

BOOK REVIEWS/КНИЖНЫЕ РЕЦЕНЗИИ

- R. Carter Elwood. *The Non-Geometric Lenin: Essays on the Development of the Bolshevik Party 1910-1914*. London: Anthem Press, 2011. xix, 228 pp. \$99.00 (cloth). ISBN-13: 978-0-85728-778-6.

In these essays published from 1966 to 2010, Carter Elwood portrays a more human side of V. I. Lenin than Soviet hagiographies allowed and elaborates upon important moments in the Bolshevik leader's life that are sometimes overlooked or sensationalized in Western biographies. The first five chapters appeared in print before the opening of Soviet archives and examine traditional political subjects, often taking pains to illuminate themes or interpretations that Soviet historians avoided or denied. In chapters 6 through 8, Elwood uses documents released from former Soviet archives to reassess his previous judgments on police spy Roman Malinovskii and Lenin's relationship with Inessa Armand. Both Armand and Malinovskii were among Lenin's closest confidantes. Chapters 9 through 11 revolve around Lenin's diet, vacations, and athletic interests. The collection joins Lenin's politics with his personality; the essays' reprinting in one volume encourages raising new questions for research. All chapters reflect the author's careful approach and close, cautious reading of sources. Their arrangement is not strictly chronological in each section, but rather follows a logical pattern of using one chapter to set up the next.

Chapter 1, on Lenin and the party schools abroad, highlights Lenin as an educator, albeit one for whom a factionalist agenda prevailed. Lenin set up his school at Longjumeau (outside Paris) in response to a school his rival Aleksandr Bogdanov had created on the island of Capri. Lenin's partisanship seems to have hindered his recruitment of students through Russian party organizations, which preferred a "truly 'all-party' school." (p. 4) Other factors impeded recruitment. The Russian party organizations could not spare talented activists to go abroad. They feared attracting police attention to recruits, and may have considered practical underground work a better school than one tailored to Lenin's agenda. Nevertheless, Elwood concludes that Lenin succeeded in his "purpose . . . to gain control of the party machinery and to educate pliable delegates to the forthcoming Prague Conference." (p. 15) The 1912 Prague Conference, examined in chapter 2, was for Bolsheviks, while Mensheviks met separately in Vienna. Elwood emphasizes that the Prague conference bestowed legitimacy on Leninist methods, such as "co-optation to the Central Committee without requiring unanimity." (p. 34) Nevertheless, strains appeared between Prague delegates who came directly from Russia and the emigrants who tried to dominate the conference.

Tensions between émigré Bolsheviks and their comrades in Russia are further explored in chapter 3 which discusses the relationship between Lenin and *Pravda* editors in 1912-1914. Editors were reluctant to publish émigré articles that were oriented toward factionalist goals. Moreover, they censored Lenin's contributions "to remove the abrasive terms he habitually used when referring to his factional opponents." (p. 44) Lenin was unhappy that *Pravda* editors paid him late, did not return his rejected articles, and that they printed articles by his rival Bogdanov. Despite such differences, Elwood thinks *Pravda* "promoted factional identification" and became increasingly popular among SD workers, even achieving majority support for its line. (p. 54)

The next two chapters illustrate the risky position in which Lenin found himself on the eve of World War I. Although Elwood regards Lenin and the Bolsheviks as in 1912-14 more responsive than Mensheviks to increasing labor activism in Russia, he interprets Lenin's ambition as designed to harness worker activism in order to consolidate his centralized leadership of the party. This Lenin planned to do at a congress, which would have been the party's sixth if it had been held when scheduled in August 1914. As Elwood explains in chapter 4, Lenin acted contrary to party statutes when organizing representation to the congress, because he weighted the number of representatives toward organizations where Bolsheviks were strong, no matter how small or newly created such organizations were. In addition, Lenin sought through this congress to revise the party program adopted in 1903. Several events conspired to distract Lenin from his preparations and prevent the congress from taking place. First was the Malinovskii scandal, the second was a rival conference in Brussels, and the final event was the beginning of World War I.

Chapter 5 examines Lenin's response to the "Brussels 'Unity' Conference of July 1914," organized by Georgii Plekhanov, Lev Trotsky, Iulii Martov, and others. Determined to avoid being placed "in a vulnerable and embarrassing position," (p. 78) Lenin did not attend the congress himself, but instead prevailed upon Inessa Armand to deliver his address, phrased in characteristically polemical language which offended delegates and failed to win converts. If not for World War I and the crisis it produced in the Socialist International, Elwood concludes, the International may very well have expelled the Bolsheviks, given the acrimony between them and other Russian socialists.

The Malinovskii affair takes center stage in chapters 6 and 7. Elwood considers whether Lenin knew at any time before 1917, when police files were opened, that Roman Malinovskii, a worker who rose to the leadership of the Bolshevik party organization in Russia and represented it in the Duma, was a police agent. Reviewing theories about Lenin's motiva-

tions in defending Malinovskii, in light of evidence that emerged from Russian archives, he concludes that Lenin had no cynical motives in defending Malinovskii. Instead, Lenin was certain Malinovskii was innocent because the evidence against him was weak and because Malinovskii put on a convincing performance. Here Elwood also revisits a controversy that unfolded between him and Richard Pipes on the pages of the journal *Revolutionary Russia*, regarding errors Elwood found in Pipes' book *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999). Elwood maintains that the lesson of the dispute for researchers is to "be aware that variants of documents often exist and that it is necessary to seek the earliest version extant." (p. 110)

Following the discussion of Lenin's misplaced trust in Malinovskii, Elwood examines the leader's weaknesses and vulnerabilities as exposed in his relationship with Inessa Armand (chapter 8). Here, in light of new documents published from Soviet archives, Elwood is forced to revise his earlier opinion that there was no love affair between Armand and Lenin. Having aimed to elevate her reputation as a practical revolutionary and advocate of women, in his biography of her (*Inessa Armand: Revolutionary and Feminist*; (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) he dismissed what he perceived to be unsubstantiated innuendo. Documents released after his biography was published forced him to conclude that Inessa loved Lenin as more than a comrade, that they had a long-lasting emotional affair, and that most likely there had been physical intimacy between them. The correspondence contained no torrid love letters between them, but does confirm their intimate relationship. Elwood still observes that some pages from their letters are missing, as is much of the correspondence Inessa sent to Lenin in emigration.

Chapters 9 through 11 explore nonpolitical facets of Lenin's life: food, drink, sport, and vacation. Lenin was not a demanding eater and his poor diet may have contributed to his early death. Despite his reputation as a teetotaler, he consumed alcohol in moderation (beer, wine, and sometimes Polish vodka). Lenin's love for the countryside and sports was established in his childhood on the family estate and reinforced during his Siberian exile which ironically also afforded him more nutritious meals than any other location in which he lived. His taste for rustic venues and vigorous physical activity (hiking, swimming, skating, hunting, rowing, gymnastics, and cycling) set him apart from many other Russian socialist leaders who preferred urban leisure and could not afford vacations to the mountains and seashore as Lenin could. Lenin went on long periods of vacation with intensive exercise after particularly trying political episodes in his life, as if he needed to release mental tension through physical activity.

Despite its focus on Lenin as the leader of the Bolsheviks, the collec-

tion reinforces the impression of temperamental diversity among the faction as a whole. The work under review is somewhat dated in that it dwells on the Bolshevik-Menshevik rivalry, contains little consideration of the legal alternatives to Leninist Bolshevism in the Russian socialist movement, and accords scant attention to the Socialist Revolutionaries as the major socialist alternative to the Social Democrats. Nevertheless, it is a useful addition to research libraries, because of the convenience of consulting Elwood's articles in book form. Anyone using his published books should also consult the articles in this collection for updated conclusions. The price prevents acquisition of the book by individuals or smaller collections and the publisher seems little inclined toward publicizing this important work. Indeed, this reviewer was only able to obtain a copy through interlibrary loan. The book has endnotes, a bibliography of works cited, an index, and pictures.

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