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NICOLAI LENIN—  
*THE MAN*



By

MAXIM GORKI

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Price 2d.

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Published by the DAILY HERALD, and Printed by the  
Victoria House Printing Co., Ltd., Tudor Street, E.C.4

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# NICOLAI LENIN—

## *The Man*

By MAXIM GORKI

"Great, unapproachable, terrible." These were the epithets a capitalist newspaper in Prague applied to Vladimir Lenin.

They were not epithets inspired by satisfaction at the death of an opponent, that satisfaction which finds expression in the proverb, "The corpse of an enemy always has a good smell." Nor was it an indication of the joy experienced by little people when a great, restless man gets out of their way. No, it was the man's pride in man which rang out loudly in that last testimonial made to him.

I cannot imagine any other man who, standing so high above people, knew so well how to protect himself from the temptations of ambition, and did not lose the vital interest in "simple" folk. He possessed a certain magnetic force which attracted the hearts and the sympathies of the working people. He did not speak Italian, but the Capri fishermen, who had seen Chialapio and many other eminent Russian men, by a miraculous instinct, assigned a special place in their hearts to Lenin.

Wonderfully attractive was his laugh, the hearty laugh of a man who, though he knew well the clumsiness of human stupidity and the acrobatic devices of reason, could at the same time find delight in the childish ingenuousness of people of simple soul.

An old Italian fisherman said of him: "Only an honest man can laugh like that."

Lying in a boat, on a blue wave transparent as the sky, Lenin learned how to fish "with the finger," without a rod. The fishermen explained to him that one should cut down when the finger feels the tremor of the fish-line. He instantly cut down the fish, trailed it along, and cried with the delight of a child, the happiness of a hunter:—

"Aha! Drin-drin!" (a Russian hunting cry).

The fishermen roared with laughter, joyfully, like children, and gave him the nickname: "Signor Drin-drin."

And when he left Capri, they kept on asking me:—

"How is Signor Drin-drin? The Tsar will not get hold of him, no?"

In 1905, in London, several workmen who had seen Lenin for the first time, spoke of his behaviour at a congress. One of them said, very cryptically: "I don't know; perhaps the workmen here in Europe have another man so clever as this one. Belial or somebody else of that kind. But that they should have anyone so lovable I do not believe."

Another workman added, smiling: "He is one of us. A man who knows what he wants."

Someone replied: "Why, Plekhanoff is ours, too!"

And I heard, then, the answer: "Plekhanoff is our teacher, our master; Lenin is our comrade."

In the autumn of 1918 I asked a workman what, in his mind, was the most pronounced characteristic of Lenin? "Simplicity. He is simple as truth." He said this as something he had long ago thought over, long ago decided upon.

It is known that servants are the most severe judges. Lenin's chauffeur, Ghl, a man who had seen various things in his life, was known to say:

"Lenin is not like the rest. There are none such as he. One day I was driving him through animated traffic. I made my way through with difficulty, fearing that they would smash my car, and I kept tooting all the time, much agitated. He opened the door, scrambled to my side, risking to be thrown out, and persuaded me:

"Please don't be so agitated, Ghl. Go as everybody else does; don't toot!"

"I am an old chauffeur; I know that no one else would have said that."

Another friend of mine, also a workman, a man with a soft heart, complained of the hard work in the Tshoka. I told him: "I, too, think that this is not a job for you."

He agreed sadly: "Yes, it does not suit me at all. But when I think that Elich, too, must often hold back the wings of his soul—I feel ashamed of my weakness."

I know and know many workmen who are forced to "hold their soul by the wings," with clenched teeth, and to violate their social idealism for the sake of the cause which they are serving.

## LOVE FOR CHILDREN

Did Lenin, too, have to "hold his soul by the wing"? He paid too little attention to himself to be able to talk about himself with other people. He knew how to keep silent the secret storms raging in his soul. But one day, in Gorki village, caressing some children, he said:

"These youngsters will have a better time than we can; they will not have to go through the things which fell to our lot. For them life will not be so cruel."

Then he added thoughtfully: "All the same—I don't envy them. Our generation has succeeded in accomplishing a task marvellous in its historical importance. The compulsory cruelty of our lives will be understood and justified one day. Everything shall be made clear, everything!"

He caressed children with great caution, touching them with light, gentle hands.

For me, personally, Lenin was not merely a marvellously perfect incarnation of will directed at an aim which no one before him had dared to face. For me he is one of these miraculous personalities, one of those monstrous, fairy-like and unexpected men in Russian history, men of will and genius, as were before him Peter the Great and Tolstoy. I think that such people are possible only in Russia.

Lenin, for me, is the hero out of a legend, a man who has wrenched his burning heart from his breast in order to light up with its fire the path leading away from our present chaos, from the bloody and treacherous swamp of corrupted

"statecraftship."

It is hard to make a picture of him. His heroism was almost entirely lacking in outward brilliancy. It was the modest, meek martyrdom, not rare in Russia, of an honest Russian revolutionary of the intelligentsia, sincerely believing in the possibility of justice on earth. It was the heroism of a man who has sacrificed all the joys of this world to the hard task of obtaining happiness for all people.

One evening, in Moscow, in a friend's flat, Lenin, listening to a Beethoven Sonata, said to me: "I know nothing that could equal the 'Appassionata.' I could hear it played every day. Marvellous, supernatural music.



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When I hear it I always think, maybe with water, childish pride: What wonders human beings are capable of accomplishing!"

And smiling, with half-closed eyes, he added merrily:—

"But I can't listen to music too often; it gets on my nerves, causes the desire to say charming nonsense, and sends the heads of the people who, in spite of living in a dirty hell, are able to create such beauty. And to-day one can't allow oneself the luxury of stroking people on the head; they would bite your hand off. One must hit them on the heads, hit mercilessly, although, in ideal, we are against all violence over men. Him . . . him . . . the job is not an easy one."

The task of honest leaders of men is an inherently hard one. How is it possible to find a leader who would not be a tyrant in a certain degree? . . . But it should be noted that the resistance to the revolution accomplished by Lenin was organized very broadly, very powerfully. And is it not out of place and repulsively hypocritical on the part of "moralists" to speak of the "blood-thirstiness" of the Russian revolution after four years of a shameful all-European slaughter, during which they not only had no compassion for the millions of exterminated people, but tried in every way to keep up this degrading war, until "final victory"?

As a result culture is in danger, the cultured nations are exhausted and are becoming primitive, and the victory remains on the side of universal stupidity: its strong ropes are strangling people until this day.

A man of remarkably strong will, Lenin was in all other points a typical member of the Russian intelligentsia. He possessed in the highest degree the quality characteristic of the Russian intelligentsia—a self-restraint often reaching self-chastisement, self-mutilation, the denial of art, the logic of one of Leonide Andreev's heroes: "People live awfully, therefore I must also live like that."

In the hard year 1922, in the worst days of hunger, Lenin was ashamed to eat the good things which were being sent to him by peasants and soldiers from the provinces. When parrots were brought to his uncomfortable rooms, he frowned, became confused and hastened to distribute the flour, sugar and butter among the sick or the underfed comrades. One day, asking me to come and dine with him, he said: "I will give you some smoked fish I got from Astrakhan."

And patting his forehead of a Socrates, and squinting with his all-seeing eyes, he added:

"They all send me things as though I were a landlord. How is one to prevent them doing it? I can't refuse to accept; it would offend them. And here are people suffering of hunger all round! . . . It's all very silly and unbusiness."

Unpretentious, lacking all taste for wine and tobacco, busy from morning till night with the complex and hard work he had assigned himself, he was without any thought about his person, although he watched the lives of all his comrades with a vigilant eye. His solitude in regard to them rose to a degree of severity accessible only to a woman; every free minute he gave up to others, leaving not a moment's rest to himself.

He is sitting at his table in the workroom, writing very fast, and speaks to me without lifting the pen from the paper.

"Good-morning; how are you? . . . Wait a moment, I'm just finishing this. . . . It is to a comrade in the provinces. He is a bit spleeny—fired, most probably. One must give him a helping hand. The state of mind is no small matter."

I see a volume of "War and Peace" lying on the table.

"Yes, Tolstoy. I wanted to read over again the scene of the hunt, when I remembered I had to write to this man. I have no time to read at all. Only this evening I managed to read your book on Tolstoy. . . ."

## LENIN AND TOLSTOY

Smiling, with half-closed eyes, he stretched himself out with relief in his arm-chair, and, lowering his voice, continued:—

"What a rock, eh? What a colossal figure! There was an artist for you! And do you know what else is marvellous in him? It is his peasant's voice, his peasant's mentality—the real peasant is hidden in him. Until this Course, we had no real peasant in our literature. Not one."

Then, looking at me with his Asiatic little eyes, he asked:—

"Whom can one place on a level with him in Europe?"

And answering himself, he said: "No one!"

He rubbed his hands and laughed, looking much pleased, and blinking like a cat that baskes in the sun.

I often noticed in him pride in Russia, in Russians, in Russian art. Sometimes this trait seemed to me incompatible with Lenin, almost naive, but in these I learned to hear in it a heartfelt echo of a deep, joyful love for his people.

In Capri once, watching how carefully the fishermen disentangled the nets, now by the shark, he remarked: "Our men in Russia work with more spirit!"

And when I expressed some doubt about that he said, not without irritation: "Hm, hm . . . you will forget all about Russia. Being on this kind of a place."

Deseritky told me that he was travelling one day with Lenin in Sweden, and that they were examining a manuscript on Dürer, in the train. Some Germans sat in the same compartment and wanted to know what the book was about. It appeared they had never before heard anything about their great artist. This made Lenin go into raptures, and twice he repeated to Deseritky: "They don't know about their own famous people, and we do!"

Life is combined with such devilish cleverness that it is impossible to love sincerely—if one does not know how to hate. This unavoidable bifurcation of the soul which disfigures a man at the root, this necessity of love coming through hatred—this of itself makes the break up of our present system inevitable.

In Russia, a country where the necessity of suffering is preached as a "universal method" for the salvation of the soul, I have never met, and do not know the man who could have resisted and hated all suffer-

ing, all misery so deeply and strongly as did Lenin.

To my mind, that feeling, that devastation of all that makes up the drama and tragedy of life, fitted Nicolai Lenin, the man of iron, to a particularly high pedestal in a country in which the most beautiful books have been written in honour of and to the glory of suffering.

Russian literature is the most pessimistic literature in Europe; all our books are written on the same subject: how in our youth, as well as in our more mature age, we suffer from lack of wisdom, from the yoke of autocracy, from women, from love of our fellow-creatures, from the unlucky organization of the world; and how in our old age we are tormented by the consciousness of mistakes committed, by bad



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digestion, absence of teeth, and the inevitability of death.

Every Russian who had done his time in prison or in exile for political offences used to consider it to be his duty to offer to Russia a book recording all his miseries. No one, until this day, has ever thought of writing a book about the merry joys of life, although such a work, in a country where people live on book-knowledge, not only would have a tremendous success, but would immediately find numerous followers.

Maybe Lenin saw the tragedy of existence in a simplified light and considered it might be easily averted, as easily as the outward fifth and slovenliness of Russian life can be averted.

But—no matter! What I appreciate in him so greatly was his feeling of inexhaustible, irreconcilable hatred towards all unhappiness and his glowing faith that this unhappiness was not a necessary element in life, but litter which ought to be swept away from it. I would like to call this basic trait in his character a helligworn optimism and to

repeat that it was not a Russian trait. It was the one which most of all attracted my mind to this Man, a man with a big M.

In 1907, in London, Lenin told me:—

"Perhaps we, the Bolsheviks, may commit misunderstandings even among the masses, it is very probable that we shall be exterminated at the very beginning of our work. But that is unimportant! The bourgeois world has reached a state of putrefaction which threatens to poison everything—that is important!"

A few years later, in Paris (at the beginning of the Balkan War, if I am not mistaken), he reminded me:—

"You see—I was right! The dislocation is beginning! The threat of becoming poisoned by the gas of a dead body, should now be clear to all who look events straight in the face."

Pushing his fingers with a characteristic gesture behind his vest, under the sleeves, and walking slowly up and down his narrow room, he continued:—

"That is the beginning of the catastrophe. We will yet live to see a European war, a wild slaughter. It is unavoidable. The proletariat, I think, will not find the strength to prevent this struggle from breaking out. It will of course suffer more than the other classes—that is its fate. But the criminals will sink into the blood which they will shed. The members of the people will be exhausted. That is also unavoidable."

Clenching his teeth, he looked out of the window, into the distance.

"No—you only think! What makes the isolated word the harbingers to a mass slaughter? Can one record it oneself with this? Can you point out to me a less excusable, a sillier crime? The workers will have to pay heavily for this, but finally it is they who will win. Such is the will of history."

## THE HELMSMAN

During the years 1907-1921 my relations with Lenin were far from being what I should have liked them to be, but they could not have been different. He was a politician. He possessed in perfection that actually but subtly obtained indefatigability of standpoint which is necessary for the helmsman of such a huge, heavy ship as is the laden Russia of peasants.

I have an organic distaste for politics, and I am a very doubtful Marxist, for I have little faith in the wisdom of masses in general and of the peasant masses in particular. When Lenin, returning to Russia in 1917, published his "theses," these showed, in my opinion, that he was ready to throw all the educated workmen and all the sincerely revolutionary intelligentsia, inconsiderable in number, but heroic in quality, as a sacrifice to the Russian peasantry. The only active force in Russia was to be engulfed in the morass of the village, like a handful of salt, without showing anything in the spirit, life, or history of the Russian people.

The scientific, the technical, the qualified and specialised intelligentsia, which is, from my point of view, revolutionary in its essence, together with the Socialist Labour intelligentsia, is for me the most precious power in Russia. No other power existed capable of getting the upper hand and organising the peasantry in Russia in 1917. But these forces, negligible in quantity and disorganised by contradictory ideas, could have accomplished their task only on condition that a firm mass union existed.

They had a great deal to perform: to overcome the anarchy of the peasants, cultivate their will, teach them to work with wisdom, trans-

form their organisations, and thus move the whole country forward. This is attainable only when the instincts of the village yield to the organised reason of the town.

Putting it more clearly, I will say that the basic obstacle in the way of Russia becoming Europeanised in culture is the crushing ascendancy of the illiterate peasantry over townpeople; the sociological individualism of the peasants, the almost entire absence of social emotions among them. The dictatorship of politically educated workers, in union with the intelligentsia, was to my mind, the only possible issue out of the complicated situation. I disagree with Communists in their low estimation of the part played by the Russian intelligentsia in the Russian revolution. It was prepared by that intelligentsia, including all the "Bolsheviks" who had educated hundreds of workmen in the spirit of social heroism and high intellectuality. The Russian intelligentsia—both scientific and Labour—was, is, and will remain in the future the dray horse harnessed to the heavy cart of the history of Russia. In spite of all the doubts and crises which they have gone through, the wisdom of the masses remains a force which demands direction from outside.

Until 1918, until the mean attempt to kill Lenin took place, I did not come together with him in Russia, and did not even see him casually from afar. I ran to him when he still used his arm with difficulty, and could hardly move his injured back. In answer to my expressions of indignation, he answered unwillingly, in the way with which one speaks of boring, tedious matters:—

"It's a fight. It can't be helped. Every man acts as he thinks best."

We met in a friendly way, but, of course, the piercing, all-seeing eyes of dear Hich looked at me with evident compassion, as one looks at an "erring soul." That sort of glance I am used to. For



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thirty years people have been looking at me like that. I expect with confidence that the same glance will follow me to my grave.

A few moments later Lenin said with great enthusiasm: "Whoever is not with us—is against us. It is a foolish phantasy to imagine that there are people independent of history. Even if one were to admit that there were such people in the past, they don't exist any more. Everybody is involved in the whirl of reality, entangled as never before."

"You say I simplify life too much," he asked me, "but this simplification threatens to ruin culture, yes?"

And then came the ironical, the characteristic: "Hes, hes, . . . ." The piercing glance grew sharper and, lowering his voice, Lenin went on:



"Well, what about the millions of peasants armed with guns—are they not a threat to culture, to your mind—no? Do you think that the Constituent Assembly would have known how to handle their anarchism? You, who make such a fuss—and quite rightly, too—about peasant anarchism, ought to know better than anybody else what work we are accomplishing. The Russian masses ought to be confronted with something very simple, very accessible to their reason. Soviets and Communism are simple!"

## THE ENEMY OF CHAOS

But it is not so much my object to speak of Nikolai Lenin, the politician—it is Lenin the man, who was very dear and very close to me.

Bold enthusiasm was a characteristic of his nature, but it was not the careless, hazardous boldness of a gambler; it was an exceptional energy of spirit, characteristic of a man with an unshakable faith in his calling, a man deeply and many-sidedly conscious of his link with the world, and reaching unto the end that his part in the world's chaos was to be the enemy of chaos.

He could play chess, examine a "History of Costumes," lead a discussion with various comrades, fish, go for long walks along the stony paths of Capri, warmed by a southern sun, admire the golden flowers of the lagoon and the swarthy children of the fishermen—all with the same vivacity. And in the long evenings, listening to tales about Russia, about its villages, he used to sigh profoundly:

"How little I know of Russia! Kirghiz—Kazan, Petersburg—then exile—that is about all!"

He loved a joke, and used to laugh, shaking with all his body, "swimming" in laughter, often until tears stood in his eyes. His short, characteristic ejaculations: "Hm, hm . . ." acquired a whole scale of different shades of expression on his lips—from a stinging irony to a cautious dubiousness; and often a sharp sense of humour sounded in that "Hm, hm . . ." a humour accessible only to a vigorous man, well aware of all the satanic absurdities of life.

Staid and square, with the skull of a Socrates, and the all-seeing eyes of the great and crusty sage, he often stood in a strange and somewhat comical posture, his head thrown back, slightly inclining on the shoulder, his fingers hidden under the arms behind the vest. There was something wonderfully charming and funny in that pose, something of a triumphant cocksureness, so to say; at such moments he used to sparkle with gaiety, this great child of a world under a curse, this splendid man who had to make himself a sacrifice to hatred and hostility for the sake of the cause of love and beauty.

## FOE OF LIES AND MISERY

His movements were light and agile. His rare and vigorous gestures were in harmony with his manner of speech, made up of few words, but abundant in thought. And his piercing eyes—the eyes of an untiring foe of lies and misery—shone and sparkled in his Mongol face; they sparkled half-closed, blinking, smiling ironically, flashing with anger. The light of those eyes made his speech more biting, more unacceptably clear. It seemed sometimes that the indomitable energy of his spirit shot sparks out of his eyes and that the words, saturated with it, glittered in the air. His speech always roused in me a physical sensation of breathing in inevitable truths, and although these truths were often unacceptable to me, I could not mistake their power.

It was curious to see Lenin in the park at Gorki Village. He had the vigilant eyes of a helmsman, closely, aptly, directing the discussions of his comrades; or else, standing on an elevation, his head thrown back, he would be flinging clear, definite words into the silenced crowd, into the hungry faces of people crying for truth.

A great deal has been written and said to prove that Lenin was cruel. I will not be so tactless as to defend him. I know that calumny and lies are a legalised method of politics, the usual means of struggle with an enemy. Among all the great men of this world, not one is to be found whom folk have not attempted to splash with mud. That is a thing known to all.

The evil desire of defiguring things of exceptional beauty, which is noticeable so often, has the same source as the mean aspiration, at all costs, to calumniate any exceptional personality. Such personalities prevent people from leading the life they want to lead. People aspire—if they aspire at all—not at all to an alteration of their social habits—merely to an expansion of them. The fundamental greening and application of the majority is: "Do not come interfering with our customary way of living!" Nikolai Lenin was a man who succeeded in preventing people from living according to their acquired habits more brilliantly than anyone else succeeded before him.

I do not know which it was he roused the more: love or hatred? The hatred he provoked is rakedly and repulsively obvious; its blue, pestilence stains shins brilliantly everywhere. But I fear that the love itself for Lenin was, with many, needs the dark faith of exhausted and despairing people in a miracle-worker, love which expects a miracle, but does nothing to instill its power into the body of an age almost numb with the suffering that has been provoked by the spirit of greed among some and by monstrous stupidity among others.

## REVOLUTION AND CRUELTY

I often had occasion to speak with Lenin of the cruelty of revolutionary tactics and methods.

"What do you expect?" he asked, amazed and indignant. "Is humanity possible in such an unusually fierce battle? Where is there a place for soft-heartedness and generosity? We are blockaded by Europe. We are deprived of the support we expected from the European proletariat. Counter-revolution cranks on to us like a bear. What are we to do? Are we not in the right to fight and offer resistance? We are no fools! We know that what we want no one can accomplish except ourselves. Is it possible you can believe that if I were not convinced of this I would remain here?"

"In what measure do you consider the blows dealt in a fight necessary—or superfluous?" he once asked me after a hot discussion. To this simple question I could answer only lyrically. I doubt whether there is another answer to it. I often approached him with various petitions, and felt that my intercessions roused compassion, almost contempt, for me in Lenin.

He asked me: "Don't you think that you are worrying over mere trifles?"

But I went on with what I considered it necessary to say, and the crooked, inevitable glances of a man who kept the account of the enemies of the proletariat did not repulse me. He would shake his head mournfully and say:

"You compromise yourself in the eyes of the workers."

But I tried to indicate to him that the workers in a "state of irresolvability and inaction" often treat the too "simple" and lightly the question of freedom and life of many valuable people. This, to my mind, not only compromised the honest and hard task of a revolution by an unnecessary and often absurd cruelty, but was also objectively unwholesome for the cause, as it repelled many strong men from participating in it.

"*Hm—hm.*" Lenin growled sceptically, indicating the numerous cases of treason to the workers' cause to be noted among the "intelligentsia."

"Between ourselves," he went on, "they play traitor mass out of cowardice, out of a fear to be caught empty-handed, out of a terror that the beloved theory may suffer when confronted with practice. We do not fear that. Theory, hypothesis is not a 'sacred' thing to us; it is nothing but a tool."

In spite of all this, I do not remember one occasion when Ilich refused a petition of mine. If they happened not to be carried through, it was not he who was to blame, but the cursed "technical weaknesses" in which the uncouth machinery of Russian statecraft has always abounded. Alas, it may be, that someone's ill-feeling, someone's malicious unwillingness to ease burdens to save lives, interlarded with my success. Revenge and ill-feeling often act by inertia. And besides, there always exist small, mentally abnormal people with a sickly delight in the sufferings of their fellow-creatures.

### HELP FOR ENEMIES

Very often I was amazed by Lenin's readiness to help people whom he looked upon as enemies, and by his concern as to their future. There was the case of a general, a chemist and scientist, threatened with death.

"*Hm—hm.*" Lenin said, listening attentively to my story. "So you affirm that he was not aware that his sons concealed guns in his laboratory? There is something romantic in that. I must give it to X. to unravel; he has a good nose for the truth."

A few days later he rang me up in Petrograd: "Your general will be set free; I think it has already been done. What is it he wants to work at?"

"*Hydro-erabition.*"

"Ah, yes, that carbolic stuff. Well, let him make it. Tell me what he needs for it."

And in order to hide his glad confusion at having saved a man's life, Lenin concealed it under irony. In a few days he asked again. "Well, what about your general? Is he all right?"

"Very well," he told me on another occasion when I had interceded in a case of exceptional importance. "Very well, you will take those people on bail. But how is one to arrange their fate afterwards, so that anything like the Shingareff case may not happen? Where are we to put them? That is difficult to decide."

Two days later, in the presence of people not belonging to his party, comparative strangers, he asked, with a preoccupied air:

"Have you arranged all you wanted about the bail for those four? Formalities? *Hm. . .* We are swallowed up by those formalities."

I did not succeed in saving those people—they were hastily killed. I was told that that murder provoked a fit of wild anger in Lenin.

In 1859 a beautiful woman used to appear in the kitchens of Petrograd and demand severely:

"I am Princess X., give me a bone for my dogs!"

It was said that, unable to stand the hunger and misery, she had decided to drown herself in the Neva, but that her four dogs, seeing the evil device of their mistress, followed her, and, through their wails and agitation, compelled her to abandon the idea of suicide.

I told this story to Lenin. Looking at me stealthily, he half closed his eyes and, finally shutting them altogether, said gloomily:

"If that is a made-up story, it is well made up. A joke of the revolution!"

Then he remained silent. Finally, rising and looking through some papers scattered on the table, he muttered thoughtfully:

"Yes, those people" (he meant aristocrats) "have had a hard time. History is a cruel step-mother; it strikes nothing in the path of redemption. Yes, we can't deny it—these people have had a decidedly hard time. The clever ones understand, of course, that they have been pulled up by the roots, and that they will not grow to the earth any more. As to transplantation to Europe, that will not satisfy the clever ones; they will not assimilate themselves over there. What do you think?"

"No, I don't think they will."

"Then that means that either they will join us or again work for intervention."

I asked him whether it was a fancy of mine, or did he actually regard aristocratic people.

"I regret the clever ones. We have not many of them. We are a talented people, but our minds are lazy. The Russian clever ones is usually a Jew, or a man with a Jewish origin."

And remembering several friends who had outgrown class anti-psychology and who worked with the "boishviki," he spoke of them with remarkable affection and tenderness.

Feeling himself very ill and tired, he wrote to me in 1921:

"I have sent your letter on to Kameneff. I am so tired myself that I can't do a stroke of work. And you have hemorrhage and don't go abroad? That is unheard-of, shameful, unreasonable. In a good sanatorium in Europe you will get cured and will be able to do so much more. My word, you will, while here neither can you get a cure, nor do any work—just a bustle it all is, nothing but a useless bustle! Go away and get better. Don't be stubborn, I beg of you!—Your Lenin."

For more than a year he had insisted with a marvellous obstinacy that I should leave Russia, and I was amazed how, being completely engrossed in work, he found time to remember that someone was sick and needed a rest. But he had probably written dozens of letters like that.

## LOVE OF COMRADES

I have already mentioned Lenin's quite exceptional solicitude in regard to his comrades, a solicitude which penetrated through to all the unpleasantnesses of their lives. In this feeling I never found traces of that interested attention which is so common characteristic of a clever master in his relationship towards honest and able workmen. No. It was the sincere attention of a real comrade, the love of an equal towards an equal. I know that it is impossible to put even the most ardent members of his party on an equality with Nicolai Lenin, but he himself did not realize it, or, more exactly, did not want to realize it.

He was at times very sharp in his bearing with men, mocked at them mercilessly, sometimes rebuked them bitingly—all that is true. But how often in his judgment of people whom yesterday he had abused and "scolded," have I clearly heard a note of sincere admiration called forth by their valour and moral solidity, their hard, unshinuous work amid the terrible conditions of 1918-1921, work surrounded by spies of all countries as well as of the party, among conspiracies which burnt out like pestilent abscesses on the body of the country, exhausted by war. They worked indefatigably, eating little and badly, living in perpetual anxiety.

Lenin himself did not seem to feel the weight of these conditions, these anomalies of a life shaken to its deepest foundations by the bloody storm of a civil struggle. Only once, in a conversation with Madame Andreyeva, according to her statement, did something like a complaint escape him.

"What is to be done?" he asked her. "We have to fight, it is an absolute necessity. We find it hard? Of course we do. You think I, too, do not find it hard? And how! But look what X looks like! There is nothing to be done! Better have a hard time and come out victorious in the end!"

I myself heard only one complaint from him:

"What a pity Martoff is not with us; what a great pity! What a wonderful comrade he was, what a genuine man!"

I remember how he laughed after reading somewhere Martoff's statement, "There are only two Communists in Russia—Lenin and Kollontai." And he added, with a sigh, "What a mind, what a bright mind!"

With respect and wonder he observed, after sending one of the "industrial" comrades out of his office: "Have you known him long? He could have been at the head of any Cabinet in Europe!"

And rubbing his hands with a laugh, he said: "Europe is poorer in great men than we are."

## LENIN AND THE GENERALS

I asked him one day to go to the Munitions Department to see the invention of a Bolshevik, who had served before in the artillery, and had now discovered an apparatus for correcting fire at aeroplanes.

"What do I know about it?" he asked; but went all the same.

In a dark room, around a table on which stood the machine, were gathered seven glossy generals, grey-haired old scientists. Among them Lenin's modest figure in plain clothes was lost—was unrecognisable. The inventor began to explain the construction of the machine. Lenin listened to him for two or three minutes, and then said approvingly:

"His . . . his . . ." and began questioning the inventor as freely as though he were examining him in matters of politics. He asked about the dimensions of the field of vision, and many other questions. The inventor and the generals explained everything to him with animation. Next day the inventor said to me:

"I told my generals that you would come with a friend, but I did not say who the friend was. They did not recognise Elitch, and, besides, they could not imagine that he would come without fuss or pomp. They asked me: 'Who is he—a professor?' Lenin I told them. They were amazed. What? It could not be! And how can he know all our mysteries? Why, he asked questions like a man perfectly at home in technical matters. It's a mystery."

I think they remained convinced that it was not Lenin who had been to see them.

While Lenin, leaving the place with me, laughed, and said:—

" You say that our old friend has another invention. What is it? We must arrange that he shall be bothered with nothing else. Oh, if only we had the means to surround those technical people with the ideal conditions needed for their work! In 20 years Russia would be the first country in the world!"

Yes, I often heard him praise his comrades. Even about those for whom, according to remark, he had no sympathy, Lenin spoke with a true estimation of their energy. I told him that many would be astonished at his praise of one comrade.

" Yes, yes! I know! People spread lies about my relations with him. How they all lie, especially about me and Trotsky. . . ."

Striking his fist on the table, he said:—

" But let them show me another man capable of organizing an almost perfect army in one year, and conquering the sympathies of military specialists. And we have a man like that. We have all we want. And we shall have miracles, too, yes!" . . .

He liked human beings, loved them with self-denial. His love looked across the distance and through clouds of hatred.

## A GREAT RUSSIAN

He was a true Russian. He was a Russian who had lived long outside Russia, and watched it from afar. From afar it seems more beautiful, more full of colour. He estimated rightly its potential power, the exceptional talent of its people, still inadequately expressed, dimmed by their hard and wearisome history, but always flashing their gift on the dark background of Russian life, like brilliant golden stars.

Nikolai Lenin awakened Russia; it will not go to sleep again. He loved the Russian workman in his own way, which was a very good way. One could see this when he spoke of the European proletariat, when he pointed out the absence among them of the characteristics which Kautsky had noted so well in his pamphlet on the Russian workman.

Nikolai Lenin, that great, that genuine man, is dead. His death struck pain into the hearts of those who know him. But the dark line of death only showed up more sharply his importance in the eyes of the world—his importance as the leader of working people. And if the cloud of hate surrounding his name, the cloud of lies and calumnies, were still more dense than it is, no matter, there are no forces that could extinguish the torch lit by Lenin in the darkness of the maddened world. And there has been no man who better deserved to be eternally remembered.

Nikolai Lenin is dead. But the heirs of his wisdom and will are still alive. In the end honesty and truth created by man conquer. Everything must yield to those qualities which make a Man.