

EIGHTEEN DAYS Changed the World!

by JOHN M. HAFFERT

Lenin came to power in Russia in just 18 days, and it all began when a pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady's Protection ('Pokrov') was cancelled!

The people of Russia had become disillusioned and weary of the war with Germany. The Czar had taken personal charge of the war and seemed to ignore the fact that the country was being drained of men, food and resources.

This gave revolutionaries in Russia a ground swell of opinion for the overthrow of the Czar (primarily to end the war).

A "Workers" Revolution

Lenin was in Switzerland plotting a Marxist World Revolution. He was not then, and never had been, primarily interested in a revolution in Russia. He felt "called" to follow through with the ideas of Marx and to lead to an organization of the workers of the world against the "imperialists," and against religion—which he believed was used by the imperialists to keep the people in "industrial slavery."

With German Help...

When news came to Lenin in Switzerland from his friends in Russia, about the ground swell of opinion of opposition to the Czar and the possibility of a revolution to end the war, he promised the Germans that he would get Russia out of the war if they would help him into Petrograd to join his friends.



Above: Procession of Orthodox "Old Believers" in Russia. A similar procession was cancelled on October 14, 1917, Feast of Pokrov, which set in motion Lenin's successful bid for power. (Wide World Photo)

An amazing set of four events, which followed rapidly one upon the other, enabled Lenin literally to "jump" into power in just 18 days!

Our Lady's Protection Celebration Cancelled

October 14 for the Orthodox Christians of Russia was one of the most important feasts of the year: the Feast of Our Lady's Protection called *Pokrov*. Indeed, it was so important that they dated all the events in the fall of each year as "before" or "after" *Pokrov*.

Those loyal to the Czar were planning a solemn religious pilgrimage in honor of the October Feast of "Our Lady's Protection" to pray for a resolution of the conflict. But at the last moment the leaders decided

to cancel it because they heard rumors that revolutionaries would attack their procession and that there would be bloodshed.

This hesitation on the part of the organizers of the religious pilgrimage encouraged Lenin, who had recently arrived in Russia with the help of the Germans but had been in hiding until that time.

History Might Be Different

On October 27, a few days after the pilgrimage was cancelled, Lenin effected a bloodless coup. Shortly afterwards, with the help of a naval ship in the river which followed his orders, he stormed the Winter Palace, headquarters of the moderate forces led by Kerensky.

Thus Lenin's move to power took only two weeks, from four days

before the Feast of Our Lady's Protection, when there was hope of a compromise with Kerensky.

Consider how different history would have been written except for four swift events:

- 1) If the Cossacks had not cancelled their religious pilgrimage;
- 2) If Lenin's sudden declaration of power had not succeeded;
- 3) If a small naval ship in the river had not proved to have a crew sympathetic to Lenin; and
- 4) If the storming of the Winter Palace had failed.

We would most probably today not have world communism backed up by a communist and atheistic Russia!

Precisely at the Same Time

Perhaps of special interest is the fact that it was precisely at the time that Lenin had taken his first step to power, and was in the course of achieving his goal *within those few days* from October 10 to 27, that *Our Lady appeared at Fatima* and said that the war which precipitated the Russian crisis "would soon end," but that a more terrible war would begin in the reign of Pius XI if people did not amend their lives—and that "error would spread from an atheist Russia throughout the entire world" if men continued to ignore God, and if there were not enough people to make reparation for the world's sins.

Since not even a sparrow falls from a steeple without God's knowing, let us consider with hope those four fragile events which put Lenin (a man with a passionate idea of a world, atheistic revolution) into power in just 18 days.

Could Crumble in 18 Days!

When one reads a detailed history of these events in Russia from the point of view of many individuals who were involved on both sides, we are encouraged to think that also *within 18 days the whole system could crumble*. The coup promised by Our Lady of Fatima could suddenly be a reality... and the moral and political climate of the world would change.

How Often We Hesitate!

It all began when, out of fear, a pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady's protection was cancelled on October 14—the day after *Our Lady appeared in Portugal* and performed a miracle "so that all may believe"! In an earlier visit, She spoke of *Russia by name*.

How often we hesitate to carry through when we have been inspired to organize an All-Night Vigil, or a Rosary Rally, or just even to start a cell in our own parish!

Now let us hope, encouraged by the prophecy of St. John Bosco, that the terrible wave of evil which was

unleashed in Russia in October of 1917 at the very time of Our Lady's appearance may be brought to an end in the next two decades as thousands of pilgrims find their way to Our Lady's Shrines... if not in person at least in spirit.

May It End with YOUR Resolution

Indeed, what could be a better resolution for 1981 than to organize a pilgrimage—either by yourself with just a few members of your own Blue Army Cell—to our U.S. National Shrine of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Washington, N.J., and especially this coming May 13, Feast of Our Lady of Fatima, or this coming October 13, Eve of the Feast of Our Lady's Protection and 64th anniversary of the miracle She performed at Fatima "so that all may believe" that if Her requests are heard, "*Russia will be converted and there will be peace.*"

Editor's Note: In conjunction with the Centennial Eucharistic Congress in Lourdes, many Americans will participate in "the greatest Marian pilgrimage in history" in honor of Our Lady of Victories. John Haffert, leader of this pilgrimage, will be the major speaker in the afternoons of May 13 and October 13, 1981, at the Blue Army's National Shrine of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

PILGRIMAGE FOR OUR

In the November-December 1980 issue of SOUL, we had an article on the Our Lady of Victories pilgrimage and also an article on the opinion of Archbishop Sheen that Our Lady was also to be known as "Our Lady of the Apocalypse."

According to many Marian scholars, the apparition of the Mother of God at the Rue du Bac to St. Catherine Laboure *not only ushered in the modern age*, but also clearly identi-

fied Our Lady as "the Woman of the Apocalypse." And on the Miraculous Medal, given 150 years ago this past November 27, we can see some of the reasons why this 1830 apparition indeed began the "Age of the Apocalypse."

Through 1981

Mr. Erwin J. Lovas, who suggested a "victory" pilgrimage in honor of the bimillennial anniver-

sary of Our Lady's conception and birth (which will visit all the major Marian Shrines of Europe and conclude in the Holy Land next September 8), thinks that the anniversary of the Miraculous Medal to be important enough to be celebrated by the Blue Army *through 1981*.

Due to the difference in calculating events with regards to corrections made in the calendar, we