

beautiful things, she, the source of Life and Poetry, cries, "Kill! Hang! Shoot!"

We are here face to face with a fearful and gloomy contradiction, that may well destroy the aureole with which History has surrounded woman. Can it be that women do not fully understand their great cultural function, do not feel their creative power, that they abandon themselves too much to the despair that is awakened in their maternal souls by the chaos of revolutionary days?

I will not go into this question any further, I will just make the following remarks.

You women know that birth is always accompanied by labor pains, *that the new being is born in blood*—the malicious irony of blind Nature wills it so. In the moment of delivery you cry out like animals, and smile the blissful smile of the Madonna when you press the new born child to your breast.

I will not reproach you for your animal cries, I understand the unendurable torture which causes them, for I myself nearly faint at the sight of such tortures, although I am not a woman. And I hope with my whole soul that soon, smiling the smile of the Madonna, you will press to your hearts *the new born child of Russia*.

One must remember that revolution brings out not only many cruelties and crimes, but also many heroic deeds of bravery, of honor, of unselfishness, and of disinterestedness. Do you not see that? Is it perhaps because you are blinded by hatred and hostility?

The forty years of civil war of the eighteenth century caused a disgusting brutality in France, an arrogant cruelty, but think what a benign influence a Julie Recamier exercised! There are many such examples of the influence of women on the development of human feelings and ideas in history. It is fitting that you mothers be excessive in your love of humanity, but cautious in your hatred.

The Bolsheviks? Yes, just think they are human beings like the rest of us, born of mothers, and there is no more of the ani-

mal in them than in us. *The best of them are remarkable persons of whom the future history of Russia will be proud*, while our children and grandchildren will admire their energy. Their deeds are subject to violent criticism, even to malicious scorn—this has fallen to the lot of the Bolsheviks in perhaps greater measure than they have deserved. They are surrounded by their enemies with a stifling atmosphere of hatred and, what is perhaps more dangerous for them, by the hypocritical, servile friendship of those who, like foxes, prowl about those in power, in order to use them like wolves, and who, we hope, will die like dogs.

Am I defending the Bolsheviks? *No, I am working against them*—but I defend *the men* whose honest convictions I know, whose personal honor is known to me, just as I know the honesty of their devotion to the well-being of the people. I know that they are conducting *a most cruel scientific experiment on the living body of Russia*. I understand how to hate, but I prefer to be just. Oh, yes, they have made many very grave, serious mistakes—God also made a mistake when he made us more stupid than we should be—Nature has made mistakes in many things—shall we judge them from the standpoint of our wishes, which may contradict their objects, or their imperfections? Without knowing to what political results their activities will finally lead, I assert, that from a psychological standpoint, the Bolsheviks have already done the Russian people a great *service* in that they have called forth in the masses an interest in present events, without which interest our country would have been destroyed.

*Now it will not be destroyed*, for the people have awakened out of their apathy to a new life, and new forces are ripening in them, which fear neither the madness of political innovators nor the greed of foreign robbers who are altogether too certain of their invincibility. Russia struggles convulsively with the dreadful labor pains of delivery—do you wish, that as soon as possible *a new, beautiful, good, human Russia* shall be born?

Let me tell you, Oh mothers, that rage and hatred are bad midwives.