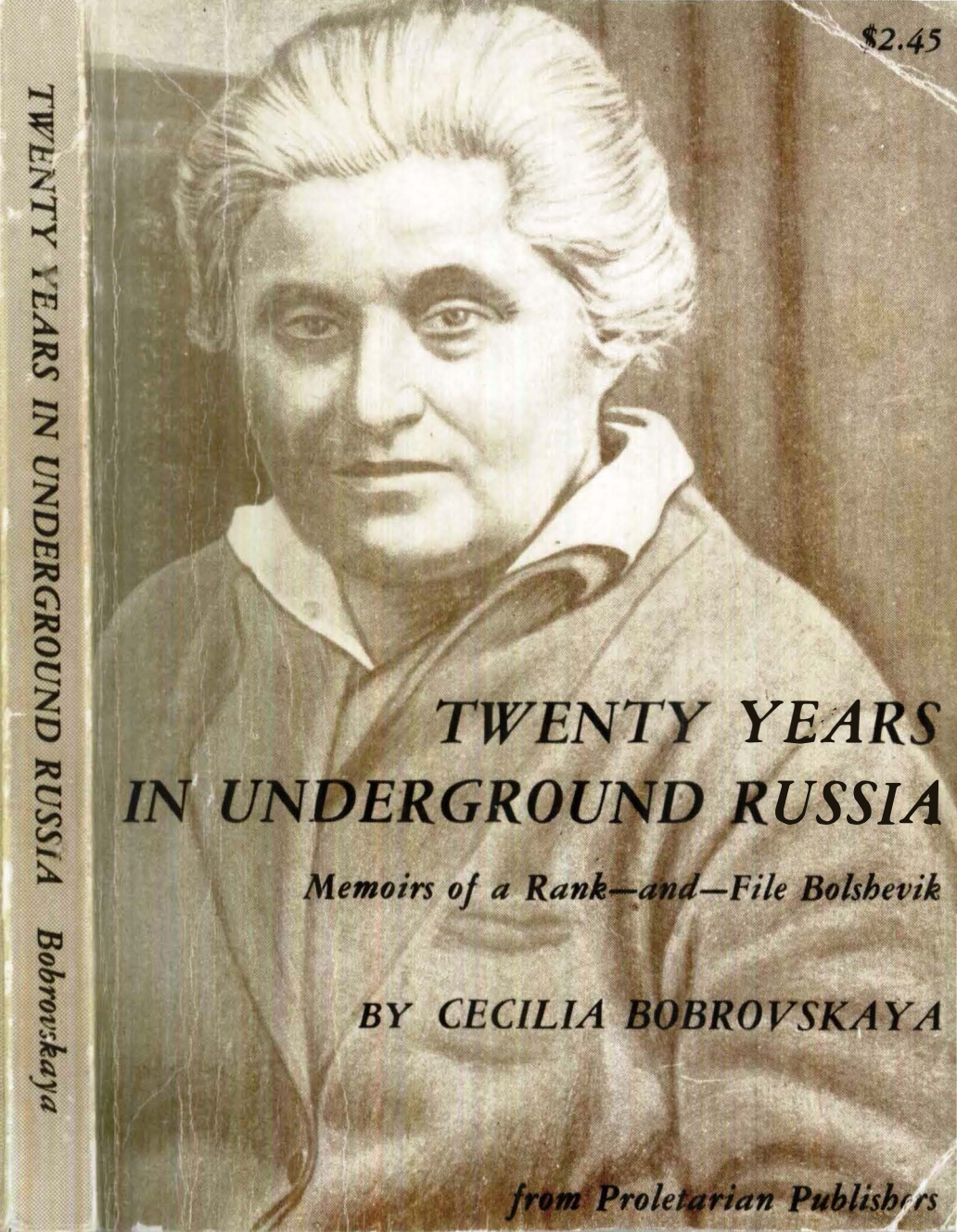

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TWENTY YEARS IN UNDERGROUND RUSSIA
Memoirs of a Rank—and—File Bolshevik
BY CECILIA BOBROVSKAYA
from Proletarian Publishers
TWENTY YEARS IN UNDERGROUND RUSSIA Bobrovskaya

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IN UNDERGROUND RUSSIA

Memoirs of a Rank-and-File Bolshevik

1934

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CHAPTER I: MY PARENTAL HOME. I GO TO WARSAW

MY father was a small, sickly, grey-haired Jew with lively, kindly eyes. I can picture him bending all day long over huge ledgers in which he counted up the profits of his masters, lumber merchants, who were also his distant relatives and "benefactors," for whom he worked as bookkeeper at forty rubles a month. In the evenings and far into the night he would also bend over no less voluminous books, the Talmud, in which he vainly sought the meaning of life, the beginning of all beginnings, the blessings of god and other no less hazy things. Buried in his Talmudic and philosophic researches, without so much as raising his eyes from his monumental book, my father would reply awkwardly to the extremely concrete and extremely pertinent complaints of my mother as to how she was to feed and clothe our family of six on forty rubles a month as well as be burdened with the care of a psychopathic step-daughter, the offspring of my father's first marriage.

My mother was twenty years younger than my father. She was a healthy buxom woman, but illiterate—a true daughter of the soil—interested only in narrow, material, family questions, and her husband's soaring into the clouds often aroused her to the verge of frenzy. The inevitable wrangle usually ended with father taking his "holy" book

under his arm and escaping into the next room, slamming the door behind him. The lock clicked, and through the keyhole one could see his shabby figure bent again over the Talmud and hear the scratching of his pen as he wrote Hebraic hieroglyphics—commentaries on the text.

Thus he sat, far into the night, often until dawn.

Mother often wept bitterly; I pitied her, but my sympathies were with father, even though I had long ago lost faith in the holiness of the Talmud, and my belief in god had vanished.

Books, which fortunately were brought into our remote little town, Velizh, in the Vitebsk province, some eighty versts from the railroad station, by the neighbouring liberal landlords and the local teachers, who played the part of *Kulturträger*,* had helped to wipe out the last traces of my belief in god. These were teachers at the elementary schools, there being no high schools in our town.

I had more than enough time for reading, for I had nowhere to go to gain any further school knowledge. There was no urgent need for my learning a trade since there were more tailors and shoemakers in Velizh than there ever could be buyers. Neither was I overburdened with housework. All the household duties my mother voluntarily took upon herself. Thus I had twenty-four hours a day at my disposal, the lion's share of which was spent in reading Pisarev, Shchedrin, Chernyshevsky, Gleb Uspensky, Nekrasov, Dostoyevsky and many others.

Under the influence of books, principally Chernyshevsky's novel, *What Is To Be Done*, which

* "Carriers of Culture"—those who concentrated on peaceful educational work in contradistinction to revolutionary work.—Ed.

made a great impression on me, I in my early youth, without education, trade or training and penniless, decided to leave my parental home and go to Warsaw where I dreamed of studying, working and, most important of all, meeting the kind of people Chernyshevsky wrote about.

This happened in the winter of 1894.

I remember that during the first few days in Warsaw I met two of my countrywomen, young girls like myself, semi-workers and semi-intellectuals. They worked in a lace factory and were at that time connected with illegal workers' circles. After some unsuccessful attempts at learning to sew and to cut, I decided to follow my friends' example and go to work in a factory.

The task proved to be far from simple. Unemployment in Warsaw was very great at that time. Near the factory gates there were crowds of other girls willing to work for the most meagre wage. Eventually, after jostling with the crowds of unemployed near the gates of lace, tobacco, cigarette, chocolate and other factories, I had to content myself with work in a small shop. My work was very monotonous: I prepared the pieces from which the more skilful workers made elegant ties.

The work day, which was not regulated by any laws at that time,* was very long, and the wages did not exceed eight rubles a month. There were only twenty workers in the shop. Most of the shop

* The first law regulating the work day (reducing it to eleven and a half hours) appeared only three years later, in 1897, as the result of the big strike movement which swept all the large industrial centres of Russia. But this law pertained only to the larger mills and factories and not to small shops.—C. B.

girls were obliged to walk the streets in order to earn enough to clothe and feed themselves.

My first attempts at arousing and enlightening my shop-mates came to a lamentable end. I was discharged because, as the mistress of the shop put it, I exercised harmful influence upon the other shop girls. Once more I had to hunt for work. I found a job in another shop where the conditions were even worse than in the first. In general, I had a pretty hard time earning a living. We used to go hungry quite often, even though the cost of living in Warsaw was so low that students we knew who received twenty-five rubles a month from home were regarded by us as bourgeois.

On the other hand my attempts at studying were very successful. There was an excess of teachers in Warsaw at that time. Many Jewish students came to Warsaw, a big university centre within the Pale,* in the hope of getting into the university or passing an examination at the gymnasium for four, six or eight classes. Besides the Jewish students, there were many others who had been expelled from secondary schools on political charges in various Russian cities and who wanted to enter college in Warsaw. These heterogeneous elements flocked to Warsaw because it was easier to enter college there than in Moscow or St. Petersburg.

All these young revolutionary men and women, separated from their native land and unable to participate fully in the surrounding Polish life, owing to their imperfect knowledge of the language, formed a Russian colony in Warsaw. There was a

* The Pale of Settlement, or Ghetto—the districts outside of which the Jews were not allowed to reside under the tsar. —Ed.

large number of teachers in the colony who were eager for revolutionary work and vainly sought an outlet for their energy.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that I had three teachers at once. One of them introduced me to the theories of Darwin, a second prepared me in political economy and a third taught me the history of Russian literature. The fact that there were so many teachers to one worker graphically demonstrates what little basis this colony had in Warsaw.

A vast amount of underground revolutionary work was being done among the Polish and the Polish Jewish proletariat. We knew this work was being carried on, but we were not able to take part in it because the Russification policy of the tsarist officials in Warsaw was at its height and so everything Russian, even the Russian young men and women who found themselves in Warsaw owing to the vicissitudes of revolutionary life, were regarded with suspicion by the Poles. Hence, to us, underground work was a vain dream for the time being. Nevertheless, despite the unfavourable conditions there was no despondency in our colony; on the contrary, we feverishly groped about for underground-circle activity among the workers and at the same time tried to determine our own "world outlook" as we termed it then.

I remember with what avidity we threw ourselves upon all books and magazine articles which dealt with the controversy between the Marxists and Narodniks.* In the colony the majority, and I among

* The revolutionaries of the 'seventies who believed that the "mir" or village community could serve as the basis of socialist society without Russia having to pass through the stage of capitalism. The Narodniki played a reactionary role against the Marxist labour movement which originated in the 'nineties.—Ed.

them, was on the side of the Marxists. Only an insignificant minority was carried away by the articles in the Narodnik magazine *Russkoye Bogatstvo.** I recollect with what absorbing interest we pored over Struve's book, *Critical Remarks,* which by the way, we read not at all critically. We read and re-read Beltov's (Plekhanov) book, *The Monistic View of History,* collectively and individually. We would sit up late at night at each other's rooms discussing it. A copy of a volume of Marxist essays, containing an article by Tulin (Lenin), which had escaped being burned at the order of the censor and had by lucky chance fallen into our hands, caused a veritable sensation. Since only one copy was available for the entire colony, lots were cast as to who should read it first.

Owing to our estrangement from the Polish underground movement, but mainly due to our lack of organization, we had very poor access to the illegal literature that was printed abroad. Occasionally we would receive illegal literature which had been printed in St. Petersburg, but only single copies. Mostly, this literature consisted of leaflets; very rarely we got pamphlets. Getting supplies of illegal literature in an organized way was out of the question so long as our colony remained a motley, amorphous, and, to tell the truth, a garrulous crowd.

The idea of organizing ourselves occurred to us much later. Even then we thought of it in terms of a legal organization, for we thought that the underground and illegal form of organization was only for workers' circles. A small group was formed which set itself the task of organizing our colony.

* "Russian Wealth."—Ed.

This group organized a dining room which could also serve as a club wherein we could "formulate our world outlook"; it could also be used as the headquarters of illegal workers' circles. We did not disclose these plans to the others, but merely stated that we wished to organize a co-operative dining room because the cheap Polish restaurants served us with bad food dressed with piquant sauces. Our plan was greeted sympathetically. In a few days, fifty members were enrolled, each paying an entrance fee of three rubles.

We found a middle-aged Polish cook who was willing to take over the management of our dining room. We rented an apartment of two rooms and a kitchen in the back of a block on Panskaya Street, bought all the necessary provisions, and began to feed our members with fresh cabbage soup and excellent, buttered buckwheat "kasha" free of all deceiving sauces. Our members were delighted. We waited on our customers ourselves, each one taking his or her turn each day. The person on duty had to report to the cook at seven o'clock in the morning so as to help her with the shopping, and also had to wash the dishes, help prepare the meal and finally, serve it. Notwithstanding the innocence of our enterprise the police looked askance at it; they even did us the honour of sending one of their representatives to visit us. But our cook's husband was quite an adept in getting rid of those unwelcome visitors. He would quietly slip a "three-spot" or even a "fiver' * into the expectant palm of the policeman, and the latter left the place perfectly satisfied. At that time the police did not display particular interest in our activities. They had their

* Three rubles or five rubles.—Ed.

hands full with the Poles. They began to pay us close attention only after we had organized a large number of study circles among the Jewish artisans.

Soon, people who sincerely desired to turn from mere revolutionary phraseology to real revolutionary activity began to group themselves around our dining room. Even though occasional visits of the police reminded us that a watchful eye was being kept on us, nevertheless our dining room served as a meeting place for political and economic discussions. It was also used as a rendezvous for Jewish workers who spoke Russian.

Toward the end of the eighties Alexander III ordered the expulsion of Jews from Moscow and many of them settled in Warsaw. There were many tradesmen among these Jews, but the majority were artisans who crowded round the workshops, seeking employment. These Moscow emigrants were treated with enmity both by the Poles and by the Polish Jews. The Poles hated them because they were Jews and spoke Russian, the Polish Jews were hostile because the newcomers did not speak the Polish-Yiddish dialect but their Lithuanian dialect and because, despite their banishment, the Russian Jews were drawn toward everything Russian, whereas the Polish Jews, though despised by the Poles, gravitated towards things Polish. But in reality both the Poles and the Polish Jews hated the newcomers because they regarded the latter as competitors in their respective trades.

Those Moscow Jewish artisans, called "Litvaks" because they originally came from the Lithuanian provinces, furnished the material for our underground-circle work. I distinctly remember the first

carpenters' circle organized by Feodor Lubimsky, for which purpose Feodor moved into the house of an old Jewish carpenter where he rented a corner of a room for three rubles a month.

Feodor Lubimsky's personality has cut so deeply into my memory, that I find it hard not to write about him. He came from an environment completely alien to ours. Son of a St. Petersburg colonel of noble birth he began his revolutionary career while still at school. He was expelled from various schools on political charges, until at last he found himself in the Warsaw Veterinary Institute. He had about as much inclination for veterinary science as for Chinese grammar. All his strivings were directed towards one goal—revolutionary work. A well defined Social-Democrat, a sound Marxist and a fervent believer in the victory of the working class even in backward Russia, Feodor constantly sought means to penetrate into the midst of the working masses not merely as a casual propagandist, but in order to take part in their daily life as one of them. His joy was boundless when he received an invitation to attend a wedding or other family celebration at the home of some Jewish artisan. Feodor was especially drawn to poor Jews. His comrades would sometimes declare jocularly, "The chap has become a complete Israelite." His sensitive approach to the rank and file worker enabled him to penetrate into the Polish underground movement. But he was very hurt when they delicately hinted that though they had no objections to Feodor they had no desire to establish connections with his Jewish comrades.

Feodor was morally so much above us, that we unanimously recognized his authority and believed that everything he did was right. Even when he got

drunk we suffered for him, but could not bring ourselves to censure him.

Among our shabby, half-starved crowd, Feodor was the hungriest and shabbiest. He tried to eke out a livelihood by giving private lessons, but he would forget to keep his appointments with his pupils and so lost his clientele. On the rare occasions that he received a little money from his mother, he would immediately give it away to some starving family or to the first old beggar he chanced to meet in the street. Even his visits to our dining room were irregular. It was often difficult to get hold of him to feed him. In the evenings after work I occasionally attended his circle in the carpenter's shop. This circle served me as a preparatory school before I dared to take upon myself the responsibilities of independent propagandist work. About ten or twelve carpenters came to the circle. There were only two or three youths among them, the rest being bearded, middle-aged Jews. Feodor read Dickstein's pamphlet, *How We Get Our Living,* to his circle. It was not a reading in the strict sense of the word, but more like a discussion into which all present were unconsciously drawn. At times these discussions became heated theological disputes between Feodor and the Talmudistic Jews. Besides the names of Marx and Engels there also figured the names of Christ, Jehovah and Palestine.

And yet from these different elements arose a systematized discussion about wages, the working day, surplus value, etc. Feodor had several circles of this kind in various parts of the city to all of which he went on foot for a twofold reason: first, because he did not have enough money for fares, and

second, it was safer to go on foot—he could see whether he was being shadowed.

Feodor worked until he was ready to drop from exhaustion; at times he became melancholy, and drank. During these spells he would hide from his comrades and all efforts to find him would be futile. His attacks occurred every three or four months. After them he would be particularly ashamed to face his more intimate friends. Fatiguing work, hunger, his inherited drinking habits, rapidly shattered Feodor's health. When he was arrested and thrown into a damp cell in the Citadel, as the prison in Warsaw was called, he developed galloping consumption. After ten months the gendarmes, thoroughly convinced that he was no longer dangerous, handed him over to his mother who took him to the Crimea; but he died on the way. Such is the short, sad story of that striking personality in our group—Feodor Lubimsky.

To gain experience I attended another circle on Delnaya Street. It was a galloon-makers' circle led by Sasha, an eighth-term gymnasium * student. I think Sasha was reading the illegal pamphlet by Svidersky, *Labour and Capital,* to his circle. I participated in the discussions that followed the reading. Sasha used to bring leaflets to his members, which he himself had translated from Polish into Russian. He had managed to obtain these leaflets from the Polish underground movement. Although Sasha was a "Litvak" who had migrated from Moscow to Warsaw, he had been brought up in Warsaw, spoke Polish fluently and had many Polish gymnasium friends. Besides the galloon-makers' circle, he had many contacts among tailors, bristle-makers, drapers,

* High school.—**Ed.**

etc. He always strove towards mass work, stimulated strikes, had schemes for organizing mass demonstrations and did everything to draw me into the path of revolt. He neglected his gymnasium just as Feodor had neglected his Veterinary Institute for which conduct he got into hot water with both the gymnasium authorities and his relatives with whom he continued to live.

Ironically enough, the Jew Sasha was drawn towards purely Russian workers, just as the pure bred Russian Feodor had been drawn towards Jewish workers. Sasha was always yearning to get away from Warsaw and go to the "real" Russian regions where there was no "cursed" national question, and I partly sympathized with him. He enabled me to be present for the first time in my life at a secret printing of leaflets, and the few hours I spent there were to me nothing but heavenly bliss.

It happened in this way: I lived on Mironov Street, in a tiny cage of a room which I rented from an old surgeon's assistant, who was usually away from home. One day Sasha said to me: "Be home all day tomorrow. We want to come to your room to do some printing." My joy knew no bounds. I had never seen how secret leaflets were printed. On the morrow, with beating heart, I let Sasha and another comrade, heretofore unknown to me, into the room. The latter carried a bundle under his arm. When the bundle was unwrapped it disclosed a hectograph, ink and a quantity of writing paper.

Sasha worked skilfully. Leaflet after leaflet was taken off the hectograph, while the other comrade and I helped Sasha. Towards evening, before my landlord returned, our work was finished. The first to leave the house was Sasha. He seemed to

have grown considerably stouter, for half the leaflets that were printed were hidden under his coat. A little while later the second comrade left. I was told to hide the hectograph until a third comrade called for it. He came soon, took the hectograph, and warned me to burn all the remaining scraps of paper. I did as I was told with deep regret, for I wanted very much to keep those scraps as mementoes of the great event.

I confess that I was more interested in the printing of the leaflet than in its contents. I cannot even recollect for what purpose this leaflet was issued, or who signed it. Only such fragments of phrases have remained in my memory, as "Comrades, organize, close your ranks!" and "Workers of the World, Unite!" which was written across the top of the leaflet.

Shortly afterwards Sasha left Warsaw. I found out later that he had entered the Kiev University and carried on responsible work in the Party organization. He was arrested in Kiev and sat a long time in prison awaiting sentence. Then he was exiled to Siberia where he died shortly afterwards. One version of his death was that he was killed by a stray bullet while hunting, but another, and more likely one to my mind, was that he shot himself in a fit of melancholy owing to his isolation from revolutionary activity.

After observing the propagandist work of Feodor and Sasha, I myself ventured to undertake to lead two circles. One was a women's circle which consisted of seven young seamstresses who, despite their youth, took the circle work seriously. But the meetings were much too noisy to be secret, and for this reason it was necessary to restrain the ardour

of the young members. The figures of pretty, fidgety Rachel, and gloomy, sedate Esther, who were the organizers of this group, remain in my memory with particular vividness. My second circle was that of a group of tailors who worked for a big ready-made clothes store. The organizer of this circle was not a tailor but a paper-hanger, Grisha Zharov, who had close connections with our colony and often visited our dining room. Grisha was very active in organizing circles as well as uniting the Lithuanian artisans in mutual benefit societies, the embryos of the trade unions. These societies were organized in each trade. The funds were made up of contributions of a certain percentage of the meagre wages of the members and were used for the assistance of workers on strike, and also for arrested or exiled comrades, and even for the purchase of literature.

Things did not go quite so smoothly in the tailors' circle as in the women's circle. In both circles we read Sviderski's pamphlet, *Labour and Capital,* but the tailors would insist on turning the discussion to abstract things; much as I tried, I could not get them down to reality, particularly one of them, Zalman, who would at every opportunity return to the "root of all things," to god, the creation of the world, etc. He even wrote a philosophic treatise on the "four elements" upon which the world was supposed to be founded, Zalman tortured me with these "elements" even outside the circle, coming to my home every Sunday to explain his philosophic views.

I lived with my sister, Rose Zelikson (Stavskaya), who came to Warsaw at about this time. We arranged to take turn about listening to Zalman's

harangues, I giving ear to one part of it and she to the remainder. No one person could have sufficient fortitude to listen to all his rigmarole, but we did not want to offend him. Since I had no inclination whatsoever toward philosophic studies, and as I knew very little about that subject, work in this circle became quite difficult. I gave it up at the first opportunity.

The tremendous growth of the mass workers' movement in the 'nineties, which was so vividly expressed by the famous St. Petersburg strikes in the summer of 1896, clearly revealed to the Russian Social-Democrats the urgent necessity for passing from narrow circle work to broad mass work. Owing to the circumstances in which we carried on our work in Warsaw, another very important question arose: in what language were we to carry on our agitation, Russian or Jewish? When we worked among a limited number of Jewish workers, we used the Russian language. But when the work began to embrace the broad masses of Jewish workers, the majority of whom did not know Russian, it became clear that we must carry on our work in Jewish. We were in a dilemma, for many of our comrades were not Jews and did not know Jewish. Even though I could read and write Jewish a little, my knowledge was insufficient to serve the purpose. I knew a few "household" words, but when it came to leading a circle or making a speech, I was completely lost.

When we began to issue leaflets, to participate in strikes and spread illegal literature which we received from abroad, the police took more notice of us and spied on us, but in a very primitive fashion. Some suspicious looking individual would

post himself at the gate and stand there for hours at a time until another no less interesting character came to relieve him. If one went anywhere, he followed; one crossed the street and he was already there. At times the spy would become annoying and one of us would take it upon himself to lead him away. The decoy would go to the Saxony Gardens for a stroll, the spy vigilantly following. So, while the spy shadowed our decoy, all the necessary work was being done unmolested at home, the comrades went in and out of the house, while the spy strolled in the Saxony Gardens.

Then we began to receive literature from abroad more regularly and with less trouble, particularly after the arrival of Vera, a Zurich student connected with the "Emancipation of Labour" group, who was a sister of Eugenia Alexandrovna Tushinskaya, one of our closest friends. Vera used to carry literature not only to Warsaw, but also to St. Petersburg.

Eugenia Alexandrovna was more than a sympathizer. Although she did not take part in organizing workers' circles, she risked so much for our group that we regarded her as one of ourselves, even though her husband, who visited her on rare occasions, was a big landlord who had squandered his fortune. He had been a liberal, but by that time he had degenerated into an official of the Polish frontier police. Eugenia was ashamed of her husband and distressed by these visits, but she could not bring herself to break all ties with him. However, his visits were very rare and short. As soon as he left we would be told immediately that the house was once more at our disposal. Eugenia Alexandrovna's house was above suspicion, hence our reason for using it as much as possible. There we

hid our literature, printed our leaflets, met strikers and hid comrades who were being hunted by the police. Sometimes these comrades had to stay in the house for several days at a time and Eugenia Alexandrovna would feed them.

Witty, cheerful, gentle Eugenia Alexandrovna had a special gift of soothing a tired, nervous person. Not a few of us were half-starved and exhausted at the time. She lived on a modest income gained by giving French lessons. Despite her limited funds she managed to help the most needy in our group. She fed me for a long time when I had no resources.

The fact that my sister and I and many other comrades did not die of hunger in Warsaw was the result of the comradely mutual help, the truly brotherly relations in our colony, and especially of the efforts of Eugenia Alexandrovna. It was through her assistance that I was able to go abroad sometime afterward. She died in a hospital somewhere in the south, away from all of us, because our hazardous underground life made the luxury of caring for those near and dear to us impossible.

As to the conditions under which our work was done, I cannot recall that we were united in any kind of centralized group which took definite measures or passed definite decisions. Perhaps such a group did exist with Feodor as its leader, but I, as a rank and file worker, knew nothing of it. I can only recollect that we lived as a commune, discussed all kinds of questions, studied in circles, constantly consulted one another. Someone would write a manifesto and the comrades who happened to be near at hand would read and discuss it. Anyone who had some technical skill would undertake

to print and distribute it. There was no proper distribution of functions among us. Generally, our work was of a somewhat restricted character, *i.e.*, our conditions were to a certain extent artificial. Knowing only Russian we were necessarily confined in our work to the Lithuanian artisans, who were of infinitesimal value both in quantity and quality compared with the masses of Polish and Polish-Jewish workers. The Lithuanians were only artisans and naturally could not play an important part in such a large industrial centre as Warsaw with its huge proletarian masses. Small wonder that the more active members of our group endeavoured to get away from Warsaw to participate in the activities of Russian groups.

For me, personally, the possibility of doing work in Russian industrial centres could be realized only if I received a permit to live outside the Jewish ghettos. This meant that I must take up some profession. For one who had chosen the profession of underground revolutionary worker this was not easy. Nevertheless, I decided to go to Vienna where I would take a six months' midwifery course. After getting my Vienna diploma I should have to pass an examination in a Russian university. The midwifery diploma that I would get if I succeeded at the examinations would give me the right to live in any part of Russia and the possibility of carrying on revolutionary underground work.

CHAPTER II: MY FIRST TRIP ABROAD

IN the autumn of 1896 I returned home, where my revolutionary activities were unknown, to get a governor's passport to go abroad--to Vienna. And here, on my arrival in my native town, I heard for the first time about the "old man," which was Lenin's political nickname in St. Petersburg. I did not connect him at that time with Tulin (V. I. Lenin) whose articles I had read so avidly in Warsaw. I clearly recall the circumstances in which I first learned of the existence of the "old man." I had a friend, Elena Solomonovna. Her almost pauperized parents lived in a little hut on the outskirts of the town. Elena, like myself, left her native town, but instead of going to Warsaw, she went to St. Petersburg. There she had the fortune to attend nurses' courses. When I learned from my mother that Elena also had come to visit her folks, I rushed to her home to get the latest St. Petersburg revolutionary news.

It was a Friday evening and, as in every respectable Jewish home, at least five tallow candles were shedding their flickering light in the little hut. Elena took some St. Petersburg leaflets out of her stocking and we sat in the dull candle-light, absorbed in our reading. In connection with these leaflets Elena told me that there was in St. Peters-

burg a certain "old man," who was not really an old man but who went by that nickname. This "old man" was in prison at that time, but he contrived to write leaflets and get them out to his comrades. But the most interesting thing he wrote at the time was his pamphlet *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How they Fight the Social-Democrats* in which he refutes the utopian theories of the Narodniks, or Populists who predominated in the socialist movement in Russia at that time. To our great disappointment, Elena was unable to procure a copy of this pamphlet.

After three or four months the desired passport arrived from the governor of Vitebsk and I left for Warsaw, going on from there shortly after to Vienna. As I have said, the funds for my journey were supplied by Eugenia Alexandrovna who, with the help of some friends, also managed to arrange a small stipend for me.

Connections with the foreign revolutionary circles were well established, and the first person I met in Vienna was the daughter of Axelrod, one of the founders of the "Emancipation of Labour" group and who in later years became a Menshevik and an open enemy of the Soviet Union. His daughter, Vera Axelrod, was a medical student. This acquaintanceship helped me over the difficulty of my imperfect knowledge of German and enabled me to settle down quickly. Having been educated in Zurich, Vera spoke German fluently; she also knew personally the prominent leaders of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party.

Events in Vienna while I was there—mass meetings, strikes, fierce Party strife in the Reichsrat,*

* Parliament.—Ed.

street demonstrations against the hated Badeni ministry—all this made an enormous impression on me who had been reared in the traditions of underground-circle work. I attended one huge mass meeting of the Galician peasant navvies. These labourers listened to the various speakers with intense interest, and some of them even got up on to the platform in their aprons and clogs and delivered spirited speeches themselves. They resembled the peasants in our Vitebsk province but, comparing the two mentally, I would have told anyone who suggested to me that some day I should see similar meetings in my native land that they were dreamers. Fervently as I believed in the triumph of the Russian revolution, that triumph then seemed to me unattainably remote.

I not only attended the big meetings at which the more prominent agitators delivered rousing speeches, but also the small gatherings in all the socialist clubs where theoretical lectures and discussions were held. About this time the revisionist tendency was clearly defined in the German Social-Democratic Party. I do not remember whether we read Eduard Bernstein's book or articles in the magazine *Die Neue Zeit;* but the criticism of Marx and the revision of his theories were the fashion then, and at the club meetings the discussion centred principally around revisionism. Although my personal sympathies were on the side of the orthodox Marxists and not with the critics of Marx, nevertheless, it was very difficult for me to make head or tail of these polemics.

The Russian exiles in Vienna did not make a particularly strong impression on me, but what deeply engraved itself in my memory was the other

Vienna—the Vienna that was the centre of the Austrian workers' movement. Life in Vienna was very varied and interesting, but I could not afford to remain there long. My finances were dwindling rapidly notwithstanding the fact that Vera and I lived very modestly. We rented a little room and lived mostly on lentils and potato salad. On rare occasions we permitted ourselves the luxury of a donkey-meat "beefsteak" for which we were teased by our friends who declared that such food would stimulate the growth of our ears. Owing to our lack of funds we tried to see and hear as much as possible in the shortest possible time.

In the morning we bought the *Arbeiter Zeitung* and turned first to the back page where "meetings, lectures and reports" were announced and according to which we planned our day. We were obliged to cover most of the distances on foot, but we did not mind that, if the meeting proved interesting. Now and then we would be reminded of our "fundamental" work, Vera's university and my midwifery courses; but we tried to give a minimum of our time and attention to this. It was not suprising, therefore, that I failed to pass my examinations and was obliged to remain for another term.

I received an invitation to spend my summer holidays at the home of Vera's parents in Zurich. I had long been thinking of a trip to Switzerland. I always dreamt of actually coming in contact with the "Emancipation of Labour" group. Also I wanted to read more illegal literature and to learn from first-hand sources what was happening in the Russian underground movement.

At the Axelrod home that summer I met Plekha-

nov and Vera Zasulich as well as Bebel, Kautsky and Bernstein.

I well recall the first time I saw Plekhanov. I was standing in the little garden of the Axelrod home, talking to Sasha, Axelrod's son who had just come up on his bicycle. All of a sudden a well-dressed, middle-aged European, clad in a light-grey suit, brown shoes and kid gloves, bowed to us and, turning to Sasha, said: "Well, how do you like the bicycle? Shall I take a ride on it? Or is it improper for a Tambov squire to ride on a steel horse?"

"Who is this gentleman with the clever eyes"? I thought to myself, and when the "gentleman" went into the house I began to question Sasha. Sasha looked at me in surprise and exclaimed: "Why, didn't you know that he is Georgi Valentinovich?"

Naturally, a youth who had grown up in Switzerland could not understand that, according to my conceptions, Plekhanov would more likely have been in tatters than in yellow kid gloves.

But if Plekhanov's outward appearance and habits might have caused some disappointment to a Russian underground worker, the appearance of Vera Zasulich and her whole mode of life made up a hundredfold for the first disillusion.

I met Vera Zasulich very often that summer because she also practically lived at the Axelrod home. She had a room in the neighbouring street, and the Axelrods did all they could to persuade her to leave that den. Vera Zasulich coughed and was indeed very ill, and her room was altogether unsuitable for her. But not wishing to inconvenience the Axelrods she refused their invitations to dine with them, saying that it was quite easy for her "to cook

a potful of soup that would last for a whole week". Once she said to Vera Axelrod and to me on the subject of clothes: "It is needless to have a dressmaker make you a blouse. Anybody can cut one out. All you have to do is leave two holes for the sleeves and a third hole for the collar." Indeed, she habitually wore a grey cotton dress that really looked like a sack with holes for sleeves and collar. She felt perfectly comfortable in it though, and once even wore it at the theatre. She regarded Vera Axelrod and me as children and never talked seriously to us.

The discussions that arose among Plekhanov, Axelrod and Zasulich centred principally upon their differences with the Russian Economists and the German revisionists, but they did not break off personal relations with either.

When Eduard Bernstein visited the Axelrods in Zurich both the hosts and the guest carried on a peaceful conversation at tea. Bernstein, the father of German revisionism, impressed me as a homely man in blue glasses. What this man in the blue glasses said at tea I have completely forgotten.

Another time "the Russian Webbs," as Kuskova* and Prokopovich were then called, visited the Axelrods, and Plekhanov came from Geneva to meet them. They had a lengthy discussion in Axelrod's study into which we, the youthful guests, were not permitted to enter. When they came out to tea, Plekhanov was in excellent spirits, Kuskova ap-

* The leading exponent of Economism—i.e., the theory that the workers should confine themselves to the economic struggle and leave the political struggle to the liberal bourgeosie.—Ed.

peared flushed and confused, while Axelrod and Zasulich gazed at Plekhanov with admiring eyes.

It could never occur to me then that Paul Borisovich Axelrod would one day put spokes in the wheel of that very revolution which he discussed with me so many times. Nor could I ever dream that Plekhanov, who was then so near to us, would become so infinitely distant, estranged and hostile.

In the autumn I returned to Vienna where I was obliged to work seriously at the clinic, since upon my finishing the term depended my getting the right to live in any part of Russia—that peculiar right of being without rights which was the lot of the common people in the Russian empire at that time.

After passing the examination and receiving my Austrian diploma, I went home for a short while, certain that I would be able to get a certificate as to my political reliability which I had to present at the university before I could sit for an examination. Up to that time, absolutely no one at home knew about my association with the movement.

After many difficulties I finally obtained the required document from the governor of Vitebsk and decided to go to Kharkov. There I had to pass an examination in anatomy, physiology and nursing in order to exchange my Austrian diploma for a Russian one. The Russian diploma in its turn enabled me to change my old passport which read, "valid only where Jews are permitted to live," for a new one which read: "Jewish midwife, so and so, has the right to live in any part of Russia."

CHAPTER III: WORK IN KHARKOV

I ARRIVED in Kharkov in the summer of 1899, about three months before the examinations were to start. I had to learn the syllabus of the course, prepare myself for the coming exams and register at the university; but to accomplish the latter was not easy. According to the regulations, all those who desired to sit for the examinations had to be permanently domiciled in Kharkov. But in order to get a room on a Jewish passport one had to have a document certifying that one was eligible to enter for the examination. Impossible as this seemed at the first glance, we soon learned that it could be very simply arranged by a "voluntary levy" of ten rubles. When this bribe was passed by certain channels into the depths of the university office, the Gordian knot was promptly cut. Having legitimatized my stay in Kharkov in so illegitimate a manner, I became immediately occupied not so much with preparations for the coming examinations as with finding contacts with the underground movement.

When I was abroad I heard that after the first Party Congress held in the spring of 1898, the Social-Democratic organizations were no longer disconnected unions, groups, or circles, although numerous arrests had taken place in all towns. I

knew that the Party had united at the Congress and that it had committees in all parts of the country. I was quite certain that there was a committee in Kharkov and that I only had to find it. Although the committee was a very secret affair, nevertheless I managed very quickly to establish contact with some of its members and join the local organization.

The local organization was a well-knit nucleus of revolutionary workers, although it had not yet assumed definite organizational shape and did not even have a definite name. We carried on propaganda in workers' circles, executed all the technical duties of printing leaflets, hiding and distributing literature, obtaining headquarters for secret meetings. We organized illegal gatherings at which reports and lectures on political and economic themes were made. We arranged concerts, plays and other lucrative undertakings from which we obtained the funds to run our organization as well as to support strikers or comrades who had been arrested.

It never occurred to us that we ought to help not only arrested comrades, but also the comrades who were busy all day with organizational affairs and who were literally starving. Many of us, having no definite occupation and receiving no regular help from home, suffered very severely. I can say for myself that in Warsaw and partly in Vienna I had become quite an adept at going short. But trained as I was, what I endured in Kharkov, proved more than I could bear. There were many days when I had nothing but a drink of water. I had no money with which to buy a piece of bread, let alone buy a dinner. All day long I would go about the necessary business; my legs would give way under me, my head would spin. On such days it was

particularly distressing to be looking for an apartment for secret meeting purposes or in which to hide illegal literature. I would be obliged to visit "sympathetic" doctors, lawyers, engineers and dentists. These people had such snug little homes. They greeted you so hospitably, and offered you a miniature cup of tea with flaky cookies. They could not realize that there was a hungry person before them who should be given a square meal and not be teased with cookies. Once, the pangs of hunger were so strong that, taking the opportunity of my landlady's absence, I went to the kitchen, cut myself a big slice of bread, dipped it into a pot of appetizing, fat, cabbage soup, locked myself up in my room and ate it; and I did not tell the landlady about it when she returned. During those times of intense hunger I would be in utter despair. I would rather die than give up Party work and daily intercourse with the comrades; yet if I looked for employment it would mean that I would have to give up my Party work and become occupied with something that I neither knew nor liked. I hated midwifery. In all my future life I never helped a single infant to come into the world.

Sickness rescued me from this systematic starvation. The doctor stated that my illness was due to starvation. This diagnosis startled my comrades. When I recovered, work was immediately found for me in a Zemstvo * library. The work was very simple and I was paid by the day—two rubles a day. Besides, I soon found out that the Zemstvo library could be used for revolutionary purposes, so that

* Rural bodies elected on a restricted basis in which the landlords predominated and which also contained representatives of the Kulak elements of the peasantry.—Ed.

my spirits completely recovered. I felt that I had come into such affluence that I even sent for my brother. I wanted him to take his examinations at the Kharkov grammar school. My plans were not altogether successful, but the most important thing was done: my brother fell in with our revolutionary crowd and later turned out to be a very active Party worker and Bolshevik.

As our work among the proletariat expanded, the committee began to feel that we Party workers needed more theoretic instruction. Fifteen of the most active members were appointed to attend classes in theory. We took our studies very seriously and learned a great deal. At the same time each of us took charge of a workers' circle.

I was given two workers' circles. One was composed of some Kharkov railroad workers. There were six young workers and their organizer, Vassily Sheykov. This group met two evenings a week. We read Bogdanov's *Political Economy* but, truth to tell, we often deviated from the subject. I used to tell the workers (quite unsystematically at times) all that I had heard and seen abroad. My accounts of the life of the Austrian and Swiss workers aroused great interest in the circle. With no less interest did they learn about my meetings with our Russian revolutionaries who lived abroad. These deviations from the subject worried Sheykov and me not a little. Our progress in covering the required number of pages of *Political Economy* was very slow. I even complained to the committee about my lack of success. The committee tried to soothe me by saying that since the workers willingly listened to my narrations the work was not vain and

that I should continue carrying on my circle as I had been doing.

The other circle, also composed of railroad workers, met at Lubotin station. We did not succeed in organizing regular work with this circle. I personally was not able to take up systematic circle work wholeheartedly; I was much more interested in organizational work and it was quite a mistake to have me work as a propagandist. I was more interested in keeping up organizational contact with the Lubotin workers in distributing leaflets, illegal literature and in carrying committee instructions to the workers than in leading a circle. I made frequent visits to Lubotin and my appearances on this deserted station were not without danger: soon it attracted the attention of those who took interest in such things. Besides the Kharkov depot and the Lubotin station circles, I had close contact with a Belgian factory through an old exiled St. Petersburg worker, Onuphry Zhelabin. Zhelabin organized a strong nucleus of class conscious workers in this Belgian factory. This group with Zhelabin afterwards led a strike there, during which Zhelabin constantly communicated with the committee through me. I used to give him leaflets to spread among the strikers, and money to help their families. This money and the little bridge on which we met to hand over the money afterwards figured in the police enquiry as major evidence against me.

Besides my regular work, I often had to carry out special commissions for the committee. Once the committee ordered me to go to Vilna without delay and get a valise filled with illegal literature which had been especially prepared for the Kharkov organization. I lied shamelessly to my landlady

about the reason for my departure; although she was a sympathizer, my landlady was quite a gossip and so I dared not tell her the real reason, for fear she might blurt it out to others, so I told her that I was suddenly called away by my parents on some important family matter. One of the members of the committee brought me a hundred rubles and the necessary address, and that very evening I started on my journey.

Misfortune awaited me at Vilna. I did not find the comrade at home. All day long I wandered about the strange city. In the evening when I met the comrade, I found out to my chagrin that the literature for Kharkov was in Vitebsk. I immediately left for Vitebsk where I soon found the address I was given. The house belonged to a rich merchant whose son I knew in Kharkov, as it was through him that I kept up connections with the illegal paper, the *Yuzhny Rabochi (Southern Worker).*

I found him in a very worried state. He sat locked in his room in his father's luxurious mansion, almost buried in piles of illegal literature. He complained to me that the maidservant had been trying to clean up the room for several days. He had made various excuses not to let her in. But this could not continue very much longer. His people would get wind of it sooner or later. Someone had confused the cities in a letter sent to various places and wrote that the literature was in Vilna instead of Vitebsk, so the comrades had not come for it.

Taking the precious valise which had caused so many worries, I returned to Kharkov. The committee was overjoyed at my return, my long absence having caused them to give me up for lost. The literature which I brought was principally that

published by the "Emancipation of Labour" group. Only a few of the books were published by the *Rabocheye Dyelo (Workers' Cause).*

At that time the controversy was raging between the Economist-revisionists and the orthodox Marxists who favoured a widespread political struggle. Lenin, in his famous answer sent from exile, declared war on all the ideas expressed by E. Kuskova in the *Credo.** In this controversy the majority of the members of the Kharkov organization approved of Lenin's position. Only individual workers, both in the Centre and in the periphery vacillated, and for this reason heated polemics sometimes arose at the meetings of the Kharkov leaders.

Yuli Osipovich Cederbaum (Martov), who then lived in Poltava under the surveillance of the police and who secretly visited us in Kharkov, helped us take a decisive stand in this matter. We could not know at that time that the flaming Cederbaum would later endeavour to dampen the spirit of the Russian revolution, and that he would become the leader of the Mensheviks.

I cannot recall exactly what organizational ties existed between the Kharkov committee and the editorial board of the *Southern Worker*. I remember, though, that the ties were very close. Many of the members of the Kharkov committee wrote for the *Southern Worker*. Although it revealed separatist tendencies on organizational questions, every issue of this militant political paper was a festival for the entire Kharkov organization. At one time I acted as contact with the *Southern Worker* whose printshop was in Kremenchuk.

* **Credo** a document expounding the views of the Economists.—**Ed.**

Although its work was constantly growing, the Kharkov Committee continued to operate in profound secrecy. Even we, the workers of the periphery who were engaged in very responsible work, were kept at "arm's length" as it were, from the committee. I myself, who carried out various duties requiring great ability in the art of secrecy, and therefore could be trusted, never attended a single committee meeting, although I was on friendly terms with several of the members of the committee. They used to come to my room and I would visit them, not only on business, but also to have a cup of tea and a friendly chat on rare free evenings. This deliberate secrecy of the committee not only wounded the self-esteem of many of the workers, but it had a bad effect on the work of the periphery. We were obliged to carry out the decisions of the committee blindly, since we had not the slightest share in their making. This ultra-conspiratorial state of affairs created serious dissatisfaction in our ranks. The question came up at several meetings of the periphery. At one of them I heatedly objected to it. And when the committee learned about this dissatisfaction, one of its members, Dr. Ivanov, said, "All this is nonsense. We must not give the periphery any privileges; that would not be conspiratorial. It's all the doing of that little Jewess." (This was meant for me.)

In the conflict between the Kharkov Committee and its periphery the latter did not accuse the former of bureauracy and excessive privileges. Both the centre and the periphery had but one privilege—that of being caught by the tsarist police, if not today, then tomorrow. The conflict was not due either to the evil intentions of the committee mem-

bers, the unreasonable demands of the periphery or to the obstinacy of any one of its members, but simply to the fact that the workers' movement was growing apace in Kharkov while we still groped for the organizational channels through which our work was to be carried on.

I will try to give a more detailed description of the entire structure of the Kharkov organization from top to bottom. There were no definite forms of organization in Kharkov or anywhere in Russia, for that matter. Sometimes local committees were elected and sometimes appointed by the centre. and later supplemented by co-opted members. More often than not these committees were formed by some active revolutionary (or group of revolutionaries) in the city, who would establish strong contacts with the masses. He (or the group) would select a few capable comrades and these would declare themselves a committee. The Kharkov Committee, to my knowledge, was neither elected nor appointed, but organized in the above-mentioned fashion.

After the committee (the directing body) came the periphery (the executive body) which consisted of several score of comrades. There was no proper division of functions either in the committee or the periphery. Thus, for example, the committee had no secretary. There were no distinct departments for organizational, propaganda or agitation work. Nobody was even appointed to look after the literary functions. The only division between the committee and the periphery was that the first performed directing duties and the second, executive. But each one of us had to be a propagandist, organizer, printer and distributer at the same time.

The principal support of the Kharkov Committee among the purely proletarian masses were the workers in the railroad workshops. These shops had their own organizations which were composed of a number of circles at whose head was the central circle. The latter in its turn was led by two outstanding workers, members of the Kharkov Committee. Voyeikov and Matrossov, but principally Voyeikov, who played an important part in the Kharkov May First demonstration of 1900 and such a disgraceful one afterwards at the time of our arrest. Another support were the circles of the locomotive works whose leader was the worker Simonov, also a member of the Kharkov Committee. Then there were uninterrupted connections with the Belgian factory, the Lubotin railroad shops and innumerable circles. Contacts also existed with individual workers in every large Kharkov factory. Contact was also maintained with the artisans in the city, but here things were not so well. There was opposition on the part of the group led by Makhov, a worker from Ivanovo-Voznesensk. This group represented a kind of "Workers' Opposition". Makhov seemed to hate intellectuals more than anyone else, and he was also strongly opposed to politics, arguing that the workers should only carry on the economic struggle. The Kharkov organization had a big membership at that time (big for an underground organization). But it was quite impossible to keep a proper register of them. None of us had Party membership cards; the mandate which entitled us to the high calling of Party member was deep within our breasts. It can safely be said that about the time of the First of May demonstration in 1900 the organization undervalued its own strength; it did

not realize that its influence was so strong. Thus the First of May demonstration came as a great surprise both for the committee and the periphery. The First of May leaflets which had been printed in the print-shop of the *Southern Worker,* and which we had distributed in the factories, called for a general strike and demonstration. But that which came to pass on the First of May surpassed our wildest expectations.

In the morning the railroad workers came out into the streets and held a meeting at the Levada. They unfolded a red banner, and a member of the committee, Voyeikov, made a speech. The Governor, on learning about the demonstration, hurried to the Levada. He was met by Voyeikov, surrounded by a dense crowd of comrades. After a talk with Voyeikov, the governor was obliged to withdraw. The workers of the locomotive works attempted to march through the city and join the railroad workers' demonstration. But the cossacks prevented them from joining forces by barring the roadway. During the clash between the workers of the locomotive works and the cossacks some of the bolder workers disarmed a few cossacks and waved their lances as trophies of victory.

The First of May general strike in Kharkov created a big stir. After that, our work went at a more feverish pace. But if this strike taught us a great deal it also taught a lesson to the Kharkov police. The whole force was mobilized to hunt us down.

First a group of eighteen railroad workers, including Matrossov and Voyeikov, were arrested and exiled to the Vyatka province on the charge of instigating the First of May demonstrations. Many

of us were carefully shadowed by spies. This led to the arrest of the entire organization and most of the circles. The police spying in Kharkov was not so crude as in Warsaw. At one time, for example, I was utterly unaware that I was being shadowed. Later I discovered that the police had been following me all the summer. But a month before the general arrests, the spies ceased to disguise their activities; they watched my house and persistently dogged my steps quite openly. When I had to attend to some urgent business, I would have to start out early in the morning and pretend to go shopping. Sometimes I would go into various shops, go into a dressmaker's shop and try on a number of dresses. This, of course, would take a long time; the spy would get tired of waiting and go away.

Once it was imperative for me to deliver a package of leaflets and talk things over with two Lubotin workers. I started off for the station that morning looking cautiously about me. When I got into the train I noticed a suspicious-looking man with a flat nose get into the next car. When I alighted at Lubotin station, he also got off. I looked about the platform—my workers were waiting for me. I passed them by, demonstratively ignoring them. They immediately understood that something was wrong and made no sign of recognition. I went over to the buffet and ordered a cup of tea. I sat at one of the tables drinking tea and thinking what to do next. At another table not far away my friends sat drinking beer. And at a third table sat the flat-nosed man, also drinking tea. I almost laughed aloud, so ridiculous did the whole situation seem. I sat thus until the next Kharkov train pulled in.

I got into the train with the packages of leaflets still safe in my stockings and bosom.

When I returned to the city the flat-nosed man was not to be seen. I walked about the city until I was ready to drop with fatigue. Then I decided to go to a friend of mine, a nurse, who lived in the Medical Society hospital on Pushkin Street. There I had a bite and a cup of tea. I hid the leaflets in her room and, when I was sufficiently rested, I went home.

But my day's adventures were not destined to end so happily. That night I was awakened by the police. Among them was the flat-nosed man. This fact upset me so much that I thought it all a part of a nightmare. But I soon came to myself and understood that it was grim reality. My turn had come to go to prison. I had had an unusually long run of luck. I had worked in Warsaw, travelled abroad, I had carried on very important and dangerous work in Kharkov for a whole year, and now the time had come to pay the price. Nevertheless, these philosophic contemplations could not soothe that awful feeling that overwhelmed me at the prospect of losing my liberty. All those who pass through this experience for the first time feel the same thing. And to aggravate the situation, the police officer proved to be of a most irritatingly cheerful disposition. While my room was being searched he tried to be witty and asked: "Are you very disheartened? I suppose you thought this would all come about as in a French novel: a splendid young officer would arise before you and say, 'Madam, though it breaks my heart to do it, I arrest you in the name of law.'" Then he began to rummage among the books on my desk. He toyed with

the volumes of Marx's *Capital* and *Political Economy* and said, "You've got a lot of 'capital,' but only sixty kopeks in your purse."

I had to spend the rest of the night at the police station where a drunken prostitute shouted at the top of her voice until the first streaks of dawn brought their sobering effect. Before my very eyes she stole a towel from the policeman on duty. A man with carefully tended red whiskers, dressed in a well-cut frockcoat, paced to and fro all night long. In respectful whispers the policemen related to one another that this man was arrested on the charge of embezzling government funds.

Early in the morning I was taken to a well-known Kharkov prison. The governor of the prison at that time was Lieutenant-Colonel Dikhov, whose side whiskers, cross eyes and murderous expression reminded me of the turnkeys so aptly described by Melshin.* Dikhov had two favourite soldiers, Stadnik and Melnik. They took turns on duty in the secret corridor. This narrow, dark corridor, with cells on either side, could truly be called secret—not a sound could penetrate from outside.

Melnik and Stanik were surprisingly well trained—they would sooner have burned at the stake than answer questions. After months of confinment one suddenly felt a burning desire to hear one's own voice. And so I tried to start a conversation with Melnik or Stadnik—but they remained dumb.

My plank bed and mattress used to be raised and fastened to the wall at six o'clock in the morning.

* Melshin—pseudonym of Yakobovich, a Narodnik revolutionary of the 'eighties, who described his experiences in the tsarist prisons, in his famous book, "In the World of Outcasts." —Ed.

The bench and the table were likewise fastened to the wall. Being of short stature it was difficult for me to raise myself to the high window sill to get a glimpse of the patch of blue sky. I could not lie down during the day as the bed was lowered only at six o'clock in the evening. Our daily walk in an isolated corner of the yard lasted from fifteen to twenty minutes. At one end of the yard stood the watchman's booth. Behind me marched another watchman who doggedly refused to utter a sound.

Despite all appearances to the contrary, we lived a social life in the secret corrider. Feverish tapping in our secret code continued all day long. We would leave notes for one another in the public lavatory. By means of taps we gave each other nicknames. For example, notes for me were addressed to the "magpie". And every time the guard led me to the toilet, I searched among the water pipes for letters addressed to the "magpie".

The police had their hands full with our case in connection with which they had arrested almost two hundred people. The majority were released after three or four months; only the more "dangerous" were detained. We were also subjected to an infinite number of examinations, in which Captain Nornberg, the cheerful officer who arrested me, took a prominent part. He resorted to every possible trick to trip me up.

Once during the examination he suddenly said to me: "You cannot deny that contact with the *Southern Worker* was maintained through you. I can even remind you of an evening when, on returning home late, you found a girl in your room who had come from Ekaterinoslav with a basketful of the *Southern Worker*. To your question, 'How are you

all getting on there?' she answered, 'We're making a noise, brothers, making a noise'."

These details simply petrified me. All this had actually taken place, and the only one who could have told about it was Zhelabin who had been present during the conversation.

Enjoying the effect he had created by these particulars, Nornberg went on to inform me that Zhelabin had already been released inasmuch as he had made a clean breast of everything. Whether Zhelabin actually betrayed us or whether it was the clever guess of Nornberg, I could not determine at that moment. Onuphry Zhelabin vanished from the prison and we never saw him again. In March 1924, during a short stay in Leningrad, I was able to find among the materials of the former police department records of the Kharkov case and to see with my own eyes "the honest confession of Onuphry Zhelabin".

Although we had been spied upon throughout the whole summer of 1900, and although the entire organization had been uprooted, the examinations showed that the police were in a dilemma as to how to separate us into groups and bring concrete charges against us. They had spies' evidence that we were all rebels. But what crimes each of us had committed, they were at a loss to know, and they would never have found out had not some chicken-hearted person in the group told everything. Thus, for three or four months after our arrest the police did not know which one of us was a member of the committee. But the matter was suddenly cleared up for them.

One of the arrested young workers had blurted out during examination that the railroad workers Voyeikov and Matrossov, who had been exiled

after the First of May demonstration to the Vyatka province, were the leaders. The police immediately had them brought back and placed in the Kharkov prison. And then Voyeikov confessed. The fact that someone had betrayed him and the sufferings he had endured on the way to and from Vyatka had such an influence on him that he himself began ignominiously to help the police solve their problem in our case. Voyeikov's betrayal had a depressing effect on us all. The police, on the other hand, were delighted. The happiest of them was Captain Nornberg. After his confession Voyeikov was set free. When he got out he began to drink heavily and soon drank himself to death.

Having obtained all the facts they wanted, the police released some of our comrades, after keeping them three or four months. Nevertheless, a good number of us were still kept in prison. For a long time I could not understand why the police kept me in jail longer than the members of the committee. I knew that they had obtained all the particulars about our organization. I was not a member of the committee. But at one of the examinations I was soon enlightened upon the matter. I was brought into the prison office, and after a pleasant greeting, Nornberg said, "The investigation into the Kharkov Committee case is finished. All the participants including the members of the committee have been released but are being kept under surveillance until the trial. We have decided to detain you for some time, however. Kharchenko, the editor of the *Southern Worker* has been arrested. According to the evidence you had close connection with him." To my question, "Then what is the use of detaining me? You know that you won't learn anything from me

anyway," Nornberg answered, rolling out every word, "Kharchenko is a strong man, arrested recently. You are a woman, your health has been undermined in prison, your nerves are unstrung. That is why you are more likely to talk before Kharchenko talks".

It is difficult to describe my indignation at this insolent candour. I felt a burning desire to prove to him that I was not broken in spirit, that I still had the strength to protest. My only means of protesting was to declare a hunger strike. I decided to go on strike alone, without involving new comrades with whom I was personally unacquainted and who had been arrested recently. The cells of the prison were never empty, and we would often say in jest: "The prison, like nature, cannot stand a vacuum."

At that time the prison administration, the Public Prosecutor and the police were still very much afraid of hunger strikes. And so all the prison officials became extremely agitated when they learned that I had refused to take food. During my strike, touching scenes could be witnessed in my cell as when Captain Nornberg or Lieutenant-Colonel Dikhov begged me to "eat a spoonful of this broth," or "drink half a cup of milk".

This touching anxiety about my welfare was due to the fact that they feared that the other comrades would get wind of it and join me in the strike and the whole affair would become extremely serious. I kept the strike up for three days. On the fourth day I almost collapsed and the turnkeys, seeing my condition, did not put up my bed as usual. Soon I was called into the office where I was informed that I would be released and that I must leave for my native town immediately under the strict sur-

veillance of the police and remain there until the trial.

Exercising all my will power to prevent myself from collapsing from weakness and joy, I returned to my cell. After drinking a cup of strong tea—the first refreshment since my fast—I found sufficient strength to pack my few belongings and go to the station.

Thus I paid for a full year's work in Kharkov with less than a full year's imprisonment, which was considered a very cheap price at that time.

CHAPTER IV: I GO "UNDERGROUND"

DURING the long months of solitary confinement, I decided once and for all to become a professional Party worker. So when I returned home I decided not to wait for the sentence as the authorities ordered, but to escape abroad and live illegally.

It was absolutely essential that I go abroad. The constant police raids on our organization not only interfered with our work, but often separated us for long periods. When I came out of Kharkov prison I was absolutely isolated from the comrades. But to go abroad was not so simple a matter. The nearest organization that could help me escape abroad was the Vitebsk organization. But as I was under police surveillance I could not even move about my own province without special permission from the governor.

The two gendarmes in my native town, who had been kicking their heels in idleness during my absence, were extremely gratified at my arrival. They diligently sat by turns on the bench outside my home guarding the "dangerous criminal". Although the simplicity of these two officers was touching, nevertheless it was quite difficult to go about unobserved. Besides, my escape would cause a great deal of grief and worry to my folks whose life was not an easy

one as it was. Therefore I decided to escape from Vitebsk and not from my native Velizh. I planned to go to Vitebsk in a legal way.

I sent a petition to the governor asking for permission to go to Vitebsk for medical treatment as there were no competent medical men in my town. I had to wait nearly three months until I received a reply. At last I received the governor's permission to leave for Vitebsk temporarily. As soon as I got there, I immediately began to seek means of escaping abroad. It was necessary to get at least a little money. Besides money troubles, I had a good share of other worries. Any day I might receive the sentence exiling me to some remote part of Russia, from which it would be more difficult to escape than from Vitebsk. After a great many worries and hardships I was finally able to arrange my trip abroad. This was accomplished with the assistance of some Vitebsk Bundists * who were to help me get to Byelostok where I was put in contact with smugglers on the frontier.

I travelled to Byelostok via Dvinsk where the Bund had a permanent representative, a certain Kaplinsky. He organized the transport of literature, helped comrades to escape across the frontier and procured all the requirements for printing purposes. This Kaplinsky afterward proved to be a provocateur.

When I reached Dvinsk I learned that it would be impossible for me to go to Byelostok for some time owing to the arrest of the delegates to a conference there. In a few days Kaplinsky gave me a letter of recommendation to the daughter of the director of

* Members of the Bund—The Jewish Social-Democratic League.—Ed.

a factory in Sosnovitsy. She was to arrange my going from Sosnovitsky to Kattovits. My appearance upset the poor girl very much. Although she was unquestionably a sympathizer, still she was too young and inexperienced to be entrusted with such a commission. To make matters worse, the whole town (it was not a very big one) knew her very well, and the only way I could get to Kattovits was to use her passport.

I spent several irksome days in the director's mansion in the awkward position of a tiresome and utterly unwanted friend of the director's daughter. In despair of getting another passport, I decided to use hers, come what may. Two young comrades accompanied me to Kattovits. My escorts returned to Sosnovitsy with the information that everything had turned out all right. The director's daughter then told the police that she had lost her passport. I got to Zurich in the best of spirits and once again installed myself with the Axelrods who were amicably disposed towards me.

In 1902, our Russian Party organization abroad bore an entirely different aspect from what it had in the first year I stayed there. In 1898 and at the beginning of 1899, the most outstanding feature was the disparity between the great ideological influence exercised by the "Emancipation of Labour" group on all our Russian work, and its organizational isolation from this work. True, a part of the Russian students were already grouped about Axelrod in Zurich and Plekhanov in Geneva. Nevertheless, there were no active, organizational ties with Russia. A particularly unpleasant impression was created by the youthful Russian emigrants who came to live abroad. Having been in Russian prisons at some

time in their lives, they thought that their mission in connection with Party work in their native land was at an end.

Permanent, active organizational ties between the centre abroad and the work in the locals in Russia were only established in 1900 when the *Iskra* group was formed. Lenin and Martov were the leaders of this group. It was in the fourth issue of *Iskra* that Lenin's famous article "Where to begin?" was published. This article dealt with questions of the organizational structure of the Party, and was in fact an introduction to Lenin's book *What Is To Be Done?* which was published in 1902 and which marked an epoch in Party construction.

At the time of which I write (1902) the *Iskra* group not only had the paper *Iskra* which was regularly published abroad and widely distributed in Russia, but also a strong organizational apparatus. In accordance with Lenin's plan there were, first of all, cadres of well-trained, responsible comrades, the so-called *Iskra* agents, who were sent by the Editorial Board of *Iskra* to work in the locals, in Russia, or were sent from place to place as necessity required. By means of systematic correspondence in secret code and personal visits they kept the centre abroad constantly informed about their own work and the general state of the work in Russia. Besides these highly qualified agents who were successfully carrying out the principles and tatics of *Iskra*, there were professional revolutionaries, who were occupied only with such technical duties as transporting literature and conveying comrades across the frontier, procuring passports and other tasks of a similar character.

The news about *Iskra* (that vital Party centre) reached even the remotest parts of Siberia. Towards the end of the summer of 1902 a large number of comrades managed to make their escape from Siberia. These exiles fled from prison and journeyed to Switzerland or to London which was the headquarters of *Iskra* and of Lenin at that time. In addition, many comrades fresh from Party work in Russia also arrived abroad. We all became very friendly, we read together, discussed matters, shared impressions and experiences of our past work. We talked about what we had endured in prison, about the police cross-examinations. But most of all we talked about the prospects of the Russian revolution.

Once, the entire group went for a walk in the woods. On our way back we went into a restaurant situated on a hill to drink coffee. The evening was unusually lovely and the surroundings delightful. One of our comrades became sentimental and compared the happy lives of the Swiss who lived so peacefully in their lovely, free country with the hard lot of the workers and peasants in Russia. To this, another comrade answered, "Wait, wait, comrades. When we overthrow the autocracy in Russia, the new revolutionary government will send us for a rest to Zurich, to this very hill, and to this very *pension;* and we, toothless dotards by that time, will be fed on milk puddings." We all laughed at this, but not one of us realized that such talk was the product of our complete misunderstanding of the future. We did not understand that after the overthrow of the autocracy our work would only begin, that there would be no time for resting. Nor could we foresee that the freedom that we would win would be such as "free" Switzerland had never dreamed of and she

would therefore not want to welcome old revolutionaries. The Russian revolutionary government would not have to look for rest-homes in Switzerland, because there were plenty of wonderful places in Russia which would be completely at the disposal of the workers and peasants. The only correct thing in our prophecy was that most of us did lose our teeth during the fifteen years from 1902 to 1917.

In August 1902 our close circle was unexpectedly enlarged by the arrival of a group of comrades who had fled from Kiev prison. This flight had been organized by *Iskra*. Comrades had been sent to Kiev specially for this purpose. At that time the notorious Kiev general of gendarmes, Novitsky, had been planning to organize a great state trial for this group and get a heavy sentence passed on them as a warning to others. But to his deep chagrin and damage to his subsequent career, his plans were foiled. This must have caused great confusion and embarrassment in official circles, as the following excerpt from General Novitsky's own report, "Dossier" No 169 of the Kiev gendarmerie, shows:

> "... At the end of the yard not far from the watchman's post, a hand-made ladder hung from the prison wall. The ladder was made from strips of prison bed sheets. It had thirteen rungs and was attached to the prison wall about twelve feet above ground by an iron grapnel. The rungs were made not only from the sheets, but also from the back of a bentwood chair and pieces of wood. Near the ladder hung a knotted rope which served as a support...
>
> "Then I went back to the prison office to find out who had escaped, but on my way I met the

governor and we both went to make an inspection of the grounds.

"I turned to the prison inspector Luchinsky... No one knew exactly how many had escaped. I ordered a roll call of all the political prisoners, and of the sixty-four persons (fifty-one men and thirteen women) only fifty-two were checked up on August 18; all the rest, *i.e.*, Joseph Basovsky, Nikolai Bauman, Joseph Blumenfeld, Vladimir Bobrovsky, Max Vallakh (Litvinov), Marian Gursky, Victor Krokhmal, Boris Maltsman, Levik Halperin, Bomelev, Plesky, Joseph Tarshis (Pyatnitsky), escaped."

The arrival of the Kiev fugitives in Zurich not only caused rejoicing in our circle, but created a sensation among the Swiss. The papers described it as the "tremendously bold flight of the Russian revolutionaries from the tsarist prison". Reporters not only dogged the Kievites, but even dogged us, inopportunely begging for more intimate details of the flight.

Our whole company together with the Kievites grouped itself around the Axelrods. Vera Zasulich already lived in London and worked on the Editorial Board of *Iskra.* Plekhanov, whose permanent residence was in Geneva, often visited Zurich for the sole purpose of seeing and conversing with the Russian "practical workers" as we were called in distinction from the comrades who lived abroad. He questioned us about every detail of the work in Russia. For example, in a talk with me he asked how we distributed leaflets. Did it never occur to us to use the public baths for this purpose? Could we not go to the baths on Saturdays and quietly

place a leaflet in the clothing of each of the bathers? This method of spreading leaflets did not appeal to me as being particularly wise. For, if anyone noticed us fussing about their clothes, we would be taken for thieves and arrested. But the thing that struck me was that such a big man as Plekhanov, who was constantly occupied with the problems of the Party as a whole, should have the time to think about the little technical details of our daily Party work.

Towards the end of the summer, our Zurich crowd gradually began to break up. The first to leave was Boris (Noskov). He, as a member of the organizational committee for the rallying of the Second Party Congress, was called to the editorial office of *Iskra*. We all envied our comrade who was going to London and would meet Lenin personally. Many in our group, including myself, could only dream of one day meeting Lenin. But we were glad for Boris' sake that he was going to make "Party history" as we expressed it then. He was going to take part in the preparations for the Congress which was to liquidate all opportunistic vacillations like that of the *Workers' Cause* * in our ranks and create an orthodox Marxist party according to the *Iskra* plan.

We did not doubt for a moment that the *Iskra* movement would be victorious at the Congress because it had already won over pratically all the organizations in the important industrial centres of Russia. Only a few organizations gravitated toward the Economists and the *Workers' Cause*. One of these supporters of the *Workers' Cause* and the Economists was the Voronezh Committee. It was

* The organ of the Economists.—**Ed.**

whispered that this Committee consisted of a single member, a young girl, a sister of Akimov-Makhnov, the leader of the *Workers' Cause* movement. At that time we did not dream that the *Iskra* party itself would split up into Mensheviks and Bolsheviks (the M's and the B's as we called them then). Although rumours did reach us about things running not so smoothly in the *Iskra* office, and that Lenin and Plekhanov sometimes clashed, we never paid much attention to them, particularly since we often heard the Axelrods say, "Georgi (Plekhanov) is becoming capricious due to his poor health, and Petrov (V. I. Lenin) is a difficult man to get on with."

After Boris left, I and a comrade named Vera Kozhevnikova decided to go away. She was determined to go to Moscow, and I to materialize the hopes of Boris and "Uncle"—to re-establish connections with Yaroslavl, Kostroma and Ivanovo-Voznesensk. We both began to make preparations for these journeys. Both Vera and I had our notebooks full of addresses and passwords, which had to be memorized. We could not take a single document with us that might compromise any of our comrades if we were caught.

I shall never forget how we paced the room like a pair of school girls, earnestly memorizing: "Kostroma, Nizhnaya Debrya, Filitov's house, Maria Stepanova"; password—"We are the swallows of the coming spring." Or, "Moscow, Zhivoderka, Vladimiro-Dolgorukovskaya, pharmacy, pharmacist, Laytman." Password—"I have been sent to you by the singing birds." Answer—"You are welcome." All this had to be learned by heart, so that we would not

look for Nizhnaya Debrya in Yaroslavl instead of Kostroma.

Besides this "theoretical" work, we took it into our heads to dye our hair. This last undertaking did not prove at all successful. Vera dyed her flaxen hair a jet black, but as the rest of her face remained that of a marked blonde, she was obliged to wash out the dye. After that I decided not to dye my hair.

To cross the frontier I was given the passport of a certain Austrian actress, Hedwig Navotni. It was necessary to buy a fashionable autumn coat, a hat and a silk umbrella, so as to look like a real "lady". Into the hem of my coat I sewed a piece of linen upon which I had rewritten a leaflet sent to me from the *Iskra* office. This leaflet, which was said to have been written by Lenin himself, had to be printed in St. Petersburg, and sent to all parts of Russia. I regret that I cannot recall the contents of this leaflet although I rewrote it myself on the piece of linen before leaving Zurich.

I did not cross the frontier without adventure. For some reason or another, the frontier police decided to search the Austrian actress Hedwig Navotni. I was asked to go into the police office where a woman, who was to search me, awaited me. I was very much disturbed because my fashionable coat was not as innocent as it looked. The police-woman asked me to strip completely — even to let down my hair, to see whether I had anything concealed there; but she paid no attention to my coat which was hanging over the back of a chair. Of course she found nothing and informed the customs officials to this effect.

I was so overjoyed that I forgot my beautiful foreign-made umbrella, which I thought gave the

finishing touch to my fashionable outfit. The loss of it distressed me and I even thought of returning to the police office. But I did not have the courage to go there again, knowing the extent of my "guilt". Sorrowfully I abandoned to them that crowning item of my stylish costume.

CHAPTER V: MY FIRST PERIOD OF WORK "UNDERGROUND"

I ONCE more became myself in St. Petersburg after putting an end to my "artistic career," as I termed that short-lived period when I posed as the Austrian actress, Hedwig Navotni. Only when I had obtained a Russian passport from my St. Petersburg comrades did I begin to feel that I was once more on solid ground. I became so accustomed to my new name, Pelageya. (I cannot recall the surname), that I would have thought it strange if anyone had called me by any other.

For some peculiar reason I can remember the name of only one of the members of the St. Petersburg committee—Comrade Rerikh. It was the first and last time I ever saw him. The state of affairs in St. Petersburg was quite alarming. Arrests were constant in our organization. One had to be extremely cautious when meeting comrades. Every night I slept at a different place.

From St. Petersburg I went to Tver. There I was met by Nahum—Nunki—who had just arrived from abroad with a package of illegal literature, principally issues of *Iskra*. He had to take part of this literature with him for distribution to the southern organizations, the rest I was to distribute in the northern region. I arrived at Tver late in the evening. My host, a draftsman or land-surveyor, I

forget which, met me rather uncivilly. Nunki, on the verge of tears, explained that the man was afraid, that he protested against the Tver Committee not cancelling his address and continuing to send him all sorts of trouble. My nocturnal visit was the last straw that broke the camel's back. My host demanded in no uncertain terms that I take myself and my basket out of his room and go wherever I pleased. As proof of his indifference to our fate he made his bed and began to undress, not at all embarrassed by my presence.

Nunki flew into a rage, clenched his fists and was about to throw himself upon our host. To avoid a scandal I led him out of the room, saying that I had another address in reserve.

The only other address I had was that of the local hospital. Of course it wouldn't do at all to go there in the middle of the night. What could we do on that cold night in a strange city? Go to a hotel? Impossible. Both Nunki and I were travelling on false passports which had not been tested. We never registered personally on such passports; usually we gave them to some sympathizer who sent them to the police department. Only when the document was returned. and if we felt that we were not being watched at our quarters, did we feel safe to use such passports.

Nunki and I decided to walk to the station some five or six versts from the city, stay there as long as possible, and walk back in the morning. No sooner said than done. But we were fearfully fatigued and chilled that memorable night.

Early in the morning we went to the hospital. The doctor, a member of the Tver Committee, was profuse in his apologies for the conduct of the

inhospitable draftsman (or land-surveyor) saying that though the latter was undoubtedly a bit of a coward, nevertheless he was a sympathizer.

During my three day stay at Tver I tried to study the state of our organization. But it was difficult to obtain any information from our friend the doctor. He was what we called a "reserve" committee member, that is, one who had a good theoretical training but was not a firm Marxist and a true revolutionary in spirit. At best, the revolutionary activities of these "reserve" members were limited to writing an occasional draft of a resolution, a leaflet or study circle program. Such reserve members were extremely cautious; they feared having trouble with the police. But there was a limit even to their caution, that is, they too, were arrested sometimes and on these occasions they behaved loyally under examination, never betrayed their comrades and, in general, were dependable people—even indispensable. They were indispensable because they were seldom arrested and were able, after mass arrests, to weave together the torn threads of the organization and hand them over to fresh workers.

When I returned to Tver in 1903 to resuscitate the organization and proposed to this doctor that he drop the role of "reserve" member and take up active committee work, he looked at me in surprise and asked, "How can I do active work? Who will be in reserve?" He took his role to be something permanent.

Leaving some literature for the Tver Committee, I set out for Yaroslavl via Moscow. From there I was to go to Kostroma. The latter had been chosen when I was still in Zurich, at a consultation with Boris and "Uncle", as the centre from which

I was to establish connections with other cities in the textile area. In Moscow I met an intimate friend of mine, Vera Kozhevnikova, who had left Zurich not very long before me and had already managed to settle in Moscow on a borrowed passport. From what she told me I gathered that the Moscow organization was having a hard time of it. From the very first days of their stay, she and Glafira Feodorovich, who lived illegally, had to organize the Moscow Committee which was non-existent before their arrival. But they did not get as far as the districts. The place was teeming with spies and the Zubatov movement * was at its height. Each time they set up a committee it lasted a few weeks and was then arrested. Nevertheless they did not lose courage and continued to work with even greater fervour. Maxim Gorky helped the Moscow organizations considerably. They proposed to organize a secret social evening, she told me, for the benefit of the organization. Maxim Gorky had been invited and I would be able to meet him in person and have a talk.

I would have liked nothing better, but our discipline was very strict, and I would have been the first to condemn a comrade who, while travelling on Party affairs, had been detained for a few days by purely personal matters. Therefore I did not wait for the gathering. As compensation, Vera got me a ticket to the theatre where Gorky's play *The Lower Depths* was making its debut. The play was a great success and when the curtain dropped on the last act the audience vociferously called for the author. In response to those calls, Gorky, then

* Zubatov, Chief of the Moscow Secret police, the organizer of "police socialism," for the purpose of keeping the workers away from the influence of the revolutionary movement.—Ed.

still a young man, came out clumsily on the stage, bowed like a bear, and kept tugging at a handkerchief with which he constantly wiped his face.

I spent that night in the cosy room of a young and pretty mathematics student who looked like a little girl. This little girl's name was Varvara Yakovleva. *

At night, on my way from Moscow to Yaroslavl, an accident occurred, and we came to a dead halt at one of the small stations. There was something wrong with one of the cars—my car. It had to be detached. All our things were dumped out on the platform. Imagine my horror when I saw my basket of illegal literature resting right on top of the heap of luggage stacked on the platform. But I could not help laughing at the policeman who was guarding the contraband stuff so conscientiously. We stopped so long at the station that I was chilled through. That, combined with the effects of my nocturnal walk in Tver from which I had not recovered completely, caused me to be very ill by the time I arrived at Yaroslavl. I barely managed to drag myself to an *izvoshchik* ** who drove me to the home of a certain Putilova. The latter took half of the literature, some of which she promised to put aside for Kostroma and Ivanovo-Voznesensk, then conducted me to the home of the Didrikils', Maria, Olga and Nina, where it would be possible for me to recuperate. Maria and Olga had but recently returned from Moscow where they had served a term at the Taganka prison. They had been involved in the case of the Northern Union which had been discovered and broken up by the

* Now People's Commissar of Finance of the R.S.F.S.R.

** Cab-driver.—Ed.

police in April, 1902, thanks to the treachery of the notorious provocateur, Menshchikov. When the old emigré, Blumenfeld, was arrested on the frontier, an address book was found on his person. The police deciphered the addresses and sent Menshchikov to follow them up. The latter had come to an old comrade of ours, Olga Vorontsova, and introduced himself as the Party worker, "Ivan", sent from the centre to establish connections with the textile districts. As this Ivan knew all the addresses and passwords, he did not arouse the slightest suspicion. He was greeted with all the respect that provincial workers show to those sent from the centre. From Yaroslavl he went to Kostroma where he found out everything about the organization. He even discovered that hidden in the cellar of the Zavarin brothers' house were the remains of an old secret printshop. He visited at Sophia Zagina's house where leaflets were being run off on the hectograph. He remarked that things were not being done with sufficient caution in the organization and on one occasion, said: "I feel as though there is going to be a big smash-up before the First of May." Poor Sonia was very distressed. Up to that time she had prided herself upon being quite a careful conspirator, and then to hear such a remark from a centre representative! Of course, there was nothing easier for this provocateur than to predict the débâcle he was himself preparing. Some time afterwards this Menshchikov displeased the police and left Russia. He knocked about Europe for some time. He even wrote a letter of repentance to a newspaper in Paris which was followed by a volume of his memoirs. He particularly repented of his conduct towards Olga Vorontsova. Due to his activity, the Yaroslavl, Kos-

troma, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Vladimir and Voronezh organizations were discovered and completely broken up by the police.

I was laid up at the Didrikils' home for a whole month during which time I was treated with the greatest care. It seemed natural for Olga to prepare me broths and cereals, and for Nina to run to the druggist, the doctor or the store at all hours of the day or night. It did not even embarrass me if any of them stayed up all night on my account. The Didrikils' house was always full of people and everyone felt at home. The youngest sister, Nina Didrikil, was not arrested at the time of the crash, probably because of her tender years. As they had just recently been released from prison and were still carefully watched by the police, Maria and Olga stayed at home most of the time when I was there. But Nina ran about a good deal, made connections with individual workers, distributed the illegal literature which I had brought and arranged circle meetings with the youth.

At the Didrikils' I used to meet Katherina Novitakaya and other correspondents of the *Northern Region (Severni Krai)*, a paper with Marxist leanings which was published legally in Yaroslavl. Among them were the Social-Democrats Mikhail Kedrov, the leader of the Yaroslavl revolutionary students, Gregory Alexinsky (who in 1917 turned traitor and publicly accused Lenin of being a German spy), Klirikov, and a very fine comrade, Dolivo-Dobrovolsky (nicknamed "Dno"), whom I had met once or twice in Europe and who later met with a very tragic end. Comrade Dobrovolsky had an over-sensitive mind and was very highly strung. He reacted with extreme morbidity to all that

happened about us. He could not stand the severe school of prison and the strain to which all Party workers were subjected; this was one of the principal causes of his mental breakdown in 1903. Comrade Dobrovolsky's mania was that the autocracy in Russia had been destroyed, that it was necessary for us to establish a revolutionary government immediately, otherwise anarchy would seize the land. Comrades related that he would come to the meetings of the St. Petersburg Committee and beg that an order be issued for all theatres to play the revolutionary hymn. He would become angry with the comrades because they did not respond to his requests. The poor fellow had to be sent to a psychiatric ward. After a while he seemed to improve and went to Odessa where he tried to resume his work, but, apparently, he despaired so at the loss of his former strength that he committed suicide.

When I reached Kostroma, I immediately looked up a student named Claudia Ovchinnikova, daughter of the merchant Ovchinnikov. She lived with her parents at that time. Claudia welcomed me warmly and immediately made arrangements to put me up comfortably. She introduced me as an old St. Petersburg acquaintance who had come to Kostroma because of family troubles and who intended to teach there. Luckily my passport was a St. Petersburg one, and that Pelageya Davidovna, the name registered on the passport, was a married woman. So that it was not a difficult matter even for me to pose as an injured wife. My plan was more than successful; my kind-hearted hosts took a lively interest in me. They gave me an excellent room, fed me until I could scarcely move, and took only

twelve rubles a month, which, even in those days, was considered very reasonable. In the Ovchinnikov house everyone, from the master to the housemaid, was fat and well-fed. My emaciated appearance was in complete disharmony with my surroundings. My hosts sighed over me, slyly gave me the daintiest morsels and wholeheartedly sympathized with my "family trouble".

The entire Ovchinnikov household was of such good standing and so undeniably respectable, that some of their respectability was reflected upon me. It seemed the most natural thing in the world for me to come and live with them. Nobody took particular notice of me. I went about trying to get as many connections with comrades as possible. That winter I found more fragments of the former Northern organization which had been destroyed the spring before. Out of these fragments, according to my instructions from abroad, I was to build up an organization, and the resuscitated organization had to be linked up with *Iskra*. The first comrade to help me undertake the work was Ivan Savin, a young doctor who, for the time being, lived legally in Kostroma. Even before I came he had attempted to unite the fragments of the organization, but had to give it up. In Kostroma, as in Yaroslavl, there were no new people upon whom he could lean for support. The only people he could rely upon were the Zavarin brothers, Sophia Zaganina, Maria Alexandrova and a few others who had just returned from the Moscow prisons. But all these were being carefully watched by the police.

When I arrived, Ivan's spirits immediately rose; he felt that the centre had not forsaken Kostroma. In order to create a nucleus which would try to

restore the Kostroma organization, we had to draw into our ranks at least one influential worker. At about this time there lived in Kostroma a certain Putilov worker, Ivan Alexandrov, nicknamed Makar, who had been released from the Taganka prison where he had served a term for being mixed up in the Northern Union case. Makar lived in a hovel on the outskirts of the city. When I first went there I found a confused and frightened Ivan standing in the middle of the untidy room. In the corner of the room on a bed lay a giant of a man between thirty and thirty-five years old. His piercing, mocking, black eyes were sunk deep into his expressive, energetic face. When I entered, the giant stirred on the bed, stretched out a huge, calloused hand and remarked jocularly:

"Kitik" (that is what he called Savin) "has been trying to scare me by saying that a certain Pelageya is due any minute. But I see that only a little Polly has come, and she is not at all terrifying." Ivan tried to hush the sick man who had just had a hemorrhage. The sick man was in a very dangerous condition. Savin decided to go to the city for a doctor and to get some medicine. The old and experienced doctor who returned with Savin declared that though the patient's condition was serious, it was not hopeless. Good food and proper care would soon restore him to health. After the doctor's departure we cheered up a little. Kitik began to talk of organizational problems while I cleaned the room, cooked dinner with the provisions Kitik brought for the sick Makar and ourselves and, in general, put everything in order. Makar lay quietly, regarding us good-naturedly and smiling into his black beard. After a week of solicitous care, Makar

began to improve. When the doctor permitted him to speak, Ivan and I were assailed by a shower of raillery. Makar desired to reward himself for his long, enforced silence. He often chided me and Nikonovich, "two pasty intellectuals", for having made the thoroughbred proletarian Makar keep silent for so long. A man of exceptional intellect, very well read, one who had worked in St. Petersburg factories and had acquired much experience. Makar was able to estimate properly the problems which confronted the Party and was a shrewd judge of character. His penetrating glance seemed to pick out all one's merits and one's weaknesses. Finding a weak spot in any of his intimate friends, such as Kitik or me, he would let his malicious tongue go until we in our turn found his weak spot and began to tease him as mercilessly. Then he would admit defeat and turn to more serious matters.

When Makar was once more on his feet, he went to the factory to renew connections with many of the workers with whom he was personally acquainted. Our "holy trinity" (Kitik, Makar and I) became the central nucleus of the Kostroma organization. Our foremost problem was to organize at least one small workers' circle in every large factory. That is why, taking every possible precaution, we had to communicate with all the remaining circle members who had luckily escaped the arrests which had followed the raid on the organization. As soon as evening came each one of us went to a "moonlight rendezvous". That is what Makar called our meetings with workers on the boulevard on some frosty winter evening. We also issued a leaflet calling upon the workers to organize. It was written by Kitik, criticized by Makar, rewritten by me and

printed on the hectograph by Sonia Zagina. These leaflets were distributed through Makar's friends at the factory. The latter would report that the leaflets were taking effect—the workers were beginning to feel that the organization was getting up on its feet again and were duly roused by the fact.

"It would be grand if our 'holy trinity' could remain here and nurse our Kostroma organization and watch it grow," Makar would remark. But we felt this to be too great a luxury. The work of renewing ties with workers' circles could be carried on by student Party workers exiled from the centre. But none of the other cities of the northern district had any organization whatsoever. It was the period when the object of our entire Party work was to create a centralized, well-knit organization and not merely an isolated, limited, local organization stewing in its own juice, as it were. It was very clear to us even then that Lenin's plan—an organization of revolutionaries—was not merely the idle fancy of a theoretician who had isolated himself from our Russian reality as the *Workers' Cause* group and, later, the Mensheviks, tried to convince us. The necessity for a centralized revolutionary party was very keenly felt in our daily work. That is why we resolved to break up our "triple alliance" and decided that Makar should go abroad at the first opportunity to rest a while, read more literature and meet our leaders. After that he was to return as a professional Party worker. Later, when I was in Tver, I arranged Makar's trip. Kitik was the only one of our trinity to remain in Kostroma to help the organization, while I was to go to Yaroslavl for the purpose of organizing a nucleus

in the Korzinkin factory. Then, I was to penetrate into the very heart of the textile region, and establish connections with Ivanovo-Voznesenk. After this was accomplished we planned to call a meeting of the representatives of these three cities (Kostroma, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Yaroslavl) at which a regional committee was to be elected. This committee would immediately communicate with *Iskra*. Thus, towards the end of the winter (the beginning of 1903) I once again found myself in Yaroslavl. Here ill luck seems to have overtaken me—I met with one failure after another.

It began with my taking a room in a house where the landlady at once began to suspect me. At first she took me to be a "pleasure-seeker" and obligingly offered to introduce me to the officials who visited her. When she realized that she had erred, she began to watch me even more closely. Then there were several unfortunate meetings with individual workers from the Korzinkin factory. The police had noticed these meetings. Then another awkward thing occurred. A worker representative, Leonid Kudelin, came from Ivanovo-Voznesensk directly to my unsafe apartment. I had had some difficulty in getting him to come to discuss the plans for a regional meeting. Leonid told me that despite the crash, circle work had not ceased in Ivanovo. The workers of that city had been overjoyed to hear about the plans for a regional meeeting. I agreed to continue to communicate with them. He himself was to come now and then to Yaroslavl, not to my house, but to some other acquaintance. After Leonid left, spies, who had apparently noticed his visit, began to follow me. The situation reached such a point that I could not even go to the bakery for

bread without being shadowed. Of course, all thoughts of meeting workers had to be given up. After suffering in this fashion for several days, one morning very early (when the spies were still asleep) I cautiously slipped downstairs and ran over to the Didrikils. There we decided that I must leave for St. Petersburg immediately. In the centre I would talk things over with the comrades and ask them to send another worker in my stead to finish the work in the northern region. I would go to some city where I was unknown. Our plan was as follows: From St. Petersburg I would send a letter to the Didrikils in which I would enclose a note to my landlady explaining my sudden leave, and asking her to give my things to the bearer of the note. So as not to arouse my landlady's suspicions at my sudden departure, or cause her to tell the police, someone was to go to her and say that I had been taken sick while visiting a friend, and that I would remain there for a few days. I did not take a single thing with me, except my passport and some passports which had been unused in Yaroslavl and would be invaluable to the centre. I carried all the passports in my muff so that I could throw them away if anything serious occurred. Going through by-streets from the Didrikil home to the station everything seemed to be safe enough. I got into the car and sat down near the exit so as to be able to jump out if anything happened. I began to look about me. All my fellow passengers looked so kind that I at once began to feel more secure. I even joined in the conversation during the journey. One of the passengers with whom I had conversed was a man of middle-age, who looked like a merchant. He constantly dived into his heavy-looking valise

and fished out buns, chops and other homemade eatables which he devoured with remarkable rapidity. In the intervals between the eating and the conversation he read a paper, the *Russian News (Russkiye Vedomosti)*. Picture my astonishment when on getting into a horse-tram in St. Petersburg I noticed him sitting in the rear car. This incident upset me considerably. When I got off at Sadovaya Street to see if my suspicions were justified, I heard some one running hard behind me, then a voice whispered almost in my very ear, "Miss, follow me to the police headquarters." Looking about me in despair, I recognized my fellow-traveller and with him two other men who were unmistakably spies. I wanted to scream to attract a crowd, but changed my mind as I knew that I would land in jail in any case. Then there were the four passports in my muff. Besides the three passports I had taken from Yaroslavl there was my own, made out in the name of Pelageya Davidovna, which had to be destroyed. This Pelageya Davidovna's husband lived in St. Petersburg and with him lived his lawful wife. If I were to be confronted with him, he would find that he was married to two Pelageyas. My passport was a duplicate.

If, as it was said during the tsar's time, a Russian consisted of a body, a soul and a passport, this proverb was especially applicable to us underground workers. Passports were divided into several categories. The best kinds of passports were the so-called real passports, that is, borrowed passports of real people who lived in places where it was not necessary to register. The second sort were duplicates of other people's passports. Often, without the person's knowing it, his name, surname and all other parti-

culars were copied into another book. A stamp and signature would be forged and the passport was ready. Then there were the passports of dead people. They could be used everywhere except in the city where the deceased had lived before his death. The worst and least reliable passports were the forged documents. A blank passport would be filled in any way that pleased the "forger's" imagination.

After making my decision, I obediently got into a cab with the respectable looking gentleman—my fellow passenger. Behind us in another cab sat the two spies. Our procession moved toward the Fontanka where the police headquarters were situated.

Luckily for me the woman who was to search me did not come at once. While she was being called, I managed to go to the toilet, tear up the four passports and throw them into the flush bowl. I was examined by the notorious Kvitinsky, the assistant chief of the St. Petersburg Police Department—a shrewd rogue of a fellow. When asked whether I was called Pelageya Davidovna, had I not lived in Yaroslavl on Romanovskaya Street and did I not come this morning to St. Petersburg for illegal purposes, I answered;

"My name is Zelikson. In the spring of last year I left Vitebsk, where I was under the surveillance of the police, because I was out of work. And that is all I have to say."

My reply surprised Kvitinsky; apparently, it did not satisfy him, so he asked, "Where were you during the ten months before your arrest."

"I was walking peacefully along Sadovaya Street when the gentleman came up and arrested me," I

replied. That annoyed Kvitinsky. He almost shouted in his indignation:

"So you have been walking along Sadovaya Street for the last ten months?"

After the cross-examination, Kvitinsky ordered me to be taken to a room which did not resemble a prison cell in the least, but looked more like a study. It contained a writing desk, leather covered chairs, and an oilcloth sofa.

I spent three weeks there while the St. Petersburg police were communicating with Kharkov, Vitebsk and Yaroslavl. Three weeks I slept on that cold and slippery sofa without changing my clothes. It got on my nerves dreadfully, particularly the dirt. I had not taken anything with me when I left Yaroslavl, and I did not want to write from the prison to anyone, not even to neutral acquaintances, because a letter from a political prisoner usually casts some suspicion upon the recipient. That is why I took no measures to make myself more comfortable until the authorities saw fit to do something about it.

One fine day I was taken to a more permanent residence—the preliminary detention prison. I was placed in a tidy little blue room fitted with electric light and running water. Here was a real bed. I could have a bath for the asking and if need be, underlinen. But I did not ask for prison linen. Instead, I knocked on the wall and told my neighbour that I had no linen, that I had been three weeks at the police headquarters and had slept with my clothes on. Within half an hour, a woman warder came into my cell and quietly took a bundle from under her shawl. It had been sent by my neighbour, a student, Maria Nikolayeva. There was

bed linen and underwear in the bundle. That evening I had a bath, I lay down upon the bed, which was clean and comfortable, notwithstanding that it was a prison one. That night I slept and rested well.

Compared with that of the Kharkov prison, life in the women's corridor of this St. Petersburg prison was more like an enforced stay in some tedious *pension* than imprisonment. Could one really call these neat little rooms with polished floors and clean beds prison cells? Rooms that led to a tidy hall with waxed floors? Could these women warders who grumbled at us occasionally be compared with the Kharkov brutes, Melnik and Stanik? Could this constant, almost lawful connection with the outer world be compared with the complete isolation in the Kharkov prison? Nevertheless, there were incidents which reminded me that it was a prison after all.

In the spring of 1903 before the First of May there were the usual mass arrests among the St. Petersburg students. The police caught these political infants without discrimination. All the St. Petersburg prisons were crammed full. Several prisoners would be thown into cells that normally were too small for one person. A good many of these novices were sent to our prison. These newcomers seethed with indignation from the very first moment of their arrival. They assumed a very aggressive attitude towards the administration and clamoured all day for the district Public Prosecutor. When the latter appeared, they demanded their immediate release. In general, they created the impression of being extremely annoyed by such things as bars across the windows and locks on the doors. At first this conduct seemed a little

strange to us old-timers, but gradually the electrified atmosphere began to react upon on us as well, and the idea of a hunger strike hung threateningly in the air. A series of rather original prison meetings were held—opinions were shouted from open windows, the matter was put to a vote and results were passed from cell to cell. In the end a hunger strike was agreed upon by an overwhelming majority. Many of us, however, and I among them, were strenuously opposed to a hunger strike. In 1903, prison hunger strikes became such a frequent occurrence that they not only ceased to worry the police, the district attorney and the prison administration, but they even ceased to have any effect upon the public. Consequently it was hopeless to expect good results from the impending hunger strike. Besides, there were many sick comrades among us who had been in prison for a considerable time, and for them to join the hunger strike—and if the strike were declared they would be honour-bound to join—meant that they would risk not only what remained of their health, but in many cases, their very lives. About three hundred prisoners went on strike. The strike developed into a perfect riot. The prisoners broke windows, slammed doors, and sang at the top of their voices. But the prison officers did not remain idle. The noisier ones were jostled into punishment cells. A squad of soldiers was sent into our corridor, a soldier being placed in each cell. The women, confronted by armed soldiers, went into hysterics.

I got into a very awkward situation as a result of this commotion. It is not in my nature to behave in a rowdy fashion, break windows, etc. But it never occurred to me that the prison administration

would notice at such a moment that my windows were not broken and make an exception in my case by not sending a soldier into my cell. When, to my dismay, I saw that my cell had been passed by, I began to demand that a soldier be immediately sent into my cell. I told the officer that I was in complete sympathy with my comrades, and the reason I had not broken the window or banged the door was that I was sick and had not the strength to do so. My insistence perplexed the chief. He called the district attorney. The latter begged me to calm myself saying, "Don't worry, I have just given an order for the soldiers to be removed. They were placed here for a short time, merely to frighten the girls." And, indeed, I soon heard the soldiers leave the cells.

The hunger strike lasted five days. On the sixth it began to subside. Then the Public Prosecutor made a number of non-committal promises and everbody seized upon them as pretext for ending the strike. Instead of elation there was an air of depression among us after the strike as if we had played a foolish prank. Morever, the health of many of the comrades was seriously affected.

Altogether I stayed in prison for about five months. Finally, I was released temporarily until the verdict was pronounced, and I was warned that it would cover all counts, *i. e.,* the Kharkov affair and my "walking on Sadovaya Street for ten months".

But I was perfectly indifferent to what the sentence would be. In any case I had no intention of waiting for it. The important thing was to get out of prison, mend my health which was particularly shaky after this last experience, and arrange

to go abroad. There I would take a good rest and, with recovered strength, return to Russia. When the police asked me to choose the place for temporary domicile, which was not to include either St. Petersburg or Moscow, nor any of the university cities, I selected Tver, because it was conveniently situated between St. Petersburg and Moscow.

On the day of my release I met two other comrades who were also released, an old Party member, Praskovya Kudeli, and a St. Petersburg propagandist, Maria Nikolayeva, whose acquaintence I had made in prison by means of taps. They also decided to go to Tver. Things turned out very well in Tver. I quickly obtained a room at a reasonable rent and, most important of all, I got employment. Although by that time we had come to the conclusion that it was nessary to provide maintenance for those who were engaged solely with Party work, this applied mostly to comrades who were illegal. As soon as a member became legalized, even temporarily, he did not think it proper to take money from the Party funds for his personal needs, particularly as, being under police surveillance, he was not in a position to continue Party work for some time. Therefore I was overjoyed at getting a situation as temporary clerk in the insurance statistics department of the *Zemstvo*. As the job was only a temporary one, it did not require the governor's approval.

The problems of printing premises and headquarters for the Tver organization were solved with the help of the head doctor of the Zemstvo hospital, Dr. Abramovich and his family, the pharmacist, Petrov and the nurse Fanny Klionskaya.

The Tver comrades, the active workers, were so closely associated with one another, the very oppo-

site of what had been the case in Kharkov, that it was really difficult to distinguish between the committee and the periphery. There was more democracy than centralism in the Tver organization, notwithstanding the fact that it belonged to the *Iskra* group. We concentrated our work on the Morozov textile mills which were situated outside the town. These mills employed 25,000 workers when working at full capacity. The Tver organization did not seem to have any definite organizational form. The committee was at the head of the organization, all the active workers worked in conjunction with the committee. After that came the workers' circles, of which there were not less than twenty. We distributed *Iskra* literature and local leaflets which dealt with the daily problems at the factory. I remember that I once took a package of these local leaflets from Fanny, who used to run them off on a mimeograph at the hospital, and went to keep an appointment with Nil at the cemetery where we agreed to meet at eleven o'clock. What with the deathly stillness in that moonlit cemetery, and the eerie lights of the tapers burning on some of the graves, an unaccountable fear seized me: I wanted to throw my package away and run as fast as my legs could carry me without once looking back. And Nil was nowhere in sight. I waited in agony for a whole hour before he came. When he did turn up at last, we walked back together, although this was an incautious thing to do. All the way back, I scolded him for being late, and he teased me for my cowardice.

At that time we made our first attempt to carry on work in the rural districts. Tikhon Popov, an old Party comrade, who had recently come to us, was

sent to some adjacent villages. He had to strengthen connections with the peasants through the workers who lived in the suburbs near the city. We also tried to organize Social-Democratic committees among the peasants. During my short stay, there were no strikes or demonstrations in Tver. The experienced Praskovya Kudeli conducted the more advanced circles which used to be held in boats on the Volga. A great deal of agitational work was carried on among the other circles at which the point stressed most was the overthrow of the autocracy. Besides the circle work, we held mass meetings in the woods, to which the workers came in scores.

At these mass meetings fiery speeches were delivered by our young agitators, Semyon Sergovsky, who later left the Party, and Sergey Modestov.

Our Tver comrades did not devote much attention to general Party problems, and as only a short time had elapsed since the split,* they could not make up their minds whether they were on the side of the Bolsheviks or the Mensheviks. We found it difficult to understand why the split occurred. No literature on the subject had yet been received and the news of the split caused fear and consternation in our ranks. Nevertheless we felt that it was necessary as quickly as possible to take one side or the other.

Meanwhile the growth of the workers' movement was becoming more and more apparent, and sleepy and medieval as the Tver police may have been they could not but become aware of the animation among the workers. Many copies of *Iskra* found

* The split in the Social-Democratic Labour Party that occured at the Second Congress of the Party in 1905.—Ed.

their way into the factory. Leaflets issued by the Tver committee began to appear with increasing frequency. All this brought its inevitable consequences: one not very fine night the police raided us. Almost all the active members, those not under surveillance, were arrested. Those who had been watched by the police during their stay in Tver, myself included, were carefully searched. After the raid we were called to police headquarters and quite impressively informed that what had occurred must serve as a warning to us, and that "if anyone dared . . . then. . . ."

I had a narrow escape that night.

I had in my possession the draft of a leaflet that I had written and also a copy of an anti-religious leaflet which had been given to me to rewrite in a more popular form. I had finished rewriting it late that night and it was left lying on the table, when the police called. Had it not been for the presence of mind of my sister Rose who had come to visit me in Tver, things would have been serious. As soon as we heard that the police were at the front door she spilled some kerosene over the leaflet and burned it, so that when the police came into the room nothing was left of it but smoke.

The police rushed to the fireplace and then began to question us about the smoke in the room. We answered that "we wanted to light a fire, but changed our minds and went to bed". There the matter ended. Although I was not arrested, I was nevertheless carefully watched. A few days after the raid I made several attempts to restore the organization (by the way, this is the time that I had the talk with the doctor about his taking on more active responsibilities). Then I noticed that I

was being followed. The comrades who managed to remain at liberty advised me to leave the town. But before leaving Tver, I managed to accomplish a very important matter—I went to Moscow and obtained money from a sympathetic lawyer and established connections with the frontier, thanks to which Makar was able to go to Switzerland, thus realizing the plans we had made in Kostroma.

Altogether I worked in Tver for not more than two months. Of course, I was eager to go abroad again where I could rest and meet friends and also study the details of the split in the party and make up my mind which side to join.

CHAPTER VI: ABROAD ONCE MORE

ON this occasion I found it much easier to cross the frontier. Our work on the frontier was excellently organized and there were always some of our people on hand. Contacts with the smugglers were arranged to the last detail. There was even a fixed price for smuggling people across —ten rubles per head. This was at the Prussian frontier at which the work was supervised by Victor Kopp.* There I became acquainted with Zemlyachka** who was at the frontier town awaiting her turn to be shipped across. I had to deal with three smugglers of three different nationalities, a Jew, a Pole and a German. The distance from the town where I stayed to the frontier was twenty-five versts which we travelled by horse and cart. We rode very slowly; every now and then we would stop to steal hay. But when I protested that we would be caught because of that worthless hay, Itsik, the Jewish driver, answered, "Don't worry, miss, I have been driving this route for many years; I always take a little hay for the horse, and I have never been caught at it".

We came to the inn at which we were to halt late at night. The inn belonged to Itsik. After

* Late Soviet Ambassador to Sweden.—Ed.

** Then and now a prominent Party worker.—Ed.

knocking loudly the door was opened by Itsik's sleepy wife and I was admitted into a stuffy, dirty room a good third of which was occupied by a big bed piled high with pillows and feather mattresses. The whole family slept on that bed. Besides the bed, there was a large table in the centre of the room, and narrow benches along the wall. Itsik's wife reached into the hot oven, pulled out a huge earthen pitcher and poured Itsik and me a glass of weak tea. But before offering me the tea she consulted with Itsik in Yiddish as to whether it was worth while feeding me. The question was decided in my favour. Of course, I pretended not to understand a word of Yiddish. I had with me a forged Russian passport representing me as the daughter of a government official, so I had to pretend that I was a pure-bred Russian. That very night we went on foot to the village where I was to meet the second smuggler, a Polish peasant named Tomash.

Tomash lived in even more beggarly conditions than Itsik. His hut was incredibly low and dirty. On a heap of rags in one corner of the room slept the entire Tomash family, and in another corner slept a calf. Tomash himself, haggard, ragged and dirty, kept running in and out, whispering to someone in another room. Generally, he seemed nervous and confused. This disquietude communicated itself to me. Afterwards I learned from comrades who frequently had dealings with smugglers that this air of nervousness was deliberately assumed by them in order to impress the inexperienced traveller with the difficulties of the task of getting people across the border and to wheedle a few extra rubles out of them for their work. Day began to break. Tomash took my small valise. He told me

to take off my hat, wrap myself up in a shawl, and pretend to be an old woman who was crossing the frontier for some reason or other, while he would pretend to be helping me, the "old woman", across out of pity. All this, he said, had to be done for the benefit of the soldier who was guarding the frontier, otherwise the latter would ask too much for allowing me to pass. I submissively did as I was told and got across safely.

We reached a German village where everything was in striking contrast to the wretched Polish-Russian side. The home of the German peasant exuded contentment. The cottage was roomy, clean —and everyone in the household, from the master, his son and daughter, to the splendid horse which drove us to the station, seemed to be plump and well fed. I was offered a breakfast which consisted of eggs, butter, coffee with cream and delicious hot buns — all for a remarkably reasonable price. Upon learning that I could speak German, my hosts eagerly entered into conversation with me. They offered me loads of advice about how to carry myself at the station so as not to attract the attention of the German gendarmes. I was taken to the station where my German friend exchanged my Russian money for German and returned home. For some time after the train had started, I continued to look toward the door of the compartment suspiciously to see if any one was coming for me. Gradually it dawned upon me that there was nothing more to fear.

It seemed as if a load had been lifted from my shoulders. My spirits were unusually high all the way to Berlin. My destination, as always, was Zurich and the Axelrod home. On the very first

day of my arrivel, Axelrod's wife informed me that Paul Borisovich had left for Geneva and that there was a terrible wrangle in our Party between two factions—the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. The Bolsheviks with Lenin at their head, she said, were pursuing a "scandalous" splitting policy not only abroad, but even in Russia.

The principal cause of the dispute was the interpretation of Clause I of the rules of the Party, which defined who was eligible for membership in the Party. One side wished to define it as one who accepted the Party program and does active work in one of the Party organizations. The other side wished to define it as one who accepted the program and occasionally rendered some services to the Party. It seemed to me that the side which wanted only those who would work actively in the Party to be members of the Party were right. Having worked in Russia I knew well enough how alien to us were those who occasionally, whenever it struck their fancy, offered us their help. That is why I could not understand why the Leninists were being blamed so much.

Of my old acquaintances I found all the Kiev fugitives in Geneva. They were no longer an intimate and closely knit unit. Within the group, as within the Party itself, a split had occurred. One section of the Kievites, represented by Victor Krokhmal, Marian Gursky, Joseph Basovsky, Blumenfeld and Maltsman, was with Martov on the Menshevik side; Litvinov, Pyatnitsky, Nicholai Bauman and my husband, Vladimir Bobrovsky, were already determined Bolsheviks and sided with Lenin. Levik Halperin, if I remember rightly, occupied some sort of an intermediate position. Here I met

my Kostroma friend, Makar, who seemed very confused and unhappy. By natural inclination he gravitated towards the Bolsheviks, but Martov and principally Dan (who never let Martov go from his side for fear that the latter would show insufficient energy in badgering the Bolsheviks), took a firm grip on poor Makar who represented to them the essence of the Russian proletariat* and kept driving their Menshevik doctrines into his head. I was in no better position. All my sympathies were with the Bolsheviks. But Martov, with whom I was acquainted in Kharkov, inevitably accompanied by Dan, visited me several times at my *pension "Fourne"* on the Plenpallee. I was placed there to recuperate, because I was very run down when I first arrived. Martov stormed and raged when I expressed my point of view as a local Party worker in opposition to the Menshevik position on the Party rules. Matters came to such a pass that one fine day I was called into the office of the *pension* and discreetly informed that if my Russian friends did not cease to come and create bedlam, I would be obliged to leave the place. I cannot now recall any of the verbose speeches delivered by Martov and Dan, but their arguments invariably ended in a sharp criticism of Lenin, who, according to them, was creating Bonapartism in the Party, and leading the confiding Russian Party workers by the nose.

Nevertheless, our Russian rank and file workers

* Leaders abroad in general threw themselves upon every living, unbookish worker who came abroad as upon some invaluable treasure. A similar thing happened with the worker-leaders of the famous Rostov strike, Ivan Stavsky, Afanasiev and a few others when they came to Geneva: Plekhanov and Vera Zasulich could not contain their joy at the sight of these "real" proletarian agitators.—C. B.

felt that the place of a real revolutionary was on the side of Lenin and not on the side of Martov.

One day Axelrod came to visit me. Having heard that I was ill, and as Rosa (Plekhanov's wife and a well-known doctor in Geneva) who treated me declared that besides good nourishment I needed absolute rest, he told me in a fatherly way that he would not talk to me about the split. From Martov he had heard that I inclined towards the Bolsheviks, and for that reason he "could not but deplore the fact that I had enlisted with the Leninist 'rams'. The last remark was hardly fair considering that he had just promised not to discuss the split. It is not an easy thing to feel that you are becoming estranged from your best friend and teacher who had often called you his own daughter. What he said agitated me. However, without sparing Axelrod's feelings I answered, "Evidently the Bolshevik position is more convincing seeing that I, who have never seen Lenin, enlist with his 'rams', in spite of the fact that the Menshevik doctrines are heatedly defended by the leaders, Martov and Dan". That was the last time I met Axelrod.

After Axelrod's visit I began to be less envious of those fortunate comrades who had joined one faction or another as, for example, my husband, Bobrovsky, his friend Bauman, Vallakh and other Bolshevik Kiev fugitives. I too felt that I was beginning to make up my mind. Martov's and Dan's visits naturally ceased. I planned that as soon as I recuperated and felt strong enough to leave my room, I would go to Lenin and ... enlist with his "rams". Makar, who visited me every day, also began to gravitate more and more towards the Bolsheviks. Gradually he freed himself from Dan's

charms and, after deciding for the Bolsheviks, become more cheerful. And from force of habit he continued to tease me saying that it was the second time I was present at his imminent destruction—the first time in Kostroma when he almost died of a hemorrhage, and now in Geneva where he had almost perished politically, where he had been on the brink of becoming a Menshevik.

Although I had never met Lenin personally, I felt as if I knew him well. His deep ideological influence on the entire structure of our daily work in Russia was always felt, particularly after the founding of *Iskra*. So clear was his image in my mind that I immediately recognized him when I first saw him at a rather large Bolshevik meeting. I do not remember now whether he spoke on the agrarian question or on some other Party problem. Standing high above the rest, he still seemed to remain an equal, a pleasant and simple comrade. When Vladimir Ilyich came down from the platform after his brilliant speech, he immediately became one of our crowd. Knowing that I had recently come from Russia and that I had worked on the Tver Committee, he showered questions upon me about my work and the condition in which I had left the Tver organization. All I could say was that before my departure we were very poorly informed about general Party problems in Tver. No literature dealing with the split had reached us, nevertheless I was convinced that the Tver organization would turn Bolshevik. I admitted that this was my first Bolshevik meeting and that I had come to enlist with the Leninist "rams". Vladimir Ilyich laughed heartily at this and insisted that I describe Axelrod's visit in detail. He called Nadezhda

Constantinovna* and laughingly repeated the story about the "Leninist rams" which apparently had pleased him immensely. But Krupskaya only smiled in reply, for I believe she never laughed aloud at anything. There and then I was invited to visit them.

Several comrades and I went at the first opportunity to Secherone, a small suburb of Geneva where Lenin, his wife and her mother, Elizaveta Krupskaya, rented a small summer home. It was a two story house; a creaking staircase led up to the second floor. The largest room in the whole place was the kitchen with its large gas range. Ilyich received his guests in this kitchen when there were too many of us to crowd into the "parlour". There were other rooms upstairs—Lenin's study, the entire furniture of which consisted of an iron bed, a few chairs, a large white table loaded with manuscripts, papers, and books, and white, home-made shelves closely packed with books. Nadezhda Constantinovna's room was about as comfortable as Lenin's. In general, the whole house was very striking because when one rented a room in Geneva, even of the cheapest, it was comfortably furnished with a good bed, handsome writing desk, divan, bureau, and so forth.

The household duties were performed by Elizaveta Krupskaya, so that Nadezhda Constantinovna was freed from domestic cares and was able to devote all her time to her work. She not only helped Lenin in his scientific work, but also established strong links with Russia by corresponding with the various local organizations. At the time

*Comrade Krupskaya, Lenin's wife.—**Ed.**

of which I am writing, this correspondence in code assumed such proportions that nowadays it would need a whole department with a manager and clerks. Nadezhda Constantinovna would sit for days at a time bent over this tedious work which was so indispensable for the Party.

We were all so drawn towards Vladimir Ilyich, that at one period his house was crowded with people every day in the week. Then it dawned upon us that it was not in the best interests of the Party to continually disturb him. We then agreed upon a special visiting day, once a week—either a Tuesday or a Thursday, I cannot recall which. The witty Makar christened these Tuesdays or Thursdays "Ilyich's at-homes on the stove," since we all gathered in the kitchen.

Of course, there was never a definite number of visitors during these evenings. Every day brought new comrades to Geneva and sent old comrades for work in Russia. In general, our contact with Russia was very close.

More pleasant and interesting than the "at-homes" were the meetings and talks with Lenin during some spare moment when one could drop in for a chat or even a hearty laugh. Lenin loved to laugh heartily.

If, sometimes, you called during the day, the first one you would meet downstairs would be Mother Krupskaya going about her household duties. Upon your asking if it were all right to go upstairs she would invariably reply, "Go ahead, go ahead. Drag them out of their dens. Vladimir Ilyich cannot tear himself away from his books, and Nadya has grown fast to her chair sitting over those letters. Call them down to dinner, and stay for a meal

yourself. I've cooked a potful of soup—Vladimir Ilyich likes plenty of it".

How good it was to go up those pleasantly creaking stairs and see from a distance Lenin's bald head bent over a heap of papers! Ilyich—dressed in an unbelted blue cotton Russian blouse. How welcoming Nadezhda Constantinovna's smile as she warmly pressed your hand. How infectiously Lenin laughed, not a bit angry with you for having disturbed him at his work. What brilliant sparks of wit he let fly about the Mensheviks! How easily and freely one breathed while with him!

One evening I shall never forget. I had been listening to Lenin with absorbed interest and did not notice how late it was getting. I missed the last tram and was afraid to return home alone so late at night. Vladimir Ilyich volunteered to accompany me saying that he needed a bit of fresh air anyway.

Taking the opportunity of being alone with Lenin, I began shyly to ask him questions about certain doubts which had been troubling me for some time concerning my life as a professional revolutionary. I was aware of the tremendous importance Lenin attached to the organization of professional revolutionaries and I knew what hopes and expecetations he placed upon them; and it seemed to me that only those comrades had a right to call themselves professionals who were particularly gifted, who had a wide political outlook, great oratorical and agitational talents as well as deep theoretical knowledge. If the professionals were factory workers, I argued to myself, they should be gifted with a special kind of proletarian instinct which would compensate for their lack of theoretical

knowledge. Having none of these qualities, I was tortured by the thought that I was not fit for the high calling of professional revolutionary. All these doubts I put before Lenin. Vladimir Ilyich listened to me attentively. Then he began to explain to me what the structure of our Party should be like and he grew quite excited as he spoke of the role the professional revolutionary played in that structure. The professional revolutionary, he said, first of all, had to be utterly devoted to the Party and the workers' cause—his personal life and his Party life had to be one. The organization of revolutionaries could not be restricted into a narrow circle of leaders; tireless, devoted rank and file workers, who were in constant contact with the masses, were indispensable. They were the ones who were laying the foundations of the Party, brick by brick, and without their help no leader could accomplish anything.

I was so absorbed in what Lenin was saying that I did not notice that we had reached the main entrance of the house where Bobrovsky and I lived. I could not realize that our conversation had to end I stopped irresolutely and was about to ask Ilyich to come up to our apartment, but I knew that everyone was sleeping and that the commotion caused by our entrance would interrupt the conversation, anyway. Ilyich paused for a moment then turned around, and we resolutely walked back in the direction of the Secherone suburbs, continuing our talk. When we reached his home Lenin began to laugh and declared that we must put an end to escorting, but since he was entirely to blame for becoming so absorbed in the conversation, he

felt it his duty to take me home once more, but this time for good.

When we parted, Lenin slyly, very slyly, remarked: "One must have a little more confidence in one's abilities, that is not at all bad for the work, not bad at all." I often recalled these words afterwards in moments of weakness.

Nevertheless, all these inroads on Lenin's time bothered my conscience. But it was difficult to resist temptation. Lenin himself would encourage these incursions by coming to my house with Nadezhda Constantinovna and inviting me to theirs. Besides, Makar, whose love for Lenin bordered on hero worship, would often come and coax me to go "to Ilyich for a chat." When I declined and tried to persuade him not to go since it was a shame to take up so much of Lenin's time, Makar would try to convince me that we were extremely useful to Lenin because we "breathed of Russia," something which was lacking abroad. I cannot say how much truth there was in Makar's statement that we "breathed of Russia," still I knew that Lenin liked to meet the comrades who did not intend to remain long abroad and were anxious to return to Russia for practical work.

I stayed in Geneva for a few months. During that time many comrades left, among them many of the Kievites. Physically, I had not improved in the least, my health was still very poor. I could not think of going to work in Russia while I was in such a state. It would mean my becoming a burden to whichever organization I was sent to. But I found it equally hard to take part in the life of the Russian colony in Geneva. All that which continued to seethe in our Geneva Bolshevik circles

somehow did not absorb me. Reading and theoretical studies left me unmoved. I wanted to be doing practical work, but outside of Russia there was nothing for me to do. I was seized with a terrible melancholy which impelled me to move to Berlin, where there was still something to be learned from the German Social-Democratic Party. Even if the workers' movement in Geneva had been of interest it could not possibly have been so for me, as I did not speak a word of French.

Berlin captivated me from the very first day. I attended the meetings at which Bebel spoke with particular interest. What astonished me in Bebel was his extraordinary power to draw out young and fresh forces of the Party. This was felt every time he addressed a meeting and in his reply to the points raised by some of the young comrades who had participated in the discussion following the speech. Bebel had a knack of destroying all the objections raised by a young comrade without humiliating the comrade himself. In the softest, simplest and friendliest manner he would explain the correct view of a question to his opponent, regardless of the latter's youth or the naïvete of his protests and encourage him to take part in the future discussions.

Bebel's moral authority and influence on both the German proletariat and Party members was so great that there was always an air of solemnity at the meetings he addressed.

I heard Bebel speak at the May First meeting 1904, held in the largest public hall that was accessible to the Berlin workers, but even then the hall could not hold all who wished to attend. There was a larger crowd in the street than in the hall, and the burly German Schutzleute* drove back the

crowd that was trying to get into the hall to get a glimpse of Bebel. After his speech, old man Bebel quietly passed through the side door, put on his shabby cape that was so familiar to every Berlin worker, got on his bicycle and rode away.

I heard Clara Zetkin, then a young woman without a single grey hair on her head, mostly at woman's meetings. Her public appearances were no less striking than those of Bebel. Incidentally, she very often referred to Russia in her speeches, and when Plehve, the tyrannical tsarist Minister for the Interior was assassinated, she delivered a series of lectures on Russia in all the districts of Berlin, entitled "The Cossack Policy".

The Russian colony in Berlin was rather big. It was divided into Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and several intermediate groups. The Bolshevik leader about whom all the Bolsheviks were grouped was a delegate from the centre, Martin Mendelstamm (Lyadov). Pyatnitsky was in charge of all the illegal transportation arrangements in Berlin. He lived in Berlin on a German passport and called himself Freitag, which in German means Friday, hence his Russian pseudonym Pyatnitsky. A Berlin university student, Jacob Zhitomirsky, also helped in these affairs. Later he turned out to be a provocateur.

The Prussian police kept a watchful eye on our company. I was once called to police headquarters where they wanted to know if I really was the daughter of the Ural manufacturer, Kharitonov (I was registered in Berlin as such), and why it was that I lived in such a cheap room, was so undernourished, and dressed so shabbily. I expressed surprise at

* Policeman.—Ed.

these questions, thanked them for their concern for my welfare and explained that my father and I did not get on well together, that we often quarrelled, and because of these differences he sent me little money which did not permit me to live in greater affluence. My answer seemed to satisfy them. At any rate I was never called upon to give any further explanations about myself. Although I was longing to go back to Russia to do active Party work, it was easier for me to live in Berlin than in Geneva because of my deep interest in the German workers' movement.

But Makar, who had also fled to Berlin to escape the boredom of Geneva, became still gloomier. He did not know a word of German. "It was not such a tragedy if I didn't understand French in Geneva," he would say, "there was nothing to hear anyway. But here everything is so interesting, and I cannot understand a word!" Makar did not waste time in Berlin very long. He went to Moscow to carry on underground work. His lungs were far from well. The only thing that could cure him was a sanatorium in the south of Italy or France, but our Party had not sufficient funds for that.

When I finally began to feel a little better (my prolonged idleness helped me recuperate even though I did not have the proper nourishment), I asked to be sent to Russia. This was in the summer of 1904. It was suggested that I go to the Caucasus and be at the disposal of the Union Council, as our regional Caucasian Party organization which united Tiflis, Baku, Batum, etc., was called. The Union Council had its headquarters in Tiflis. It was arranged beforehand that I work in Baku where Party workers were very much needed at that time.

My return across the frontier was accomplished without any difficulty, because a student whom I knew in Berlin provided me with a real foreign passport. The arrangement was that as soon as she learned that I had crossed the frontier safely she was to inform the Prussian police that she had lost her passport.

CHAPTER VII: WORK IN THE CAUCASUS

BEFORE going to the Caucasus I wanted to see my sister Rose who was working in the Kostroma organization at that time. But my arrival in Kostroma was not without danger because my sister was then regarded with suspicion by the police, and I could be easily recognized as that notorious Pelageya Davidovna. Therefore, I did not go straight to Kostroma; I met my sister in Zhiroslavka (about thirty versts from the city) at the home of some sympathetic landowners, the Kolodesnikovs. Under their hospitable roof I was later obliged to hide. Once we even temporarily removed our printshop to Zhiroslavka.

I went to Tiflis at a very troubled period. Almost all the members of the Union Council were carefully watched by the police. Vladimir Bobrovsky (who went under the name of Nikolai Golovanov) lived in particularly trying circumstances. When I reached him (he lived at a dirty sort of inn) and before we were even able to exchange greetings, some unknown comrade burst into the room and excitedly exclaimed:

> "I have come to warn you that the police are coming to the inn. They are after Golovanov. Follow me immediately through the back entrance, into the yard and down the side-street, if you want to be saved!"

We immediately followed our unexpected rescuer. Finding ourselves in an empty side-street we took different directions. Golovanov and the unknown comrade got on to the first droshky they met, while I went quietly to look for other comrades. I had the address of a music teacher whose surname was Adjarova, I believe, but whom we called simply. Nadezhda. That day Nadezhda found me a room in the home of an Armenian acquaintance. In the evening she informed me that Golovanov was safe. His comrades hid him with their own people in a hut on Mount St. David. On the morrow there was to be a meeting of the Union Council. A Georgian, the owner of the hut who kept a barber shop in the city, took us to the mountain. A young woman, the barber's wife, dressed in Oriental clothes, came out to meet us. To my surprised questions as to whether this woman was a sympathizer, my escort, shaking his fist threateningly, said:

"Let her just dare not sympathize!"

We arrived at our friend's hut the entrance to which was through a sort of cave. The appearance of this eastern dwelling was quite extraordinary. I stopped confused, on the threshold. Through clouds of tobacco smoke I discerned the silhouettes of people sitting at a table eating fat mutton. Among them was Golovanov. These wild looking people proved to be comrades, members of the Union Council.

Of all the Union members in Tiflis, I had business mostly with the old man Tskhakaya (Mikha), who was called Gurgen; Stalin, then still very young, and the late Sasha Tsulkukidse, who even then was very sick. We discussed the difficulties facing the organization and the impending raid by

the police which we all felt was inevitable. We decided that we must ask for re-enforcements from the centre and that Golovanov be sent to Baku for this purpose. I was to remain in Tiflis as a district organizer. Gurgen (Mikha Tskhakaya) was to connect me with the district, but for a long time he was unable to do this. The police were watching him too closely. When I finally made contact with one or two workers, the spies immediately began to follow me. Hence, nothing came of my work in Tiflis, that is, if one does not count the two or three small workers' meetings which I organized, and my participation in one rather big propagandist meeting.

My precarious position in Tiflis might have ended in arrest any moment. Therefore the comrades thought it wise to send me to Baku. My husband "Golovanov from Tiflis" (Vladimir Bobrovsky) was working successfully on the Baku Committee under the name of Ephrem. Not having a passport he was not registered. His landlord, the bookkeeper Otto Winter, being a sympathizer, did not object to the passportless Ephrem obtaining an equally passportless wife, a certain "Olga Petrovna" (myself). Thus I settled in Baku. The name Olga Petrovna stuck to me and I worked in the organization under it for several years. Even now many old comrades, especially Muscovites, continue to call me by that name. We had plenty of hard work to do in Baku in the autumn of 1904. At the first meeting of the committee to which I was co-opted, plans for a general strike were discussed. The latter soon broke out. Before I had time to look round I was swept off my feet by the great event. Add to this the motley confusion of Caucasian nationalist parties,

groups and cliques whose multifarious aims and views I had first to become acquainted with, and it will become clear that it was very difficult for me to take an active part in the work immediately.

While the multiplicity of nationalities and languages among the workers in the oil industry made Party work very difficult in Baku, it made it easier as far as concealment from the police was concerned. For some mysterious reason the Baku police concentrated all their attention on tracking criminals and completely ignored birds of our feather, and this enabled us to carry on our work almost openly. All of us lived without being registered; we organized big workers' meetings in the engine rooms in various parts of the oil fields and also at the houses of the workers or of sympathetic Armenian and Russian intellectuals. Usually even the janitors at these houses were sympathizers, a fact rarely met with among Russian janitors who were usually in the pay of the police.

Before the strike began our Baku organization had to wage a bitter struggle against a semi-Menshevik, semi-adventurist group which had considerable influence over the workers employed in the Balakhana oil fields. This group was composed of several intellectual professionals, who had come into the district headed by Ilya Shendrikov, a very good agitator but a demagogue. Ilya's fiery speeches before and during the strike breathed hatred of the Bolsheviks in general and of the Baku Committee in particular. He and his friends tried to keep the strike within the limits of a purely economic struggle and tried to keep out everything that was political. Our political struggle was the principal

object of Ilya's ridicule at the mass meetings. On such occasions his harangues would be punctuated with sneering Menshevik phrases such as "Bolshevik generals," "Bonapartism," and so forth. But, notwithstanding the fact that they used Menshevik phraseology, the Shendrikov group was more adventurist than Menshevik.

The demagogue Ilya was never tired at mass meetings of discussing minor questions like the provision of aprons, mits, etc., by the employers, without touching upon the real significance of the strike. As a result, the more backward workers left these mass meetings without being enlightened as to the true nature of the struggle and went away determined to fight only for mits and aprons. They would leave the meeting with a hatred towards the Bolsheviks for whom mits and aprons were a minor problem and not the vital question.

The trouble with the Baku Committee was that it adopted a somewhat academic approach to the working masses. Another drawback was that we had no speaker in our ranks to match the eloquent Ilya Shendrikov. I recall quite clearly one mass meeting in Balakhana. Alyosha and Yuri took turns in speaking against Shendrikov. They were often interrupted by uncomplimentary shouts about the Bolsheviks who instead of demanding mits and aprons demanded the overthrow of the autocracy. We left the meeting with heavy hearts, but we were convinced a turn in our favour would take place any day. There were many objective reasons for our thinking so. While Shendrikov was pursuing his demagogic policy in Balakhana without bothering to strengthen his influence organizationally, our committee was strengthening its position in other

districts and, most important of all, it was in control of the strike committee.

I vividly recall a nocturnal meeting of the strike committee held in a worker's home, which was situated in the backyard of a weird-looking Tartar house. Several of our armed men stood on guard in the yard. If any of the police had visited us that night, they would have fared badly. At that memorable meeting which in addition to the Baku Committee was attended by a number of active district workers, the final demands of the strikers, political as well as economic, were formulated (the mits and aprons were included). We were all in high spirits. It was good to be in that room, even though the place was so stuffy that one of the comrades, a representative of the tram conductors, began to feel faint. The meeting lasted all night. Early in the morning we left the place in little groups so as not to be too conspicuous. We had to go straight to the districts in order to be on the spot when the strike broke out. I walked to my district, Cherny Gorod, with Red Georgi and a worker named Luka, who represented the railway depot on the strike committee.

Cherny Gorod was situated on the other side of the railway where there were a number of engineering shops. Things began to stir here early in the morning. Everywhere crowds of workers were excitedly discussing the strike. When they saw us, particularly Georgi and Luka, they crowded around, eager to know what demands had been formulated at the last night's meeting. Everyone was in high spirits. Only the women grumbled. They even pointed at me as at some shameless creature who was meddling in affairs which were

not a woman's business. I don't recall having met any organized women workers in Baku with the exception of the women artisans in the town and handicraft workers. The women who grumbled at the strike were principally the workers' wives. All they were concerned about was nursing the children and cooking their husbands' meals. They were the most abject and ignorant creatures in the world. That is why I felt no anger towards them despite the sharpness of their tongues. It never occurred to us to carry on work among them; the job seemed such a thankless one. Besides, there was so much other work which we could barely cope with that agitation among the women was left for more favourable times.

During the strike the Baku Committee tried to show the masses of workers the necessity of extended political demands both by oral agitation and by the distribution of leaflets which had been printed in our excellently equipped secret printshop. This agitation proved successful. The Baku workers became more class conscious during the strike, although a demonstration which had been planned on a Sunday was disrupted by Ilya Shendrikov. He deliberately called a meeting in Balakhana on that day and spoke so long that it was too late for the Balakhana workers to walk the ten versts to town where our demonstrtion was to be held, and without the Balakhana workers the demonstration could not have had the desired effect so we had to abandon it. The general strike of the Baku workers lasted a month and ended in December 1904 in the oil kings, who were organized in the Oil Producers' Federation, granting important concessions.

Even the women ceased to nag their husbands. They realized that the struggle had been worth while. The struggle had been a hard one, but the workers secured a shortened working day and an increase in wages. But most important of all, the workers began to be recognized as a power with which it was necessary to reckon.

This consciousness of their own strength could not but communicate itself even to the most backward workers, and even to the workers' wives.

After the strain of the past months, there came a breathing spell for all the Committee members and active workers, and we made up for the sleepless nights spent during the strike.

Shortly afterwards news reached us about the January events in St. Petersburg.* The breath of the 1905 Revolution was in the air.

We Bolsheviks soon began to bestir ourselves again. But the guardians of autocracy, particularly the Governor of Baku, Nakashidze, were wide awake, too. To disperse the clouds of revolution that hung threateningly in the air, he resorted to the favourite method used so widely by the authorities in tsarist Russia—the stirring up of race hatred. As an instrument for this murderous task, Nakashidze chose representatives of the most backward nationality in the Caucasus—the Tartars. Gangs of these men were provided by the police with guns and knives, and a special day was fixed for a massacre of the Armenians. I shall never forget those horrible days. All day long I tried every way to get to the districts. But all roads were completely cut off. We could not reach the

* When the troops shot down the workers who had come to the Winter Palace to present a petition to the tsar.—Ed.

districts in which the forces with which we could fight the hideous pogrom incited by the governor were concentrated. Our disarmed workers seethed with indignation, but they were powerless.

No one had the least doubt, not even the inhabitants of the city, that the pogrom had been organized by the governor (Nakashidze was later assassinated by a bomb thrown at him by an Armenian revolutionary). I personally saw Nakashidze riding about giving orders to the police. I had been trying to get to Stopani, the secretary of our committee, when I met the propagandist Arsen, an Armenian. He took me by the arm in the hope that the hooligans would not attack him. Women were not attacked in the streets, and I was still safe because I was not an Armenian. Armenian women were killed in their homes if they attempted to defend their fathers, husbands, or sons. Near Stopani's house we ran into a group of young armed Tartars. One of them grasped his revolver, but another stopped him, saying in the Tartar language (translated to me afterwards), "Don't touch him" (Arsen), "he is walking with a Russian woman. There may be trouble afterwards."

For three days Nakashidze's Tartar gangs pillaged and plundered the city. On the fourth day, having had his fill of blood and fearing the growing indignation of the workers in the districts, Nakashidze gave the signal for the pogrom to cease. To crown it all he arranged a peace farce—a procession of the united Tartar and Armenian clergy. After this the Tartar gangs were disbanded and order was once again restored.

When the pogrom ceased, the indignation of the whole population found expression in the form of

huge meetings in the city and in all the oil fields and factories. Again the wave of revolution began steadily to rise and swept in, not only the workers, but almost the entire population. At this time our organization obtained the assistance of a brilliant agitator, Mikhail Vassiliev, who, under the name of Yuzhin, afterwards played a prominent part in the armed uprising in Moscow in December 1905. There were days in Baku when power slipped entirely out of the hands of the governor. Nakashidze lost his head at first, but he quickly recovered and declared the city under martial law, sentries were stationed at all the city gates and no one was permitted to leave his house after seven o'clock in the evening. We began to prepare for an armed demonstration. Measures were taken immediately to arm the workers with guns smuggled in from Persia and similar sources. In spite of our efforts, however, we only managed to get a dozen or so revolvers. I obtained a few Browning pistols for the Cherny Gorod district, which I had to deliver to my workers. But at each city gate there were armed soldiers. In order to carry the guns past the soldiers I bought a basketful of carrots, cabbages and beets, placed the revolvers at the bottom of the basket and covered them with the vegetables. I put on a white apron, threw a cotton kerchief over my head and safely passed the soldiers, who took me for a cook coming from the market.

I worked in Cherny Gorod until the beginning of March 1905. Then I was appointed secretary of the Baku Committee. Here I had to rearrange our secret printshop. It was excellently equipped with type, cases and parts of machinery. It was quite easy to organize two printshops with the equipment

of this one, and have one in reserve in case the other was discovered. It was not good policy to have things on such a large scale. So we transferred some of the unnecessary parts to a safe place so as to be able to start a small printshop in another part of the city. But I was not destined to accomplish all this, as soon after, I was obliged to leave for Moscow.

CHAPTER VIII: MOSCOW

FROM Baku I went to recuperate a little at the estate in Zhiroslavka near Kostroma which I have already mentioned, whose mistress, Elizaveta Kolodeznikova, considered it her mission in life to provide a haven for all tired and homeless Party workers. About midsummer 1905, after I had had a short rest, I left for Moscow. According to the decision of the Moscow Committee I was to start work as district organizer. I was to take up my new duties after the city conference, at which I hoped to gain a better knowledge of Moscow Party work. The conference was to be held on a Sunday in the woods near Obiralovka on the Nizhnenovgorod line.

When our group of comrades alighted at the suburban terminus of Obiralovka, the station was crowded with gendarmes, detectives, spies, and other police department officials. The "splendour" of the scene petrified us for a moment. Then we began to pretend that we were all strangers to each other. But the police only laughed at us. One of the delegates to our conference had betrayed us, so that the police knew everything to a detail. Notwithstanding all the information they had, however, they arrested only fifteen comrades. The others, who had come by an earlier train, managed to escape the trap laid for us at the station. I was arrested with several workers employed at the Guz-

hon Works in Moscow. I particularly recollect one dark-haired young worker with squinting eyes, who kept us merry all the way from Obiralovka to Moscow whither the police were taking us. At every stop the holiday crowd tried to get into our car. The police zealously attempted to drive the crowd away, while the dark-haired Guzhon worker cried to the newcomers:

"Ladies and gentlemen, it is strictly forbidden to come into this carriage. The ambassadors from Portsmouth are here!" (This happened at the time of the peace negotiations with Japan.)

At the police headquarters we were closely cross-examined. But I could not say anything for myself. I had just recently arrived in Moscow and had had no time to obtain a passport. I lived without being registered, at the home of my husband's mother, Sophia Bobrovskaya, and avoided the janitor. This apartment was very convenient for secret work because the house had two exits, one of which was particularly useful because it led into a yard in which there was a postoffice. If anything happened one could always pretend to be going to the postoffice. These features were taken into consideration when Sophia and her younger daughter, Nina, rented the apartment. It often happened that mother and daughter, not having had time to consult each other, both offered the apartment for meeting purposes on the same day. Once, for example, a secret meeting of soldiers—representatives of the army—was held in one room, which Sophia had lent for the purpose, while in another room the girl cashiers of the Chichkin dairies met to discuss the forthcoming strike of the employees of that firm. Nina had consented to let them have the room without con

sulting her mother. The house was always used as a temporary hiding place for illegal literature and weapons. Furthermore, workers frequently made appointments at the house without telling the Bobrovskys beforehand because they knew that the latter would acquiesce.

Hence, when I was arrested I could not possibly give the Bobrovsky address. The only thing I could do was to refuse point blank to give any information about myself. I was immediately charged under Article 102 of the Criminal Code and sent to the Watch Tower in the Butirsky prison. Before me was the prospect of a quiet life (as a rest from my roving one) for a lengthy period, and I planned to take advantage of this to improve my theoretical knowledge. My deficiencies in this respect hindered me in my Party work. But this dream was not realized, owing to the breathless events that occurred on the other side of the prison bars. These events freed me from the Watch Tower—a freedom gained under strikingly happy circumstances. Each day the rumours which reached us in the Watch Tower as to the growing revolutionary spirit among the broad proletarian masses were more and more confirmed, particularly after we heard the singing of revolutionary songs in the main yard (the Watch Tower looked out into the hospital yard). They were sung by the arrested Philipov bakers. The crowds of workers in the neighbouring yard which we could see from our tower, and the snatches of speeches that were carried to us also helped confirm the fact. Besides these joyously disturbing signs, during the first days of October a group of Poles were imprisoned in the Watch Tower (because there was no room in the deportation prison) in the next

flight above my cell. I learned from these comrades that they had been exiled from Warsaw to the Vyatka province and had been on their way there, but, owing to the strikes on the railroads, they had had to stop for an indefinite time in Moscow. Any day now, they predicted, Russia would be in the throes of a general strike; then we would not be in prison very much longer.

The Poles were in very high spirits and from the moment they arrived, our isolated yard in the Watch Tower changed as if by magic. For example, a few days before October 17 a very curious thing happened. It had snowed the previous night, and one of the Poles who was a sculptor made an excellent snow figure of Nicholas II. When the figure began to melt, another of the Poles approached my window and said audibly:

"Look, comrade, the autocracy is melting, let's give a cheer!"

The guard in the yard informed the governor of this. The assistant governor came, spoke briefly to the Poles and to me, then, apparently feeling the insecurity of the autocracy, limited himself to a mild lecture about our "disgraceful conduct" and returned to the office scratching his head. But not all the warders were so pessimistically inclined. The governor of the Butirsky prison still held aloft the banner of autocracy. My husband had been exiled to Siberia and I expected that he would stop at the Butirsky prison on his way there from the Caucasus. I asked the governor to permit me to see my husband if he came. The governor replied haughtily: "Prisoners are forbidden to talk to each other." A week later, after this haughty refusal, I met my husband in Moscow—both of us were

free. He had been released on the road by the rebellious Rostov workers.

The last few days before October 17, the cream of the Moscow proletariat gathered about our Butirsky prison. There was not a workshop nor a trade that was not represented there. Prison life became unusually intense. The senior prison officials went about looking cross and gloomy. The middle ranks looked frightened and apologetic while the lower officials, warders and the rest went about gloatingly. They would forget to lock our cells (the corridors, of course, were locked), and we became so bold, that we not only carried on conversation with the Poles, but two of them even came to my cell for a few minutes. The prison officials visited us several times a day. Representatives of the public prosecutor often came to ask if we had "any complaints to make". At night our guardians had no rest. Lights flickered in the yard and in the corridors all night. It was apparent that they were profoundly disturbed. This filled us with fierce joy and, we were curious to know how it would all end. I was not very clear as to what was happening outside and things were still very vague to me even when a vast revolutionary Moscow crowd moved toward the Butirsky prison and demanded our release. The day before rumours had reached us that a royal manifesto would be issued granting us freedom. But we were indignant at the very suggestion of such a mark of the tsar's favour and would hear nothing of it.

On the morning of October 18 everything in the prison seemed as usual. Keys rattled in the corridor. The "hot water" was brought at the usual hour, but I could not think of drinking it—there was no time

for such trifles. I made my morning survey from the window sill—endangering my ribs, because the sill was very high above the ground and there was nothing to grasp but the bars—and looked out into the yard; but I scarcely recognized it. It had changed into a military camp. Machine-gans, cannon and other death dealing instruments filled the yard. Gallant officers, ready for battle, shouted orders. They all looked as though they expected the enemy at any minute. It was not difficult to conjecture what enemy. Anyway, I was not kept guessing long, for very soon I saw a huge crowd moving down Dolgorukovskaya and Lesnaya streets towards our prison. But what agitated me most was the sea of red banners. A red banner meant a great deal to an underground professional. At that moment the sight of so many red banners seemed strange to me.

The exulting revolutionary crowd approached so near that I could actually see expressions on individual faces. In front of the crowd, threading his way toward my window, was my friend Makar. He was saying something to me that I could not quite understand. He was saying that he was afraid I might be kept in prison till the evening because no telegrams had yet been received from the Minister Witte, or something to that effect. His tone implied that it was the hardest thing in the world for me to have to stay in prison until the evening—I, who had been planning a bare week ago to stay in prison for more than a year!

The most inexplicable and surprising thing about Makar and all the others was their utter disregard for any consequences their conduct might entail—a disregard that was not the least shaken by my men-

tioning the cannon and machine-guns which awaited them on the other side of the prison. They simply laughed in reply, exclaiming, "They won't dare!"

When the crowd demanded the release of all political prisoners, the first to be freed were the Philipov strikers. These had been thrown into the prison in whole groups. A barrel was placed at the gates of the prison to serve as a platform for speakers. One of the released bakers mounted this barrel and delivered the following "speech": "Comrades, I am a Philipov baker! That is all I have to say!" This avowal was greeted with tremendous enthusiasm. After the baker a few railroad workers spoke. No one tried to understand what they were saying. The speeches were not important in themselves—it was the circumstances in which they were delivered that were important.

I must admit that at that triumphant moment I was afraid of being released. I was afraid that I should have to make a speech from that barrel in my thin high-pitched voice. But the god of revolution preserved me—a voiceless underground worker—from this ordeal. I was released in the evening, when the crowd had dispersed, without being forced to deliver an agitational speech—a thing I never could, nor can do. I was permitted to leave the prison quietly. Although we had been freed by the revolutionary masses, we still had to pass through all the prison formalities at the prison office. That office had an unusual appearance. It was filled with tables at which officials sat who, apparently, had been hastily appointed. They rapidly checked us off the prisoners' list. The released comrades introduced themselves to each other, congratu-

lated one another, laughed, and tied red ribbons on their arms. At the office I had a short but very characteristic talk with the prison officials. It seemed somewhat strange to go out of prison with a valise. The first thing I wanted to do in leaving the prison was to rush to a meeting, to be out in the street; a valise would only be a hindrance. So I asked permission to leave it in the office. The warder looked at me in surprise at my request and said: "Do you still have faith in us?" To which I answered, "Of course, for most probably I will have to return to you very soon".

To tell the truth, I was not at all certain that this freedom would last very long. When I found myself at the University that evening, I became still more confused by the atmosphere. Going through the University corridors, I met many comrades, but none of them could explain to me what was actually taking place. At last I saw Martin Lyadov (Mandelstamm), a member of the Moscow Committee. I showered questions upon him about the Moscow Committee and what I was to do with myself, but he merely answered:

"Tomorrow we are burying Bauman.* You must come to the funeral; go to a meeting now and make a speech. All the comrades who were released today are doing that."

The news of our Comrade Bauman's death communicated to me in such a calm tone, was a great blow to me. I recalled his cheerful disposition in Geneva and was deeply distressed at the thought

* A prominent Moscow Bolshevik who was released from prison on October 8, 1905, and was killed while leading a crowd of workers to the prison to secure the release of his comrades—Ed.

that this brave, energetic revolutionary was no longer among the living. I met Zemlyachka, another member of the Moscow Committee, and began to question her. She also replied, "Tomorrow is Bauman's funeral," and then pushed me into a meeting saying, "You go and speak after that comrade. You're just out of prison, you know," whereupon she hurried off.

"That's a fine way for the Moscow Committee to get me to understand the situation," I thought, to myself. "To speak at a big meeting without the faintest gift of oratory and with my head still in a muddle." I pondered a while and decided not to become an "object of the celebrations," but instead to mingle with the crowd.

Next day, however, during Bauman's funeral, which was far more stirring and demonstrative than I had expected, I realized that Lyadov and Zemlyachka had been right. The organization of this funeral was a big Party task with which the Moscow Committee of our Party had coped admirably. I also understood that one's own individual sorrow at the loss of even such a dear comrade as Nikolai Bauman had to give precedence to the historical significance of the funeral.

I was unable to begin my work in the Moscow district for some time after the funeral. I was dreadfully unstrung by all that had happened and became ill and suffered from insomnia. In the moments of forgetfulness I still seemed to be walking from the Technical School to the Vagankovsky Cemetery with that solid mass of workers united by a single revolutionary aim. I could still see the coffin under its velvet pall sway on the shoulders of the men who carried it and the

words of the funeral march still rang in my ears: *"Dying like soldiers, fighting for labour, so did you fall..."*

My illness prevented me from working for three weeks—a very long time for that period.

On November 8, 1905, Lenin wrote in the paper *Novaya Zhizn:*

> "The state that Russia is in at present is often expressed with the word 'anarchy'. This wrong and false term in reality expresses the fact that there is no established order in the country. The war of the new, free Russia against the old serf-autocratic Russia is being waged along the whole line; the autocracy is no longer capable of conquering the revolution, but the revolution is not yet capable of conquering tsarism. The old order is shattered, but it is not yet destroyed, and the new, free order is existing unrecognized, half hiding, often persecuted on all sides by the henchmen of the autocratic system."

Towards the end of November the scales definitely swung in favour of the revolution; deep in one's heart one felt that the great struggle between the working class and the tsarist autocracy would at any moment break out in open armed conflict on the Moscow streets.

In all save the most backward districts the atmosphere reached white heat. Proletarian Moscow was impregnated with the spirit of revolt.

Our Bolshevik organizations carried on feverish preparatory work, mustering the working masses, agitating the troops, and getting the workers' armed units which had been organizing since October into military shape.

The leading figure on the Moscow Committee at that time was Comrade Shantser, or "Marat," as we called him, but all the information I have is the meagre data found in the documents of the Moscow Secret Police obtained by Comrade Minitsky for a biographical dictionary of Moscow Committee members who had fallen in the revolution. From this data we learn that Comrade Shantser was born in 1867, that his father was a German and his mother a Frenchwoman, who had become Russian citizens and had settled in Odessa. He began doing cultural work among the workers while he was still a gymnasium student and, after finishing school, was arrested in 1887 for participating in the organization of a workers' library in Nikolayev. In 1895 he was arrested again, this time for conducting propaganda in workers' circles in Odessa and for making collections for political prisoners. Later, when he was a junior barrister, in Moscow, he maintained constant touch with workers who used to come to his home and among whom he distributed illegal literature. In September 1901 he was arrested at the home of Comrade Nikiforov, another old comrade now dead, for taking part in the preparations for a demonstration in Moscow; and he was exiled to East Siberia for three years where he was kept under the strict surveillance of the police. From there he returned to Moscow in November 1902 and worked with even greater energy in the Party, playing a leading role in the Moscow organization whose leader he was in the November-December days of 1905.

During the uprising he was arrested for the fourth and last time at his home where a meeting of the Federative Committee—a body organized to co-ordinate the activities of all the revolutionary organiza-

tions and on which Comrade Shantser represented the Bolsheviks—was to have been held. Since all evidence about this case was lost during the days of the rebellion, he got off with administrative exile to the Turukhansk region.*

Here he suffered a nervous breakdown but, ill as he was, he nevertheless managed to escape abroad where the nervous disease developed into an incurable mental disorder. Due to his hopeless condition Shantser's wife, Natalia, managed to get permission to return to Russia with her sick husband in 1910. But the tsarist officials loved to spite their disarmed foes. When he returned to his native land, this hopelessly sick and emaciated comrade was not allowed to be placed in a private hospital, but was sent to the central police lunatic asylum. Comrade Shantser, whose memory should be preserved by the Moscow workers, died on January 29, 1911.

I personally worked as the organizer of the Lefortovo district where I met many comrades, some of whom, like myself, had been sent by the Moscow Committee, while others were local workers—representatives from the mills and factories.

The Moscow Committee regarded the Lefortovo district as one of the backward ones. And in truth, as the December days drew nearer, one could witness in Lefortovo more than in any other district the heartbreaking sight of individual workers, and even whole groups of them, with bundles on their backs—

* In the files of the Moscow Secret Police the following minute has been found, which throws an interesting light on Comrade Shantser's character: "Shantser has made a written declaration that he refuses the favour granted him by the manifesto of August 11, 1904, and also that his political views have remained unchanged."—C. B.

turning their faces towards the village—and their backs upon the revolution.

To make the Lefortovo workers fall into step with the more militant districts (Presnya, Zamoskvorechye) we had to carry on intensive agitational work. We organized meetings from morn till night at the Vedensky People's Palace to which the workers came in crowds. Before we could clear the hall of one group, another group would pour in, while crowds of workers would be waiting their turn on the Vedensky Square.

We organizers found it very difficult to provide agitators for all these meetings. In 1905 the Party in general, and the Moscow organization in particular, had an extremely limited number of agitators at their disposal. Not every underground Party worker who was accustomed to speaking at small workers' meetings held in the woods or on a boat, or in some out of way barn, could get up before a mass meeting of several thousand and speak from a high platform in a brilliantly lit hall.

We had to resort to all sorts of ruses to get an extra agitator from the centre. Thus, for example, early in the morning I would go to Fidler's house, the headquarters of the Central Board of Agitators of the Moscow Committee led by Comrade Stanislav. There I would catch one of the agitators and earnestly plead that today was the decisive day, that the Lefortovo district was not stable, that if we managed to carry off one or two successful meetings the Lefortovites would be roused, etc.

Having played upon the feelings of my agitator in this fashion, I would obtain his promise to come to Lefortovo, knowing all the while that he could only go where the centre sent him, and not where each

district organizer wanted him to go. But such is the mentality of a district worker that it always seems to him that his district is more important than any other. These difficulties were eased somewhat in the days that followed, when, besides the official agitators, speakers appeared from among the masses themselves. At our meetings in the Vedensky People's Palace, workers would get up from the audience to address the meeting. I remember a worker from the Rontaller factory who once came over to me and said timidly that he would like to speak. He wound up his long and fairly able speech with the following words: "We button makers are a big power. If we choose we can leave all Moscow without a button."

A middle-aged working woman agitator in the audience spoke about the low wages paid to women, and to illustrate the point she said: "When I, a woman, am hungry and go to buy a cucumber, do I pay half a kopek, or do they charge me a kopek the same as they charge a man?" Her speech created a tremendous impression upon the audience. It was a rare thing for a woman worker, and an old one at that, to get up on a platform and speak before a big audience.

Our Party headquarters were located in the Vedensky People's Palace and we members of the District Committee were in the office day and night: from early morning till late at night we received delegations from factories and mills who came to us with all kinds of problems.

I vividly recall a group of workers from the Dufurmantel factory, five of them, led by a middle-aged, red-bearded worker. They were sent by the illiterate workers who had organized themselves and demanded that we immediately teach them to read and to

write. "It's a crime not to be able to read at such times," they declared to us. This "illiterate" delegation made a deep impression upon us. We explained to them that we could not possibly teach them to read and write in so short a time as they desired, but that we would organize a school for this purpose without delay. And indeed we organized such a school for the workers in our district, using the nearest public school for this purpose and mobilizing teachers—our own people—to help. Despite the disturbed time, regardless of the fact that towards the end of November we had reached the verge of an armed uprising, our Party organization continued, as it had done in times of peace, to organize schools, lectures, clubs, in short, all sorts of cultural work. This work was carried on "under fire," so to speak, and was often intermingled with purely military work.

For example, during the barricade fighting in the Zamoskvorechye District, furniture which was being delivered to the club was seized and used for building barricades. The club organizers began to protest against the misuse of club property, but later, realizing the urgent necessity, they not only helped to pile up the furniture on the barricade but even removed the gate of the house where the club was situated and piled that on also.

Our Lefortovo unit of armed workers, with Comrade Rublevkin at its head, was a small, poorly equipped, but extremely militant group, which together with the District Committee members was very keen on getting the backward Lefortovo district to catch up with the other districts. Later, during the uprising, when fighting was taking place in the centre, in the Presnya District, and in Zamoskvoretsky Dis-

trict, and when we Lefortovites were still holding meetings, our armed workers went off to help the other districts.

Towards the end of November the first Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies, uniting 134 industries with about 100,000 workers, was organized. On December 14 this Soviet passed a resolution to the effect that: "Moscow workers must hold themselves ready at any moment for a general political strike and for an armed uprising."

In accordance with the decision of the Soviet on the morning of the fifth, meetings were held in all the factories and mills where the question of the strike and the uprising were discussed and put to a vote; and in the evening of the same day the Lefortovites went to the Bolshevik Moscow City Conference where the question was to be decided.

At this time even the Lefortovo district had become aroused and the referendum we took in all the factories on the question of the strike and uprising gave positive results. But we all realized that when the forces were counted up at the Conference, the Lefortovo district would be found to be the weakest. This knowledge filled our hearts with bitterness.

Those who were present at the conference on the night of December 5, 1905, will remember what a militant spirit reigned there, with what eagerness the factory delegates were listened to, and how they all in one voice declared that the workers were ready to revolt. The deep conviction of the inevitability of the uprising was not shaken even when the military organizer, Comrade Andrey, in his report on the conditions of the Moscow garrison announced that though the soldiers would not go against us,

he was not certain that they would go with us. A few comrades urged restraint on the grounds that the workers were almost unarmed, but all their arguments were unavailing, for everybody was convinced that the uprising was inevitable.

On December 7, the first issue of the *Izvestia of the Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies* was published containing a manifesto signed by all the revolutionary organizations in Moscow calling for "a general political strike on Thursday, December 7, at 12 o'clock noon" and for every effort to be made to "convert it into an armed uprising".

The Moscow Committee of our Party elected an Executive Committee which was entrusted with all authority; the rest of the committee members had to go back to work in their districts. From the very first days of the uprising reliable means of communication were established between the centre and the districts through the medium of comrades who were called couriers. At first the couriers were able to penetrate into the districts despite the difficulties, but later on they were unable to do so. Thus all communication between the centre and the districts was cut off and the latter were left to their own devices. At Presnya, fighting was going on under the leadership of Comrade Sedoy (Litvin), the Zamoskvoretsky District lived its own revolutionary life....

Our first Lefortovo courier was an old comrade, Alexander Blagonravov, who later worked in the Vladimir organization and died of typhus in 1919. I can clearly recall Blagonravov with his sad smile reporting about the affairs in other districts and delivering the instructions of the centre for the coming day. The proletariat must not forget its couriers

who selflessly devoted their lives to maintaining communication between the various sections of the city during the memorable days of struggle.

But soon even Comrade Blagonravov was unable to reach us, and our district was completely isolated. We, however, continued to hold meetings and to organize demonstrations. Once we marched by the Spassky barracks from which some disarmed and imprisoned soldiers cheered us. Our armed workers' units had several clashes with the Black Hundreds* who were numerous in Lefortovo, but the latter were not remarkable for their bravery even though they were armed as well as, if not better, than the police.

One morning, while the insurrection was still in progress, we were waiting for the workers to come to a meeting in the People's Palace. There were only about five or six of us District Committee members in the hall. Suddenly we saw a crowd of the Black Hundreds approaching and it looked as if we were going to be lynched. Fortunately, one of our comrades had a revolver. He fired one shot over the heads of the mob and this was enough to set the whole gang running.

We began to feel that we were really taking part in the insurrection only when barricades were put up in our district, but this was very belated, when the beginning of the end had set in in the rest of the city.

That day, we commenced the usual round of meetings, but we all felt that there was nothing more to be said. I remember that I was particularly

* Counter-revolutionary organizations, formed and supported by the police.—Ed.

irritated by the "rational" appeals of the Menshevik Semyon who continued to shout, "comrades, build up the trade unions!" The answer to this trivial appeal came from someone in the audience. It was an appeal to us all to go out into the streets and build barricades. The whole audience responded to a man and the whole mass hurried out into the street. On the square it was joined by those who had been awaiting their turn to come into the hall, and all of us moved in close ranks to the Pokrovskaya Zastava where we overturned the tram cars that were standing as they had been left in the street when the general strike was declared. We erected a huge barricade—our own Lefortovo barricade. Our armed workers' units remained to guard it, although no one threatened to attack it that night, while the rest of the workers dispersed to their homes.

That evening, a comrade from the committee, who went by the name of Alexey, and I planned to make our way to the city without fail; it was a long time since our courier had visited us and we were completely cut off from the centre. We did not know what was happening there and had no means of keeping the centre informed of events in our district—we wanted to boast about our tardy barricade. Such a trip at night was risky, it being particularly dangerous to pass the posts of the so-called Committees of Residents set up by the Black Hundreds ostensibly for the purpose of protecting property, but in reality to catch, insult and beat up every passerby who had the least resemblance to a revolutionary.

We passed several streets in comparative safety, although we frequently got entangled in the telegraph wires which had been torn down and were scattered everywhere. Not far from Basmannaya we en-

countered a group of civilians who stopped us. They declared themselves members of the Residents' Committee, and demanded to know who we were and where we were going. I invented a story on the spur of the moment about my husband and myself trying to go from Cherkozovo into the city to Zhivoderka to visit our daughter-in-law who was seriously ill and needed immediate help. Because of the wires and the darkness we could not find our way to Krasnye Vorota. Alexey, "my husband," beside me also muttered something about a daughter-in-law and Zhivoderka. They believed us. It was our outward appearance that saved us. I was dressed like an old woman in a wide blouse and with a shawl over my head, while Alexey was also very poorly clad.

The Black Hundreds had so little suspicion of who we were that they even warned us not to fall into the hands of the workers' units who would be sure to shoot us at the first sight. We proceeded on our journey until we had almost reached Krasnye Vorota, where we saw a group of soldiers sitting around a bonfire and were obliged to turn aside and step into the Olkhov school where we were sure to find our own people.

The school resembled a dosshouse that night—on all the desks, tables, chairs and floors sprawled comrades who had been unable to get home and were obliged to remain at the school. We too decided that it would be wiser to stop at the school. I cannot refrain from mentioning a little incident in that night's adventure. One of the teachers, whom I had never seen before, called me into the kitchen, took a pot of broth from the stove, placed me on a stool, and, without even asking my name, declared: "You have eaten nothing all day; eat this broth!"

And indeed, I had had absolutely no time for eating or drinking and was feeling very weak until the broth revived me.

Early next morning the bonfire at Krasnye Vorota burned out, the soldiers were withdrawn, probably for some strategic purposes, and we began cautiously to creep out one by one from our school dosshouse. I wanted to change my clothes and wash myself before going into the city. I went to my sister Rose who lived nearby on Kalanchovsky Street, but whose house I had been unable to reach the night before. She had rented a room among our own people, at the home of the worker Polumordvinov. When I reached her room I found her table, bed and bookshelves loaded with weapons. These had been taken from Torbek, the gunsmith, whose shop our unit had raided. A group of our men were lovingly handling these revolvers, parts of guns, sabres and cartridges and they were so merry that despite my weariness, I was cheered by the mere sight of them.

On the other hand, when at last I got to the Moscow committee, the mood prevailing was anything but cheerful. I learned that our affairs were in a very precarious condition, that St. Petersburg, exhausted by the November strike, was not in a position to support us. I also learned that the promises of the railroad union leaders had proved to be empty phrases, that the Nikolayev railway was in the hands of the government, that hostile troops from Tver and the Semyonovsky regiment from St. Petersburg had either already arrived or were on their way, I cannot recall which.

I hated to return to my district with such news—a district which had only just risen to the level of insurrection and whose active workers had been

exulting over their "own" barricade the evening before. I decided to spend the night at my sister's as I needed a good night's rest; but I was not destined to get any sleep. When I returned to her apartment, the weapons were no longer there, the workers having cleared them away during the day. But the police had now got wind of the fact that the weapons seized at Torbek's had been taken to this apartment. So we were subjected to a raid which was carried off with great pomp—a squad of armed policemen with a police officer at their head broke into the room. The police were obviously afraid, thinking that we were armed to the teeth. They were extremely nervous and threatened to shoot us on the spot if we did not surrender our weapons. They bullied my sister and me because we were women, but they were unmistakably afraid of the worker, Glotov, who rented the corner of the room near the stove, especially when they stumbled over a pile of coal in his dark corner. With extreme caution the officer flashed his searchlight on Glotov's "dwelling place." To the officer's tremulous "What's there?" Comrade Glotov rolled out sonorously: "This is the study of his proletarian highness!"

Finding no weapons, the police left the place without arresting any of us, even though we were all in some way connected with the insurrection.

When on the morrow I reached our district headquarters—the People's Palace—I found Alexey had been there since the previous night. He had already communicated the bad news to the other comrades; but they were surprisingly little depressed by it. Indeed, it was difficult, after yesterday's enthusiasm, to take that sharp psychological jump and become immediately conscious of the fact that our

struggle was weakening, that a temporary defeat was inevitable. But we, the backward Lefortovites, were not long comforted by our illusions. The defeat of the uprising approached, and when our last stronghold fell, when our heroic Presnya—the pride of the Moscow uprising of 1905—was wrecked and burned by the Semyonovsky regiment, the Soviet of Workers' Deputies had to declare an end to the strike and uprising, and temporarily haul down the scarlet banner which, after twelve more years of stubborn struggle, was again unfurled to blaze victoriously over Red Moscow in 1917.

When the revolt had been crushed, an orgy of the Black Hundred reaction broke loose, the Moscow prisons and police headquarters were overcrowded with arrested revolutionaries. Hideous rumours were abroad that the police headquarters had been turned into torture chambers by the brutalized victors and that our comrades were being subjected to unheard-of torments; and along the Moscow surburban railroads the brutal gangs of the tsarist hangman, Riman, ran riot. The spirits of the workers in the district were extremely low, and it was under these unfavourable circumstances that the Moscow comrades who had survived the defeat were obliged to renew their Party work. Once more began the painful process of returning underground. At the first meeting of the Moscow Committee held in the early days of January 1906, it was decided to send the more "notorious" comrades to other cities, while the less prominent ones were to be transferred from one district to another. Thus it happened that I was sent from the Lefortovo District to the Zamoskvoretsky District where I had many comrades even

before the uprising, both among the professionals and the factory workers.

During my first days in the Zamoskvoretsky District I set myself a very concrete though modest organizational task, namely, to re-establish at least in the larger factories our former illegal factory committees. But this proved to be an incredibly difficult task. I still remember the endless visits to individual workers' homes, the arrangement of a few small meetings with the representatives of the various factories, meetings which hardly ever took place, either because our meeting place was being watched, or because the landlady who had promised us the use of her room had funked it and refused to let us in when we arrived, or because only one or two of half a dozen who were expected, arrived. It is difficult to imagine anything more trying than the knowledge that the work was constantly slipping out of our hands, that the eyes of our comrades which had burned with such revolutionary courage, with such faith in the imminent victory of their cause not so very long ago, were now utterly weary and hopeless.

However, not all our efforts were in vain. The Moscow Bolshevik organization continued to work intensively, adapting itself to the new methods of struggle even though it often had to deal with extremely dejected and morbid moods among the district comrades. I recall several of the more poignant moments which I personally had to undergo, as characteristic of these moods.

I went to visit the family of a worker in the Danilov factory, with whom I had been formerly acquainted, hoping to renew connections with the Danilov factory through them. Both husband and wife greet-

ed me joyously and promised to assist me, but as the attempts to resuscitate the organization grew more and more futile, the worker (I cannot remember his name) became gloomier and less frank with me. Once I arrived at dinner time when their little ten-year old daughter was bustling about prettily and setting the table for her parents who were due any minute. She placed four wooden spoons on the table —one for "auntie". When my hosts returned from the factory, both the mother and the daughter insisted that I stay for dinner.

We sat around the table eating cabbage soup out of a common bowl, fishing up bits of meat from the bottom of the dish with our spoons and conversing peacefully at first about the necessity of starting Party work in the district. But towards the end of the meal, the worker became agitated, suddenly banged on the table with his clenched fist and, raising his voice, exclaimed:

"Why in the world do you come here to disturb us? I am tired, do you understand—tired, and I can't do any more!"

The little girl became frightened and started to cry. Her mother begged me not to take offence, while I in the most unexpected and ignominious fashion burst into tears and left the place.

Some time later a similar incident occurred in the tiny room, or rather the cubicle, of a young worker who was employed in the Jako foctory. He had displayed a splendid fighting spirit before the uprising, had participated in many battles during the barricade days and, did not appear to be particularly depressed after the defeat. I called on him towards the end of February, or in the early days of March, I don't quite remember which. It was about ten

o'clock in the evening, I believe. The apartment was used as a sort of lodging house, the lodgers living in tiny cubicles. The stairs were indescribably filthy and from the rooms emerged a veritable Sodom of drunken voices, smoke and stench. But the cubicle to which I went was very neatly kept, almost pretentiously—the bed was covered with a pink cotton blanket, the walls were decorated with pictures and embroidered towels, and there was a canary in a cage suspended from the ceiling. Near the bed hung a guitar tied with a pink bow. I surprised my acquaintance while he sat on a bench holding a pocket mirror to his face; on the table before him stood a jar of cream for sunburn and freckles with which he was diligently smearing his face. He did not cease his occupation as I entered, but motioning me to a seat, continued to rub his cheeks with greater vigour than ever, casually remarking, "My respects, Olga Petrovna, what news have you? I bet you're here about what I have already long forgotten because I've lost all my faith in it". When I suggested that he stop playing the fool, wipe his face, and talk sensibly, the fellow answered: "You shouldn't talk that way about the cream because it's wonderful for getting rid of freckles. It is called 'metamorphosis' and costs a ruble and a half. I strongly recommend it to you, Olga Petrovna, for you, too, have a lot of freckles. Now's the time to think about yourself a little. You're still harping on old days that will never return; and if they do, we won't be there to see them." I wonder whether this comrade lived to see the great October Revolution and, if he did, whether he recalled the words he uttered in 1906?

The metamorphosis of this Jako worker, who so

recently had been a brave comrade in our ranks, had a most depressing effect on me. I left his room at about eleven o'clock with such a crushed feeling that it mattered little to me where I went. There were moments when I felt that there was no place for me to go and I wandered aimlessly about the streets in the Zamoskvoretsky District.

These difficulties were not merely characteristic of Moscow. The disillusionment not only spread among the working masses, but was communicated to many of our individual active comrades, both workers and intellectuals.

As for the Mensheviks, who during the heroic October-December days of 1905 were forced to go against their Menshevism and temporarily join us, the defeat immediately restored them to their natural shape and gave them many opportunities to expiate their short-lived iniquity by bitter criticism of our revolutionary Bolshevik tactics.

At the beginning of 1906 the conditions in the Party organization were complicated. The split in the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, which took definite shape at the Third Bolshevik Congress in May 1905 and the Conference of the Mensheviks, that was held concurrently with the latter, did not hinder but helped the formation of a united proletarian front during the heroic last months of 1905. To co-ordinate activities, the Mensheviks were forced to join the Federative Committees.

What was happening in the districts was beginning to take place in the centre. Preparations for a Unity Congress of the Party were being made. but these preparations coincided with the defeat of the uprising and with the weariness of the proletariat who had been pressing for a united front

before the uprising. Thus, a twofold process could be observed at the beginning of 1906—preparations for a Unity Congress were continued by inertia, while at the same time new disagreements with the Mensheviks on the cardinal questions of party tactics were constantly cropping up and becoming more sharply defined (estimation of the uprising, attitude towards the State Duma, etc).

In March we Muscovites were eagerly awaiting the arrival of Lenin who was to acquaint us with the resolutions he had drafted for the forthcoming Unity Congress of the Party, which was to be held in April.

Besides the natural interest in Lenin's report, the prospect of meeting Lenin in Moscow, on Russian soil, was particularly alluring. Imagine my distress when, a few days before his arrival, while walking about in the sleet and mud, I caught a severe cold and was not in a condition to go to the meeting of the Moscow active workers at which Lenin was to speak. I was lying in bed grieving over my disappointment when a comrade burst into the room and told me for reasons of secrecy the meeting had to be transferred to other premises and that Lenin had expressed a desire to see me during the enforced intermission.

My joy knew no bounds when in half an hour Ilyich himself appeared, filling the room with his jests and laughter and with that comradely simplicity so characteristic of him when talking with the most insignificant Party workers if he felt that the latter were connected with the actual life of the Party.

The joy I felt that Lenin was sitting in my room prevented me from studying his mood, the more so

that as I was ill he spoke to me only about pleasant trifles. But I clearly recall that he was very cheerful "as if nothing had happened," although what had happened was nothing more nor less than the defeat of the 1905 uprising!

CHAPTER IX: MY UNSUCCESSFUL REST

IN the early days of April, I decided to stop work for a while and take a rest at my mother's home (my father had died) where I hoped to become legalized. After the October amnesty which pardoned all my former sins I had not had time to go through all the formalities and re-establish my rights.

At home I expected to obtain a passport in my own name, but nothing came of it.

By the spring of 1906 our provincial authorities had forgotten the tsarist manifesto issued on October 17, 1905. I spent the first two days after my arrival in perfect safety. But on the third day when I had just registered at the house, a squad of policemen led by one called Sidor came to my home. I knew Sidor from early childhood—mothers used to frighten naughty children with his name. At the head of the police squad was a bewhiskered, dandified and extremely gallant police officer. They came for me at eleven o'clock. Making no search, they politely invited me to "please" go with them to the police headquarters which were situated, as one could expect, in the market-place.

My poor mother in despair, cried out that I had brought disgrace upon her, that everyone would point at her as the mother of a convict, etc. But

this did not prevent her from running to the market to buy a chicken which she especially prepared for me, evidently assuming that I was so shaken by my arrest that I needed immediate nourishment.

At any rate, about two hours after my arrest, while pacing the locked room in the police headquarters and awaiting the police officer who was to explain to me what it was all about, I heard some heated words behind the door between the bewhiskered officer, who had just recently been so gallant to me, and a woman's voice which, to my horror, I recognized as my mother's. They were shouting at her and pushing her away. I began to beat my fists upon the door, and when it was finally opened, I saw my tear-stained mother holding a pot with the precious chicken, and the infuriated face of the policeman, who pleasantly smirking at my appearance, muttered, "Oh, excuse me, so this woman came to see you! I would never have believed that such a young lady could have such a plaguing mother".

I answered that my mother was just wonderful, that before they had time to lock me up properly she was already on the spot with a cooked dinner. Seeing that I was perfectly well, my mother calmed down, particularly after I ate and praised the chicken she had prepared and assured her that nothing serious threatened me.

An hour later the police official came and he quietly explained to me that my arrest was simply a misunderstanding, that he had "forgotten" about the amnesty, that the instructions to detain me if I returned to my native town related to bygone days. These instructions were completely annulled by the amnesty of 1905 and I was free to return home.

After this incident I had reasons to fear that the provincial officer might suddenly not only forget the amnesty but recall something else, or get news from another city about my activities. I therefore decided to leave home, especially as my arrest had affected my mother so much that it was impossible to rest in the house; I also dropped all thought of becoming legalized, realizing that it would be most unsuitable for me to continue work under my real name which had been so compromised by past arrests. I decided to live and work once more on a borrowed passport and not to creep out of my habitual illegal skin.

I stayed with my mother a few days, long enough to prepare her for the news of my departure, and then set out for the Kostroma province to my old acquaintance, Elizaveta Kolodeznikova, to my "estate," as all of us who ever had to hide at the Kolodeznikovs called the estate in Zhiroslavka. This estate for a number of years served as a sanatorium for underground Party workers. I do not believe a more hospitable corner in the world has ever existed than the one that was always ready for us in Zhiroslavka. Nevertheless I did not stay there long. The Kostroma comrades were in very great need of workers and, learning that I was nearby, they demanded that I come immediately to work in Kostroma.

CHAPTER X: IN KOSTROMA AGAIN

I WENT to Kostroma a little before the first of May and learned that the organization had great difficulty in issuing literature for May First. They were trying to establish a secret printshop and suggested that I take up the matter.

After consultation with Sonia Zagina, an old friend of mine who knew everything to the last detail concerning illegal printshops, I realized that we could not possibly do anything big in the way of a permanent printshop in the short time at our disposal, but that we would have to make a "makeshift" arrangement for printing our May First leaflets. Later, when we were not so rushed, we could arrange something more permanent.

That was the gist of my suggestion, and it was approved by the Kostroma Committee on which I was at first co-opted and later, at the first District Conference, elected. I was also appointed secretary of the committee and organizer of the city district.

The Kostroma organization possessed parts of a printing machine which were kept in hiding by a certain Goritsky, who had influence with many petty officials and petty bourgeois.

Once, owing to lack of secret quarters in Moscow, a regional conference was to be held in Kostroma. I turned for aid to "Conspirator," as Goritsky was

called, and he replied very simply, "I must get in touch with the Roman Catholic priest, perhaps he will lend us the church."

The regional conference was postponed for some reason, so that the opportunity of anticipating the Fifth Party Congress, which was held a year later in a London church,* and of holding such a godless conference in so holy a place as a Catholic church, was unfortunately lost.

The "Conspirator" took the type and printing machine parts from their hiding place and installed them in the attic of Parisky's apartment on Pyatnitskaya Street. Paper, ink, and other necessities were also unearthed. The leaflet was written either by Stopani or Kvitkin, I forget which, Sonia Zagina saw to the printing and was assisted by a comrade named Victor, who left us shortly afterwards. The work went on all day and all night. Sonia was on her feet from Tuesday until Friday, during which time several thousand leaflets were printed. On Friday Sonia's feet began to swell, she could no longer stand and work, but none of us could replace her completely because we did not know the printing business.

Apart from the weariness of our chief worker, we had to stop the whole business because we were beginning to attract the attention of our landlady's brother who was a member of the Black Hundred. Furthermore, in the adjacent apartment in the same house there lived a group of Socialist-Revolutionaries who had arms hidden in their rooms. This increased the risk of a police raid.

This compelled us hastily to pack up our print-

* The Brotherhood Church in Islington, North London—Ed.

ing machine. Sonia took it upon herself to get it out of the room. She was assisted by a member of the committee, Konstantin (Mikhayev). They loaded themselves with the machine parts and type and hired an *izvoshchik*. When they got into the carriage, the springs gave way under the weight, especially on Konstantin's side. Nevertheless, they carried the burden to Aparina who took the printshop material to the factory settlement, Rodniki, for safe keeping.

In spite of all the difficulties, however, our May First leaflet was prepared and distributed on time.

The Kostroma organization, like our Party in general, carried on an extremely complex combination of legal and illegal work. At that time we had to scheme and plan to make full use of all the remaining legal possibilities and also to develop our work deeper and deeper underground.

For example, at the beginning of the summer we still had our legal paper, the *Kostromsky Listok*. Nevertheless, we could not do without issuing leaflets and manifestoes. Although we had our own book store on Rusina Street where we openly sold pamphlets published in 1905, we had at the same time to create an underground distributing system for our manifestoes and leaflets.

So it was with our meetings. We used to organize open meetings in the factory districts on the vacant lots behind the Zatov factory. Occasionally a squad of Cossacks would be stationed not far from these meetings. At that time they kept at a respectful distance. Still, none of us was quite certain that they might not come at any moment and make use of their whips with which we were already familiar.

Besides our own meetings in the factory district we had to participate actively in those which other

parties called in the Hall of the Nobility. We had to pay particular attention to the Constitutional-Democrats,* who after the dissolution of the first State Duma, pretended to be great revolutionaries. They boasted a great deal about the Vyborg Manifesto ** and seemed to be cocksure of victory in the elections to the Second State Duma.

While taking advantage of every opportunity to speak in public, we nevertheless arranged secret meetings in the Posadsky forest where we, naturally, could speak more openly than in the presence of the prancing Cossacks near the Zatov factory or of the police official in the Hall of the Nobility.

The Kostroma Committee and the district and factory committees, were absolutely secret organizations. Our propagandist circles, which resembled our present-day Marxist-Leninist circles, to which the Party devoted a great deal of attention even at that time were also held in strict secrecy.

The group of comrades who worked in the various trade unions also carried on their work secretly although there was nothing definite in the form of a Bolshevik fraction in the unions as yet. The biggest and most influential union—the textile workers' union—was completely in our hands; the chairman, Alexander Gussev, and vice-chairman, old man Simonovsky, were members of the Kostroma Committee. Another member of the committee, Konstantin, spoke at all the general meetings of the union and pursued our bolshevik line. The textile

* The Bourgeois Liberal Party.—**Ed.**

** The Manifesto issued by the joint conference of Constitutional-Democratic and Peasant deputies held in Vyborg, Finland in June 1906 protesting against the dissolution of the first Duma.—**Ed.**

union was the stronghold which enabled us to come in contact with large masses of textile workers—which comprised the great bulk of the Kostroma proletariat—and to exercise our influence upon them. Sometimes we managed to hold our committee meetings on the sly, at the union headquarters but more often we would meet in the back room of a book store. This was a convenient arrangement because one could enter the store as if to buy literature and then quietly slip into the back rooms. I attached particular value to this feature of our store because, first of all, as secretary, it was my duty to provide a meeting place, and secondly, I was frequently obliged to live there myself.

Shortly after my arrival I had to live with Comrade Stopani's family, who lived legally for the time being in Kostroma, because I could not acquire a passport and there were no better quarters. The gendarmes knew his home very well and it was carefully watched; it was, therefore, most unsuitable for me to be there. Further, I did not want to add to the cares of Comrade Stopani's wife, which were heavy enough as it was, by my possible arrest. A true revolutionary in spirit, she had to take care of four young children, although she yearned for active Party work. Her eldest boy, Mitya, afterwards died heroically on one of the fronts of the proletarian revolution. During the many years of illegal work I often came across women—wives of revolutionaries—who, because of their children, were obliged to play the unenviable role of mother and housewife even though they had all the attributes required to make them real Party workers.

After May First Comrade Stopani's house was watched with even greater vigilance, and I decided

to leave it. But as there was no other place to go to I moved into one of our book store rooms next to Sonia Zagina, who lived there as manager of the stock room. Sonia was legally registered, but I lived as an "invisible" being. My problem was to make these rooms sufficiently secret to be able to convert them into an office for the Kostroma Committee, but these plans were constantly disturbed by the *Boyeviki* who, though they had their own secret quarters and dormitories, nevertheless constantly came to our book store rooms sometimes leaving their "little bombs" as they caressingly called their useless home-made missiles which never exploded and which, at the moment, were perfectly unnecessary.

In the summer of 1906 our armed workers' units, which had played such a militant role in the October-December days in 1905, although formally connected with our Party organization, began gradually to drift away from it and finally broke up into disorganized groups of *boyeviki*, independently becoming "expropriators," and bringing the poison of decay into our ranks.

The Kostroma *boyeviki* were no exception, and all the attempts of our committee to influence them were in vain. The *boyeviki* went one way, the Party went another.

There were innumerable difficulties to be overcome before we could organize a permanent printshop. After all kinds of plans, negotiations and special journeys to Moscow to obtain the necessary people, we finally managed to establish a printshop in a suburb four versts from the city. There Alexey Zagin, Lydia Molchanova, who had come especially

from Moscow, and a girl from Saratov settled on false passports.

I cannot recollect just what we managed to print but I can only say that the printshop did not last very long. Shortly after it was established the comrades who worked there noticed that they were being followed, and we had to dismantle our printshop which we had set up with so much trouble.

The comrades found it safer to hide the machinery in an iron trunk, lower it into the pond at night, and afterwards go into hiding. I cannot say how long it was before we were able to draw it out again. It was finally installed in a house on Pavlov street where a teacher and his sister (I've forgotten their surname) and Maria Khanzinskaya, who came from Orel on Konstantin's recommendation to work in the printshop rented an apartment specially for that purpose.

How long that printshop lasted can be judged by the fact that towards the end of the summer it was travelling by horse and wagon to our "estate", Zhiroslavka, where we merely hid it at first, not considering the place sufficiently safe to set the machine to work. Nevertheless, after a while, when the necessity for printing a leaflet was very urgent —a leaflet, if I recall correctly, concerning our attitude towards the forthcoming election for the Second State Duma, we took courage and decided to work our machine in Zhiroslavka. At about this time I sent for an experienced Moscow comrade, an excellent typesetter (he was a printer as well) called Vasya Mayorov. Vasya came with his wife to Kostroma, and we immediately sent him to Zhiroslavka.

In the evening when the children and the servants were in bed, our work would begin in the study of

the now deceased Alexander Gennadyevich Kolodeznikov. At first everything went well, but once the slightly deaf and very stupid fifteen-year old maid, Paranya, whom we apprehended least of all, believing that she did not understand anything, ran into the kitchen and said:

"Dunya, hey Dunya, look at what's happening around here! As soon as night comes I hear a tuk, tuk, tuk, something banging away in Alexander Gennadyevich's study and Elizaveta Alexandrovna herself creeps out every night with a pail of slops that are black as black can be and spills them out near the fence."

The conversation between Dunya and Paranya was overheard by comrades and we decided once again to stop work and pack up before further complications arose. Thus we struggled all summer—packing and unpacking, printing in snatches when fortune smiled.

Besides the intensive work in the factory district, we had contacts among the city artisans in the City District, of which I was the organizer. But this was considered auxiliary work because all my energy and attention were devoted to my secretaryship. The basic group of workers in the City District to whom we paid more attention, were, of course, the printers who, besides other attributes, were invaluable for one dominating virtue—they stole type from their printing establishments for our secret one.

The Kostroma Committee tried in every way to direct Party work in the entire province, but it was extremely difficult to get good results. We were in constant communication only with the nearest districts, principally Kineshma where Simon Sergovsky worked, and from where he often came

to us for instructions, carrying on his activities in close connection with our organization.

We once held a provincial conference in Kineshma, but I have completely forgotten why this conference was called. I only recollect certain impressions of it, as for example, that the trip along the Volga on that fine, sunny day had been very pleasant, that the conference was held in an extremely bourgeois country home with huge armchairs, that owing to the secret character of the whole affair we could not go out on the balcony for a breath of air even though the room was full of tobacco smoke and so stuffy that one felt faint. Strangely enough only things like that and nothing more have remained in my memory.

Besides Kineshmâ we had good connections with Rodniki through Comrade Lubimov, with the town of Novoloky and with a factory near Novoloky. We also had connections with the Yakovlevsky factory. A comrade used to come to us from Nerekhta. He was a barber by trade and had a very curious appearance—he had a shock of long hair, wore black glasses and a jacket of a very curious cut. When he spoke he used a great many foreign words and constantly complained that he was overburdened with Party work. "I perform sixteen functions," he would say and begin to count off these "functions" on his fingers. With the more remote, the so-called forest districts, we had very little contact because they were far away not only from the provincial centre but from the railroad as well. I recollect that at the committee meetings questions constantly cropped up about work in the peasant districts and among peasants in general because of the importance we Bolsheviks, with Lenin at our

head, attached to the peasants. This question was a very important one at that time. We would have to carry on this work through the village school teachers, but these teachers had to be trained first because most of them leaned towards the Socialist Revolutionaries although there were no S.R. organizations of any importance either in Kostroma or in the neighbouring districts.

I very clearly recall one of the meetings at the Hall of the Nobility convened by the S.R.'s in honour of the arrival of a Moscow celebrity, I think it was the "Unconquerable," or the "Sun",* I do not remember which. Teachers from all parts of the province came to the meeting. The S.R. leader delivered a brilliant speech, but no less brilliantly was he opposed by our agitator, Gastev, who appeared in public under the pseudonym of Vershinin, but who was known as Lavrentev in the organization. Gastev was diligently sought for by the police, and for that reason he very rarely spoke in public.

The arrival of the S.R. luminary roused the revolutionary spirit of the teachers a good deal, but the Kostroma S.R.'s could not consolidate these results organizationally and the field was left to us.

After the meeting the teachers came to our book store for literature and also dropped in to see me, the secretary of the committee, "simply for a chat". At these visits our greatest enthusiasts, Comrade Kvitkin (Afanassy) and others, were sure to be present. As a result we finally succeeded in organizing a group of teachers whose task it was to start work in the rural districts.

* The party pseudonyms of Bunakov and Avksentyev, two well-known Socialist-Revolutionaries.—Ed.

All that summer (1906) we kept in close touch with the Party Centres where the question of the Second State Duma was being discussed (opinion was inclining towards not boycotting it *) as well as the question of convening a special Party Congress.

We, Kostroma Party workers, were uncompromisingly for the calling of a special Party Congress, where we were convinced, the balance of power would be in favour of the Bolsheviks. This certainty was based on the cheerfulness and high spirits of the Kostroma workers among whom there was not even a trace of the despondency or confusion which I witnessed the winter before in the Zamoskveretsky District of Moscow.

This was principally due to the fact that Kostroma had experienced the events of 1905 comparatively lightly, and for that reason there could not have been such a sharp depression as in Moscow. Besides, the repressive measures which had been shower ed upon the proletariat of the more revolutionary districts were not felt in comparatively peaceful Kostroma. At any rate, work in the spring and summer of 1906 was quite a cheerful duty in Kostroma; even the most intensive work was not particularly fatiguing, a fact which can be explained by the shortness of the distances we had to cover. Kostromo is a very small town and the distance to the Posadsky forest, our principal and safest headquarters, was a trifle.

The most frequent visitor from the Moscow regional bureau was Danilo—Sergey Modestov—who came to discuss with us all kinds of general Party problems.

* The elections to the first Duma were boycotted by the Bolshevik Party.—Ed.

When I think of Danilo I see before me the laughing face of the student Serezha whom I met for the first time at our secret headquarters in Tver in 1903. After two years I met him again in Moscow where he related between jests and laughter that during those two short years he had managed to serve sentences in two prisons—at Yaroslavl and Ivanovo-Voznesensk. A year later, in Kostroma, I met the fully matured, prominent Party worker, Comrade Danilo, who had only one thing in common with the former Serezha—his sense of humour.

During one of his visits to Kostroma, I went with Danilo to a meeting in the Posadsky forest where he was to talk to us about certain Party matters. On the way he asked: "Olga, did you find it very hard to resume underground methods after 1905?" When I answered that it had been difficult, but not very, Danilo said: "It would not have been hard for me at all, except for my rheumatism. Walking through the woods hurts my feet; we underground folk need good legs first, and then a head, is that not so?"

In 1907 the restless Danilo, after having walked to meetings on his poor, sick legs through all the woods in the Kostroma, Yaroslavl and Vladimir provinces, went to report to the Moscow Regional Committee and was arrested there.

In 1908, owing to his illness and his mother's solicitations, the authorites gave him the alternative of going abroad instead of being exiled to Siberia; but despite his serious illness, he refused to go abroad. He was too conscious of the lack of skilled Party workers in Russia, particularly after the mass desertion of the intelligentsia, and instead of going abroad Serezha went underground to work

first in the Urals, then Ekaterinoslav, and from there to Nikolayev where he was arrested and convicted, under article 102 of the Criminal Code and was sentenced to six years penal servitude.

His illness—tuberculosis of the bones and rheumatism—became considerably worse: penal servitude in Nikolayev prison, the so-called tsarist sanatorium to which all tubercular political prisoners were sent, finished him. After four years in this awful prison Comrade Modestov's constitution was completely wrecked. Thanks to the intercessions of his parents he was sent to the prison in his native town, Tver, and the two years he spent there were a living death. His term of imprisonment came to an end just as the 1917 revolution began. An old invalid came to Moscow; he called himself Modestov, but no one recognized this Comrade Modestov as the Serezha of old. Nevertheless, this invalid found strength enough to begin work once more—he became the editor of the peasant paper, *Golos Trudovovo Krestyanina,** but his strength lasted only a few months even though now he had to work only with his head and not with his feet as in Kostroma. On the eve of the great proletarian revolution to which he had given the last drop of his extraordinary strength, Comrade Modestov died at the age of thirty-four.

To return to Kostroma. That summer (1906) all the legal sides of the Kostroma organization fared badly. To begin with, our paper was closed down; then the police got to our book store, which I had been guarding as the apple of my eye because it was such an excellent screen for all our illegal work. It began with the police coming more frequently to

* "The Voice of the Toiling Peasantry. — Ed.

look for uncensored books which they suspected we were selling. And one fine morning they took it into their heads to search the whole of the premises. I managed to leave the place under the very noses of the police. I was sitting in my room at the back of the store. A candle was burning on my table so that, in case of a raid, I could immediately burn up the papers that lay before me containing notes of the minutes of the meeting held the evening before.

My occupation was interrupted by a knock at the door, and young Peter Kaganovich entered. He had come in by the back door. He informed me excitedly that a strong force of police were coming to search our premises. Having said this he returned the way he came, while I immediately burned all the papers, blew out the candle, put on my coat, pinned on a hat, managed to run into the store and whisper to the manager "they're coming," grabbed several books from the shelf and, pretending to be a purchaser, went down the main stairway. On my way down I met the police who, after inspecting the "purchased" books, let me pass. Our stock room was carefully searched, sealed up, and the new manager, named Polya, was arrested.

The closing of the book store was a big blow to all of us, and to me in particular. My work as secretary became doubly hard—I had to search for premises for every meeting, consultation, etc. In other words I had to appeal to the so-called sympathizers—a task which I always disliked. Our second apartment, the textile union, was also subjected to frequent raids by the police. Besides, the Cossacks became more truculent and broke up our meetings. To crown it all, spies began to follow us Party workers. I was so persistently shadowed that it

became impossible for me to carry on any further work in Kostroma, and I could not even leave the city without being observed. In order to put the police off the scent I spent several days at the town house of the Kolodeznikovs without going out into the street. Only after all these precautions was I able to leave the town unobserved.

Crossing the Volga on my way to the station a sharp autumn wind began to blow, the day was cloudy, and melancholy thoughts crowded into my mind. It seemed to bode ill luck for the Kostroma organization which I was leaving with so much regret. My work there had been connected with so many clear and sunny spring and summer days, and now the reaction would triumph here too.

CHAPTER XI: MY BRIEF SECRETARYSHIP

FROM Kostroma I went to Moscow where our regional Party centre—the Regional Bureau—was located. At that time—the end of 1906 and the beginning of 1907—the Bureau consisted of three members who had so far escaped arrest. They were Boris Posern, known as Stepan Zlobin, Olympus Kvitkin, called Afanassy, who had left the Kostroma organization in the summer for regional work, and Sergey Modestov—Danilo.

When I went to Afanassy's apartment on Bozhedonka, I learned that his room served as a place of contact for the Regional Bureau—which was a violation of the elementary principles of secrecy. In the course of the conversation I further learned that the Regional Bureau suffered from lack of workers, premises, funds and printing facilities and that it had fallen to my lot to take over the secretaryship of this Regional Bureau.

Despite my constant desire to be in Moscow, the prospect of settling down in the Regional Bureau was not at all a happy one. I begged to be sent to work in the district or, if that was not possible, to be given local work in Moscow, or to be sent to the provinces. But my request was absolutely refused and I had to remain with the Regional Committee.

I remember remarkably little about this period of

my work. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that instead of doing revolutionary work I was constantly going after sympathizers, begging them to lend us their rooms, to give us money, which they did so reluctantly—going after sympathizers who had partly ceased to sympathize.

I recollect that for a month at a time we could not get premises or funds for a regional conference. Our attempts to set up a printshop also proved futile. Our principle work was to agitate for the convening of a special Party Congress, the necessity for which was already felt in our local work. This was due to the fact that the tactics of the Central Committee that was elected at the so-called "Unity" Congress at which Mensheviks were in the majority, were naturally half-hearted and could not possibly satisfy the more revolutionary section of the Party —the Bolsheviks.

The preparations for the Congress that were made in the Moscow industrial centres were very successful. In all the fourteen provinces that made up this region the Bolsheviks predominated.

Nevertheless, it was very difficult to carry on the work. The Regional Bureau did not have enough comrades at its disposal to send to the various districts. I remember only two comrades whom we sent to the districts—Ivan Stavsky and Nikolai Rastopchin. Instead of people we had to send papers—letters in code. We had to content ourselves with bureaucratic methods of work instead of lively connections with the various localities.

We worked bureaucratically because we were unable at that time to build up a proper apparatus. It was even difficult for me to get a room to live in

and in my despair I decided to advertise for one and take the risk of registering on my very doubtful passport. But just at this time a Kostroma acquaintance, Marussya Simonovskaya, who had also recently arrived in Moscow, came to my rescue. We rented a room in Obukhovsky Street, and she sent both her real passport and my borrowed one to be registered. Marussya lived in our room awaiting the return of the passports from the police office. I stayed there only during the day spending the night wherever I could.

Getting some sleep was also a problem. Naturally I had to stay overnight at the homes of sympathetic intellectuals, who lived in comfortably furnished apartments, and to all outward appearances were quite cultured people. But it was not often that these outwardly cultured people seemed to realize that the illegal Party worker who was seeking their hospitality was tired, and that what he needed more than anything else was rest. In most cases the hosts would weary one to death with tedious questions and arguments about "principles" which are characteristic of the intelligentsia—and these arguments would drag on until two or three o'clock in the morning.

This lack of consideration on the part of my intellectual friends irritated me beyond endurance. But soon our passports returned safely from the police office and I began to sleep at home.

I used to spend the whole day running about Moscow, and when I did have a free evening to do some work in the district or in the factory, I could not do it because of my position—the possibility of my continuing my work as secretary for any length

of time in safety depended upon my keeping away from direct work among the workers.

In general I look back upon my temporary secretaryship of the Moscow Regional Bureau with sadness. I fulfilled this function merely from a sense of duty to the Party, but my heart was not in the work. I yearned to be among the masses. And so, at the very first opportunity that offered I left for the provinces.

CHAPTER XII: IN IVANOVO-VOZNESENSK

IN February 1907 I was at last permitted to do district work. I was sent to Ivanovo-Voznesensk —a real proletarian centre to which I had wanted to go for a long time. My very first entry into the town made a deep impression upon me. In all my wanderings about the world I had never seen a more striking contrast between luxury and poverty than I witnessed in Ivanovo.

In every "well-ordered" city the squalid workers' habitations are decently hidden on the outskirts of the town, but in Ivanovo-Voznesensk the whole city looked like an outskirt, densely populated with textile workers, emaciated woman weavers and their ragged, rickety children—the future generation of weavers.

Amid the squalid hovels with their tiny windows—hovels which in some amazing manner housed several families where there was hardly room for one—one would suddenly come upon a luxurious mansion, the palace of a mill owner, and the connecting links between hovel and palace were the huge buildings and tall smokestacks of the factories.

Along the streets, rooted up by swine and strewn with every imaginable form of garbage, one could often meet a fine carrige drawn by snow-white horses driven by a fat and sleek coachman. In the carriage

sat some mill owners' family—his well-fed, well-dressed wife and children, accompanied by their governesses, nurses and other household menials. I often wondered how these people had the insolence to pass the windows of the workers who toiled for them, and how the workers had the patience to look calmly at these sparkling equipages.

Here in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, without the softening effect of any intermediate class, the two antagonistic sides—labour and capital—stood confronted. The issue was as clear as clear could be, and that is why it was so easy to carry on our bolshevik propaganda there. Here we had no serious conflict with any organized groups of Mensheviks or Socialist-Revolutionaries. That is why the Ivanovo-Voznesensk proletariat, led by some of the most prominent comrades in our ranks, was always in the forefront of the proletarian revolution.

When I arrived in Ivanovo I had to settle in one of these huts, not with a workers' family, but with a nurse, named Nadezhda Stopani, who was employed at the Ivanovo hospital and provided our organization with premises.

This apartment consisted of a single room which was divided by a screen. It was incredibly cold and damp; water ran down in streamlets from the frozen windows into a pan placed on the floor for that purpose. Besides a narrow cot, a table and a few stools, there was no other furniture in the room. Behind the screen on the cot slept Nadezhda, while her friend, Marussya—now the wife of Comrade Bubnov—slept on the floor. On my arrival a bed was made up for me out of two broken boxes. This bed was placed behind the screen, for this "territory" was more "inviolable"—one could wash,

undress, or change one's clothes without being surprised by some comrade coming on urgent business. During the day the room was usually filled with visiting comrades, while at night the floor was often covered with sleeping comrades.

Our principal part-time lodger was the "Chemist"—Andry Bubnov,* an inhabitant of Ivanovo-Voznesensk who was constantly sought by the police. He, for reasons of secrecy, lived and worked eight versts away, in Kokhma, and frequently came to town on Party business. He always covered the distance on foot, clad in his grey felt boots for which he had paid a ruble and twenty kopeks. The "Chemist" valued these boots so highly that once, when he had to flee from Kokhma and in his haste had left these precious boots behind, we had difficulty in dissuading him from returning for them to Kokhma where the police had certainly laid a trap for him.

Comrades who came from Shuya on Party business also stayed with us overnight. Among them were Frunze,** nicknamed Arseni, and his bosom friend, a Shuya worker named Gussev. Whenever this pair came, we had to scan the street corners with special care because the police were constantly at Arseni's heels; he had managed to keep out of jail thus far solely because of the care bestowed upon him by the Shuya workers who, despite the danger to themselves concealed their beloved friend Arseni. Both the "Chemist" and Arseni were very popular among the workers in Ivanovo-Voznesensk.

During district conferences, when comrades came from Teikovo, Kokhma and other towns, our little

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

** Late Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army and Commissar for War of the U.S.S.R. Died in 1926.—**Ed.**

place would be crowded to the utmost with comrades staying over night. There was also a time when we actually had a permanent lodger, a young worker named Serezha who had to find refuge in Nadezhda's room—either because the police were after him, or because his parents turned him out of the house for "being a socialist" and he had no other place to go. We never had a regular meal, but we put up the samovar about ten times a day. On her days off from the hospital, Nadezhda would spend the entire day cooking to give the crowd of us a square meal. Her friend Marussya was not very neat in her habits and would always prefer to pin up a rent in her dress than mend it; this led to many a quarrel with the neat, housewifely Nadezhda. All of us newcomers brought disorder into the house, and poor Nadezhda suffered like a martyr, not to mention the fact that she stood in danger of arrest at any minute.

The problem of premises was one of the sorest spots in the Ivanovo organization. It was extremely necessary for us professional Party workers to find lodgings anywhere but with factory workers, so as not to be in the public eye; but among the intermediate classes there were no other apartments available except those of the teachers Taranov and Tarakanov. This made Ivanovo a very difficult place for us to work in; but this was the only drawback. In all other respects Ivanovo was splendid. There was livelier work to be done there than in Kostroma.

In the spring of 1907 there was not a shadow of despondency among the workers, even though the events of 1905 hit Ivanovo harder than they did Kostroma. At the time of which I am writing a few crumbs of the gains of 1905 still remained in the

form of three legal trade-unions—the Metal Workers' Union, the Calico Printers' Union and the Weavers' Union. For some reason the last two were considered two separate unions instead of a single textile union, although they occupied the same premises. But these trade unions did not escape the vigilance of the Ivanovo Chief of Police, a short nimble little man who not only had the police at his disposal but the Cossacks as well.

These Cossacks in Ivanovo lived like lords; special funds were raised for them by the mill owners; they were given houses, gardens, cows, chickens, ducks, etc. In return for all this bounty the Cossacks' duty was to use their whips well on the workers whenever the mill owners and Chief of Police desired.

The Chief of Police often raided the trade union quarters, and the chairman and other officials were constantly called to police headquarters. Nevertheless, we carried on tremendous, well-planned work in spreading bolshevik ideas among the great masses of workers. Our Party workers Nikhayev and Gandurin, would often deliver big political speeches at public meetings. The unions carried on important work as trade unions and at the same time served as a screen for our illegal Party organization. The more active members of the unions were active workers in our organization as well—the chairman and most of the union officials were in the thick of all the Party work in the Ivanovo-Voznesensk district. They were members of the Ivanovo-Voznesensk Party Committee.

As soon as I arrived, I was appointed secretary of the committee because I was considered somewhat of a specialist in this line, having been a secretary in Baku, Kostroma, and of the Moscow Regional

Bureau. I went to the Ivanovo organization when the Second State Duma election campaign was coming to an end—almost at the time of the very elections when, after lengthy negotiations with the Orekhovo-Zuevo comrades who were putting forward their own candidate, the Ivanovo workers succeeded in securing the adoption of their candidate, Comrade Zhidelev, as a deputy representing the workers of the Vladimir province.

As I have indicated above, the spirit of Ivanovo Voznesensk was high not only in Party circles, but also among the broad non-Party masses, a proof of which was the grand send-off which the workers gave their deputy, Zhidelev, when he left for St. Petersburg. There were almost forty thousand workers at the meeting on the station square. After the meeting a dense crowd of workers surrounded us members of the committee in order to conceal us and for greater safety the speakers of the meeting disguised themselves by changing their caps and coats with some of the workers. Thus we all returned home safely in spite of the fact that there were numerous policemen and detectives on the square, and a little distance off, were the mounted Cossacks who dared not attack the huge mass of workers who had gathered to give their deputy a send-off. After the election and the send-off arranged for our deputy, two very urgent and serious tasks had to be fulfilled: to make preparations for the Moscow regional textile strike, and to elect delegates to the Fifth Party Congress, later called the London Congress.

Our preparations for the regional strike had to be done through our work in the trade unions which, as I have already mentioned, were wholly under the

influence and led by the members of our Party Committee.

A conference of the trade unions in the Moscow region was held in February at which the question of checking the growing capitalist offensive, which was a result of the general political reaction, came up for discussion. First consideration was given to the question of raising the workers' standard of living, and in April the idea of a general strike finally matured. After this conference a number of district trade union conferences were held at which the question of the possibility and expediency of calling a strike in the Ivanovo district was debated from every angle.

Of course, before each conference, these questions were first discussed at our Party committee meetings. Our committee was divided on the strike question—some comrades were whole-heartedly for it and stressed the political role it would play in the prevailing period of reaction. Others thought that the depression was too great, that the strike was doomed to failure and that a lost strike would still further intensify the depression among the workers and that our organization which was only just recuperating would be forced to emerge from underground and would be wrecked again immediately after the failure of the strike.

Both the advocates and the opponents of the strike agreed that it was necessary to gather our forces for the "decisive" struggle, for an armed uprising, which appeared to us to be nearer than it proved to be in reality; the disagreement centred around the tactics to be applied to achieve this aim. The advocates of the strike thought it wise to speed up the

historic process a little, while the opponents feared that it would have the opposite effect.

The questions pertaining to the regional strike were thoroughly discussed at all the factory meetings, and it must be said, the idea of speeding up history pleased the inherently militant Ivanovo textile workers. But for the time being, we limited ourselves to merely talking about the strike.

Simultaneously with the strike campaign we made preparations for the election of delegates to the London Congress of our Party.

I remember that Afanassy came to us from the Regional Bureau and delivered a long speech, first at the Party committee meeting and later at a meeting of factory representatives, about our controversy with the Mensheviks and about the necessity for calling a special Party Congress.

But although all the members of the Ivanovo organization had become acquainted with the nature of the controversy, we could not have a real pre-Congress discussion, on which Lenin always insisted, for the simple reason that we had no Mensheviks to discuss with. We Bolsheviks had to convince the bolshevik-minded workers in the factories about the difference between us and the Mensheviks, none of whom existed in Ivanovo-Voznesensk. One needs no special perspicacity to guess the degree of the impartiality of our discussions for which the menshevik god would have had every justifiation for casting the whole of the iniquitous Ivanovo-Voznesensk organization into the depths of hell, had it not been for the only righteous one among us, the exceptionally scrupulous Olga Vorontsova, who carefully and impartially expounded to the workers in

her district the principles and policies of both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

Towards the end of March after this "discussion" the elections were held. Here again one needed to be no prophet to guess at the fractional leanings of all the nine delegates—all of them were Bolsheviks, of course. Among the delegates elected were Comrades Bubnov and Frunze. The latter was caught by the Shuya police before the Congress took place and naturally could not attend it. In his stead he sent a member of the regional committee, Comrade Kvitkin. The thought of going abroad put the elected Ivanovo proletarians into an extraordinarily elated state of mind. They all began to prepare for their trip and constantly pestered me as one who had travelled through "the whole of Europe" with questions concerning their dress, how to ask for tea in German, what is the German for "station," whether one could hire on *izvoshchik* abroad and what would be the approximate price when translated into our currency, and so on and so forth.

The question of a respectable European outfit was solved brilliantly by one of the worker-delegates. He sewed himself a bright yellow blouse which he wore with a black patent leather belt bought especially for that purpose. In this costume he presented himself before me, deeply convinced that strutting about in this splendid fashion he would be able to merge with the European crowd.

Altogether we had great fun over preparations for the departure of our delegates to the Congress.

After they had left, I went to Nizhni-Novgorod, on private business, but the journey was so curious that I think it worth relating.

At election meetings held during the Second State

Duma elections in Nizhni, a certain individual who called himself Nikolai Shirayev, and whose passport confirmed that name, was arrested after delivering a bolshevik speech. This seditious Shirayev, who was not really Shirayev but my brother, Lazar Zelikson, was placed in a cell with fraudulent bankrupts because the prison was overcrowded and there was no other vacant cell to put him in. During his first examination my brother insisted that he really was Shirayev, and he named a certain veterinary surgeon, Bobrovsky, who lived in Saratov as being able to confirm that fact. In order to obtain a speedy answer from Saratov, my brother was permitted to make the request by telegraph at his own expense. Bobrovsky's answer came immediately confirming that he knew Shirayev very well. But to my brother's misfortune a certain district attorney, Chernyavsky, who had been in Vladimir in 1905 where my brother had spoken at public meetings under his own name, visited the cell of the fraudulent bankrupts. The unfortunate arrival of the lawyer spoiled the whole game, because in the presense of the prison warder he asked the supposed Shirayev: "Mr. Zelikson, how did you get into the fraudulent bankrupts cell?"

After this my brother could do nothing but confess that he was not Shirayev, but Zelikson. But now the police would not believe that he was either, and assumed that he was a very dangerous "unknown" who should be exiled to Siberia. In this predicament my brother wrote to me in Ivanovo-Voznesensk telling me of the fix he was in. Hence, my decision to go to Nizhni. Having obtained a suitable passport, I went to Nizhni and claimed to be a distant relative of Zelikson. The police were

extremely courteous to me, apparently overjoyed at the opportunity of unravelling the Shirayev-Zelikson mystery. They handed me a blank which I conscientiously filled out, enumerating all Zelikson's sisters and brothers. Comparing my information with that given by Shirayev-Zelikson, the gendarmes became convinced that we spoke the truth and apologized for their intention of placing Zelikson in the category of an "unknown". "You will agree that it was rather suspicious," they said apologetically, "He calls himself Shirayev, receives a telegram from a certain fictitious Bobrovsky saying that the latter knows him well, but makes public speeches in Vladimir in 1905 under the name of Zelikson!" It cost me an effort to refrain from laughing outright at the thought that I, an illegal worker sought by the police, was sitting before them playing the role of a well-meaning distant relative of my brother, and listening to their conjectures that Bobrovsky, my own husband, probably never existed.

My brother was immediately released on my recognizances, and I accompanied him to Moscow. On returning to Ivanovo, I related the adventure to my friends and they could scarcely control their hilarity.

From the first days of my work in Ivanovo I came into conflict with the remnants of the armed workers' units, the *boyeviki,* who, here, as well as in Kostroma and most probably in other cities, had become completely demoralized. In the autumn of 1906 the Ivanovo Committee issued a leaflet in which it disclaimed all connection with the *boyeviki* or their "expropriation" activities which had degenerated into mere robbery and even murder. In order to give a political colour to their misdeeds the

boyeviki offered part of their spoils to our organization, but we refused to touch their money under any circumstances. As secretary of the organization the *boyeviki* came to me with their proffered gifts and I had to refuse them; for this reason they hated me wholeheartedly—particularly one of them, a certain Orlik, who later died as a result of an explosion caused by an experiment with a bomb which the *boyeviki* had been making outside the city. This Orlik often remarked that it would not be a bad thing to get rid of Olga as this would remove an obstacle in the negotiations with the committee.

Another worry was the business of establishing a secret printshop—a thing which Ivanovo needed very badly since there were no legal means of printing anything. We not only needed leaflets which, as a last resort could be set up and printed in somebody's house; but we urgently needed a newspaper, and to get this out we had to have a properly fitted printshop.

At first, I sent for Sonia Zagina who came from Kostroma. She rented a room in Ivanovo with a private entrance and planned to give private lessons. This was the first apartment, absolutely free of suspicion, to be used in connection with our future printshop. Then we began to collect the parts of the printing equipment which had been kept by workers in different hiding places, but these parts proved insufficient; we particularly lacked type. After some time a valise full of type was brought to us from Moscow by Vladimir Bobrovsky. I went to the town of Vladimir where Marussya Simonovskaya-Rastopchina worked at that time to get some more type and other essential parts. With Marrusya I went to the house of Stepan Nazarov who had a

huge iron bound trunk loaded with ikons in his room. Underneath the ikons, at the bottom of the trunk, lay the type.

After a while Alexey Zagin came to us; and at my request the Regional Bureau sent me a certain Egor Ivanovich, and a girl, whose name I forget, from Moscow. With the help of all these people we managed to set up a printshop in a village not far from Ivanovo. But after printing several leaflets we noticed that we were being watched. Our comrades had to go into hiding. I don't remember how it all happened but the type, the machine and the other accessories, were hurriedly taken away in parts and concealed. This quick failure of our printshop drove me to the brink of despair, for it had cost so much effort to establish it. But there was no time to give way to grief—we had to think of how to set it up again.

Knowing all the details of the life of the Ivanovo workers, it became clear to me that if we wanted a more or less permanent printshop it was necessary to find a local inhabitant who could take care of it, since all newcomers who hired a whole apartment immediately attracted attention. It took us some time to discover such a person. At last I discovered a local worker who had given up working in the factory and was selling newspapers. His wife, a middle-aged woman named Darya, was a charwoman. They had no children and were a very suitable couple for our purposes.

We agreed with Darya and her husband that at the first opportunity she would rent a little house which they had in mind consisting of three rooms and a kitchen with a front and back garden. This was very convenient as the noise of the printing

machine would not be heard in the street. Darya and her husband were to occupy the front room facing the street while the two back rooms were to be let to boarders—Egor with his wife in one room and Alexey in the other. Both these rooms would be used for our work. The garden gate was to be kept shut, while Darya was to sit near the window on the lookout for strangers. If anyone were to come, work was to stop, the lodgers were to go to their respective rooms which Darya was to lock from outside to prove they were not at home. The newspaper vendor was to continue his occupation in order to provide a cover for carrying paper into the house and printed matter out of it.

This plan was successfully carried out and for a while everything ran smoothly.

We obtained all the necessary machine parts, prepared the material for an illegal paper, which, I think, we called *The Struggle*. I cannot recall what material we were going to print, but I do remember that we had much more than we could get into the first issue. Our typesetters, Alexey and Egor, worked at full speed. But when they had used up all the type they found they had only set the first half of a page of our paper. As there was no other type to be obtained, they had to print the half page and then reset the type for the other half. All this caused considerable delay; the matter dragged on and we, the members of the committee as well as the comrades in the printshop, lived under a great strain until the first issue came out.

Then everything began to go wrong in the printshop. Egor who was a trying person in general, was seized with nervousness. Even Darya got nervous, particularly after a ridiculous incident had occurred.

Not far from our printshop there was a police box which we had regarded as an advantage when renting the house—it is always safer to act under the very noses of the police. Every day as I passed down the street to see if everything was safe, I invariably saw the policeman peacefully dozing in his box and Darya quietly knitting at the window of our little house. One day the policeman knocked at the gate and asked Darya to put a fish, which somebody had given him, into the cellar and keep it there until the evening because he was afraid it might spoil. Darya took the fish to keep until evening, then came running to me to advise her. What was she to do if the policeman came for the fish in the evening and asked to come into the house? The incident seemed to me to be quite trivial, it was not a trap but just an ordinary everyday occurrence, and I managed to calm Darya's fears.

We decided that the lodgers would go away for the day and that Darya should lock up the rooms from the outside. When the policeman came she was to invite him in for a cup of tea and in the course of the conversation mention that her boarders, a clerk and a fitter were both looking for work, and that her own husband was doing fine in his newspaper business and that they had everything they wanted for the present. The policeman came in the evening, but refused to come in for a cup of tea, thus proving that he had no suspicions about what was going on in the house. Nevertheless, Egor who had been very nervous before, now insistently demanded that we move to another place. This mood soon communicated itself to Darya and to her husband, and things soon came to such a pass that it was impossible to get on with the work.

Bitterly as we felt about the whole matter, we had to destroy with our own hands everything we had created with so much trouble. Nothing else could be done, because the first condition for the successful accomplishment of such a task as ours is complete mutual confidence and belief in all those taking part in it. The disturbance of this calm ran counter to all the rules of secrecy and would inevitably lead to the discovery of the entire affair. That is why we hastened to dismantle the whole plant.

So our hopes of seeing the first issue of our own Ivanovo workers' paper were dashed to the ground.

This disappointment hit me hardest for I was the organizer of the unlucky enterprise. It was made doubly hard by the fact that my searches for new people and new quarters proved futile. Thus our paper never saw the light.

As far as funds were concerned the Ivanovo-Voznesensk organization was fairly well off. From the very first days of my secretaryship I was pleasantly surprised to learn that there was no need for me to run all over the place to seek for funds as I had had to do in other cities. The Ivanovo organization existed on membership dues which were regularly collected and carefully recorded by our treasurer, Olga Varontsova. Comrade Varontsova somehow managed to combine this tedious, unpleasant duty with her work as responsible organizer of one of the larger districts in the city and with the propaganda work which she carried on in the higher grade circles. It is true that our organization was not rich; expenditure on the maintenance of the printshop and party workers had to be kept down very strictly, nevertheless I do not recall any sharp financial crisis in the Ivanovo organization. It

always managed to make ends meet. We professionals received eighteen rubles per month, which of course, never sufficed, because our mode of living was very unsettled and this entailed greater expenses than would be the case under ordinary circumstances.

In connection with this I remember that at one of our conferences, when all the items on the agenda had been dealt with and we began to discuss "other business" one of the delegates (not a professional) moved that the pay of the professionals be raised. To this an amendment was moved to the effect that the pay of the more skilled professionals be raised, while the weaker comrades continue to receive what they had been getting heretofore. This discussion seemed to me to be perfectly absurd and we hurriedly moved "next business".

The high spirits that prevailed among the Ivanovo workers since the send-off given to the Duma deputies caused us to anticipate a very fine May Day celebration. Our Party Conference which was held in a detached wing of a house in a suburb which, for some reason, was called the "Far East," decided to organize a First of May meeting in the woods along the Bolinsky road. On April 30 we distributed a First of May leaflet in all the factories. According to a previously arranged plan, the workers were to come to the woods singly; patrols, wearing small red badges, were placed along the road to indicate the way. It was the duty of the patrols also to warn us in a special manner of any approaching danger. We had made preparations for all contingencies. But as is the case with the most carefully laid plans something which we least expected occurred. The Cossacks proved to be more cunning than our patrols

this time—their horses' hoofs rang out from the least expected quarter. The meeting had just been opened by the chairman, V. Bobrovsky, and the speaker, Comrade Maxim, had barely uttered a few introductory words, when out from the trees the Cossacks came galloping, spreading through the wood. The suddenness of the attack turned our orderly meeting into a mob which scattered pell mell in all directions, pursued by the yelling Cossacks with raised whips. Three of us—Bobrovsky, Maxim and I paused for a moment, but before we had time to think, a whip cracked sharply about our heads. Maxim and I were the first to fall while Bobrovsky, who still remained on his feet, seized the Cossack's horse by the bridle and tried to persuade the fellow to stop beating us, but he received another blow on the temple so that one eye immediately swelled up. After beating us, the Cossacks took our watches and purses and galloped off in pursuit of other comrades, evidently thinking that we had had our share. They did not arrest us probably because we were too badly beaten up.

Utterly shaken and covered with weals we managed to drag ourselves to the hospital which was situated along the road that led out of the wood where one of our own people, the nurse Cheikasova, worked. She bandaged us up and sent us home in the evening.

That was the sorry end of our First of May Celebration that seemed to have started so well. Next day, the police evidently decided to make a few arrests. They therefore put an announcement in the Police Gazette to the effect that a large number of hats and canes had been found in the woods along the Bolinsky road and that if the owners of this

property wished to recover it they were to apply at the police headquarters. Obviously nobody answered this advertisement, preferring to leave their property to the police chief as a souvenir.

This unfortunate May First marked a turning point in the life of the Ivanovo-Voznesensk organization and in the spirit of the workers of Ivanovo. After May First, a marked depression set in and it was under these unfavourable circumstances that we had to finish our preparations for a regional strike which we had started in the early part of the spring.

Throughout May and June our organization was occupied exclusively with the strike question. We carried on tremendous organizational and agitational work. The disagreement on the committee about the expediency of calling the strike gradually disappeared. Both the advocates and the former opponents of the strike participated actively in the preparations; nevertheless we all laboured under a sense of uncertainty which was a reflection of the circumstances we were in.

The economic situation favoured a strike—the mills were loaded with orders and any considerable stoppage of work would have hit the pockets of the mill owners hard. But the political reaction was growing in intensity, it was obvious that the authorities would resort to every means in their power to crush the strike rather than to submit to the workers' demands. The interests of the capitalist mill owners were temporarily in conflict with those of the semi-feudal autocratic government and the fate of the strike depended entirely upon whether or not the group interests of the textile barons would prevail over the interests of the governing classes as a whole.

We all realized this very clearly, hence our irresolution.

Nevertheless Ivanovo was getting ready for coming events; a strike committee was set up to formulate the workers' demands. The Ivanovo Party Committee deputed three comrades, Mikhaeyev, Olga Varontsova and myself, to help the strike committee. We and the strike committee held our first meeting in the Weavers' Union headquarters and formulated the following demands: 1) an eight hour day; 2) increase in wages; 3) the abolition of fines.

The door of the committee room was locked, but the union members in the other rooms knew what we were doing.

Suddenly somebody knocked at the door and informed us that the Chief of Police had entered the union premises with a squad of police who were stationed at all the exits. I managed to burn the document containing the demands which we had drawn up, and we all dispersed to different rooms. The police began the tedious procedure of registering all the workers who were in the building; all of us, even the strike committee, managed to pass off as rank and file union members who had come to headquarters "merely to see each other". But one of the policemen pointed at Mikhaeyev and said, "Your honour, this is the one that always speaks at their meetings." Our Konstantin was taken in charge right there and then.

In the pleasant anticipation of my turn, I began to wander "unconcernedly" from room to room and strolled quite nonchalantly into the kitchen. There on the bench lay a bright-coloured shawl which belonged to the housekeeper, who was not at home. I wrapped myself in the shawl, sat down on the

bench and began to look about for a means of escape, when in walked the Chief of Police and asked me:

"How long have you been working here? How much do you get?" I answered that I received seven rubles a month and that I had been working in the place for two months. The Chief of Police found my answer satisfactory and, with a great show of importance, he began to inspect the premises, while I continued to sit on my kitchen bench, wrapping the shawl more closely about me. Soon the police left the building carrying off Konstantin as their only trophy. Comrade Varontsova also managed to get by the police unnoticed. Pretending to be a tenant in the house, she went downstairs to the apartment below to some acquaintances, with whom she stayed until the raid was over.

The loss of our best agitator at such a moment was a terrible blow to the Ivanovo organization; it would have been much better had I, the "housekeeper," been taken instead. But Konstantin was shipped off to prison while I went back to continue the preparations for the strike. Finally we decided to call the strike on July 6, but on the very eve of the appointed day Stanislav (Sokolov) who had been sent by the Regional Bureau to lead the strike in the Kostroma district, arrived and informed us that things in Kostroma were at low ebb. Besides, the Kostroma comrades condemned us severely for not supporting them in time.

On the morrow, Innokenty (Joseph Dubrovinsky) came from Moscow bringing bad tidings about Orekhovo-Zuevo where the strike was also subsiding. Innokenty came from the centre with instructions that we must not start our strike, because in

the places where strikes had been called (Kostroma, Orekhovo) they were already coming to an end.

After Innokenty had reported to the committee, we decided to call a special conference to discuss the strike a second time. The conference was held in the woods; the principal speaker was Innokenty, who surprised us by his extraordinary ability to grasp the complicated situation in Ivanovo created by the fact that the Party Committee itself, which was so long in coming to a decision to call the strike, had now to propose calling off the strike before it had commenced. In his speech at our conference he made a profound analysis of the whole economic and political situation, from which it became clear that the moment was unfavourable for a strike, and that it would be wiser not to begin at all in those places where it had not yet been called.

Innokenty struck the right note at once, and no one would have believed that he was a stranger to our district. Returning with him through the woods from the conference late that night, I expressed my surprise at the extraordinary ease with which he analysed our purely local situation, but he only smiled sadly and said nothing.

The decision to call off the strike had a very depressing effect upon the workers. But in those places where the strike had been called (Orekhovo-Zuevo, Kostroma) the situation was still worse. These strikes only lasted a week or two and petered out. An article in No. 6 of *The Struggle,* the illegal organ of the Moscow Regional Party Committee, summed up the situation very well when it said:

"The workers could do nothing but return to work. The old conditions—inhuman labour, meagre

wages, hungry children, stuffy cell-like living quarters—all this has remained as before, because the strike failed."

The article ended with an appeal to the workers to cheer up and continue to struggle. It said:

"This is not the time for either laughter or tears. It is the time to learn the lessons of the struggle as we have been taught to do by our great teacher, Karl Marx. We have been defeated, but we must not grieve over our defeat, rather must we grieve over the fact that we were not firm enough in our struggle, not united as we should have been. We must not give way to despair. We must prepare for a new struggle against the capitalists for our workers' demands. All history indicates that neither prayers nor humility, neither cringing nor servility will soften the heart of his majesty—international capital; only a stubborn and persistent struggle will help to wrest from it better conditions of life. Therefore join the ranks of the Party and the trade unions and by our stubborn struggle we will win victory in the end."

After the strike was called off, the Ivanovo police cheered up noticeably. The Cossacks began to ride about the streets with greater frequency and our work became infinitely harder. Things became particularly hard for us professionals. We could not do anything because of the vigilance of the police. For that reason, at the end of June, I left Ivanovo and once more turned towards Moscow.

CHAPTER XIII: THE "OKRUZHKA"

IN August 1907 a Regional Party Conference was held in Moscow at which reports were heard from representatives from various districts. The sum and substance of all the reports was that there was marked stagnation in all the organizations of the central industrial region. This was the result of the repressive measures of the government which once again compelled our Party to experience the hardships of underground work. It was also the result of the apathy and sense of disappointment among both the Party workers and the working masses owing to the temporary slowing down in the revolutionary process.

One of the items on the agenda of this conference was the question of the trade unions, and it is characteristic that the idea that the trade unions should become illegal Party organizations found support. After a long debate it was agreed by a close majority that the trade unions be built on an illegal basis and under Party control. The fact that such a decision was taken is to be explained by the defeat of the textile strikes and the exaggerated hopes the Party had placed in the trade unions. And because the strike proved too much for these trade unions the conclusion was drawn that the unions must be subjected to the Party to such an

extent that they become Party organizations. This idea was advocated by Comrade Lyadov. He spoke at length on this subject at the conference.

After the conference I was sent to work with the Moscow Regional Committee—to the "okruzhka" as it was called in short. The Moscow Regional Committee was elected at the conference and consisted of a group of representatives from the centre and one representative from each locality. Whenever I think of the members of the Regional Committee, the vision of a group of comrades, now dead, appears before my eyes. One of the members of the Regional Committee was Concordia Samoilova, "Natasha" as we called her. She died not long ago. A passionate revolutionary, Natasha one day delivers militant speeches at a mass meeting in the Mitishchi Woods, next she calls an organizational meeting in Golutvino, the day after she sits in conference with the representatives of the Kolomna Works, from there she goes to Shchelkovo, Kuntsevo, Pushkino; everywhere she is expected with impatience, everywhere she rouses dormant thoughts, stirs a wearied will, binds the scattered suburban Moscow proletarian masses who are gradually recovering from the defeat of 1905, with strong organizational ties. Having made her rounds, hungry and tired Natasha returns to Moscow, and her reports at the meetings breathe of the life, of the very heart, of the working masses.

I can recall another comrade who worked with us on the Regional Committee, the responsible organizer of Orekhovo-Zuevo, our biggest district in the "okruzhka," Comrade Valentin. He was the son of a poor peasant and had been a village teacher at Podolsk in the Moscow province. He began his

revolutionary activities in the Party in 1903, while he was still a student at the Polivanov teachers' seminary. In 1906 he was arrested for the first time at a Moscow surburban railway station for carrying illegal literature and was sentenced to imprisonment. After serving his term, he began to work illegally. In 1907 he was again arrested: in 1908 he escaped from prison and worked first in our "okruzhka," later in Ivanovo-Voznesensk and then in Baku. In 1909, Comrade Valentin was arrested a third time at a meeting of the Moscow Committee and was one of the accused in the celebrated case of the "thirty-five" started by the Moscow gendarmerie. After two and a half years of preliminary detention, he was sentenced to four years hard labour in the Butirsky prison in Moscow.

He profitably employed those six and a half years of imprisonment in hard study, and when he was released from prison and deported to Irkutsk in 1915, he was not only well up in Marxian theory, but he had also mastered four languages—German, French, English and Italian. He was in Irkutsk in 1917 when the February Revolution broke out and he could once again throw himself body and soul into Party work. In August 1918, when the Soviet government in Chita was surrounded by Czechs and whiteguards on the Irkutsk side, by the Japanese and Kolchak in Vladivostok, and by Semyenov in Manchuria, Comrade Valentin organized a group of five to wind up the soviet without serious loss and to cover the retreat of the Party underground. Having accomplished his object he moved along the River Amur to Khabarovsk. There he lived illegally and settled as a teacher in one of the villages. He established contact with the Central Trade Union

Bureau in Khabarovsk which used to issue a legal paper. For this paper he wrote a series of satirical articles under the heading, "A Letter to My Aunt," in which he subjected Admiral Kolchak and Ataman Semyenov to biting ridicule.

The paper, of course, was closed down, but an open challenge had been thrown at the reaction, and was very significant. Later Comrade Valentin proceeded to muster the broken and scattered Party forces of Vladivostok, Blagoveshchensk, Verkhneudinsk and Irkutsk.

Then, the guerilla war against the Whites and interventionists commenced. Not wishing to leave the partisans without ideological leadership, Comrade Valentin took part in establishing a secret printshop and published leaflets. This work was interrupted by his arrest by the Kolchak secret police on May 8, 1919. Comrades tried to arrange his escape, but they were betrayed and the plan failed. Semyenov sent his men to take Valentin to the torture chamber near Chita. What happened there is unknown. Those who entered that torture chamber never returned. It is not known whether Valentin was shot or slowly tortured to death. Only this much is certain, that when the partisans took Makeyevo they found horrible implements of torture, and the inhabitants of the district relate that it was rarely that anyone was shot, that most of the prisoners were slowly tortured to death.

A third member of the "okruzhka," was Arcady Samoilov, Natasha's husband, a responsible propagandist, speaker and editor of our paper, *The Struggle*. I had known him since 1899, when I met him in the Kharkov organization. He died in Astrakhan in 1919. He had been sent from St. Petersburg to

carry on political work in the backward Astrakhan fishing industries where epidemics of typhus and dysentery raged.

Then there was the very young member of our committee—the organizer of the Kolomna district, Alexander. His surname I never discovered, just as I never learned where he came from nor what was his trade. I only recollect that he was an ardent revolutionary, selflessly devoted to the cause, that he worked without respite, that in the foulest of weather, clad in an old weatherbeaten coat, he would travel on the Moscow railways, not even third class, but by freight car because it was cheaper and less conspicuous. Alexander was rather frail, he often coughed at the committee meetings, and when spring drew near his face became suffused with an unwholesome flush. The doctor who examined him declared that he had tuberculosis and that the Crimea was the only place where he could recover.

I remember the difficulties we had to collect the necessary money for the journey. But on the way, or soon after his arrival, he died of hemorrhage.

Alexander was one of those unknown heroes who gave his life for the revolution even when the revolutionary tide was at low ebb.

And there were many other comrades whose faces stand vividly before me.

As it was impossible for reasons of secrecy to have anything in the nature of a Party apparatus in the country districts, all the district secretaries were located in Moscow. Each secretary had to provide literature for his district, collect and keep account of membership dues, provide living quarters for all his district workers who came to Moscow to attend

meetings, regularly inform his district representatives when meetings were to be held, and so on.

As soon as I joined the "okruzhka" I became secretary of the committee. An apparatus in the present sense of the word naturally could not exist either at the centre or in the country districts. Towards the end of 1907 our Party had again gone underground: the entire regional secretariat consisted of myself and three assistants who were ready night or day to risk every danger in order to be of service to the Regional Committee. There were the two Elenas: Big Elena and little Elena and a youth named Faddey Meshkofsky who was later arrested in connection with a secret printshop and exiled to Siberia.

Big Elena's real name was Maria Dracheva, a nurse by profession. Although Maria had been listed among those who had perished in the Presnya District of Moscow in 1905, she was alive and flourishing in 1907 and an excellent assistant into the bargain. Before December 1905 Comrade Dracheva worked in a secret printshop in Presnya which was destroyed by the Semyenov Regiment during the days of uprising. Some of the comrades were killed, but Dracheva had been sent to town on Party business and was not on the premises during these tragic events.

Little Elena was the student, Elena Nomas.

Both Elenas looked extremely respectable, and no one would have dreamed that they were revolutionaries. This was just the kind of people our organization needed. The work was becoming more and more difficult, the reaction increased in intensity and the opportunities for carrying on our work were steadily diminishing. Our improvised "secreta-

riat" was, if one may use the term, extra-territorial—it had no permanent premises for its work. At one time our headquarters were in Ivanov's bookstore near Kudrinsky square. Old Ivanov often came to the assistance of the Regional Committee, for which reason his store was closed down by the police and he and his family were arrested.

The apartment to which Party members could go and by giving the correct password obtain the address of headquarters, where the secretary could be seen that day, was more or less permanent; but the place where the secretary could be found was changed every day. Thus we required seven different apartments per week for our headquarters where comrades could meet and discuss the problems that arose in connection with their work. Besides twice a month we needed a safe place in which to hold our committee meetings. In 1907-08 the question of premises was more acute than at any other time. Sympathizers altogether ceased to sympathize, for we were definitely out of fashion. Philosophic and other problems, particulary the sex problem had become the fashion and they had no time for us. Indeed, so acute did the premises question become that not only had we no place to meet in, but we professional revolutionaries had no place to live in.

I found shelter in a room behind the stove with the family of a porter who worked in the German Club. The man was a terrible drunkard, but his wife and two daughters were our own people. They knew I was working illegally and that my name was not Olga Petrovna but concealed this from the neighbours and from the drunken father who made a row every night and gave no one any rest. Natasha was literally homeless for a considerable time and

had to go in search of a place to sleep every night. And sometimes she had absolutely nowhere to go. As a measure of safety Natasha and I arranged to keep away from each other although this was not easy for we were the most intimate friends until she died.

At twelve o'clock one night, however, she came to my lodgings and said that she was forced to break our agreement, because, having visited the homes of three sympathizers to ask to be allowed to stay she had met with a polite refusal at all of them and found herself on the street. That night both of us slept very little, but we jested a great deal at the expense of the sympathizers and at our own expense. There was nothing else to do, for it was impossible for both of us to sleep on that narrow, broken cot.

I had three apartments which I could use for our daily work and for meeting purposes whenever it was expedient from the point of view of secrecy, and the tenants of these apartments never objected to our using them. The first of these was that of Sophia Bobrovskaya, the second that of the lawyer Vladimir Trudchinsky and the third, that of the late Sergey Veidrikh who lived with his mother Alissa Veidrikh, who was also a sympathizer. But all these apartments had been known to the police since 1905, and for that reason we had to be very cautious when using them.

The widely scattered districts of the "okruzhka" demanded many Party workers but all we had could be counted off on the fingers of one hand, so to speak. The drop in our Party membership was beginning to assume threatening dimensions. At almost every Party meeting the insoluble problem of

how we were to serve the districts would arise. How were we, a mere handful of workers, to cover all the big and small enterprises in our region? Oral propaganda and agitation on a big scale were out of question. The only possible form of agitation and propaganda left to us was the printed word. That is why the Regional Committee, which was considerably weaker than the Moscow Committee had its own paper, while the latter did not.

When I began to work as secretary of the "okruzhka," my first problem was to re-establish the secret printshop which had met with misfortune shortly before I came, after having printed five issues of *The Struggle*. By what miracle the comrades who worked in the printshop escaped arrest and imprisonment remains a mystery to me, but the machine and the type were lost. Comrades Tsirul was the head "technician" as we called the comrade who arranged the technical part of the business. There was also an old and tried comrade, Nikolai Kudriashev, who worked in the printshop. Tsirul lived on Zatsepka, but I cannot say whether the printshop was also located there.

In September the sixth issue of *The Struggle* appeared containing the following editorial:

> "Comrades, the servants of the tsar raided our printshop while the sixth issue was being produced. They gloated over the fact that this hated newspaper ceased to exist. General Reinbot was overjoyed and well rewarded his faithful spies, detectives and provocateurs. The comrades who worked in the printshop managed to escape, but the machine and the type which we had procured with the hard-earned money contributed by the workers fell into the hands of our enemies.

Nevertheless, we succeeded in establishing another printshop, once more we are issuing *The Struggle*, once again the free voice of the workers' Party finds expression in its pages."

In September we managed to publish two issues—the sixth and the seventh.

We ran this printshop on a large scale. We were obliged to employ six or eight professionals including the responsible technician. We paid a high rent for a special apartment, besides spending large sums on paper for our printing.

Of course, we received a considerable amount of money that was collected among the workers, but this did not suffice. Then the finance committee came to our rescue, and there were a number of cranky intellectuals who, although they had ceased to believe in the revolution after the events of 1905, nevertheless, continued to donate funds for the upkeep of our paper. The finance committee consisted largely of the wives of engineers, lawyers, doctors, and there was even the wife of a rubber manufacturer on this committee. There were only three of our people on the committee, Anna, Armond and Claudia. Being the daughter of a manufacturer and the widow of an engineer Anna had money and contributed to the Party funds on many occasions, besides helping in other ways. Claudia joined the Party before 1905. At first she worked on the finance committee of the Moscow "okruzhka," but later became a more active worker in the Party organization. Being a teacher, Claudia took full advantage of her legal position, and often placed her little apartment at the Filaretovsky Divinity School in Moscow at the disposal of illegal comrades who not only were given shelter but the most

solicitous attention. When the secret printshop was threatened the only safe place to hide the huge basket containing the machine, type, paper, etc., was the little apartment in the Filaretovsky School. At such moments the extremely modest, almost shy Claudia would display great self-control, daring and resourcefulness. With her Filaretov mien (as the comrades would say in jest), Claudia was indispensable for carrying packages of leaflets to some dangerous place, for warning active workers that arrest was threatened, for getting in contact with prisoners who had the necessary addresses for re-establishing the organization when it was broken up by the police, etc.

She was the daughter of a baker of consecrated bread and in fact was brought up in this very Filaretovsky School. Hence she was intimately acquainted with the life of the clergy and hated everything that was clerical with all her heart; but she continued to work in the school with the sole object of using the place for Party purposes because nobody would ever suspect such a holy place of being a hotbed of sedition.

The finance committee would often arrange functions such as social evenings, concerts, lotteries, etc. for raising funds. But these affairs always resulted in a deficit. These circumstances did not embarrass our patronesses one bit. They not only covered the deficit out of their own pockets, but would often add a bit more, for they thought it would look awkward, if after having made so much noise about their affairs they did not contribute anything to the organization. I can recall a rich manufacturer's wife who paid sixty rubles a month for the upkeep of the printshop, and on special occasions she would

give more. One of the conditions for obtaining this money, was that I had to go for it personally. This duty was a very trying one for me because the lady lived in an extremely expensive apartment. At the door stood a pompous footman, upstairs was a starched maid who squeamishly removed my shabby, weatherbeaten coat. Then I had to walk across the softly carpeted floor into a luxurious drawing room. In a few minutes the rustling of silk skirts would announce the mistress who would begin to question me about Party affairs in general and our "okruzhka" in particular. Every time she put these questions to me I wanted to ask, "What business is it of yours?" But I restrained myself, for I could not deprive the organization of such a good source of financial support. However, one fine day, in 1908, I believe, my rubber manufacturess announced to me that she was disappointed in our organization, that she was occupied with the study of philosophy, that she no longer believed in historical materialism but had taken up empiriocriticism or something of the sort, and considering all things she could no longer support our bolshevik printshop. This finally convinced me that we had gone completely out of fashion, that we must now rely on our own resources as far as funds were concerned.

Just then I keenly felt the lack of the sixty rubles she used to contribute to meet the expenses of our printshop. I had to obtain money at all cost. Luckily Vladimir Bobrovsky, who by a trick had obtained work as a veterinary in the city slaughter house, received a hundred rubles for his work which I immediately "borrowed" and got out of my fix.

Towards the end of 1907 the Central Committee of our Party called an All-Russian Conference in

Helsingfors, Finland, to discuss our tactics in the forthcoming elections for the Third State Duma. The opinion of many of the comrades in Moscow and in the "okruzhka" was that we ought to boycott the Third State Duma, and the central bodies of the Party had to exert a great deal of effort to convince them of the necessity of participating in the elections. But while this boycotting mood prevailed our local comrades showed little interest in the Conference. When the "okruzhka" had to elect delegates to this conference, none of us wanted to go. At the general meeting of the Regional Committee comrade after comrade was nominated as a delegate but each refused in turn. At last only two of us remained on the list—either Natasha or I must go. As Natasha refused absolutely, it fell to my lot to go.

A whole group of delegates from the Moscow Region left for Helsingfors. A delegate from the Urals, Comrade Nazar, accompanied us. This red-haired, plump little comrade, with his sharp wit, made us laugh all the way from Moscow. In St. Petersburg we obtained the required addresses and went through Belo-ostrov to Teriyokki. In Koukala, near Teriyokki, lived Lenin and all the overseas members of our Central Committee. When I met Lenin and Nadezhda Constantinovna, it seemed to me they had not changed in the least, especially Nadezhda Constantinovna. She wore, as it seemed to me, the same grey blouse she had worn in Geneva in 1903. But we all had the impression that Lenin was weighed down by some anxiety which he apparently was loth to disclose to the district workers.

If I remember rightly, the secretary of the Central Committee at that time was Teodorovich, who lived

in St. Petersburg. The technical apparatus of the Central Committee was in Teriyokki. Our central organ *Proletary* was also printed there; it was taken to Russia by two comrades, "The Bee" and "Misha with the umbrella"—comrade Weinstein.

In Teriyokki a preliminary meeting of the Bolshevik delegation was held at which Lenin was present. Besides Teodorovich, there were Poletayev and Michael Tomsky from St. Petersburg, Tyszko, Warski and Dzerzhinsky from Poland and Danishevsky from Latvia. There were also present M. N. Pokrovsky, A. A. Bogdanov and Professor Rozhkov who was a Bolshevik then, Comrade Goldenburg and Comrade Knunyanis, who had just escaped from exile. He was sentenced to exile for his connection with the first St. Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies in 1905. The principal item for discussion at the meeting was the relationship between the Duma fraction and the Central Committee of the Party. The Mensheviks argued that the Social-Democratic deputies in the Duma ought to act independently of the Central Committee of the Party. We stood firmly on the ground that the Duma fraction had to submit to the instructions of the Central Committee. Hence, we had to mobilize all our forces to get our point of view adopted at the Conference.

On the morrow we left for Helsingfors in small groups. The beautiful granite city with its streets made a very pleasant impression on me, but this lovely city did not welcome us at all hospitably. We were obliged to live almost illegally, and our conference was held in premises that were so damp and dark that they completely harmonized with the dullness of the conference itself. It seemed to me

that only the Menshevik and Bund leaders (Martov, Dan, Lieber and company) could find any inspiration in this conference. Chkheidze delivered particularly fiery speeches. All their arguments seemed to amount to this: "No matter how many resolutions you pass about Central Committee instructions, about its leadership of the fraction, we, the Duma fraction, are our own masters.... This is our time, the time for gradual, parliamentary action, and not for your revolution."

During the entire conference Lenin was visibly bored. And we simple, district workers were not sorry when the conference ended. We were very anxious to get back to our local work which, though not remarkably colourful at that particular time, was, nevertheless, less tedious than the conference.

During the intermission between sessions, our crowd gathered in an obscure corner and carried on a merry conversation. I was ill at that time and had a bad cough. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin came over to me and remarked, "You have a bad cough, you should go abroad to get rid of it." And when I answered that there was such a dreadful shortage of workers in Moscow that it would be impossible for me to leave, Lenin answered in jest, "You will die like a bird on a twig in the wintertime."

Besides the question of the tactics of the Duma fraction the conference also discussed whether Social-Democrats should write for the bourgeois press. A liberal resolution was passed to the effect that while it was not permissible to write for bourgeois newspapers, it was permissible to write for bourgeois magazines, or something like that.

The conference lasted several days during which time we found shelter with a Finnish Social-Demo-

crat whose apartment and occupation were far from proletarian. This Finn kept a wine shop, a circumstance which shocked us beyond conception.

We returned from the conference with great caution singly but we all passed safely over the border.

I was able to make my report on this conference only at the general meeting of the Regional Committee. Our first plan that I should go from district to district to give the report did not materialize.

The last months of 1907 and up to the spring of 1908, work in the "okruzhka" was harder than anywhere else. There was stagnation in the districts; work in Orekhovo-Zuevo, Kolomna and Pushkino barely crawled along, and Serpukhov was a lost hope. There the police were extremely active; as soon as any of our comrades went there, they were immediately arrested. During this time it was very difficult to prevent the districts from going to pieces. Things brightened up a bit with the coming of the warm weather when we could hold meetings in the woods.

In June 1908 we planned a Regional Conference at which we were to re-elect the Regional Committee. We were to hold the conference in the woods not far from Obiralovka, on the Nizhnenovgorod railway. This station had unpleasant associations for me—I had been arrested there in the summer of 1905 and I was destined to meet with another unpleasant experience at that ill-omened spot. We gathered early in the morning and towards four o'clock had almost finished with our agenda. Sitting on a hillock, I was making careful notes of the speeches and decisions, when suddenly the alarm was given by our patrol—somebody shouted "Cossacks." Everybody scattered in all directions. During the con-

fusion I fell into a puddle and turned up at one of the Moscow suburban railroad stations on this bright June day in my light dress up to my knees in mud. Although I knew my appearance would attract attention at the station, I could not make up my mind to remain in the woods until evening. I was afraid that what had happened in Ivanovo would be repeated. I preferred to be arrested at the station to being beaten up in the woods. But I was not arrested at this suburban station. The police had their eye on me it seems, and allowed me to get to Moscow, and there I was arrested. When I was taken to the police headquarters, I found seven of our comrades already there. We pretended not to know each other. Of the forty who attended our conference only eight were caught. We were the least nimble ones—the more long-legged and fleeter comrades managed to get away.

Thus my work in the "okruzhka" in the summer of 1908 ended as usual—in arrest.

CHAPTER XIV: THE SEQUEL

WHEN I was arrested, I gave the name on the passport by which I was registered—Lydia Nikitina, the daughter of a Kaluga official. I said that I gave private lessons, that I had gone for a day's outing to the country and that I didn't know anything about an "okruzhka". Whereupon the captain replied that I was the "illegal" Olga Petrovna, secretary of the Regional Committee, that a conference had been held in the woods at which I took the minutes. Fortunately, I had managed to destroy my notes of the minutes, otherwise I would have been instantly charged under article 102 of the Criminal Code.

The captain's exact knowledge of what occurred disturbed me and led me to suspect provocation. For the police even knew the password to our conference. Only one of our members could have betrayed it to the police, but just who it was is still a mystery to me.

I remained as Lydia Nikitina for only a week; then I was examined again and I was shown my photograph signed Zelikson and a voluminous dossier containing the record of my former sins.

Curiously enough, when recently I was perusing my "personal" dossier in the archives of the former Moscow Secret Police, I discovered a document

pinned to the other papers—a statement from a certain Kaluga inhabitant that no Lydia Nikitina had ever lived in his house; there was also correspondence between Kaluga and Moscow about a raid at the home of this unfortunate Kaluga inhabitant. The truth is that at my first examination when I was asked where I lived in Kaluga (I had never been there in my life), I had given the first name that came into my head and, unfortunately, there happened to be a man of that name in Kaluga, and he was subjected to much unpleasantness on my account.

Since neither I nor the other arrested comrades had any compromising documents upon our person, no definite charge could be brought against us and we were subjected to a summary penalty. This time I was detained for three months. At first, before they learned who I was, I was sent to the secret police headquarters. In the narrow corridor near my cell were two huge boxes filled with our newspaper, *Proletary*. I had seen similar boxes in Teriyokki. Most probably an entire shipment of our paper had been seized. During my daily exercise I felt a pang at the heart as I passed those boxes of our splendid newspaper standing in the filthy corridor of the police headquarters.

Once, quite unexpectedly and to my great joy, Sophia Bobrovskaya came to see me. Her age, and her passport which indicated that she was the widow of a counsellor of state, duly impressed the prison officials who permitted her to see me as soon as she declared that I, Lydia Nikitina, was her niece.

There was an amusing scene. The door of my cell opened and in marched my mother-in-law calling me her dear Lydochka, followed by a policeman solemn-

ly carrying her rubbers which she had taken off in the corridor. This courtesy was solely due to her high station.

Sophia Bobrovskaya's visit to me as her niece Lydia, however, did not prevent her coming a week later, when everything about me was already known, and asking to see Zelikson, her daughter-in-law.

After a while I was transferred to the Sushchevka department and unexpectedly found myself in the same cell as my former assistant, big Elena, who had been arrested together with little Elena some time before me. A note signed "Olga" was found in her possession, and the police racked their brains to discover who this "Olga" was. And yet, even when they had me in their hands, they could not put two and two together. Big Elena—Comrade Dracheva—had just returned from being examined and exclaimed, "Oh, those dreadful nuisances, how they pester me about this Olga! How I should like to tell them that that very Olga is right under their noses!"

Prisons in 1908 were somewhat different from what they were before 1905. A marked change had taken place. The prisons became more democratic, if one can thus express it. All sorts of people were assembled there.

In Sushchevka, by the way, a good many anarchists belonging to different groups were imprisoned. But no matter what group they belonged to, they all made the same unfavourable impression on me. Conditions in this prison were quite tolerable. The only thing we could not do was to take our things and go home. Everything else was permitted. The superintendent was a spineless sort of creature, his assistant, whom we nicknamed "Nikolai the Second"

was a hopeless drunkard, and the third official we merely called Vadimka. When "Nikolai the Second" sobered up after a drunken spell, he would come to our cell for some hot cabbage soup. Vadimka was a dandy with a sweet tooth. Whenever a prisoner received a bottle of eau de cologne from outside—Vadimka would spill half of it on his uniform and smilingly return the other half to the person it was meant for, and if it happened to be a box of sweets, Vadimka would take half for himself and hand the other to its rightful owner. Naturally such behaviour on the part of the senior officials of the prison could not but degrade them in the eyes of the prisoners and of the junior prison staff.

We were so free in prison that we hated to remain there. Life was so boring that one day the prisoners created a disturbance, broke windows, and swore at the officials. The result was that we were taken to different prisons. Dracheva and I were sent to Prechistenka prison which resembled a young ladies' Institute. Here it was even more boring than in Sushchevka: so much so that one did not even desire to break windows. But I remained in Prechistenka a very short time. Soon I was informed that I was to be exiled for four years to East Siberia. Owing to my illness, however, and the solicitations of my sister, I was examined by a medical commission and the sentence was changed to two years exile in the Vologda province.

I travelled to Vologda under quite unusual circumstances. Because of my illness I was allowed to go at my own expense instead of travelling with other prisoners by stage, on condition that I also take two detectives with me at my own expense. These were to guard me all the way and deliver me

safely to the governor of Vologda. The entire journey cost me thirty rubles. My guards, while generously helping themselves to the food Sophia Bobrovskaya had sent, took excellent care of me. The younger and simpler one ran about all the stations to get me hot water and fresh rolls, while the older one, who wore a bowler hat, diverted me with his conversation and constantly apologized for consuming my eatables. After imprisonment, when you find yourself on a train knowing that on the morrow you will be walking unhampered about the streets of some strange city, you have an uncontrollable desire to laugh and talk. My desire to talk was so great that I gladly made conversation with my detectives.

Early in the morning we reached Vologda; when I arrived at the station I saw two of my old comrades standing there, Capitolina Rusanova and Constantin Popov—both of whom came to meet me. I was was so overjoyed at seeing them that for the moment I forgot my escorts. Comrade Rusanova took my things and suggested that I go home with her, but here my two guards interfered, declaring that I could not go to the governor before ten o'clock, and that until I saw him I was considered under arrest and must remain at the station. Comrade Rusanova thereupon invited the detectives to go with me to her home where it was warm and cozy while it was cold at the station. The detectives readily agreed: we hired two izvozhchiks—Rusanova, Popov, and I got into one, while my escorts got into the other. When we arrived at Comrade Rusanova's apartment, the detectives, after having drunk their coffee, modestly settled back in the corner of the room, while we struck up a lively conversation at the table which lasted until 11 o'clock. Then I set out with

my two guards for the governor's office where they handed me over and signed the necessary papers. From that moment I was free.

Besides Popov and Rusanova I met some other old comrades—B. P. Posern, the late com. Sammer, and O. A. Varontsova. Our group of exiles continued to do active Party work in the town; at any rate, Constantin Popov ardently devoted himself to the work in the circles among the workers employed at the railroad workshops.

We once printed a manifesto on a hectograph in my room which I rented in Comrade Rusanova's apartment. But I cannot recall for what occasion it was printed. In general one could live and work very well in Vologda. However, the governor, Khvostov, did not intend to have me in the city and sent me to a district.

When I went to him to ask to be permitted to remain in Vologda, he answered: "I have some 3,000 exiles in my province: if I left all of them in Vologda, they would spoil the whole town." I wanted to tell him that we would spoil the whole province for him, but I refrained.

At the time of my journey to the district, called Veliki Ustug, my health was so poor that I had to send for my husband to take me there. Veliki Ustug is a splendid little town once you get used to it. But when you are ill and shaken by a journey of sixty versts by horse and cart through the winter frost and arrive before dawn, you feel a bit differently. Everything seems dark and desolate. The first person I met in Ustug was a doctor, the second —an architect, Vladimir Kuritsin. Among the Ustug exiles were two rather secluded groups—Social-Democrats, the majority of whom were Bolsheviks,

and a group of Socialist-Revolutionaries. There was a third and more numerous group of peasants who had been involved in agrarian disturbances, the so-called masses, who were purposely mixed with shady elements exiled by the village communities for drunkenness, horse-stealing and similar deeds. Altogether there were about three hundred peasants in Ustug.

Our Bolshevik group was in very good spirits. We spent a great deal of time in studying Marxian theory, as the problems that were in fashion at the time were of little interest to us: at any rate, I recall that Dmitri Polian's lecture on the sex problem did not interest us in the least.

Among the exiles I particularly remember a Ukrainian peasant named Nenadoshchuk, a tall elderly muzhik in a huge Caucasian fur cap who was exiled for agrarian disturbances, and who was dreadfully homesick for his village. He often came to me with questions of a religious trend. Through this Nenadoshchuk I managed to get in contact with the mass of exiled peasants, which proved very useful when a new district officer, notorious for the organization of numerous attacks on the exiles in other districts, began his provocative activities in Ustug.

At first this officer began to send his inspectors about the town. You would be sitting in your room when suddenly, without a knock or a warning, a "figure in grey" would spring up at your elbow, stand silently a minute or two and then go away. It was an inspector who came to see whether you were still there and had not escaped. These appearances of the "figure in grey" unstrung even the calmest among us. After some time a provocative rumour

spread among the peasants that all the landladies in the town were going to refuse to rent their rooms to the exiles. There was a talk of organizing a protest demonstration, and the day was actually fixed for it. We discovered, however, that the rumours had been deliberately spread by the district officer in order to provoke a demonstration of this kind and he had his police already posted to "pacify the revolt", that is to beat up the exiles and win a reward from his superiors. Thanks to the timely measures taken by the more experienced section of the exiled comrades, Ustug witnessed no "demonstration" and no beating up.

Although there were not many workers in Ustug, there was a small local party organization in the town. It was kept alive by the indefatigable Kostya Kursin, from whom I learned that a considerable part of a secret printshop which had been functioning not very long before, was hidden in the town.

As it was extravagant to set up a secret printshop far from the Centre in a remote little town sixty versts from the railroad station, and because the local organization was too small and did not have sufficient funds to run it, and coupled with the fact that both Kostya and I were great patriots of the Moscow industrial region (Kostya had worked in Kostroma and Yaroslavl), we agreed to pack up all the typographical accessories and send them with Vanya Shumilov, member of the local organization, to Moscow, to an address which I gave him. Poor Vanya Shumilov, who was making the trip to Moscow for the first time in his young life, was not a little worried before his departure, but he fulfilled the commission in an exemplary manner, although he encountered many difficulties with his special

burden in Moscow. Some time later several issues of the paper *Workers' Banner (Rabocheye Znamya)* were set up with our Ustug type (the paper was published by the Moscow Regional Committees) and the vignette of this newspaper—a factory with smoking chimneys—was made by Kostya Kursin.

In Ustug we had unlimited possibilities of following our Party press. I managed to arrange the regular receipt of copies of our latest literature published abroad, and from the cheerful tone of our leaders we tried to persuade ourselves that things were not so bad as they really were.

In the autumn of 1910 I finished my term of exile and went to Moscow. But I was not sure that the police would allow me to live there.

CHAPTER XV: IN MOSCOW AGAIN

ON my return from exile I could not find either the Moscow or the Regional Party organizations to which to go. From the conversation I had with several comrades I gathered that we exiled ones had not the least conception of what had happened to our Party apparatus which had collapsed as a result of the years of oppressive police rule. Notwithstanding the few hopeful sparks of awakened enthusiasm among the workers in 1910, there was no planned or centralized Party work in Moscow. Individual groups were formed in the districts and in the Centre which attempted to re-establish the District and Moscow Committees, but these groups invariably failed, particularly when they attempted to restore the Moscow Committee. More or less systematic work was carried on in the Moscow trade unions because our people were on the Central Bureau. Comrade M. I. Frumkin who lived illegally in Moscow, under the name of Rubin, worked very energetically in the unions; but he too was soon arrested. Perhaps if I had gone to the districts and had got into my old harness of professional district worker, everything would have looked much brighter, but I could not do that because of a purely personal disability, I had a new-

born child on my hands, a sick little boy, who unjustly had to pay for my restless life.

In the winter of 1911 Constantin Strievsky returned from exile in Ustug. We managed to find place for him as a worker at the electric station "1886", whose director was Gleb Krzhizhanovsky. Constantin was at first dumbfounded by the state of our Party organization. But he did not lose courage and energetically took to his work both at the electric station and outside of it. He collected the comrades who were scattered in the various enterprises and I helped in this work as much as my difficult circumstances permitted. Olga Afanasyevna Varontsova, and an old metal worker, Ivan Golubev, a good friend of mine in the Baku days in 1904 and in Moscow in 1905-06, were also in Moscow. These two comrades together with Comrades Arosev, Tikhomirov, the printer Borshchevski and Dugachev, formed a group to resuscitate the Moscow Committee. But towards the end of 1912, when things were going so smoothly that a city conference was called to elect the Moscow Committee, the entire group was arrested.

In the autumn of 1911 I went to the Shanyavsky University where it was not necessary to produce a diploma or a certificate of political good behaviour to enter. I was induced to do this by the illusion that I could systematize the fragments of knowledge I had gained by studying during the involuntary interruptions in my work by arrests and imprisonment. I wanted to make the best use of my legal position in order to get a proper education. On the other hand the Shanyavsky University was an excellent place for meeting comrades. But this illusion was soon dispelled.

Kizevetter's lectures on Russian history were purely bourgeois in character, the political economy taught by Manilov who praised the genius of bourgeois economists and threw stones at Marx at every opportunity, and the lectures of Visheslavtsev who spurned historical materialism and offered us some idealistic trash—this was not for us, all of it was alien to me and only irritated me. But the university had its merits. It was an excellent place for accomplishing all sorts of tasks to resuscitate the Moscow organization. Here a number of comrades, intellectuals as well as workers, found refuge. But even here we could not escape the interference of the provocateur.

It goes without saying that the omnipresent and omniscient secret police were not slow in penetrating the Shanyavsky University. I often made appointments with two famous provocateurs, Poskrebukhin and Romanov, of course I did not know they were provocateurs then, who would insist that there was no better place in the world to discuss Party matters than the halls of the Shanyavsky University. I had the misfortune to arrange a meeting between a very fine comrade who had fled from exile, Comrade Gvozdikov, and the provocateur Poskrebukhin. Poskrebukhin worked in the office of the Simonov Factory Sick Fund. I hoped to put Comrade Gvozdikov in touch with one or two Simonov workers. Soon after the meeting with Poskrebukhin, Comrade Gvozdikov went to St. Petersburg for a few days on a personal matter and was arrested in the street. After a short illness (inflammation of the kidneys) Comrade Gvozdikov died in the St. Petersburg prison. To this day I am not sure whether Comrade Gvozdikov's death was due to a chance meeting

with a spy who knew him in St. Petersburg, or to my unwittingly having introduced him to the provocateur Poskrebukhin. Some time later I introduced Ivan Smirnov, who had also fled from exile, to Poskrebukhin. After a while Ivan was also arrested and sent back to Siberia. Towards the end of 1914, I introduced Comrade Soltz who had also fled from exile to Poskrebukhin. Naturally, Comrade Soltz did not last long in Moscow and was arrested shortly after his arrival. No one suspected Poskrebukhin. He pretended to be terribly distressed at these occurrences and would often remark that Moscow had become an unendurable place, that nothing could be arranged here, that everything became known to the secret police. Furthermore, these arrests occurred at different times and in such different circumstances that it was difficult to suspect the real instigators.

I had my own corner in a particularly secluded corridor of the Shanyavsky University where from time to time I made appointments with George Romanov who afterwards turned out to be a provocateur. I had met George during my work on the Moscow Regional Committee, he would come to see me on Party business as the representative of the workers in the works of Kolomna. He kept me informed of all the latest news which he received from the Centre abroad, gave me fresh literature received from abroad, informed me of the conditions of the Ivanovo-Voznesensk organization and of other cities in the Moscow Region whenever he chanced to be there. Also he kept me informed about the affairs of the Duma fraction in St. Petersburg. I confess that it did seem strange to me that an insignificant and poorly educated fellow like

George could occupy such a responsible position in the Party. But I reminded myself that he had attended the Party school in Capri, where most probably, he had studied a bit and become acquainted with our leaders, that he must have progressed intellectually a little during these last few years. Moreover, I was impressed by his indefatigable work during those times of depression. Neither Romanov nor Poskrebukhin were regular students at the University; but they attended periodical courses on co-operation, I believe, merely to have free entry into the place.

That winter I was destined to come upon another provocateur, the provocateur of provocateurs—Roman Malinovsky.

My brother came from abroad illegally with instructions from Lenin to send representatives from Moscow and from the Moscow region to the All-Russian Conference that was to be held in Prague. Malinovsky, was marked as a future candidate to the Fourth Duma, and my brother had strict instructions to get him to go to the conference.

My brother was introduced to Malinovsky at the Blumenthal Bacteriological Institute by the laboratory worker Matvei Segal. All the time that my brother was in Moscow he stayed in our apartment on Bolshaya Ekaterinskaya Street during the day, and every night we sent him to a different place to sleep, because we feared a raid on our apartment at any moment. A few days after his introduction to Malinovsky my brother was arrested by detectives who were waiting for him to leave the house.

Although my brother did not say who he was at first (he had a letter in code in his pocket which he was sending abroad), and although he did not

give our address, nevertheless a raid was immediately made on our rooms: a number of books, which seemed suspicious to the police, were taken away, and my husband and I were told that we were perfectly free to go wherever we pleased, but that the police would occupy our apartment for an indefinite time. When morning came we very cautiously went to warn everyone we could to avoid our apartment. As a result, during the twelve days that the watch continued, only one comrade came to our room, one whom we did not know in Moscow and therefore could not warn, a Comrade Sistrin who later died in the imperialist war. The trap laid by the police was a positive torture to us.

We trembled at every ring of the doorbell for fear that a comrade, some newcomer whom we had been unable to warn was coming to us. Once the postman brought a letter which I managed to snatch out of the hands of the detective posted at our door. The other two policemen were sitting in the room playing cards. I locked myself in my room to read the letter. It came from abroad and on the surface contained nothing but an ordinary greeting and an enquiry about my health, but I suspected that it was a secret letter written in invisible ink, dealing with urgent Party matters, otherwise it would not have been addressed to my house. I had nothing at hand with which to reveal the real contents of the letter, and the detective kept knocking at the door demanding that I give it to him. I could do nothing else than dip the letter into a pitcher of water and tear it into tiny bits, and then I opened the door. When I told the scared detective that I had destroyed the letter and pointed to the torn fragments, he became even more frightened and begged me not

to say anything about it to his officer for fear of being punished for not having procured it.

Twice a day four secret police agents came to our cramped apartment, two of them in police uniform and two in civilian dress. They would seat themselves and begin to "guess" if anyone would come but as no one appeared, they soon began to get bored.

Besides ourselves the apartment was occupied by two girl students. Once a very richly dressed lady, a relative, came to visit one of them. The detectives detained her and would not let her go home until she had been identified. The lady wrung her hands in despair vowing that she was no common socialist, but owned a house in the Khamovniki district. One of the policemen ran to a telephone and when he learned that the lady really owned a house in Khamovniki, he was profuse in his apologies for the annoyance they had caused her. The detectives on duty in our rooms were evidently being bored to death by waiting for people who never came and one day one of them said to my husband, "You and I, Mr. Bobrovsky, are comrades in misfortune, you are sick and tired of us and we are just as tired of you. We won't regret it in the least when we are ordered to leave you."

On the tenth day I went to the secret police headquarters to demand to know when this was going to end. I spoke to Captain Ivanov who said: "You ridicule the seeming lack of purpose in laying a trap in your apartment. Perhaps you think we do not know that you warned everybody and that we are sitting and wondering at your secluded life? During ten days nobody (except Sistrin) came to your house. You and I should understand each other: you are an old revolutionary and I am an

experienced police officer. We are not waiting for those whom you have warned, but for those whom you have not been able to warn; we are waiting for someone from abroad, or someone from exile who will be sure to drop in on you."

To my announcement that we would leave our present quarters and go to a hotel, the police officer replied:

"You need not go to the trouble, because we will follow you to the hotel." I expressed my indignation as strongly as I could and went away. But in a few days the trap was withdrawn. Shortly afterwards I was permitted to see my brother in the prison cell, and he whispered to me that his first cross-examination proved that the letter had not been deciphered properly and the police could not make a case of that matter. But the examination also showed that the authorities knew too much. "Something is wrong in Moscow, someone is playing the traitor," my brother said.

Even after the trap was withdrawn our apartment and we ourselves were watched quite openly. In the summer the arrival of Nicholas II was expected in Moscow and the authorities wanted to clear the city of all unreliable elements. Moscow was "cleared" of me. The police came to me and ordered me to leave the city during the tsar's visit.

I went to the town of Alexin in the Tula province, and returned in the autumn. I was allowed to remain in Moscow without interference and I continued my studies at the Shanyavsky University. There all our Party people used to gather. We used the Students' Mutual Aid Society to the board of which I had been elected, as a screen for our activities.

At this time I became acquainted with Ilya Tsivtsivadze under curious circumstances. I had been watching this student for a long time and sensed that he was one of us, a Bolshevik. So I decided to ask him to collect money for a legal bolshevik paper. When I proposed this to him, Tsivtsivadze laughingly answered that he had been observing me for some time and had also wanted to ask my help for the same object because he was also busy collecting money for the paper.

The need for a legal bolshevik paper was great in Moscow, particularly after the Lena shootings when a number of protest strikes broke out in the bigger factories. The St. Petersburg paper, *Star (Zvezda)* and later the *Truth (Pravda)* were avidly read, but the business of issuing a Moscow daily took a long time. Only in August 1913, principally due to the efforts of the late Nikolai Yakovlev, did we succeed in issuing a daily Bolshevik paper *Our Way (Nash Put)* in Moscow.

At the end of 1912 or the beginning of 1913 I got in contact with the Lefortovo district where Comrade Lomov and his assistant Vera Karavaikova, whom I knew from Ivanovo-Voznesensk, worked. Things were beginning to develop in this district and I remember that we planned to establish our own plant for printing leaflets, but nothing came of it. The most active Party worker in Lefortovo was the well-known Moscow Comrade Marakushev, who turned out to be a provocateur. This was provocateur Number Four. In general Moscow broke the record for provocateurs. During all these years a curse seemed to hang over Moscow. All the comrades who started work to restore the Moscow Com-

mittee inevitably got entangled with one of these provocateurs.

After the closing down of our daily paper *Our Way* an editorial staff was organized for our future weekly. It consisted of Ivan Skvortsov, Valerian Yakhontov and Vassily Lossev. These comrades proposed that I edit the workers' correspondence column and establish contacts with the factories through my personal acquaintances in the districts.

Early in the sping of 1914, Malinovsky came to Moscow to see me on urgent business. I arranged to meet him in the vegetarian restaurant in Gazetny street. When we sat down at a table in a secluded corner and ordered lunch. Malinovsky, to my astonishment, began to talk in a loud voice about the revival of spirits among the St. Petersburg workers and said sneeringly that we in Moscow were afraid of our own shadows. I thought that this was rather tactless of Malinovsky and that while he was taking advantage of his immunity as a deputy—he had been elected to the Duma by that time—he was drawing the attention of the people in the dining room to me, a very "unimmune" person, and thus placing me in a very awkward position.

The urgent business proved to be the statement that he, Malinovsky, intended to publish a weekly paper in which I was to edit the labour news column. Moreover, he was to be the official publisher, taking advantage of the fact that he was a deputy in the Duma, and that I was to be the business manager in Moscow. I agreed to this and we went to a lawyer to draw up the necessary power of attorney for me. The title of the paper was to be *Rabochy Trud*.

Next day we met in the vegetarian restaurant

again and later Malinovsky took me to a warehouse that formerly belonged to *Nash Put* where a large quantity of paper still remained. The sight of these huge rolls of paper took my breath away. Being a typical underground Party worker I could not help thinking what a splendid thing it would be if we had had at least one of these rolls for our secret printshop. Then Malinovsky read me quite a lecture on how to take care of the paper, how to remove the furniture from the editorial office of *Nash Put* to our new offices so that no one could discover the connection between that paper and our new *Rabochy Trud,* etc.

It took us three months before we could find a person to act as "responsible" editor, that is to say, a person who would pay the fines or to go to prison in the event of the authorities prosecuting the paper. By this time Malinovsky had resigned from the Duma which of course caused a great sensation in the Party. Finally, we got the editorial staff together. The editorial staff consisted of Comrades Skvortsov, Yakhontov and Lossev. As a precaution, only one of the conmrades worked at the office. Finally we got out the first issue of the paper. But even before the first issue appeared, as soon as the news of the proposed publication got about, many factory workers came to us bringing us interesting items of news about what was going on in their factories. These comrades told us that there was a marked revival among the masses of the workers and expressed impatience at the slowness with which our Moscow Committee was developing its work.

The first issue came out on June 14, 1914, that is, several weeks before the outbreak of the imperialist war. Hence, I think it of interest to quote a passage

from the leading article in the first issue written by Comrade Skvortsov explaining the aims and objects of the paper. In this article Comrade Skvortsov wrote:

> "As far as international relationships are concerned our paper will always ruthlessly expose the policy of fomenting national hatred which brings huge profits to small groups in society, imposes a heavy burden of taxation upon the people, increases militarism, dissipates the productive forces of the country, retards economic development and creates the danger of shedding the blood of the people. As against the national hatred instigated and fanned by selfish groups, *Rabochy Trud* will advocate the international solidarity of labour."

"As far as international relationships are conflooded with greetings from workers in numerous factories all over the town. There was no doubt about the wide sympathy with which the appearance of our paper was greeted among the masses of workers. So great was the need felt for a workers' paper in Moscow that even the dirty work of Malinovsky could not mar the joy its appearance roused among the workers.

Of course, the paper did not escape the attentions of the tsarist censorship. And when the police attempted to confiscate the subsequent issues interesting things happened. According to the law we had to send two copies of each issue to the censor before the bulk of the copies were distributed. But before sending the two copies to the censors the printers themselves would take bundles of the paper out of the office and hand them to waiting comrades who

would immediately get them distributed, so that even if the police did decide to suppress an issue large numbers of copies would get around nevertheless. On publishing day the office would be crowded with workers coming to get supplies for their factories.

I forget exactly how many issues we managed to get out before the paper was suppressed, I think there were six. But I vividly remember the last day of our paper's existence. The page proofs of the last issue were already made up and some slight corrections had to be made. I went to the printshop to do this. There I found Poskrebukhin sitting with the manager of the office discussing some business or other. Suddenly a police officer entered and glancing at Poskrebukhin, turned to the manager and in formal tones announced that the governor of Moscow had issued an order to suppress the paper, and that printing must stop immediately. When the officer left I rose to go into the editorial office to rescue some of the material and addresses. I was particularly anxious to get hold of the manuscript of articles written by Comrade Skvortsov because I had promised him that none of his manuscripts would fall into the hands of the police as he had very peculiar handwriting which could easily be traced to him. But Poskrebukhin detained me and offered to go himself as he was much quicker than I. Evidently he calculated that the police had already entered the editorial office and that if I were to go there I would be arrested: for his own purposes he wanted me to remain at liberty for some time yet. I allowed myself to be persuaded and went home instead.

When I left the printshop I was immediately

followed by detectives. To get rid of them I decided to go home by a roundabout way, but try as I might I could not shake them off and finally decided that it really made no difference, because in any case by the arrangement with Malinovsky, I was the registered manager of the paper and the police knew my address. I felt so depressed and weary that I merely telephoned Comrades Skvortsov and Yakhontov arranging to meet them next day to discuss our future plans.

But this next day proved a momentous day in history—it was the date of the declaration of the World War.

TWENTY YEARS IN UNDERGROUND RUSSIA

". . . I missed the last tram and was afraid to return home alone so late at night. Vladimir Ilyich volunteered to accompany me saying that he needed a bit of fresh air anyway.

"Taking the opportunity of being alone with Lenin, I began shyly to ask him questions about certain doubts which had been troubling me for some time concerning my life as a professional revolutionary. I was aware of the tremendous importance Lenin attached to the organization of professional revolutionaries and I knew what hopes and expectations he placed upon them; and it seemed to me that only those comrades had a right to call themselves professionals who were particularly gifted, who had a wide political outlook, great oratorical and agitational talents as well as deep theoretical knowledge. If the professionals were factory workers, I argued to myself, they should be gifted with a special kind of proletarian instinct which would compensate for their lack of theoretical knowledge. Having none of these qualities, I was tortured by the thought that I was not fit for the high calling of professional revolutionary. All these doubts I put before Lenin. Vladimir Ilyich listened to me attentively. Then he began to explain to me what the structure of our Party should be like and he grew quite excited as he spoke of the role the professional revolutionary played in that structure. The professional revolutionary, he said, first of all, had to be utterly devoted to the Party and the workers' cause—his personal life and his Party life had to be one. The organization of revolutionaries could not be restricted into a narrow circle of leaders; tireless, devoted rank and file workers, who were in constant contact with the masses, were indispensable. They were the ones who were laying the foundations of the Party, brick by brick, and without their help no leader could accomplish anything."

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Bobrovskaya