



The Non-Geometric Lenin

Essays on the Development of the Bolshevik Party 1910-1914

Carter Elwood

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Description

A fascinating examination of Lenin's attempts to build the Bolshevik Party between 1910 and 1914, *The Non-Geometric Lenin* provides a new picture of the Marxist revolutionary as a bourgeois, fallible individual.

'This book is based on a vast amount of research on a key period in the career of V. I. Lenin. It shows him hard at work at party meetings, usually winning the day through the force of his arguments. However, we also learn of Lenin at leisure in Switzerland, walking and taking refreshment in particular. The book is a major contribution from Carter Elwood, a senior figure in the field much respected by his colleagues.' —*Paul Dukes, FRSE, University of Aberdeen*

'Elwood has risen very well to the challenge of producing a more multifaceted Lenin... His guidance...is second to none. He has mined archives as deeply as they could be mined, including some post-1991 additions. His assessments are judicious and careful, and his scholarly craft is admirable... A wide range of those interested in the period will benefit greatly from Elwood's book.' —*Christopher Read, 'Slavic Review'*

'A somewhat quirky book [that] combines a study of pre-revolutionary Bolshevik party history with an often amusing and light-hearted look at the personal life of Lenin [...The] writing style is breezy, often witty, and sometimes insightful, and the book makes for an enjoyable read.' —*James Ryan, 'Revolutionary Russia'*

This collection of eleven essays deals with Lenin's life in western European emigration in the years before the First World War. The first five essays explore Lenin's efforts to build a purely Bolshevik Party through the creation of a unique school for underground workers outside of Paris, his schismatic machinations in calling the 1912 Prague Conference, his problematic relations with the new Bolshevik daily *Pravda*, his unsuccessful attempt to call a party congress in 1914, and his defeat at the Brussels 'Unity' Conference summoned by the International Socialist Bureau on the eve of the war. These essays are based on a detailed reading of Western and Soviet sources, and they question the common assumption that Lenin was unquestioned inside his own faction and that pre-war Bolshevism was a monolithic entity well-prepared to seize power.

The latter essays discuss Lenin's curious friendship during the pre-war period with Roman Malinovsky, who turned out to be a police spy, and Inessa Armand, a Bolshevik feminist with whom he had a romantic relationship. They also investigate such mundane but little-studied topics as what he liked to eat in emigration, his annual habit of taking bourgeois vacations and his obsession with athletic pursuits. The picture which emerges from these studies is not of a single-minded, perfect leader solely devoted to carrying out revolution, but rather of a 'non-geometric' Lenin with very human foibles and weaknesses.

Readership: A key title for students and scholars of Russian history and general readers interested in Vladimir Lenin, the history of the Bolshevik Party and the Russian Revolution.

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About the Author

Carter Elwood is a Distinguished Research Professor of History at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. He is the author or editor of eight books dealing with pre-revolutionary Russian social democracy, among them *Inessa Armand: Revolutionary and Feminist* (Cambridge, 1992 and 2002), which won the Heldt Prize for the Best Book in the field of Slavic Women's Studies. He is a Past President of the Canadian Association of Slavists and the Ottawa Historical Association.

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