

# CANTATA ON THE DAY OF LENIN'S DEATH

- Bertolt Brecht

1.

The day Lenin passed away  
A soldier of the death watch, so runs the story, told his comrades: I did not want to  
Believe it. I went inside, and  
Shouted in his ear: 'Ilyich  
The exploiters are on their way!' He did not move. Now  
I knew that he has expired.

2.

When a good man wants to leave  
How can you hold him back?  
Tell him why he is needed.  
That holds him.

3.

What could hold Lenin back?

4.

The soldier thought  
When he hears, the exploiters are coming  
He may be ever so ill, he will still get up  
Perhaps he will come on crutches  
Perhaps he will let himself be carried, but  
He will get up and come  
In order to confront the exploiters.

5.

The soldier knew, that is to say, that Lenin  
Throughout his life, had carried on a struggle  
Against the exploiters.

6.

And the soldier who had taken part  
In the storming of the Winter Palace wanted to return home, because there  
The landed estates were being distributed  
Then Lenin had told him: stay on!  
The exploiters are there still.  
And so long there is exploitation  
One must struggle against it.  
So long as you exist  
You must struggle against it.

7.

The weak do not fight. The stronger  
Fight on perhaps for an hour.  
Those who are stronger still fight for many years  
The strongest fight on all their life.  
These are indispensable.

8.

**In Praise of the Revolutionary**  
When exploitation is on the rise  
Many get discouraged

But his courage grows.  
He organises his struggle  
For wage-pennies, for tea-water  
And for taking over power.  
He asks property:  
What is your origin ?  
He asks the viewpoints:  
Whom do you serve ?  
Wherever there is a hush  
He will speak out  
Wherever there is oppression, and the talk is of fate  
He will call things by their right names.  
Where he sits down on the table  
There sits also dissatisfaction  
The food is perceived to be awful  
And the room too narrow.  
Wherever they chase him away  
Turmoil follows, and at the hunting place  
Unrest remains.

**9.**

When Lenin passed away and was missed  
The victory had been won, but the land lay waste  
The masses had set out, but  
The way was dark  
As Lenin passed away  
Soldiers, sitting on the footpaths, wept  
And the workers went away from their machines  
And clenched their fists.

**10.**

As Lenin went, it was  
As if the tree said to its leaves  
I am off.

**11.**

Since then fifteen years have passed away  
One sixth of the globe  
Is freed from exploitation.  
At the call: the exploiters are coming!  
The masses, as ever, stand up anew.  
Ready for the struggle.

**12.**

Lenin is enshrined  
In the large heart of the working-class,  
He was our teacher.  
He carried on the struggle along with us.  
He is enshrined  
In the large heart of the working class.

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