

By the Mausoleum.

Under the Kremlin wall, where the chimes of the III International ring out indistinctly, by the mass graves, there is a fresh, hastily made mausoleum, lined with planks, and on them, painted in steel color, is inscribed one word, which has become as big as the world, one word: Lenin.

The mausoleum stands motionless and austere, an armored car at this headquarters of the red-crowned, red-starred army. The crypt stands like a faithful, silent guardian.

...These are days of farewell, of last greetings to the departed, and one name remains, persistently, irresistibly imbued with the poignant bitterness of recent loss: Lenin.

Here we have a call and a banner, a password and a slogan, a pledge of loyalty and a call to the coming centuries, a battle cry and a symbol of brotherhood and comradeship.

Our eyes blur before the image of an agile, sturdy man and one whose lips will never again open with the living thrill of the word. It seems that all that is necessary has been said in hundreds and thousands of articles, all has been summed up, and yet there is something important that has not been written about and that will be not written until much later and no time soon. At such moments, the poverty and limitation of language is particularly acute.

...Lenin...

...Russia has long lived in revolts, in uprisings, in the bloody and cruel struggle of the lower masses of the laboring people. The history of this struggle goes back into the depths and darkness of centuries. It is known in the most general outlines. The historical life of our borderlands flowed under the sign of this struggle. Our fugitives, protestants, “vassals” and “serfs” who could not be reconciled, who suffered from the oppression of tsarist officials and nobles, fled there. The free, riotous Zaporozhian sech, the wild taiga places of Siberia, the boundless steppes of Orenburg, the cold rocks and tundras of the northern region gave shelter to seekers of a “righteous life,” to those who defended their rights to a better life and, above all, the right to own and cultivate land freely.

More than once or twice with Pugachev, with Razin, with other people's atamans and leaders, our “rabble” rose up, avenging with fire and sword the nobility and merchants for their hardships and for their hopeless life. That which appeared as an idyll in history textbooks, in novels and novellas, in poems and verses, was saturated and filled to the brim with either a muffled and concealed, or then with an explicit and resounding struggle of the oppressed against the oppressors.

But it always happened that the movement and struggle of the peasant masses crashed against the granite of the despotic state. The state was organized, had a complex administrative apparatus and a regular army; it relied on the local nobility with its distinct culture. The peasantry lived in

immobile, patriarchal, and backward serfdom; it was dispersed, illiterate, and uncultured. It arose spontaneously, unorganized, and just as spontaneously threw down arms at the first failures. Such defeats were incalculable and constant. There was a conviction, a certainty, even: “Why fight a losing battle?”, “we didn't start it, we won't end it”. It seemed that the upper and lower social strata would exist forever, and the struggle of the oppressed was doomed to defeat.

That's the way it was not only in Russia, but in Turkey, India, China and Japan.

In the so-called “epoch of great reforms,” our peasantry succeeded in shaking up classical serfdom, but there was no victory here. Tsarist and noble oppression remained, serfdom remained in its vestiges. In the second half of the nineteenth century came the revolutionary Narodnik intelligentsia, but it was too foreign to the people and distant from them. The new class-fighter had not yet been formed, and the heroic efforts of our intelligentsia also crashed on the granite of despotism, and was scattered in the ascetic struggle of loners, small circles and groups.

Lenin was the first to lead the victorious revolutionary struggle of the working people, which washed away both the vestiges of serfdom and our despicable Asiatic capitalism. He was and remains above all a leader of the masses, who went far beyond the borders of Russia; his whole life is strongly connected with the class struggle of the proletariat of all countries and peoples, but this in no way changes the position that for Russia, in Russia, he was the first victorious leader, the organizer of the revolutionary victory, the leader who washed the old system clean away.

Of course, the struggle of the masses went forward immeasurably farther than the rebellions of Pugachev and Razin. The country was being brutally crushed and ground up by the iron jaws of capital. A new class of wage-laborers was formed, grew, and strengthened in the country, and our original peasant was undergoing the merciless preliminary training of the machine-concrete age. The new “fourth estate,” to the extent of its growth, to the extent of the general decomposition of capitalism, has set socialism as its ideal and its ultimate goal – not utopian, not abstract, but real and scientific. Its chief guide, its preacher in the working masses was Lenin. But Lenin was never only a preacher and a teacher. He was a brilliant practitioner. He knew that the worker would not achieve socialism, would not defeat tsarism, unless he succeeded in attracting one part (the poorest) and neutralizing the other part of the peasantry (the middle peasant). And as one of the main tasks of his policy he set the conjoining, the interlocking, the good-neighborliness of the worker and the peasant. To the extent that it was necessary for the victory over tsarism and over the provisional government, for undermining the power of Mr. Coupon, for establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, he solved this problem ingeniously. Through the workers, relying on them and with them, Lenin united, fused, rallied, trained, raised and threw into battle our peasantry, never for a moment missing the main goal – the struggle for communism. In Russia this joint effort was made easier by the fact that the majority of our workers were connected with the countryside.

Thanks to this link, he was victorious. And that is why his image came forward and left behind itself the fiery fighters, heralds, supporters, and advocates of the revolutionary cause. He smashed backwardness, Oblomovism, non-resistance [to evil]; he wiped away our native Asia. He proved that the oppressed are winning, will win, and have won; he showed how victory is organized.

The Russia of the Soviets – this is a sufficiently graphic argument. Thus, in the most backward laboring masses in Russia, Europe, Asia, and Africa, everywhere he instilled, infused, strengthened, and reinforced faith – confidence in their own strength, in the triumph of their hidden thoughts and hopes. With Lenin, through Lenin, in Lenin, millions of people were convinced by experience, with their own eyes, that the victory of labor is not a dream, is not a miraculous but unfulfilled fairy tale. After Lenin, we cannot say: “so it was – so it will be”, “we did not start it, we will not end it”. In our underdeveloped and backward country, this has invaluable significance.

Lenin did not create history like a demiurge or the biblical Jehovah. He did not change the *direction*, character, or the course of the historical stream, but moved together and within it; he was a part of it; but the stream was alive, human. Lenin was ahead of it; he brought orderliness into the spontaneous movement, he warned where there were dangerous thresholds, where it was possible to crash temporarily, to lose many unnecessary victims, and he threw people and threw himself with frantic energy where it was necessary to wash away, erode, demolish, and destroy. He *accelerated* the movement by bringing reason into it.

Lenin organized the victory of the revolutionary masses in Russia and undermined the old world in all parts of the globe by uniting the proletariat and the peasantry. The simple word “smychka”, [link, bond, alliance] which has become erased, means not only sober accounting, but great attention, love, and sensitivity to the needs not only of the workers but also of the peasantry. It is not without reason that Lenin never tired of proving that the peasant has two souls: one proprietary, the other labor. That is why Lenin now stands as something exceptional and monumental, like the Himalayas in a chain of mountains and foothills, overshadowing many others that are large and significant. That is why his name is on the lips of millions of people, and over a million people have passed by his coffin, paying their farewell duty to him in tattered clothes in 20-degree frosts – a worker stands in thought at the crypt, and a poor, illiterate peasant woman wails as the people do, and a child cries, while a Caucasian mountaineer, an Armenian, an Indian, a Chinese and a Negro honor his grave; his death has become a huge social phenomenon.

Lenin came from a typical intelligentsia family, but there was nothing in him characteristic of our past generation of the intelligentsia: no Hamletism, no irresponsibility and disorderliness, none of the intelligentsia’s “breadth of nature,” no Oblomovism, no traits found in Chekhov or Dostoevsky, no hail-fellow posturing, or any other similar characteristics. Lenin was a vivid,

distinctive, and individual person, but he was not an individualist. He was mass-minded from head to toe. He absorbed the best precepts of the revolutionary intelligentsia's underground, from Herzen to those in Narodnaya Volya [People's Will], but still, on the whole, he was far from them, and the most important thing that distinguishes him is that Lenin cannot be thought of, cannot be imagined in isolation from the broad masses of workers and peasants, whereas all our Russian revolutionaries of the old intelligentsia were always loners, outside the people, or above the people. Of course, Lenin lived at a time when working mankind had come into a great social movement, when the working class had formed and matured, but a great deal belongs to him and was achieved in hard work on himself. N. K. Krupskaya said at the XI Congress of Soviets very accurately, profoundly and correctly that to the painful and urgent questions comrade Lenin found answers in Marx and went with them to the workers: "But he did not come to the workers as an arrogant teacher. He came as a comrade. He did not only talk and tell: he listened attentively to what the workers told him." *He taught the workers and was himself able to learn from them.* In this we must look for the secret of Lenin's wisdom. It was thanks to this skill that he became a mass worker, merged with the people of labor, and became an ideological spokesman for their interests, hopes and thoughts. For the same reason, while coming from an intelligentsia milieu, he resembled so little a Russian intellectual, and so much of him came from the worker. Lenin is a genius. His precise, scholarly, well-trained mind of a social strategist, tactician and visionary, the firmness and hardening of his will, his extraordinary capacity for work, his ability to unite, to organize, to act together, his latent revolutionary pathos, his hatred to the end for everything philistine, bourgeois, and exploitative; his matter-of-factness, simplicity and completely lack of posturing – all this is his, Lenin's, individuality. But these individual traits are also the blood-typical properties of the wage-earning class. This connection came about because Lenin taught and was able to learn from the worker.

Many petty-bourgeois intellectuals do not understand and are surprised at Lenin's fearlessness. Yes, he was fearless, he was able to go to the end; once convinced, he acted without hesitation and doubt. He never took revenge for the sake of revenge, but in the interests of the revolution, he did not stop before any sacrifice, he was not afraid of blood where it was impossible to do without it. Why? Because he could sense the potential will of the worker, he could "listen attentively," he knew and understood what they lived and breathed.

A truly great heart beat in him with a burning love for all workers. This feeling was hidden, concealed by Vladimir Ilyich's matter-of-fact behavior. One could say that *with him, this feeling was entirely absorbed in the cause, in practice.*

In the ability to teach and learn from the workers, one must also seek an explanation for the exceptional and singular influence which Comrade Lenin enjoyed in the ranks of the Communist Party. The Russian Revolution is Bolshevism. Bolshevism is Lenin. The Communist Party is Lenin's party. Lenin and our party are synonymous. But the Bolshevik Party smashed and shattered the tsar's throne, undermined the power of Mr. Coupon, and led to the bankruptcy of the petty-bourgeois socialists, only because it followed its leader: *it taught and it learned from*

the masses. By giving shape and translating into clear socio-political language what was fermenting in the workers' grassroots, what was often only instinctively experienced by the worker himself, Lenin created in the Party a special atmosphere, a psychological and social environment, in which the best revolutionary intellectuals were miraculously reshaped and remade: they shed their intellectualism and were imbued with the moods and thoughts of the most advanced workers. The best example of this is the cadre of professional revolutionaries, the old guard, which was largely populated by intellectuals.

But neither the party nor Lenin have ever flattered or indulged the working masses, nor have they ever lagged behind them. On the contrary, Lenin's party has always tried to raise the working masses to the level of the most revolutionary, determined and conscious vanguard, fighting ruthlessly against trade-unionism, economism, reformism, and liquidationism. *The whole essence of Bolshevism lies in this combination of the purity of the movement, of orthodox hard-headedness, with the ability to learn from the working masses.* This is the rock on which our party rests, “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”¹

This is what Comrade Lenin taught his party.

Lenin – is the meeting point of the West and the East, and not only the East. Lenin was able to unite the latest revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat of the West with the liberation struggle of the enslaved, subjugated, and culturally deprived peoples of Asia, Africa, Australia and America.

Nothing revealed Lenin's amazing sensitivity, understanding and knowledge of the needs and situation of the oppressed with such force, vividness and clarity as in his relations with these peoples, who are under the most inhuman oppression of their own and foreign enslavers. Lenin firmly knew that there could be no question of a genuine socialist society as long as whole nations were turned into rickshaws for the demands of masters and lords, bankers and financiers, as long as the patriarchal economic and political order of these nations and states was not shaken.

The whole life of Comrade Lenin was imbued with great concern for these recently dormant Teherans, for this world-wide Asia, enslaved and plundered. Here, too, he did not weary, he did not tire of fighting against misters and lords, against national despots and oppressors. Nor did he indulge those upper layers and strata of Western European and American workers who received handouts from the world's robbers, who in one way or another, actively or passively, consciously or unconsciously, had a hand in or allowed the capitalists of their own country and state to kill, rob, and turn into pack animals and cannon fodder the Hindu, the Negro, the Chinese. And he struck at the most distressed, the most dangerous places in the old world; he struck firmly, precisely, relentlessly.

¹ Cf. Matthew 16:18 – “...upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

In this field, almost the entire evaluation of Comrade Lenin lies ahead of us, in the centuries to come, for we do not have sufficient data to even make a rough approximation of the results. And it is no accident, of course, that Lenin came out of Russia. Precisely, because Russia lies at the junction of East and West, and in Russia, along with highly developed capitalism, the Asian way of life was nesting side by side.

He was an internationalist like no other. And the words of the poet should be addressed to him more than anyone else:

The rumor of me shall spread throughout all great Russia.
And every tongue in the land will call me by name:
The proud grandson of the Slavs, and the Finn, and the now savage
Tunguz, and the Kalmyk, friend of the steppes.²

*A friend of laboring humanity, never, in any way, in any place, did he betray them – so he lived
and so he went to his grave.*

About Lenin, who put forward the idea of the power of the Soviets and practically realized the dictatorship of the proletariat, we need to write especially. Entire studies are required in this field. Moreover, the activity of comrade Lenin during this period took place before the eyes of millions of people. Here it is enough to note one feature. Struggling for the realization of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin never tired of contrasting formal, “pure”, bourgeois democracy with proletarian, plebeian democracy. Instead of playing the game of freedoms, in parliaments with four-tailed elections [universal, direct, equal and secret], Comrade Lenin moved hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants into the economy, into the Red Army, into the state and party organs. He gave them real, not phantom, power and found that the essence of proletarian democratism lay precisely in giving the workers access to schools, to universities, in giving them mastery of the “temples of science,” in giving them control of the factories, plants, and the state.

The big and small Kerenskys are still shedding tears and do not understand how it happened that the workers turned their backs on all the splendid freedoms and preferred the “regime of terror and violence.” The fact is very simple and clear: “the regime of terror and violence” has created before our eyes huge cadres of the new demos who have become masters of the economic, political and cultural life of the country.

And in this, in the final analysis, Comrade Lenin only “listened attentively to what the workers told him,” for the Soviets were spontaneously put forward, first of all, by the working masses themselves.

² Lines from Pushkin’s poem, “Unto myself I raised a monument..” (1836).

The death and funeral of Comrade Lenin have shown and emphasized that he was a truly national, popular leader and hero. The death of Comrade Lenin found such a powerful, massive response in the whole country, that no one could have expected. All Russia was shaken and felt the sadness of loss. It became visible, clear and knowable what an incalculable number of people – the entirety of laboring Russia – considered him close, necessary, beloved, the only one, their own. And it is not without reason that we are witnessing how hundreds of thousands of calloused people, who stood aloof from the Communist Party, have decided to continue the cause of Comrade Lenin in its ranks.

Upon his death, Lenin belongs to those great men whose importance, whose specific weight, unceasingly grows in the centuries to come. Already now, before our eyes, his name is becoming a legend, a fairy tale, a saga. Different groups of our motley population are already composing, crafting, and creating their own Lenin. They seek in him the embodiment of their hopes, ideals and thoughts. Some see him as a pacifist³; others as a kind American uncle; some see him as a culture-bearer; others as a cunning and thrifty muzhik; and still others are already shrouding him in a mystical fog.

One can also be sure that, in addition to slander and curses, the bourgeois world will try to distort the image of Comrade Lenin, and one of the next tasks will be to struggle resolutely against such distortions. And of these, of course, there will be no shortage.

But what can be said about those “socialists” who, in the days of general mourning, found nothing better to do than to yap like a shabby mongrel from a foreign back alley. This, too, took place. № 368 of “Days”, the organ of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and People’s Socialists, printed: “In the interval between the revolution of 1917 and the beginning of 1914 lies ‘Zimmerwaldism,’ the darkest period for Lenin’s biography. It is not the struggle against war itself that puts a dark stain on the reputation of a revolutionary. Pacifists who agitated against war can be found in every warring nation. Lenin died without extinguishing or endeavoring to extinguish the direct accusation of his connection with the German headquarters.” All this was written in the days when literally the whole of Moscow was proceeding toward Lenin’s coffin. The mutt from “Days” is so brainless and stupid that he calls Lenin, who hurled the slogan “war on war”... a pacifist. And as for the connection with the German headquarters, now, after 6 years of our revolution, only freaks can talk about it: there is nothing to refute.

Comrade. Lenin left us in complex and contradictory conditions of social life: state socialism and the NEP, the recognition of Soviet Russia by the bourgeois world and relentless, new, secret and overt attempts to undermine the Republic of the Soviets, etc.

³ Непротивленец – a follower of Tolstoyan non-resistance to evil with force.

Lenin made communism the question of the day, he made it a practical and tactical problem. The distant became close, tangible, and visible; the ideal became real. Communism is no longer a doctrine, but a cause, a practice, a daily struggle, and work.

In this sense, Comrade Lenin became a new Prometheus, who brought the sacred fire of socialism from heaven to earth.

Many formidable dangers – daily, hourly, at every step – await the paladins of the new promised land. But we are already on our way; we have moved too far away from the captivity of capitalist Egypt. There is no return for us, and those who have experienced this yoke cannot want it. On us, contemporaries, companions of Comrade Lenin, on us, the Old Guard, who have navigated through life shoulder to shoulder with him, who have bound our lives to him unbreakably, there lies a particularly heavy, honorable and great responsibility: to see the cause through to the end, to be consistent and unyielding, as he was consistent and unyielding. We must pay special attention to one of the most important precepts, to one of the most difficult problems – the link between the proletariat and the peasantry: for after all, Lenin, who had constantly raised this question with special acuteness, is no longer here.

Let our hands not tremble, let our red battle banners not fall!

