in one way or another, war operations within the division were being carried out. But one unexpected event at one time threatened to undo everything. The head of the government, Kerensky, appointed a Socialist-Revolutionary, Lebedev, to be his assistant, with the post of Minister of the Navy. This fresh-baked Minister decided to make an inspection of the fleet and *enforce* discipline. During the imperialist war Lebedev had been a lieutenant in some land battalion in France, where he had been living as a political exile.

Well, in this uniform of a lieutenant of some French regiment, he made his appearance in Russia. I shall not dwell on his visit to the fleet in Helsingors, where the staff was quartered, and practically the whole of the fleet concentrated, but I cannot refrain from describing his visit to our division in the Abo-Aland fiord, since this event preceded Kerensky's telegram and I think was an indirect cause of the telegram I subsequently received from Comrade Lenin.

As a personality, Lebedev in my opinion was in no way remarkable, which shows that such a comparatively large party as that of the Socialist-Revolutionaries was unable to choose men of bigger calibre and that it understood the revolutionary situation in the fleet very badly.

It was a bright August morning when the Staff dispatch boat, the *Kretchet*, passed the cruiser division carrying the Commander of the Fleet, Rear-Admiral Razvozov, with the whole of his Staff and the Minister of the Navy, Lebedev. After the usual exchange of signals I received a signal message to the effect that the Minister of the Navy would visit the division.

The *Krechet* steamed into Abo harbour and two hours later Lebedev, Onipko and one of the staff officers arrived on a motor launch.

He first visited my flagship, the *Rossia*. We received Lebedev in accordance with his rank as Minister of the Navy. I made my report to him while the officers and crew stood lined up on parade. In a word, an onlooker would have received the impression that everything was perfectly in order.

At that time, the S.R.'s were still respected. And I am certain that the sailors were convinced that this brief ceremony would

soon end and that thereupon " Comrade " Lebedev would open a meeting. But to my astonishment, this Russian Minister of the Navy in the uniform of a French lieutenant decided to display his authority in an entirely different manner.

Having passed down the line of parade, he mounted to the commodore's deck and through the commander of the cruiser, Second Rank Captain Ginter, he ordered the crew to come closer. When the crew of the *Rossia* consisting of about a thousand men, began slowly to approach, Lebedev himself thundered : " Why do you carry out orders so slowly ! Double quick, march ! "

For me, an old naval officer and a man who from the first day of the revolution had shared every experience with his sailors, this was entirely unexpected. Can it be, I thought, that Admiral Viren, the former Commander-in-Chief of Kronstadt has been resurrected in the image of Lebedev ?

At any rate, from the agitation among the mass of the sailors, I clearly conceived that I could expect no help from the Minister of the Navy; on the contrary, I would have to help him. Lebedev delivered a long speech, frequently punctuated with such phrases as : We (*i.e.*, the S.R.'s) will reimpose discipline on board ship ; we will crush all who stand in our way to power, and so forth. A murmur passed through the crew, but there were no untoward incidents.

Things did not go off so smoothly on the *Gromoboy*. Someone from the crowd of sailors cried out : " Just look what a general has come to see us. Is that a 'tec he has brought with him (this referred to Onipko, whose appearance was very morose) ? " And several catcalls entirely spoilt the ceremoniousness of the visit of the Minister of the Navy, Lebedev, to the division.

Lebedev declined to visit the *Diana*, the most revolutionary of the cruisers. (He publicly declared that he refused to have anything to do with so undisciplined a crew). As chief of the division, I returned with Lebedev and Onipko on the launch to Abo. On the way, Lebedev in the most severe terms expressed his dissatisfaction at the decline of discipline in the division, for which he blamed me entirely. I replied in terms no less severe.

In a word, after a most stormy interchange of opinions, I left him and returned to the *Rossia*, where the members of

the ship committee informed me that the sailors were highly incensed and extremely hostile towards Lebedev. " Things are going to happen," they declared. And indeed, at the meeting of the shore crews in Abo, which was attended by a section of the crews from our division, the general feeling was such that they simply wanted to drown Lebedev. And it was only by sheer luck Lebedev managed to escape on the *Krechet* under cover of darkness.

This ended the curious visit of the Minister of the Navy. Lebedev, to the Second Cruiser Division. It ended for Lebedev but not for me. The crews were agitated, and, indeed, not without reason. Lebedev, after all, was still Minister of the Navy (it is true, in far-off Petrograd).

Suddenly I received the telegram from Kerensky, the contents of which I have already mentioned. I do not know how, but the telegram became known to the sailors.

I left for Petrograd by train, temporarily handing over charge of the division to the senior commander and unfortunately leaving an extremely agitated crew behind me.

In Petrograd I reported at the Admiralty, where I was immediately led into the office of the Minister. Instead of Kerensky, whom I expected to encounter, I found Lebedev seated at the minister's table. Lebedev rose and announced :

" You are retired."

" For what reason ? " I inquired. I, as a naval man with an Academy training, who had participated in every war Russia had engaged in since 1900, fulfilled the most exacting requirements.

Lebedev cynically answered that he had the right to dismiss officers and that he was exercising that right at the present moment. He was not inclined to give any explanations.

I submitted to orders and left the room. I proceeded immediately to Helsingfors where I demanded of the Commander of the Fleet, Rear-Admiral Razvozov, whether he considered it permissible that, without his knowledge, and in time of war, the chief of a division of cruisers on active service should be retired. Obviously, he was greatly embarrassed. He merely informed me that the order concerning my retirement had already been signed and published. I said :

" I shall return to my division in Abo and wait three days

for my successor. If he does not arrive by that time I shall hand over the division to the chief commander and leave."

But meanwhile events were taking their own course. One of the sailors of the Second Cruiser Division started the rumour that I had been arrested by Kerensky in Petrograd. The crew immediately appointed a delegation to secure my release. This delegation first appeared at the Staff Headquarters of the Commander of the Fleet, where, they declared their protest in a rather hostile tone.

Upon my return to the cruiser *Rossia* the excitement subsided and everything resumed its normal course. Not desiring to make the position of the Commander and his Staff more embarrassing than it was already, I said nothing to the ship committees of my retirement.

Three days later, Sunday, a section of the crew of the division, about a thousand men, took their turn on shore leave. I instructed my orderly, Makarov, to bring my things, and after handing over the charge of the division to the commander of the cruiser *Gromoboy*, First-Rank Captain Ilyin, left for Abo, where I put up at a hotel. But two hours had barely elapsed when delegates from the ship committees came to me and called upon me to return with them to the cruiser *Rossia.*

Arriving on the *Rossia*, I observed that a large number of the crew had returned from shore and that a meeting was in progress, attended even by delegates from the submarine fleet, the shore crews, and from the battleship stationed at Helsingfors. The meeting was a stormy one. I was called upon to given an explanation. Since I had nothing to conceal, I related everything that had happened. The meeting passed a curt resolution couched as follows :

> " First-Rank Captain, Modest Ivanov, is instructed to remain Chief of the Division and anyone appointed in his place shall be flung overboard."

This resolution was sent with a delegation to the Commander of the Fleet.

And so, by revolutionary means, I retained my position as Chief of the Division. And although I had been officially retired, thanks to this circumstance the order was counter-

manded and I continued to fulfil my duties and carry out instructions.

And in this way I found myself unexpectedly in the very thick of events.

II

October 25, 1917, saw the end of the rule of the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

This was an acute period in the war against Germany and the cruiser division stationed in the Bay of Abo was kept in readiness to sail at any moment. On October 27, I received an unexpected telegram from the Centrobalt. I was called upon to participate in the newly organized Supreme Naval Board. I was given one hour for reflection. I telegraphed my consent. Subsequently, I learned that there had been a stormy meeting in the Centrobalt and that upon somebody's proposal my candidature was accepted unanimously. On October 20, in response to the telegram from Lenin in the Smolny, I handed over charge of the division to the senior commander of the cruiser *Gromoboy*, First-Rank Captain Ilyin. I left for Petrograd, without visiting the Fleet Command, my relations with whom were very strained. On November 1, I arrived at the Smolny, where I found an unusual spirit of animation. Here was the seething cauldron of the revolution, from whence and to which flowed all the waves of revolution. This was my first visit to the Smolny and I was at first unable to find the person by whose orders I had been summoned.

In a large room on the second floor I happened upon Comrade V. A. Antonov-Ovseyenko, to whom I showed my telegram. Obviously he was extremely busy. Nibbling a piece of black bread, he said: "Go to Comrade Lenin," and immediately turned to speak with another person, or to give some order.

I probably would have gone on seeking Comrade Lenin for a long time had I not been accosted by a short, pleasant-looking, bearded civilian.

What astonished me most about him was that he appeared thoroughly at home in this commotion, although neither his exterior nor his manners spoke of the revolutionary. I, of course, wore the naval jacket of a first-rank captain.

He asked me what I was looking for. I replied that I was looking for Comrade Lenin and showed him the telegram I had received from the Smolny. Having perused it he inquired: "Are you Comrade Modest Ivanov?" I replied in the affirmative. "Come with me," he said. In conversation, I learned that this was Comrade L. B. Kamenev. We mounted to the third floor and went to Room 31, before the door of which stood two Latvians carrying rifles. These were sentries. Comrade Kamenev said something to them and we passed into the room. There were two rooms, or one room divided by a partition. At any rate, there was nobody in the front part of the room, while in the other room, or rather, behind the partition, Comrade Kamenev went in and returning after a short while, told me to wait and that in a few minutes Comrade Lenin would come to me. Kamenev left the room. I seated myself on the divan and listened to Comrade Lenin behind the partition talking over the telephone with Gatchina, where at that time Comrade Dybenko* was about to engage in battle with Kerensky.

After about ten minutes there emerged from behind the partition a short, stockily-built individual, with a large head, or rather, a large prominent forehead, and very badly shaved. But what particularly attracted my attention were his eyes. His face was rather of a Kalmuck type, and his eyes revealed a keen mind. This was Comrade Lenin. I rose and we shook hands. We then seated ourselves on either side of a small table. I shall try to report our conversation word for word.

Lenin: You have been sent by the fleet?

I: Yes.

Lenin: You are a socialist?

I: Yes, I think I am. But not a great socialist; a "May" socialist (after the February revolution many of the sailors of the fleet and a few officers joined the Party). At any rate, regard me as rather a green socialist.

Lenin: At any rate, you read the newspapers and interest yourself in current events?

I: Not only do I read the papers and interest myself, but rather unexpectedly for me it has been my fate to take part in those events.

* Then Commander of the Bolshevik naval forces.—Ed.

Lenin smiled. It must be confessed that the smile lit up his face astonishingly.

Lenin: You are, I hope, opposed to the government of Rodzyanko and Kerensky.

I: I am in general opposed to all governments that rely on bayonets.

A slight pause ensued. It seemed to me that Lenin was reading my thoughts.

I must make a slight diversion here in order that what follows might be better understood.

I am a naval officer. I had never concerned myself with politics. Owing to my military training and fairly long military experience, I was somewhat inclined to look down on everything not connected with naval affairs.

For me, Lenin was a journalist from somewhere abroad, writing something I did not understand, or rather, was not interested in. But since the February Revolution I had learnt a lot and understood a lot. I sensed with every fibre of my being that something great was taking place, something purely of the people. An internal, all-absorbing process was taking place within me. But all this I grasped more emotionally than mentally.

And sitting thus confronting Lenin, I involuntarily thought, "Here I am, an old sea-dog, and for some reason or other we are sitting here preparing to discuss some question or other."

It seemed to me that Lenin divined what was going on in my mind. He said:

"It is not the government, but the people who will defend the conquests of the revolution with the bayonet."

In spite of myself, I stared at this man who had done so much not only for Russia, but for the whole of humanity.

We sat regarding each other for some time and then Lenin said:

"Take command of all the naval forces of the Petrograd area."

"I am a commander on active service," I replied. "My division is in a front-rank position. A war is in progress with Germany. I consider my place is there. Here they can get along without me; here the front is not very large."

"Where are you staying?" Lenin asked.

"In the Naval Revolutionary Committee at the Admiralty," I answered.

"Yes, I know," Lenin said, "I am glad you have put up there. Well, do not leave until I get in touch with you again."

We shook hands and I left the Smolny. The following day Comrade I. I. Vakhromeyev informed me that Comrade Lenin had appointed me Assistant-Minister of the Navy and Chairman of the Supreme Naval Board, which was confirmed by decree No. 31 of the Council of People's Commissars of Military and Naval Affairs of November 4, 1917.

But, in consequence of the fact that Vice-Admiral Verderovsky, who was fulfilling the duties of Minister of the Navy, at that time fled abroad, I was called upon to assume charge of the Naval Department, while P. E. Dybenko was appointed People's Commissar.

And so it came about that in the very room were Kerensky and Lebedev had retired me, I, at the behest of the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Comrade Lenin, assumed the task of building up a Red Navy.

LENIN IN THE OCTOBER DAYS

By V. I. Vakhromeyev

During the great days of October it was my duty as chairman of the Military and Naval Revolutionary Committee of Petrograd to report to Ilyich almost daily. All his instructions breathed strong confidence in the sailors, in their class consciousness and revolutionary firmness. Four meetings with Ilyich, in particular, have become engraved on my memory.

On the day after the historical Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets closed, I and several other delegates to the Congress were summoned to Ilyich. He opened a copy of the newspaper *Novaya Zhizn* and we read with disgust an announcement in heavy type to the effect that the Centroflot had joined the defencist Committee for the Salvation of Russia and the Revolution.

Lenin said :

" Comrades, you, as delegates to the Congress, voted for a government of Soviets. You must put an end to this affair. . . . This is not the time to return to your homes ; you must stay and work here and consolidate what has been begun."

We requested Ilyich to give us instructions, but he answered :

" It is now too late to learn. You must act in accordance with revolutionary conscience. Go out and act."

And we went and acted. The Centroflot quickly came to an end and in its place arose the Revolutionary Committee of the Navy.

During the struggle against Kerensky I was one day urgently summoned to see Ilyich at the Headquarters of the Petrograd Military District. I arrived there about five o'clock in the afternoon. Ilyich was seated at a table in the office of the Commander. He was studying a map of Petrograd and its environs. There were also present Antonov-Ovseyenko, Muravyev and others whom I do not remember.

Ilyich turned to me and said :

" Can the fleet help the land front ? "

Kerensky at that time was stationed at Tsarskoye Selo. Having carefully studied all the distances, I replied :

" We can bombard Tsarskoye Selo from two angles. We

can place the cruiser *Oleg* in the Channel ; she can fire from her 130 millimetre guns. We can bring two or three destroyers of the *Novik* type up the Neva as far as Rybatskoye and they can bombard the Neva from the east with their four-inch guns. By this means we can without the slightest doubt drive Kerensky out of Tsarskoye Selo."

Ilyich was extremely interested in what I said ; he carefully questioned me on every detail until he had thoroughly convinced himself that the operation was feasible. He thereupon instructed me to proceed to execute it without delay and to keep him informed of its progress.

The following day I reported to Lenin :

" The *Oleg* is ready, she is in position. The destroyers *Samson*, *Deyatelny* and the *Delny*, under the command of reliable sailors, have proceeded to Rybatskoye and we are ready to open fire on Tsarskoye Selo to-night."

" I saw the vessels coming up the Neva," Lenin said.

I realized that in spite of the tremendous amount of work he was performing, Lenin remembered every detail of our conversation of the day before.

I nearly always came to the Smolny at night to report. On one occasion Ilyich instructed me to go to the General Staff Headquarters, get in touch with the Commander-in-Chief over the direct wire and receive the replies to the questions he had put to him.

" Here is your mandate. Get the tape and return to me."

The leader wrote out a mandate on a leaf of his notebook. I returned about six in the morning. Ilyich was still at work. In spite of the crowds of comrades who had come to see him during these three hours, he remembered that he had sent me for the wires. I had hardly entered when I was told that he had been inquiring whether I had returned.

On another occasion, after my usual report, Ilyich said :

" I have my doubts concerning the reliability of the Smolny guard." He ordered me to examine every sentry post and to report to him whether the guard could be trusted. He had particular confidence in us sailors, and after I had reported, he gave orders to have the whole guard replaced by sailors. Comrade Maltzov of the *Diana* was appointed commandant of the building.

In general, during the October days, Ilyich regarded the sailors as the most trustworthy military organization and frequently said:

" I need you sailors for the most dangerous positions."

And we justified Ilyich's confidence.

What struck me during my work with Ilyich was his brilliant memory. It seemed to me that he remembered everything, even trifles, that had happened ten years ago. Here is a characteristic instance. After the February Revolution I was serving on board the mother-ship of the Baltic submarine fleet, the *Oland*. We were stationed at the mouth of the Botny Straits at Lyum. At a division meeting an officer declared :

" The German spy, Lenin, has arrived."

The class-conscious members of the crew were indignant at these words and repudiated this slanderous statement in the most vigorous fashion.

We thereupon adopted a resolution expressing complete confidence in Lenin as the leader of the proletariat. This resolution signed by me was sent to Lenin and published in the *Pravda* (of May, or April 29, 1917). After the October Revolution I met Ilyich and he asked me :

" Was it you who signed the resolution of the sailors of the submarine fleet this spring ? "

" Yes, it was I."

Ilyich said : " I remember your name."

Yes, this great man had a remarkable memory.

This great man was also extremely simple in his manner. One used to go to see him without the slightest timidity, with the feeling that Ilyich was a father, a teacher. If you had done something not quite as it should have been done, he would correct you, tell you how it should have been done, or gazing frankly into your eyes, say :

" This, comrade, is beyond your powers."

He would never offend, he would convince.

There were times when one was fatigued from working day and night without intermission ; but after having reported to Ilyich, having seen the tremendous work he accomplished, one gained fresh strength. One returned eagerly to one's own work anxious to fulfil Ilyich's instructions to the letter.

Ilyich never commanded, he persuaded. He gave his instructions in such a manner that we realized their necessity.

HOW ILYICH TAUGHT US REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS

By A. Kaktyn

One of my meetings with Comrade Lenin in the days immediately following the October Revolution became particularly impressed on my memory.

It was in December 1917, after the publication of the decree of the Council of People's Commissars on workers' control of industry, the initiator and author of which was Comrade Lenin himself. Fearing that the workers would be too precipitous in the seizure of the factories, and that the decree would be interpreted in the sense of direct interference in industry, the All-Russian Council on Workers Control set up a commission (if I remember rightly, among its members were Comrades Larin and Lozovsky), which drew up instructions. These instructions interpreted the decree in a sense which limited the right of the factory and works committees in the matter of controlling the factories ; *i.e.*, control in the narrow, passive sense of the word, without the right of countermanding the orders of the factory managers. We workers in the Central Council of Factory Committees in Petrograd thereupon drew up alternative instructions, in which we interpreted the decree on workers' control in a directly contrary sense, in the sense of active control, with the right to interfere in management ; control which would prevent and suppress sabotage of the Soviet government and the working class by the factory owners. The exercise of workers' control in this sense would have inevitably accelerated the seizure of the factories by the workers and would have led to nationalization from below. The All-Russian Council on Workers' Control, on the other hand, endeavoured to direct the process into organized channels, to effect nationalization from above, by means of decrees. They attempted to impede the process.

We were profoundly convinced that our attitude under the circumstances was the only right and revolutionary one. We had the support of the working class masses in the factories of Petrograd. We printed our instructions at our own expense and sent them out not only to Petrograd, but also to the provinces. But how could we give them an official and *legal* character, when the majority on the authorized body on workers' control, the All-Russian Council, was in favour of passive control? How could we "legalize" our instructions in the eyes of the workers?

We decided to appeal to Comrade Lenin, knowing his attitude on the question of workers' control. One evening, three of us, Comrade Amosov, president of the Central Council of Workshop and Factory Councils, Comrade Ivanov (Mikhailov) and I, called upon Comrade Lenin in the Smolny. We briefly, if not very coherently, outlined the essence of our problem. Vladimir Ilyich listened to us attentively, screwing up his eyes as was his wont, asked a few questions and forthwith gave us the following piece of unexpected advice.

"If you are really anxious to have your attitude towards workers' control realized, you must not rely only upon authority and formal legality. You must act, you must agitate, you must use every possible method of conveying your idea to the masses. If that idea is vital and revolutionary it will force a way for itself and nullify all lifeless, even if legalized, instructions and interpretations of workers' control."

Such was the purport, if not the exact words, of the answer we received from Vladimir Ilyich. For us, or at least for me, it was new, unexpected and even strange. We had thought that the question would be settled by a signature, a confirmation, by an act of legislation. Instead, we got this piece of advice, accompanied by a genial, comradely, even ironical smile, as though to say: how naive, how young you must be not to understand that social realities and the class struggle are not decided by decrees and instructions, but that, on the contrary, the latter are but their reflection; and that they are their reflections only to the extent that they are vital and real.

Lenin's lesson was not wasted on us. We were at first taken aback, we tried to object, but nothing, if I remember rightly, came of it. But when we left Lenin we began to act energetically; our instructions were distributed broadcast, unsigned, unconfirmed, without anybody's recommendation, but definitely borne out by the whole process of revolutionary development in the sphere of production. Realities soon proved how correct Ilyich was in this matter, as in all others. He already saw, and, indeed, had seen long before, the form the first "expropriation of the expropriators" the world had seen would assume. He was certain that no attempt to halt the onslaught of the proletarian revolution would succeed. He, who in other spheres of work and under other conditions made extensive use of the "agitational" value of decrees, not without reason considered it superfluous to assist the process of the transformation of workers' control into the management of production which had already begun from below, and of which our instructions were a feeble reflection.

Of course, this incident revealed another of Lenin's characteristic features: his caution and circumspection, his grasp of the realities of a situation. Before passing decrees, one must examine the phenomenon, study it. It was one thing to issue a general decree which would free the hands of the lower working class bodies in the sphere of control; it was another matter to give that control form. Comrade Lenin realized that elemental forces had to be directed into an organized channel, that the necessary conditions had to be created for the nationalization of the factories before undertaking nationalization. This perhaps explains his caution and deliberation, his "compromise" (so inexplicable to many at the time) with the employers until the promulgation in June 1918 of the decree on the nationalization of industry. These considerations undoubtedly determined the reply he gave us and his unwillingness to ratify our instructions immediately. But the value of his lesson is not diminished by this fact. It was one more example of Lenin's skill in the art of revolutionary tactics.

HOW WE BEGAN TO BUILD

By G. Lomov

How swiftly time flies, how swift is the development of the revolution. . . .

Far off is the time when just prior to the October insurrection the central organ of the bourgeoise, *Rech* on September 16, wrote : " The Bolsheviks, with the exception of a few fanatics, are brave only in words. They would never take over the government of their own accord. Disruptors and wreckers, they are essentially cowards, and in their heart of hearts are fully conscious of their own insignificance and the ephemeralness of their present successes. They know as well as we do that the first day of their final triumph will be the first day of their headlong fall. . . . The best way of ridding ourselves of Bolshevism for many years to come, of overthrowing Bolshevism, would be to entrust its leaders with the fate of the country."

But the fate of the country was taken by the Bolsheviks by storm. The " first day " of our triumph has long passed, but it has not proven " the first day of our headlong fall." For ten years, in the fire of civil war, tried Bolshevik methods have forged and tempered the steel which gives us the right to assert that the next ten years will be much easier than the last. The policy of the bourgeoisie and the policy of Bolshevism have been tested by history—and Bolshevism has triumphed.

It fell to my lot to take a most active part in the stormy days of October and in the first steps in the construction of the U.S.S.R.

I became a member of the Board of the Supreme Council of National Economy at the end of 1917, and served as vice-chairman of that body almost until the adoption of the New Economic Policy.

The Council at that time had no organization, no staff. All

* Now member of the Board of the Supreme Economic Council.—Ed.

that we found in the magnificent building of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on the Tuchkovaya Embankment was about a half-dozen automobiles and their chauffeurs, who were inspired with the greatest enthusiasm and desire to help the revolution, and about a dozen messengers who had all remained at their posts. . . . It was impossible to find a single office worker. They all estimated the situation in the same way as the leader-writer of the *Rech* ; they were convinced that we would not hold on for a single day and thought it better to wait rather than to fall into the bad graces of their old masters.

And so in that vast, cold building, we worked without office help, sabotaged by the intelligentsia. What the situation was like may be judged by the fact that at a meeting of the bank clerks of Moscow organized by the Moscow Soviet immediately after the nationalization of the banks, only thirty-four expressed their readiness to work under the new regime. And about half of them turned out to be scoundrels : in the course of the first year we were obliged to shoot about fifteen of them who had been caught red-handed.

I recall another meeting attended by several important representatives of the Moscow electrical industry. The meeting was held at what is now the Smidovich Electric Power Station. We representatives of the Soviet government were forced to listen to many an unflattering remark. I tried to bring it home to the incensed engineers that " it is a mistake to spit into the well from which you will be obliged to drink," but not a single one of the experts had a word to say in support of my proposal that they should remain working at the factories at which they were employed at the time of the revolution and nationalization.

Under such circumstances, only time and persistence could create conditions which would permit the systematic and purposeful realization of the principles of the October Revolution and the reconstruction of economic life.

Larin's office in what was formerly the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and, at that time in Leningrad, the Supreme the Council of National Economy was always crowded with delegates, mostly workers, who kept arriving from all parts. Most of the problems we settled jointly with them ; and indeed, in the earlier days it often happened that the comrades awaiting

their turn all took part in the decision of the problem under consideration.

The authoritative workers in the Supreme Council of National Economy could be counted on one's fingers, Kritzman, who very soon joined us, took over the department dealing with the organization of production, and then began to work on the chemical and food industries.

I remember how Comrade Antipov gradually developed in the course of his work. The idea of forming the first Chief Board (the Leather Board) was his. There soon appeared the enthusiast for syndicates, Otto Schmidt, a fine scientific mathematician, who, by the strange chances of the revolution, for some reason, linked his fate with that of the textile industry.*

One of the prime duties of the Supreme Council of National Economy was to recruit faithful experts and capable Communist business men. In those early days this was a far from easy task.

One of the first big experts to join us was Professor Makhovetsky; also the late Comrade Karpov. I remember that I had frequent occasion in those days to meet Krassin; but in the Petrograd period he had no connection with the Supreme Council of National Economy, but fulfilled individual commissions, at times extremely important ones (such as the negotiations for a trade agreement with Germany before the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk).

The organization was built up by V. N. Yakovleva. She worked at this important task day and night with great energy and persistence, and her work soon began to bear fruit.

This was what might be called the normal method of work. But by that method we could never have settled the enormous number of questions we were called upon to decide. We adopted another method, the method of "cheerful anarchism," as Comrade Larin called it. Finding it impossible to decide a vast number of extremely important questions during working hours, we used to meet from time to time in a semi-official way in one of the rooms of the Astoria Hotel (where most of us lived), to which we lured Comrade Menzhinsky, who was then the Commissar of Finance, Comrade Pyatakov, Director of

* Now Captain of the Arctic steamer *Cheluskin*.—Ed.

the State Bank, and other comrades. In this way in about an hour or hour and a half, we settled such questions as, for example, how to annul the public debt, and right on the spot—we would draft decrees to be submitted to the Council of People's Commissars.

At these conferences Larin would dive into one of his numerous pockets and fish out scraps of paper on which were scrawled numerous drafts of decrees. About half of them we rejected on the spot; the other half we approved in principle. They were subsequently elaborated and submitted to the Council of People's Commissars.

Gradually our Supreme Council of National Economy began to assume body and content. A staff was assembled. Scores and hundreds of delegates from the provinces used to pass through its doors; vast projects were drawn up and elaborated. Among the delegates I recall Comrade Konyukhov, now chairman of the Metal Syndicate, but at that time chairman of the Bryansk Works, for which he energetically endeavoured to find funds. I also recall Comrade Borisov, by whose efforts the Gold Industry Department was formed, and who was the initiator of the registration of gold articles for the State fund. Antipov very quickly adapted himself to the work and rapidly developed into a business organizer. Many another comrade passed through the Supreme Council of National Economy.

It cannot be said that we pursued a clear line of economic policy in those days. The banks had only just been nationalized and the factories and certain of the big industrial plants were also being nationalized. But until the decree of June 28, 1918, nationalization was not pursued systematically in accordance with a definite plan. During the earlier period, nationalization was rather the result of the flight of factory owners from Russia, or their efforts to sabatoge production; in other words, it was resorted to as a punitive measure.

I remember Lenin's views on nationalization at that period. He used to say: "The important thing is not nationalization; we could nationalize at ten times the present rate. The important thing is to organize and conduct industry ourselves." He would sign a decree of nationalization without a moment's hesitation. But on each occasion he would repeat that nationalization by itself meant nothing and altered nothing.

We had to find a solution to the question as to how to manage the nationalized factories. We all seized on Comrade Antipov's idea of Chief Boards, like the Leather Board. Lenin also approved the idea, and under the deft hand of Antipov, Chief Boards began to appear in every branch of industry. At first, each Chief Board was constructed on the following principle : one-third from the trade union, one-third from the owners, and one-third from the Supreme Council of National Economy. This principle of one-third from each party concerned was the normal principle of organization of the management of industry during the early days of the Supreme Council of National Economy.

But apart from casual nationalization, the idea of nationalizing whole branches of industry from motives of expediency was advanced from the very first days of the Soviet government. One of the first branches proposed for nationalization was, of course, the oil industry. Lenin had long conversations with Comrade Gukovsky, who had formerly worked in the oil industry after which a report on the subject was submitted to the Council of People's Commissars. Gukovsky was appointed commissar and charged with the nationalization of the oil industry. If I am not mistaken, the next in turn for nationalization was the Volga transport system. The suggestion was made to us and to the Council of People's Commissars by the trade union organization of the Volga River transport workers. As I remember, one of the difficulties in this case was the application of the principle of " thirds." The Volga transport workers' union demanded the elimination of the owners. Nationalization, as a definite economic policy, was only in its formative stages.

I remember—this was already in the Moscow period, in the spring of 1918, after the government had removed from Petrograd ; we established ourselves in the Hotel Metropole and we had a great dispute about the organization of a trust, or a Board, it was not clear which, in a word, an economic organization to embrace the Sormovo, Kolomna, Kulebansk and Vyksunsk Works. The head of this organization was to be a great engineer and business man, Meschersky, a representative of the former owners and himself a partner in these works. It is true that after prolonged discussion the Supreme Council of National

Economy rejected the idea, not from motives of principle, but on account of business differences with Meschersky.

Apart from our work in the Supreme Council of National Economy, which lasted from morning until dinner time, and then until six or nine in the evening, almost every night we were obliged to attend the meeting of the Council of People's Commissars at the Smolny. This was a rendezvous for almost all the workers in the various Comissariats, where they discussed the results of their work and the important events of the day. The " buffet " at the Smolny was a sort of club in which opinions were exchanged and the most heated arguments conducted. And it was not surprising that the buffet attracted the comrades. Why, during the sessions of the Council of People's Commissars, which lasted until four or five in the morning, each man received two black bread sandwiches and an unlimited number of glasses of tea. In those hungry times this was an important reinforcement for a People's Commissar. At times, when the disputes in the " club " waxed particularly furious, when in the meeting room of the Council of People's Commissars some question of little interest was being discussed and very few of our Communists were present while the Left Socialist Revolutionaries were in force (it must not be forgotten that at that period the Left S.R.'s were still members of the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee), we would receive a brief, dissatisfied note from Ilyich demanding the immediate attendance of the People's Commissars. As a rule this happened on occasions when the Left S.R.'s who were hopeless poseurs and lovers of grandiloquent speeches, had driven poor Ilyich to desperation by their high-falutin' metaphors and rhetoric. Ilyich would be annoyed that he himself could not escape and was obliged to sit and listen to those windbags.

I remember how we used to return from the Smolny to the Astoria in equipages from the tsar's stables and in automobiles through the incredible snow-heaps which encumbered Petrograd in the winter of 1918. If one yawned and slackened one's attention to the holes and bumps, one was painfully forced to realize that the snow was not being cleared, that a revolution was in progress, and that one must " keep one's eyes open."

At nine in the morning one was obliged to be at one's desk again.

The transfer to Moscow was a great blow. The organization built up with so much difficulty in Petrograd fell to pieces. There were no suitable premises in Moscow; in the Hotel Metropole everybody kept running about and no real work was performed.

With Rykov's appointment as chairman of the Supreme Council of National Economy in the spring of 1918, a period of organic and businesslike work began. But it was accompanied by the greatest difficulties. The conditions of civil war, the attack from all sides and the kulak uprisings affected people's nerves and made them unfit for work; workers were being constantly sent to the front, which disorganized the business machine that had been built up with such labour.

A clear policy of organic work began to take effect after the promulgation of the decree of June 28, 1918, on the nationalization of the principal enterprises in every branch of industry. True, the adoption of this measure was dictated not so much by our economic policy as by motives of a different character. The policy of nationalizing all the large-scale industries was, of course, of long standing. But policy is one thing, and the rate of its realization is another.

I recall how this decree was drafted. We summoned representatives of various branches of industry in great haste and buried ourselves in reference books in order not to overlook any of the large enterprises and to embody them all into the draft decree. The typing of the lists of enterprises occupied a considerable time and we were almost late for the session of the Council of People' Commissars. I was entrusted with the report on the proposed decree.

No paste was available and I was obliged to fasten the decree which was several yards in length, with safety and other pins. While unrolling it during the reading the pins would frequently drop out and I was unable to find the page I required.

The only comment made at the Council of People's Commissars was as to whether I had not overlooked anything. And to tell the truth, I could give the Council no assurance on that score.

After the adoption of the decree on the nationalization of enterprises in the main branches of industry, there began the period of learning how to run the nationalized industries. We

energetically set about organizing Boards and departments of the Supreme Council of National Economy. Some of the most capable experts and specialists joined us. When the financing of industry was assumed by the State, it was only natural that the work of learning to run them proceeded at a much faster rate. The Supreme Council of National Economy gradually entered the phase of normal organizational work.

It is with a smile that one now recalls the prophecy of the wise owls of *Rech*, who declared that "the first day of their final triumph will be the first day of their headlong fall."

Many years have passed since the Cadet professors sat waiting on their packed trunks for the fall of the Soviet power; if not to-day, they hoped, it would be to-morrow, or in a week. The trunks have long been sold, but the Soviet power grows ever stronger and stronger.

LENIN AND THE PLANNED MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRY

By M. Zhivotov*

For those of us who worked in the Council of Factory Committees in the period when the bourgeoisie was being ejected from the saddle of private property (as Vladimir Ilyich expressed it at a conference of the factory committees) every word of Lenin was law.

The moment the working class assumed the power of government, it became impossible for the factory committes to continue their work without virtually assuming control over production.

Having thought over this question, the Council of Factory Committees, in the person of Comrade Amosov and myself, drew up a plan for the organization of a government body which would regulate and direct the whole of industry and economic life. Having carefully reflected on the organizational forms of this body, we decided to visit Vladimir Ilyich and learn his attitude on the matter.

On October 28 or 29, 1917, Vladimir Ilyich received us at the Smolny in his office on the second floor. Having seated us at a small round table he questioned us regarding the purpose of our visit. We explained our plan in detail, at the same time displaying a graphic representation of the scheme. We were astonished at the extreme attentiveness with which Vladimir Ilyich questioned us regarding the minutest detail of our plan. He was particularly interested in the composition of the proposed body and the name we intended to give it. We showed him the list we had prepared of the representatives from various Commissariats and workers' organizations who were to form

* Formerly Chairman of the Council of Factory and Works Committees of Petrograd.

the directing board of the body. As to the name, we replied that we thought of calling it the Supreme Council of National Economy. He repeated the name several times and declared that it was a very apt one. In a few words he explained that the workers' government needed such a body, since, in view of the task we had set ourselves of socializing the means of production, we needed a body that would help the workers to direct their economic life.

Encouraged by Vladimir Ilyich's sympathy, we asked that our project be issued as a decree, whereupon he laughingly exclaimed : " How can I issue your multi-coloured circles as a decree ? Draw it up on paper in clauses and paragraphs, then we shall publish it as a decree." We frankly admitted that we were not able to write such a decree, which moved Vladimir Ilyich to hearty laughter.

" What is to be done, then ? " he asked.

We begged him to draw up the decree, to which he replied that he himself had no time to write, but he would send somebody to help us.

We left Vladimir Ilyich pleased with the sympathy he had expressed for our project and at the same time thought over what he had said : the workers' government needed a body that would help the workers to direct their economic life.

We visited Vladimir Ilyich on another occasion, as representatives of the Council of Factory Committees.

Towards the end of January 1918, the malicious sabotage of the economically still undefeated bourgeoisie had created a situation in which the Petrograd factories were being brought to a standstill one after another owing to lack of orders. It seemed to us that if all tenders and orders were centralized we would know which of the factories were supplied with orders and which were not. We thought it would be a good thing if the government published a decree centralizing orders. It was to discuss the promulgation of such a decree that we called on Vladimir Ilyich.

Vladimir Ilyich received us in the Smolny. In a comradely manner he asked us to be seated. We explained our request and in answer received advice which astonished us for its definiteness. Vladimir Ilyich declared that, owing to our economic structure and the extremely scattered nature of the

peasant as a consumer, it was impossible to centralize orders. Before it became practical to talk of that we must exert every effort to bring the population—and especially the working class and the peasantry—into the co-operative movement. But when the working class and the peasantry had become organized consumers, and when the organized consumers formed contacts with our industry, it would be entirely unnecessary to issue a decree; we would know the clients of our industries without a decree.

"But now," Vladimir Ilyich said in conclusion, "it would be well if you workers in the factory committees devoted the greatest attention to organizing resistance to the attack of the whiteguards and take the greatest possible part in the struggle against counter-revolution and sabotage within the country."

From these thoughts uttered by Vladimir Ilyich six years ago* we see how in the midst of savage sabotage and counter-revolution his genius already foresaw the necessity for an alliance between our industry and the peasantry through the medium of the co-operatives.

* Written in 1924.—Ed.

THE EARLY DAYS OF THE COMMISSARIAT FOR SOCIAL WELFARE

By A. Kollontay*

It was not such a simple matter to "take possession" of the Ministry in those October days.

For about a week or even more after the great events of October 24 and 25, when the Soviets seized power, the old government offices continued to function as though nothing had happened. Reports passed up and down the bureaucratic ladder of the ministries and the heads of departments continued to sign documents in the name of the Provisional Government. They refused to admit that the government had passed into the hands of the Soviets.

To the officials, the good burghers, and the whole of the "old Petrograd" that was hostile to the proletarian revolution, it seemed incredible that those Bolsheviks, who, in their opinion were either German spies or simply hooligans, seriously intended to govern Russia.

And therefore the Russian bourgeoisie and their servitors, the government officials, would not believe that the Bolsheviks would retain power "more than three days. . . ."

The Soviet government had no intention of ousting or embarrassing the old functionaries and the intelligentsia. On the contrary, the People's Commissars came to occupy their Commissariats unarmed, without a guard, accompanied perhaps by a couple of comrades. They thought of taking over affairs "in a business-like fashion." But no sooner did the People's Commissar appear in the building, than the halls of the ministry were immediately deserted. Only the service staff remained at their posts, with perhaps one or two officials who were sympathetic towards the Bolsheviks.

* Now Soviet Ambassador in Sweden.—Ed.

Having wandered through the deserted building of the Ministry of Poor Relief for a day or two, I with one or two comrades decided to " open " the Commissariat of State Relief (now the People's Commissariat of Social Welfare) at the Smolny. In those days the Smolny buzzed like a disturbed hive. Two streams flowed along its endless corridors—one to the right, to the Military Revolutionary Committee, the other to the left, to the room where the Council of People's Commissars was situated.

Installing ourselves in an empty room containing a table with only one drawer, we hung on the door a handwritten sign :

The People's Commissariat for State Relief. Office hours—12 to 4.

Thus we began our work.

That very same day several burly fellows in ragged overcoats burst in on us.

" Is this where the Bolsheviks are giving relief? We are hungry. We have no roof to our heads. Nobody cares about us. We went to the Kazan Square—the doorkeeper sent us here. You go to the Bolsheviks, they said, ask them for assistance. Give us relief."

We asked them who they were, where they came from, whether they were disabled soldiers.

" What do you mean disabled soldiers ? We are just hungry. Can't you see for yourselves ? What are you wasting our breath for ? Tell us straight : are you Bolsheviks, or not ? "

We explained that of course we were Bolsheviks, but all the same we must know what right such healthy-looking fellows had to demand assistance from the State.

They would not listen to us. Since we were Bolsheviks we were obliged to assist the hungry, they argued.

" Why then did the Soviets take power if no one is going to worry about the starving ? "

They were very persistent, healthy-looking fellows and very determined.

Our position was an embarrassing one. The treasury of the former Ministry of Poor Relief was still in the hands of the Kerensky officials.

We searched our pockets. Not very much. We added the contents of Comrade Tsvetkov's pockets. It worked out at

about twenty kopeks per head, which we handed out in the form of " temporary relief." Our first clients for social relief took our assistance, but refused to go away. What about work ? They wanted work. That is what the Bolsheviks took power for, to give everybody work.

What solution could we find ? To send them into the Red Guard would be dangerous. They were not class conscious ; they admitted that themselves. The militia, perhaps ? They were suited for the militia, healthy fellows. We gave them a note to take to the People's Commissar, adding a footnote : " Feed them in any case."

They went off.

They were followed by an armless man. He was a worker who had lost his arm in the war. But he was not thinking of relief. He had a plan, a plan for saving crippled and armless workers, especially textile workers. We must buy knitting machines ; he would take it upon himself to organize workshops and producers' co-operatives. The armless man had met Vladimir Ilyich in the corridor ; had apparently taken him by storm. Vladimir Ilyich, he asserted, warmly approved of the plan to organize knitting workshops and producers' co-operatives, and had directed him to us to get the money to procure the machines.

But was it our business, the business of the Commissariat, to buy knitting machines ? The armless textile worker is a persistent fellow. He argues eloquently in favour of his " production plan."

But what was to be done ? The Commissariat had not yet even succeeded in securing the keys to the safe in which, according to the junior bookkeeper, Comrade Adashev, the " millions " of the Ministry were kept in hard cash.

We decided on this occasion to act " bureaucratically " and to request the armless man to return in " a day or two."

He too went off. Unsatisfied, it is true, and muttering something about " those Bolsheviks."

He had hardly departed when there nosily entered two representatives of the Disabled Soldiers League. Agitated, nervous and excited they began their attack.

If we did not help the disabled soldiers, if we did not give prompt assistance, if we did not take measures to shelter the

homeless—they would start a demonstration. Their discontent rises, they abuse the Bolsheviks. In a moment, they would be out on the streets demonstrating.

At this moment a messenger arrives, Comrade Vassiliev, straight from the poorhouse.

" The old women are mutinous. There is no fuel. They are freezing. There will be a row if the old women begin to die off. . . ."

He is followed by Comrade Kachan from the playing-card factory (the playing-card factory, as well as the sale of playing-cards, was a monopoly under the charge of the Ministry of Poor Relief).

" Pay day is at hand, but there is no money. The first pay day under the Bolsheviks, and payment delayed! Impossible, that must not be! "

A delegation arrives from the orphan asylums.

" The nurses are preparing to desert—there is no food."

Comrade Amosova from the foundling hospital appears. There is trouble there too. The subsidies have been held up. The nurses are threatening to abandon the infants.

There was a great deal of noise and commotion in the room which saw the birth of the People's Commissariat of Social Welfare.

We hold council.

Comrade Egorov comes hurrying in. He is a Party man and a member of the Soviet from the first day it was formed. He is also chairman and moving spirit of the " Union of Junior Employees " of the Ministry of Poor Relief. He himself formed the union in the summer; it was a bulwark of Bolshevism in the new Commissariat.

We were rejoiced to see him; we surround him.

" We must act," he said. " If there is a row about state relief, if the disabled soldiers, the workers from the playing-card factory, and the nurses start a demonstration on the street and cry that we are starving them, it will be worse than Kerensky's troops. It will be a moral blow to the Soviet Government. A delegate meeting of the Union of Junior Employees will be held at the Ministry this evening. Come along. We will discuss the situation."

So we decided.

Before the meeting I ran in to see Vladimir Ilyich.

It was a modest room, in which during the first few months the meetings of what might be called the night Council of People's Commissars were held.

For some reason or other, presumably owing to haste, during the first few weeks, Vladimir Ilyich's table stood with its face to the wall and its back to the window. Nearer to the window stood a tiny table at which Comrade Gorbunov used to take the minutes. The People's Commissars sat in a half-circle behind Vladimir Ilyich's back and he, the chairman, had to turn round each time someone asked for the floor or was called upon to speak. For a whole week nobody thought of placing the table in a more convenient position for the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. Such were the times. One's thoughts glided over everyday things. One saw, one perceived, only big, fundamental, decisive things. . . .

Only one lamp was burning in the room that evening. It was fairly dark. At first, not seeing Vladimir Ilyich at his usual place at the table, I decided that the room was empty.

But Vladimir Ilyich was standing with his back to me at the window. And through the window shone the frosty, starry sky.

Vladimir Ilyich was gazing at the stars.

Hearing that somebody had entered, he swiftly turned round. " Stars," he said, nodding towards the sky. He still seemed to be engrossed, in thoughts known only to himself. Then suddenly he resumed his business-like manner.

That evening it was decided to appoint Comrade Egorov Assistant Commissar. But in the midst of my brief, jesting report on state relief, Vladimir Ilyich suddenly inquired:

" Did an armless worker come to you regarding a producers' co-operative? The fellow's plan must be supported. He has got hold of a good idea."

How was it that amidst the vast and important affairs that Vladimir Ilyich was then engaged in, he could remember the armless worker who sought assistance for his knitting-machine and worried about his " production plan "?

I left Vladimir Ilyich and hurried to the delegate meeting of the Union of Junior Employees.

Egorov was in the chair. The meeting was a large and noisy one. Many women were present: nurses and ward maids,

workers from the playing-card factory; messengers from the Ministry; mechanics, repair men.

Noise, argument, high feeling.

What about?

About their own needs, affronts, demands? No. Each is defending the interests of the institution in which he works. And with what feeling! One speaks of hospitals and sanatoria, another of the artificial limb shops, a third of the lying-in hospital, a fourth of pensioners and invalids, a fifth of the card factory. Everyone was urgent and insistent regarding the necessity of "saving from ruin" the institution in which he, a junior employee, performed some modest function as messenger, nurse or furnace-man.

A decision was arrived at: to form a Council of the Commissariat. It would now be called a collegium. Each member of the Council took upon himself a branch of activity of the Commissariat; Comrade Kachan, the card factory; Comrade Vassiliev, the poorhouse and pensions; Comrade Amosov, the foundling hospital, and so forth. The delegates elected the Council and dispersed, encouraged and in heightened spirits.

"The work will go on now."

And these junior employees also expressed their opinion as to which of the doctors, the intelligentsia and the officials might be invited to co-operate.

"That one is suitable. He loves his work. He will join us."

Others were disputed, or rejected.

"Saboteur. He does not understand us. He has no pity for the people."

"To pity" was a sort of professional term in the union whose work was carried on among the disinherited and dispossessed.

That very same night the first meeting was held of the Council of the People's Commissariat of State Relief.

And the next day, in the building of the former Ministry, the Soviet Commissariat of State Relief, now the People's Commissariat of Social Welfare, began its urgent and manifold activities.