

# LENIN

## On People's Democracy



## Collected Writings on Insurrection and Revolutionary Democracy

Erdogan A

**ON  
PEOPLE'S  
DEMOCRACY**

**LENIN  
ON  
INSURRECTION  
AND  
REVOLUTIONARY  
DEMOCRACY**

Selected writings from Lenin & Stalin researched and  
compiled for various articles on the subject. E. A

## CONTENTS

Introduction - P6

### **The years of organizing (pre-1903)**

The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats 1897 - P64

### **The years of preparation for revolution (1903–05)**

The Principal Stages in the History of Bolshevism – P94

### **The years of revolution (1905–07).**

Two Tactics, February 14, 1905 – P101

The Convening of The Third, party Congress, February 28, 1905 -P113

General Plan of the Third Congress Decisions, February 1905 – P117

The Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., April 1905 – P125

Social-Democracy & the Provisional Revolutionary Government,  
April 1905 – P146

Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution, June-  
July 1905 – P156

The Boycott of the Bulygin Duma, & Insurrection, August 16, 1905 -  
P162

Oneness of the Tsar and the People, and of the People and the Tsar",  
August 29, 1905 – P166

Social-Democracy's Attitude Towards the Peasant Movement,  
September 14, 1905. – P178

The Theory of Spontaneous Generation, September 14, 1905 – P191

The Political Strike & the Street Fighting in Moscow, October 17, 1905  
-P199

Tasks of Revolutionary Army Contingents, October 1905 – P210

On P. B. Axelrod's Pamphlet, the People's Duma and a Workers' Congress, October 1905 – P216

The Latest in Iskra Tactics, or Mock Elections as a New Incentive to an Uprising, October 17, 1905 – P220

The Lessons of the Moscow Events, October 24, 1905 – P245

Petty-Bourgeois and Proletarian Socialism, November 7, 1905 – P258

The Bolshevik Resolution on the State Duma, May 9, 1906 – P269

The Peasant, or "Trudovik", Group & the R.S.D.L.P., May 11, 1906 – P281

The Unsound Arguments of the "Non-Party" Boycotters, July 1, 1906 - P 286

Before the Storm, August 21, 1906 – P293

The Social-Democrats and Electoral Agreements, October 1906 – P300

The Social-Democratic Election Campaign in St. Petersburg, January 21, 1907 – P329

The Fifth Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, May 1907 – P341

Stalin, The Advanced Proletariat and the Fifth Party Congress, 1907 – P358

Stalin, Muddle..., April 10, 1907 – P362

### **The years of reaction (1907–10).**

A caricature of Bolshevism, April 4, 1909 – P365

## **The years of revival (1910–14)**

The Slogans and Organisation of Social-Democratic Work Inside and Outside the Duma, December 8, 1911 – P381

From the Camp of the Stolypin “Labour” Party, December 8, 1911 – P395

The Fourth Duma Election Campaign and the Tasks of the Revolutionary Social-Democrats, May 8, 1912 – P402

Democracy and Narodism in China, July 15, 1912 – P408

Report to the International Socialist Bureau, “Elections to the Fourth Duma”, November 20, 1912 – P417

The Struggle of Parties in China, April 28, 1913 – P423

## **The First Imperialist World War (1914–17)**

*Karl Marx, A Brief Biographical Sketch with an Exposition of Marxism, 1914*

The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination, October 16, 1915– P426

Reply to P. Kievsky (Y. Pyatakov) 1916 - P430

## **The second revolution in Russia (February- October 1917)**

A Regrettable Deviation from the Principles of Democracy, May 10, 1917 – P438

Petrograd City R.S.D.L.P.(B.) Conference, APRIL 14, 1917 – P441

Stealing a March on the Workers, May 6, 1917 – P444

War and Revolution, A Lecture Delivered May 14, 1917 – P448

A Strong Revolutionary Government, May 19, 1917 – P479

The Petty-Bourgeois Stand on the Question of Economic Disorganization, May 31, 1917 – P482

First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, June 3–24, 1917 – P485

Speech Made at the First Petrograd Conference of Shop Committees May 31, 1917, June 16, 1917 – P 501

The Political Situation (Four Theses), July 10, 1917 – P503

Stalin, Outcome of the Moscow Conference, August 17, 1917 – P507

Stalin, The Conspiracy Continues, August 28, 1917 – P510

Stalin, The Second Wave, September 9, 1917 – P515

Marxism and Insurrection, A Letter to the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), September 13, 1917 – P523

Heroes of Fraud & the Mistakes of the Bolsheviks, September 22, 1917 – P531

From Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power? October 1917 – P542

The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It, October 1917 - P548

### **After revolution (October 1917 -on)**

Revolutionary Phrase mongering, February 21, 1918 – P563

Moscow Party Workers' Meeting, November 27, 1918 – P578

Should We Participate in Bourgeois Parliaments? 1920 – P599

## Introduction

Among ML Revolutionaries, eclectic memorization of theories and revolutionary phrase making is another byproduct of ML theory not being able to be applied correctly to the practice in any given "concrete" situations.

The fundamental reason for deducing wrong approach and **drawing wrong conclusion from the right theories** is that the "theories" remain abstract and thus prevents formulating any concrete strategy for the specific conditions and situation, in a way that can be understood by the masses.

**Marxism is related to the essence of thing not to the forms-** *yet not denying the importance of forms*. It is not the form of revolution, name of party, or of power that is important, **but the class essence**. To call a power structure as "People's Power", "People's Democracy", or "Labor Democracy" does not determine its class essence. A power called "People's Democracy" could be the power of working class, yet another called "Worker's democracy" could well be a bourgeois power. **What determines is the hegemony of class that holds the power**. Naming may have tactical reasons both for Socialists and Bourgeoisie. Stalin's comment on the subject of setting up a "Labor Party" in Bulgaria may be a good example for this. Stalin says;

"You must unite the working class and the other working strata **on the basis of a minimal programme**, and later there will be time for maximal program. Peasants consider the worker's party as alien, but they will look at labor party as their own. I strongly

recommend that you do that. A labor party or worker-peasant party is very suitable for a country like Bulgaria from the point of view of the country's international position, that would only make your tasks easier for you. In character the party will be communist, but it will have a broader basis and a convenient mask for the present period. *"Stalin, The Diaries of Dimitrov, September 2, 1946*

The importance of the name used may be considered **in conjunction with its ability** to embrace larger masses on the path of revolutionary struggle and ensure their support, and to maintain power. Decision depends on the concrete assessment of concrete situation and class relations at that given time for Marxists proceed from the principle that " **a Marxist should not leave the real ground in the analysis of inter-class relations.**" *Lenin, Letters on Tactics*

The group that will quickly embrace the slogan of the "People's Democracy", obviously, will be the reformists, petty bourgeois who still have great hopes, illusions for the bourgeois parliament and fear of revolution. Because, according to them, "People's Democracy" will provide democratic rights and liberties **within the existing system, and its purpose will be limited to the protection and "improvement" of the existing system.** Their kin, left-opportunists however, hiding behind far-left slogans, **will label the "People's Democracy" as reformist.**

Having said that, the approach to the terms should not be **in their literal meaning, taken from dictionary, encyclopedia, or**



from a concocted meaning, but in its **historical context and historical, Marxist Leninist theoretical use of the terms**. If not done so, conclusions reached will have **nothing to do with the ABCs of Marxism Leninism** as one “theoretician !!” of a left!! magazine states; “Revolutionary Democracy is the reaction of middle bourgeoisie.” Proletarian revolution has an **unbreakable connection with** the democratic revolution and the dictatorship of workers-peasants in most of the countries of the world. It is not the “reaction of middle bourgeois”, but as Lenin puts it; “**Revolutionary democracy, i.e., in the main, the proletariat, and Social-Democracy**” ...“By **revolutionary democracy is meant** the consistent and firm democratic currents that accept the whole democratic programme of Social-Democracy, **do not hold back from any revolutionary measures, but lack the clear Social-Democratic class consciousness**”. So Revolutionary democracy **has nothing to do with the “middle bourgeoisie”** but it is mainly **the alliance of the socialists with the revolutionary democrat currents**.

Obviously, without some exceptions stated below, **general use of "People's Democracy"** has a strategic content that somehow involves the popular-elections and especially the **utilization of parliament in connection with the insurrection** for “revolutionary democracy as a bridge”-*which is our main subject to discuss*. As the quotes will show, historically **the term “People’s Democracy “is used for countries who waged anti-fascist and anti-imperialist wars** in where the bourgeoisie escaped, in others became a part or supporter of the **new type of proletarian power in the form of “People’s Democracy”**, in others a dictatorship of proletariat and peasants, **while in some,**

an alliance between the anti-imperialist bourgeoisie, peasants and workers. **Each varied in class content.**

On January 27, 1918 a revolution in Finland began in response to a call from the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party of Finland, deposed bourgeois government and placed power in the hands of the workers. On January 29 a revolutionary government of Finland was set up in the shape of the Council of People's Representatives." Lenin mentioning Finland in his speech at Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) said:

"Because we are standing on the shoulders of the Paris Commune and the many years of development of German Social-Democracy, we have conditions that enable us to see clearly what we are doing in creating Soviet power. Despite all the crudity and lack of discipline that exist in the Soviets—this is a survival of the petty-bourgeois nature of our country—**despite all that the new type of state has been created by the masses of the people.** It has been functioning for months and not weeks, and not in one city, but throughout a tremendous country, populated by several nations. **This type of Soviet power** has shown its value since it has spread to Finland, a country **that is different in every respect**, where **there are no Soviets** but where there is, at any rate, **a new type of power, proletarian power.**"

Lenin's conclusion that the **Soviets were not the only form of the dictatorship of the proletariat** was subsequently fully confirmed. After the Second World War **a new form of**

**dictatorship of the proletariat** arose in a number of countries of Europe and Asia. This was called **“people’s democracy”**, which reflected the **distinctive development** of socialist revolution **at a time** when imperialism had been weakened and the balance of forces had **tilted in favour of socialism”**

Explaining the specificity of this era, Cominform states; “The defeat of fascist Germany and militarist Japan as a result of the world-historic victory of the Soviet Union in World War II, **the rise of the countries of people’s democracy and the weakening of the forces of world imperialism** constituted most important factors stimulating a new powerful upsurge of the national-liberation struggle in the dependent countries and in the colonies and aggravating the crisis of the entire colonial system of imperialism. *“Cominform No. 2 (218), January 9, 1953* And as a result of **“the smashing by the Soviet Army of fascist Germany** and imperialist Japan in World War II further weakened the imperialist camp and gave a fresh impetus to the revolutionary struggle waged by the working class and to the national-liberation movement against imperialism. **In a number of countries** of Central and South-East Europe there was **established the system of people’s democracy**. In Asia there arose the Korean People’s Republic and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. *“Cominform No. 9 (173), February 29, 1952*

In this sense **Bulgaria is an important example**. At the end of the war, the Communists in Bulgaria seized the majority in parliament. Stalin explains **this exception** and that “People’s power” in this case was **another form of dictatorship of the working class**;

**"The proletariat is known two forms of dictatorship.** As the first of Marx and Engels in Paris he saw the Commune and argued, democratic Republic **with a majority of the proletariat, the best form of proletarian dictatorship ...** Lenin had the Soviet form **suitable to our conditions formulated.** Here, the Russian Soviet form The power of the working class was proved to be **the easiest way to seize power** in your country, where the power of the working class was seized, **not from the insurrection, but from outside** (Soviet Army), you can go back to the Marx and Engels model without the Soviet form. **People's Democracy will play the role of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.**

*(in Bulgaria)* The capitalists and the Landlords have fought against us for four years, and **they have surrendered without war and fled.** *"Stalin, Dimitrov's Diaries December 6, 1948*

Explaining the context and the differences, Cominform states:

"It would be a transition to a non-capitalist power, or, to be more precise, to the socialist development of China, said Comrade Stalin. **State power in China is not the dictatorship of the proletariat,** and in this it differs from the state power in the European countries of **People's Democracy** where this democracy fulfils the **functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat.** The dictatorship of the People's Democracy in China is the state power of the People's Democratic United Front of the **working class, peasants, petty-bourgeoisie,**

**national-bourgeoisie** and other patriotic democratic elements based on the **alliance of workers and peasants and led by the working class**. The task of the People's Democracy in China at this stage is to carry out agrarian reform, to consolidate the alliance of the working class and the peasantry, to draw into active political life hundreds of millions of people, economic rehabilitation, and industrialization of the country, to strengthen and broaden the foundation of public property, to restore and develop the economy, to raise the living standard of the working people and to effect the cultural revolution. The Central People's Government of China is **building up the defense of the country against imperialist aggression.**" *Cominform, September 29, 1950*

"In the People's Democracies historical successes in working class unity have also been won: united working class parties, united trade unions, united cooperatives, youth, women's and other organizations have been established.

**This working-class unity** has played a decisive role in the successes achieved in the economic and cultural advance in the **People's Democracies, in securing the leading role of the working class in the State** and in a radical improvement in the material welfare of the working masses." *Resolution adopted by the Meeting of the Cominform, November 1949*

However, "The nature of the people's democratic state power in China is defined by the conditions in this

recently colonial country. At present **the working people of China are not confronted directly with the task of building Socialism**, the instrument of which is **the dictatorship of the proletariat.**" *From "Cominform, September 29, 1950*

Lenin was stressing the importance and yet **making the distinction** clearly in his speech at *Extraordinary All- Russia Railwaymen's Congress*

"We have been openly and straightforwardly saying **from the very start of the revolution**—April 1917—that the Soviets were a much higher, a very much more perfect and purposeful form of democracy—**a working people's democracy**—than the Constituent Assembly. **The Constituent Assembly unites all classes**, which means also the exploiter classes, the propertied classes, hence, the bourgeoisie and those who received their education at the expense of the people, at the expense of the exploited, and abandoned the people to join the capitalists, turning their knowledge, the greatest achievements of knowledge, into a tool for oppressing the people, and fighting the working classes. For our part we declare that **when a revolution of the working and exploited classes breaks out, all power in the state goes to their organisation.** This form of democracy is **incomparably higher than the old one.** No party invented the Soviets. You know very well that no party could have invented them. They were brought to life by the 1905 revolution."

Since Marxists proceed from the assessment of concrete conditions and situations and cannot leave the real ground in the analysis of inter-class relations, **under current conditions speaking of “People’s Democracy” should not be taken** the same as in its exceptional context but **in the context of a “Revolutionary Democracy”, as a phase and a bridge to socialist revolution**, with some possible exception, in all countries.

Studying the Russian history of revolution, Lenin’s writings and his foresight in “the principal stages in the History of Bolshevism” that the **“history has proven that in some very important problems of the proletarian revolution, all countries will inevitably have to do what Russia has done”**, we can assume the dialectically connected, uninterrupted phases as; **“insurrection - revolutionary democracy”** followed by **“Revolutionary Democracy – insurrection – socialist revolution.”**

Any “democracy” - with any prefix- **as an end to itself**, by itself **is a deviation from Marxism Leninism**, is the denial of Proletarian Dictatorship – Socialism.

All the “democracy” - with any prefix- should be taken within the context of class and class power and **whether it is aiming at socialist revolution or not**.

“ In dealing with the idea of control and the question of when and by whom this control is to be affected,” says Lenin, “one must not for a single moment **forget the class character** of the modern state, **which is merely an organisation of class rule**. A similar class analysis should be applied to **the concept**

**“revolutionary democracy”, and this analysis should be based on the actual balance of social forces.” (P501)**

The concept should be used by Marxist Leninists with its class context distinctive from the reformists’ use. Clarifying that **“Revolutionary Democracy” is not an invention** but a phase between the capitalism and socialism that advanced by the revolution, Lenin states;

**“what is this revolutionary democracy that people here speak so much about to conceal their utter misunderstanding and complete repudiation of it? To talk about revolutionary democracy at the All-Russia Congress of Soviets and obscure this institution’s character, its class composition and its role in the revolution... This is a type of state not invented by the Russians but advanced by the revolution because the revolution can win in no other way.... We are asked whether socialism can be introduced in Russia, and whether, generally speaking, radical changes can be made at once. That is all empty talk comrades. .. Nowhere in the world is there pure capitalism developing into pure socialism, nor can there be in wartime. But there is something in between, something new and unprecedented... If you want to talk of "revolutionary" democracy, then you must distinguish this concept from reformist democracy under a capitalist Ministry.” (P485)**

Let’s touch base on some of the basic aspects in light of our current world’s facts.



**The importance of a bourgeois democratic system with a constituent assembly in countries where it does not exist.**

Marxism Leninism must be dealt with in a dialectical unity and applied to the concrete conditions. The forms, means and methods of struggle and path to the revolution will differ in each country; where feudal or semi-feudal structure, and/or autocracy, fascism reigns will be different than where a bourgeois democratic state with constituent assembly reigns. And most importantly depends on the availability of the objective and subjective conditions of a country in any given time.

Lenin stressing the importance and making the comparison, in his article mentioned above in which he summarizes the **main stages of the history of Bolshevism** by saying, "**history has proven that**, in some very important problems of the proletarian revolution, **all countries will inevitably have to do what Russia has done**", finishes his writing as follows;

"" Despite views that are today often to be met with in Europe and America, the Bolsheviks began their victorious struggle against the parliamentary and (in fact) bourgeois republic and against the Mensheviks **in a very cautious manner, and the preparations they made for it were by no means simple**. At the beginning of the period mentioned, **we did not call for the overthrow of the government but explained that it was impossible to overthrow it without first changing the composition and the temper of the Soviets**. We did not

proclaim a boycott of the bourgeois parliament, the Constituent Assembly, but said that **a bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly would be better** than a bourgeois republic without a Constituent Assembly, but that a **“workers’ and peasants’ ” republic, a Soviet republic, would be better than any bourgeois-democratic, parliamentary republic.** Without such thorough, circumspect and long preparations, **we could not have achieved victory in October 1917, or have consolidated that victory.”** (P94)

And Lenin in his critique below, stresses the fact that the socialist revolution **is not a single battle**, but a period covering **a series of battles** over all sorts of problems and **each** must be formulated in a revolutionary way.

“From what Parabellum says, **it appears that, in the name of the socialist revolution, he scornfully rejects a consistently revolutionary programme in the sphere of democracy.** He is wrong to do so. The proletariat **cannot be victorious except through democracy, i.e., by giving full effect to democracy** and by linking with each step of its struggle democratic demands formulated in the most resolute terms. **It is absurd to contrapose the socialist revolution and the revolutionary struggle against capitalism to a single problem of democracy...We must combine the revolutionary struggle against capitalism with a revolutionary programme and tactics on all democratic demands:** a republic, a militia, the popular election of

officials, equal rights for women, the self-determination of nations, etc. **While capitalism exists, these demands—all of them—can only be accomplished as an exception**, and even then, in an incomplete and distorted form. Basing ourselves on the democracy already achieved, and exposing its incompleteness under capitalism, we demand the overthrow of capitalism, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, as a necessary basis both for the abolition of the poverty of the masses and for the complete and all-round institution of all democratic reforms. **Some of these reforms** will be started **before** the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, others **in the course** of that overthrow, and still others **after** it. **The social revolution is not a single battle, but a period covering a series of battles** over all sorts of problems of economic and democratic reform, which are consummated only by the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It is **for the sake of this final aim** that we must **formulate every one of our democratic demands** in a consistently revolutionary way. It is quite conceivable that **the workers of some particular country will overthrow the bourgeoisie before** even a single fundamental democratic reform has been fully achieved. It is, **however, quite inconceivable that the proletariat, as a historical class**, will be able to defeat the bourgeoisie, unless it is prepared for that by **being educated in the spirit of the most consistent and resolutely revolutionary democracy.**" (P426)

In regard to the phases of revolution, as contrast to the left child disease, such as "revolution now", "revolution tomorrow", "revolution or nothing", Lenin points out that **the revolution requires certain processes**, and the strategy must be **determined concretely depending** on the assessment of concrete conditions in this process. His words; " **It is not enough to learn slogans by heart; one must also learn to judge the opportune moment to issue them**"\* demonstrates the necessity of assessments to be made based on the concrete facts.

*\* Lenin, A caricature of Bolshevism*

Looking at the Russian history of revolution and Lenin's assessments, past and current history of the world, we can safely construe **the fact that the bourgeoisie will never leave the power in a peaceful way**, nor the revolution will be realized **in one leap without any intermediate stages**. Some may have to go through the toppling of autocracy, revolutionary democracy and socialist revolution, others may go through revolutionary democracy followed by socialist revolution.

Especially for the undeveloped, dependent countries, Stalin and Lenin stresses the **necessity of a democratic republic** as a stage and importance of using parliament as a means:

Stalin;

"Political freedom is best achieved in a democratic republic, of course, and of course, in the conditions of capitalism. For this reason, **all the advocates of proletarian socialism must strive to establish a democratic republic as the best "bridge" to socialism.**"

*Stalin, Anarchism or Socialism?*

Lenin;

**“How can one say that** “parliamentarianism is politically obsolete”, **when** “millions” and “legions” of proletarians are not only still in favour of parliamentarianism in general but are downright “counter-revolutionary”!?” (P599)

This, however, **does not mean that Marxists Leninists see a democratic republic as an alternate to socialism** but as an alternate in backward, autocratic countries where the objective and subjective conditions **do not exist** and where the laboring masses needed to be educated in the spirit of revolutionary democracy. In advanced capitalist countries, however, granting the conditions exist, the only alternative is socialism through insurrection – in some more than others, depending on the revolutionary situation, a phase of “revolutionary democracy” may be required.

As for most existing “parliaments” - if not all-, the parliaments formed after the toppling of autocracy followed by an insurrection - unless lead by the ML and achieved the majority in it - will still be a “pigsty” of bourgeoisie.

As Lenin points out;

**“Only the armed people, organised in a revolutionary army”** says Lenin, “which has won over to its side all decent and honest elements in the tsar’s army, **has overcome the tsar’s forces and substituted a provisional revolutionary government for the tsar’s autocratic government.** .... The slogan for all this

agitation will be: **insurrection**, the immediate formation of combat squads and contingents of a revolutionary army, **the overthrow of tsarist rule, and the establishment of a provisional revolutionary government** which is to convene a **popular constituent assembly.**" (P166)

And Characterizing the Duma he states;

"We have said that the **State Duma is a mockery of popular representation.** That is undoubtedly so from the standpoint of the theory of the sovereignty of the people.

**In present-day Russia we have before us three political theories**, of whose significance we shall yet speak on more than one occasion. These are: 1) The theory of the tsar's consultation with the people ..... 2) The theory of an agreement between the tsar and the people... 3) The theory of the sovereignty of the people (**the programme of Social-Democracy, as well as of revolutionary democracy in general.**)" (P166)

In simple terms based on any given country's concrete situation, if the majority of the masses still expects hope from the parliament, and they are at the same time counterrevolutionary, and where the autocracy reigns, efforts should be made at minimal to establish a "popular constituent assembly", **if it exists**, or the **subjective conditions are ripe**, all the democratic opportunities, including the parliament **should be utilized for the establishment of a "Revolutionary Democracy"** as a bridge to the socialist revolution or **if both**

**objective and subjective conditions exist**, directly to socialist revolution. At any given moment, the minimal and maximal goals should be set, phases are determined, **not based on subjective hopes, wishes and expectations** with revolutionary phrases, but **based on the concrete assessment of concrete situation**.

**Can "People's Democracy" that sees the elections and the parliamentary as the only path be realistic?**

First question should be; **Can a majority be held in parliament with elections?** Considering, particularly the technological advances and current technology, and those who owns and controls them, and their power **in manipulating the minds, buying votes and other frauds in elections and imperialist interferences** to the elections and election results; to make such an argument would be childish.

Even if the majority in the parliament could be achieved, is there a possibility of turning it into a socialist parliament, socialist power? Can there be exceptions? Of course, as history shown, there may be exceptions, such as, MLs can take over the majority in parliament **as a result of a regional war or as a result of an uprising against fascism**. Marxist Leninists do not deny that there may be exceptions. But, let's not forget, **Marxists do not set their strategy and tactics based on expectations and exceptions**, but on general rules. The strategy of organizing and taking power on the basis of general principles -fitting the given country and situation- **does not endanger** the seizure of power and holding on to the power in case of an exception, on the contrary **it facilitates**.

As an example of constituent assembly achieved through uprising within which carries another uprising as a phase, Lenin states;

“The Russian proletariat, however, is at present a **minority of the population** in Russia. It can become the great, overwhelming majority **only if it combines with the mass of semi-proletarians, semi-proprietors**, i.e., with the mass of the petty-bourgeois urban and rural poor. Such a composition of the social basis of the possible and **desirable revolutionary-democratic dictatorship will, of course**, affect the composition of the revolutionary government and inevitably lead to the participation, or even predominance, within it of the **most heterogeneous representatives of revolutionary democracy**. It would be extremely harmful to entertain any illusions on this score. If that windbag Trotsky now writes (unfortunately, side by side with Parvus) that “**a Father Gapon could appear only once**”, that “**there is no room for a second Gapon**”, he does so simply **because he is a windbag**. If there were no room in Russia for a second Gapon, there would be no room for a truly “great”, consummated democratic revolution.”  
(P146)

**As history has proven**, in general, **the majority in parliament can only be achieved** in relation **with an uprising**, or multiple staged **uprisings in different forms and levels** in different countries, based on each specific condition.



The struggle for a revolutionary democracy and revolution can be waged through **only legal means within the boundaries of the existing system is an illusion**, a reformist deception.

While Lenin stresses the importance of legal work by saying "Don't let a single hour of legal work slip by", he warns not to sink into reformism;

"The party of the working class, without abandoning legal activity but never for a moment **overrating it, must combine legal with illegal work**, as it did in 1912–14."

*Lenin, Political Situation, four Thesis*

Including the struggle for a constitutional democracy, struggle for a Revolutionary Democracy and socialist revolution cannot be waged legal means only, for its success depends on **some kind of insurrection, at varying degree** which fundamentally could be organized illegally.

Let us first examine these questions after giving a synopsis of the concept of insurrection and Revolution.

### **The difference between Insurrection and Revolution**

Lenin sees the armed insurrection as a special form of political struggle.

"**A people's revolution**," says Lenin, "**cannot be timed in advance**. An **uprising can be**, if those preparing it have influence among the masses and can correctly estimate the situation..." (P101)

This interdependent two concepts are being used as an equated manner in general and in Turkey particular. Consequently, the

concepts of "Revolution" and "Strategy" always remain to be "abstract", vague, where **neither the one who mentions** and the **one who hears** can bring it down to a concrete footing in order to comprehend.

The **uprising** is a form of struggle and **serves as a bridge** that **extends all the way** to the realization of the **Revolution**. A revolution without uprising is unthinkable – *always without denying the possibility of exceptions*.

### **Democratic Struggle - Can there be a "People's Democracy", without an uprising?**

If we look at the history, especially the recent historical events, it indicates that **it is not possible** to have a majority in parliament (for the revolutionary democracy) **without the support of some kind of uprising**.

When Lenin criticized the Bundists in 1905, he said,

**"The formation of a constituent assembly without the aid of an uprising** is an idea worthy **only of bourgeois philistines**, as even the comrades of the Bund realize "  
(P191)

In his short essay entitled "Political Situation," Lenin explains,

**"The aim of the insurrection can only be to transfer power to the proletariat**, supported by the poor peasants, with a view to **putting our Party programme into effect**." (P503)

An autocratic government can be toppled through an uprising or an election followed by an uprising, however that **does not**

necessarily guarantee a majority in the parliament, or a "Revolutionary Democracy".

### **Can the "People's Democracy" protect itself and be a bridge to Socialism without the uprising?**

As Lenin emphasized above, parliament, as "People's Democracy" **requires new legal and illegal organizations and activities to gain the majority**, to protect, to consolidate and to ensure the **transition bridge without interruption**.

Just as an **uprising would be the instrument of a parliament that would provide the majority of revolutionaries under the name of "popular power", "Revolutionary Democracy"**, the Revolutionary Parliament **should be seen as a means of a new uprising to complete the bridge**. In other words, the Power of "Revolutionary Democracy" - parliamentary bridge, form of struggle - **cannot be seen as a final goal**. From **uprising to parliament, from parliament to (a new) uprising** - the bridge should be seen as a continuous construction.

In evaluating the period in Russia, Lenin says,

**"A provisional revolutionary government is an organ of insurrection** a provisional revolutionary government **"emerging from a victorious popular insurrection"**: both logic and historical experience show that it is **possible to have provisional revolutionary governments as organs of insurrection which are far from victorious, or which are not completely victorious.**" (P191)

Lenin summarizes these words as: "**a provisional revolutionary government does not only "emerge" from an uprising, but also directs it**"

The history has proven that without the evaluation of the current concrete conditions, and on that basis determining concrete strategy, the **abstract "revolution" and "revolution now"** slogans **have not served to the interests of revolutionary struggle**, not served to put its foot on the ground. Unlike Trotsky's view (*which will be dealt on separately*) **Revolution is not a military coup**. It is very common these days to hear "Revolution Now", "Either now or never", "all or nothing" slogans from those who do not embrace and has no strong ties with the masses, and do nothing about it, yet spreading the vague illusion that the revolution will happen "spontaneously" or by some "supermen" from space in a miracle way. The fact is that **not only revolution** but insurrections that carry the movement to revolution requires the determined **participation of masses** and utilization of parliament at each stage -whether it be constituent or revolutionary democracy. As Lenin puts it;

**"" an uprising without the aid of a provisional revolutionary government can be neither an uprising of the whole people nor a victorious uprising. " (P191)**

In other words, insurrection is not only an important component of **acquiring the power**, but of safe-keeping and carrying it to the socialist revolution. And insurrection means masses.

## Uprising conditions and preparation

Lenin, who speaks about the necessity of the revolutionaries to **assess** the conditions of struggle, **examine the new forms of struggle**, their practical validity and the possibility of realization, and followed by the education of the masses on this basis, says;

" **If it is necessary to prepare for an uprising**, such preparation must of necessity include the dissemination and explanation of slogans calling for an armed uprising of the people, the formation of a revolutionary army, and the establishment of a provisional revolutionary government." (P191)

On the one hand, "Spontaneity -ist", for example In Turkey, and those who see the masses as "flock" that will tail the "heroes" on the other, **promote abstract insurrection and revolution slogans** and yet still lack the practice. Despite such catchy far-left slogans **what actually promoted is passivity**, submissive, hopeless, defeatist and self-destructive practices – which in return reflects on the masses as such and strengthens the parliamentary illusion. Such **abstract slogans not reflecting the existing conditions** deepens the isolation of revolutionary movements from the masses of people.

In his letter to the Central Committee of Lenin summarizes the three conditions of the insurrection:

"" **To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class.** That is the first point. **Insurrection**

**must rely upon a revolutionary upsurge of the people.** That is the second point. **Insurrection must rely upon that turning-point in the history** of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people **is at its height**, and when the vacillations in the ranks of the **enemy and in the ranks of the weak**, half-hearted and irresolute **friends of the revolution are strongest.** That is the third point. **And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish Marxism from Blanquism.** “  
(P523)

Lenin based on the given concrete conditions draws attention to **two important points in the preparation of the Uprising;**

**“Firstly,** the task of preparing an uprising must carry within it the **pre- emergence of the uprising** that is being prepared or almost prepared.

**“Secondly,** that the uprising now developing spontaneously is outstripping the purposeful and planned work we are doing to prepare it. **We are unable now to restrain the insurrectionary outbreaks** which occur here and there sporadically, disconnectedly, and spontaneously. So much the more are we in duty bound to speed up dissemination and explanation of all the political tasks and **political requisites of a successful uprising.**” (P191)

It is clear that, **the uprising and revolution cannot be put in practice** with abstract, far-left-phrase making, and by movements **isolated from the masses.** On the

contrary, it requires the determination of strategies on the basis of research and analysis. It carries a responsibility to the public; it is not a matter of gambling with the interests of the working people and their struggle with "abstract" slogans that has no feet in the ground. As Lenin puts it;

"We Marxists have always been proud that we **determined the expediency of any form of struggle by a precise calculation of the mass forces and class relationships.** We have said that **an insurrection is not always expedient; unless the prerequisites exist among the masses,** it is a gamble " (P563)

In the current conditions of autocracy in Turkey, for example, in respect to some of the objective conditions for the uprising the answer to the question **would be "Yes"** , however the concrete reality of unorganized masses and lack of a strong, uniting, united leadership, for the subjective conditions the **answer will be "No"**. In fact, some of the conditions that make up the objective conditions in favor, reveal the political tasks for the unfavourable **subjective conditions as urgent tasks** in order to change it into favorable. The "Form" or "Name "is not decisive. A "Coalition", "Front", "Alliance" etc., **any front formed on the basis of the "bridge" concept**, can take up the historical responsibility and the task of developing the spontaneous upswings into a power of uprising. Bringing forward only the argument that the "elections will not bring any changes "and remaining passive will not change the

subjective conditions favorably, visible practice and trials of building an active revolutionary-front will. As Lenin puts it;

**“Our job is to promote the democratic upswing, to foster the new revolutionary democracy that is growing in a new way in the new Russia. Unless it succeeds in gathering strength and winning in spite of the liberals, no “triumph” of the Progressists and the Cadets in the elections will bring about any serious change in the actual situation in Russia.....Our task is to organise the revolutionary democrats... intensify our revolutionary Social-Democratic work among the proletariat and strengthen the illegal Social-Democratic Labour Party.” (P402)**

One cannot compare and copy the “alliance” forms of a country where a strong vanguard leadership exists and apply to a country where there is not. **Objective and subjective conditions vary in each given country, so the makeup of the “alliances” vary.**

### **Concrete Conditions and Possible Alliances**

Based on each objective and subjective concrete situation, each minimal, urgent aim will have varying alliances. There may be a situation where it can quickly and uninterruptedly transfer from the minimal to maximum, as there can be situation of a transfer from minimal to an intermediary phase. **There is no one template that fits every country and every situation**, each is determined by the conditions of its own particular - of course in connection with general.



**Regardless of the type of alliances** at any given condition, Stalin points out one important factor that is related to the importance of **democratic tasks which is crucial for the success of any revolution**. He says "the question of the middle strata is undoubtedly **one of the basic questions of the workers' revolution**. The middle strata are the peasantry and the small urban working people. The oppressed nationalities, nine-tenths of whom consist of middle strata, should also be put in this category. As you see, these are the strata whose economic status puts them midway **between the proletariat and the capitalist class**. The relative importance of these strata is determined by two circumstances: firstly, these strata constitute the majority, or, at any rate, a large minority of the population of the existing states; secondly, they constitute the important reserves from which the capitalist class recruits its army against the proletariat. The **proletariat cannot retain power** unless it enjoys the **sympathy and support of the middle strata**, primarily of the peasantry, especially in a country like our Union of Republics. The **proletariat cannot even seriously contemplate seizing power** if these strata have not been **at least neutralized**, if they have not yet managed to break away from the capitalist class, and if the bulk of them still serve as the army of capital." *Stalin, The October Revolution and the Question of the Middle Strata*

Never forgetting Stalin's assessment, let's give a synopsis of typical alliances at different conditions based on Lenin's assessments.

### **1- Alliances against Autocratic, fascists systems**

Alliance against autocratic systems will be in varying character and inevitably embrace the widest strata of classes.

**Example of Turkey in particular**, currently experiencing a period of unprecedented historical monopolization. Concerning the concrete situation, the alliances and the "benefiting from the contradictions within bourgeoisie, Lenin's assessment of the autocracy is important to mention;

"" **the autocracy** guarantees the bourgeoisie opportunities to employ the **crudest forms of exploitation**, but, on the other hand, places a thousand obstacles in the way of the extensive development of the productive forces and the spread of education; **in this way it arouses against itself, not only the petty bourgeoisie, but at times even the big bourgeoisie.**"

*Lenin, "Political Agitation and "The Class Point of View"*

In relation with the "conditions of uprising", under the autocracy **the discontent and opposition** widen and reaches its peak in its maturation. Marxist Leninists cannot ignore and remain indifferent to this discontent and opposition with far-left phrase making with abstract "class point of view" that contradicts ML and makes them indifferent to the discontent among the masses.

In reference to autocracy, the opposition that the system will create and the attitude of the revolutionaries against it, Lenin summarizes the following in terms of "class perspective";

"" The autocracy guarantees (?) the bourgeoisie protection against socialism, **but** since the people are

deprived of rights, this protection is necessarily transformed into a system of police outrages that rouse the indignation of the entire people. ....**It is precisely the “class point of view” that makes it impermissible for a Social-Democrat to remain indifferent to the discontent and the protests. “**

*Lenin, “Political Agitation and “The Class Point of View”*

The example of Autocracy in Turkey, in addition to the discontent and "hate of autocracy" turning into sporadic active practice, the discontent and hate in the large peasantry population -which is the most important alliance of revolution – is increasing. All these discontents always have the possibility of **spontaneously transforming into upswings** and even into sporadic uprisings in different dimensions.

We always come across the far-left phrase mongering that labels every opposition to the autocracy as “reformist” and repeats the learned by rote slogan of “preserving the independence of the proletariat”, and ultimately chooses the pacifist” approach of doing nothing other than throwing slogans. Such phrase mongering approach that disregards the existing objective and subjective conditions has no practical connection with Marxism, Leninism. Lenin clearly notes;

"It is particularly **in regard to the political struggle** that the **“class point of view”** demands that the **proletariat give an impetus to every democratic movement**. The political demands of working-class democracy do not differ in principle from those of bourgeois democracy, they differ only in degree. In the struggle for economic

emancipation, for the socialist revolution, the proletariat stands on a basis different in principle and **it stands alone** (the small producer will come to its aid only to the extent that he enters, or is preparing to enter, its ranks). **In the struggle for political liberation, however, we have many allies, towards whom we must not remain indifferent.**" *Lenin, "Political Agitation and "The Class Point of View"*

As far as our subject is concerned, for the tasks of the Russian socialists working class of Lenin states that " in the democratic , political struggle **working class is not alone**; all the elements of political opposition, its layers and classes, **stand beside it**, as they are enemies of absolutism and wage struggle against it in one way or another. **Here side by side with the proletariat stand the opposition elements of the bourgeoisie, or of the educated classes, or of the petty bourgeoisie, or of the nationalities, religions and sects, etc., etc., persecuted by the autocratic government.**" And he asks the question;

"" The question naturally arises of what the attitude of the working class towards these elements should be.  
"(P64)

He responds;

**"The attitude of the working class, as a fighter against the autocracy, towards all the other social classes and groups in the political opposition is very precisely determined by the basic principles of Social-Democracy expounded in the famous Communist Manifesto. The Social-Democrats support the**

**progressive social classes against the reactionary classes**, the bourgeoisie against the representatives of privileged landowning estate and the bureaucracy, the big bourgeoisie against the reactionary strivings of the petty bourgeoisie. **This support does not presuppose**, nor does it call for, any compromise with non-Social-Democratic programmes and principles—it is support given to an ally against a particular enemy.”

As a historical example, Stalin says;” The **first wave of the Russian revolution began as a struggle against tsarism**. The workers and soldiers were at that time the main forces of the revolution. But they were not the only forces. Besides them, bourgeois liberals (Cadets) and the British and French capitalists were also "active, ...

There thus arose **something in the nature of a concealed coalition**, under whose pressure tsarism was compelled to quit the stage. On the day following the fall of tsarism, the secret coalition became an open one, having assumed the form of a definite agreement between the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet, between the Cadets and the "revolutionary democracy."

But **these forces pursued entirely different aims.**" (P515)

Lenin explains who belongs to the camp of "Revolutionary Democracy" who does not;

"Next come the "Trudoviks". The parties of this type, namely the petty-bourgeois and **predominantly peasant parties**, are divided into the non-party

“Trudovik Group”, the Popular Socialists and the Socialist-Revolutionaries. The **only more or less consistent** and determined revolutionaries and republicans among them are the S.-R.’s. **The Popular Socialists are much worse opportunists than our Mensheviks**; strictly speaking, they are semi-Cadets. The non-party “Trudovik Group” has, **perhaps, more influence among the peasantry than the others**; but the strength of its democratic convictions is difficult to determine, although it is undoubtedly far more Left than the Cadets, **and evidently belongs to the camp of revolutionary democracy.**” (P300)

Struggle against autocracy does not bring about a “Revolutionary Democracy “unless the subjective conditions exist and working class has the leadership, or majority in the leadership. Lenin states;

““ we have made the revolution, after all, we are a revolutionary people, **a revolutionary democracy...** What revolution did we make? We overthrew Nicholas. ... **Who did the revolution put in power?** The landowners and capitalists the very same classes who have long been in power in Europe... A bank remains a bank, profits remain profits, be it in a republic or in a monarchy.” (P448)

And explains it in relation with the unique historical circumstances;

**“A revolutionary-democratic dictatorship has been established but not in the form we envisaged: it is interlocked with the dictatorship of the imperialist**

bourgeoisie... It is this unique historical concurrence of circumstances that **has brought about a dual dictatorship: the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of revolutionary democracy. ...voluntary submission of revolutionary democracy to the bourgeois dictatorship.** The specific feature of the present situation is that **lack of political awareness on the part of the masses is preventing** the establishment of a stable and conscious majority on the side of the proletarian policy.. **the separation of the proletarians and the semi proletarians from the petty bourgeoisie is inevitable,** but the consolidation of the propertied elements in the revolutionary bloc may well advance to a point where it will prevail over the organisation of the masses rallying round the proletarian slogans. **It is quite possible, therefore, that power will remain in the hands of the bourgeoisie,** and that there will be no transfer of power to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The conclusion: **we are not faced with the task of overthrowing the Provisional Government**—it rests on the confidence of the petty-bourgeois and a section of the workers' masses—but with that of painstaking explanation of the class tasks and organisation." (P441)

Lenin gives another example in his evaluation of China; The Chinese people have succeeded in overthrowing the old medieval system and the government supporting it. A republic has been established in China,

and the first parliament of that great Asian country, which had long gladdened the hearts of the reactionaries of all nationalities by its immobility and stagnation—the first Chinese Parliament has been elected, convened and has been sitting for several weeks.

In the Lower of the two chambers of the Chinese Parliament, a small majority belongs to the supporters of Sun Yat-sen, the Kuomintang Party, the “Nationalists”—to express this party’s essence in the context of Russian conditions, it should be called a **radical-Narodnik republican party**; a party of democracy. In the Upper Chamber it has a more considerable majority.

**This party is opposed by smaller moderate or conservative parties with all sorts of names** like “Radicals”, and so on. Actually, all these parties are parties of reactionaries, namely, **bureaucrats, landowners and reactionary bourgeoisie**. They all gravitate to the Chinese Cadet Y"uan Shih-k'ai, the provisional President of the Republic, who has been acting more and more like a dictator. As a Cadet he has been running true to form: yesterday he was a monarchist; now that revolutionary democracy has won out, he is a republican; tomorrow he intends to be the head of state, again a monarchist state, that is, to betray the Republic.



**What is this party's weakness?** It lies in the fact that it has not yet been able **sufficiently to involve broad masses of the Chinese people in the revolution.** The **proletariat in China is still very weak**—there is therefore no leading class capable of waging a resolute and conscious struggle to carry the democratic revolution to its end. **The peasantry**, lacking a leader in the person of the proletariat, is terribly downtrodden, passive, **ignorant and indifferent to politics.** Despite the revolutionary overthrow of the old and thoroughly corrupt monarchy, despite the victory of the republic, **China has no universal suffrage!** The elections to Parliament had a qualification: **only those who had property valued at about 500 rubles were entitled to vote!** This also shows how little of the really broad popular mass has yet been drawn into active support of the Chinese Republic. But without such massive support, without an organised and steadfast leading class, the Republic cannot be stable.

Still, despite its leader Sun Yat-sen's major shortcomings (pensiveness and indecision, which are due to his lack of proletarian support), **revolutionary democracy in China has done a great deal to awaken the people** and to win freedom and consistently democratic institutions. **By drawing ever broader masses of the Chinese peasantry into the movement** and into politics, Sun Yat-sen's party is becoming (to the extent to which this process is taking place) **a great factor of progress in Asia** and of

mankind's progress. Whatever defeats it may suffer from political rogues, adventurers and dictators, who rely on the country's reactionary forces, **this party's efforts will not have been in vain.**" (P423)

"The chief representative, or the chief social bulwark, of this Asian bourgeoisie that is still capable of **supporting a historically progressive cause, is the peasant.** And side by side with him there already exists a liberal bourgeoisie whose leaders, men like Yuan Shih-kai, are above all capable of treachery: yesterday they feared the emperor, and cringed before him; then they betrayed him when they saw the strength, and **sensed the victory, of the revolutionary democracy;** and tomorrow they will betray the democrats to make a deal with some old or new "constitutional" emperor." (P408)

Struggle waged against the autocratic systems mostly covers the minimal, democratic tasks of socialist revolution, and thus will have varying alliances, especially the peasantry.

## **2- Alliances for "Revolutionary Democracy"**

Alliances aiming for Revolutionary democracy, however, consists only the alliance with the revolutionary democrats - contingent upon the existence of a strong vanguard party.

Lenin explains as following;

"The first stage. The Social-Democrats make the theoretical preparations for the elections. The most prominent representatives of the Right and the Left wings express their views.... The **Bolsheviks come out**

**in favour of a purely Social-Democratic election list, but do not exclude agreements with the revolutionary democrats.”** (P329)

Characterizing the liberal party:

“The Tiflis Mensheviks, it turns out, do not know that universal suffrage is not a Cadet demand, **but the demand of revolutionary democracy, which Social-Democracy advocates more consistently than anyone else!** No, comrades, ... the **Cadets are not revolutionary democrats.”** (P362)

“No, it is not we who are refusing to fight against the ‘pseudo-socialist nature of the Narodniks, **but you Menshevik comrades, who have refused to support revolutionary democracy,** and prefer the liberals (the Cadets).” (P341)

Assessing the objective conditions and comparing with the previous;

“At one time Russian Social-Democracy consisted of a handful of members. At that time, it bore the character of a movement of intellectuals and was unable to influence the proletarian struggle. Party policy was then directed by one or two individuals—the voice of the proletarian membership of the party was drowned. . . . **The situation is entirely different today.** Today we have a magnificent party—the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, which has as many as 200,000 members in its ranks, which is **influencing the**

**proletarian struggle, is rallying around itself the revolutionary democracy** of the whole of Russia and is a terror to "the powers that be." (P358)

And defining the aim and comparing with the previous;

"What is the real task facing Russia? The complete replacement of semi-feudal economy by "civilised capitalism".

**That is not Marxism**, however, but Struveism or liberalism, for a Marxist distinguishes between classes with their Octobrist, Cadet, Trudovik, or proletarian ideas as to what constitutes "civilised" capitalism.

**What is the crux of the problem of appraising of the revolution? .... The essence of the question is: which of the classes that took part in the revolution** showed that they were capable of waging a direct, **mass revolutionary struggle**, which classes betrayed the revolution and directly or indirectly joined the counter-revolution? Rkov concealed this essence and was thus able to ignore **the difference between revolutionary democracy and the liberal-monarchist "progressive" opposition.**" (P395)

We Social-Democrats regard a "**victory**" of the **Progressists as an indirect expression of a democratic upswing**. It is necessary to use the skirmishes between the Progressists and the Rights—**the mere slogan of support for the Progressists is no good**. Our job is to promote the democratic upswing, **to foster the new**

**revolutionary democracy** that is growing in a new way in the new Russia. Unless it succeeds in gathering strength and winning in spite of the liberals, no “triumph” of the Progressists and the Cadets in the elections will bring about any serious change in the actual situation in Russia.

The **democratic upswing** is an indisputable fact now. It is progressing with greater difficulty, at a slower pace and along a more arduous path than we should like, **but it is progressing, nonetheless**. It is this **that we must “support” and promote by our election work and every other kind of activity**. Our task is to organise the **revolutionary democrats**—by ruthless criticism of Narodnik liquidationism and Narodnik otzovism to forge a republican peasant party—but first of all and above all else to clean “our own house” of liquidationism and otzovism, intensify our revolutionary Social-Democratic work among the proletariat and strengthen the illegal Social-Democratic Labour Party. The outcome of the growing revolutionary crisis does not depend on us; **it depends on a thousand different causes**, on the revolution in Asia and on socialism in Europe. But it does depend on us to conduct **consistent and steady work among the masses** in the spirit of Marxism, and only this kind of work is never done in vain." (P402)

“ If the Cadets are now playing at “eyes left”, as the Octobrists taunt them, that is one of the symptoms and

one of **the results of the country moving “leftward”**; it **shows that revolutionary democracy is stirring in the womb of its mother**, preparing to come into God’s world again. The womb of Russia under the rule of the Purishkeviches and Romanovs **is such that it must give birth to revolutionary democracy!**”

Setting the tasks and tactics;

“What is the practical conclusion to be drawn from this? The conclusion is that **we must watch the growth of this new revolutionary democracy with the greatest attention**. Just because it is new, because it is coming into the world after 1905 and after the counter-revolution, and not before it, it is sure to grow in a new way; and **in order to be able properly to approach this “new”**, to be able to influence it and help it grow successfully, **we must not confine ourselves to the old methods**, but must search for new methods as well—**we must mingle with the crowds, feel the pulse of real life**, and sometimes make our way not only **into the thick of the crowd, but also into the liberal salon.**”  
(P381)

“The liberal opposition and **revolutionary democracy (Social-Democratic workers and peasant bourgeois democrats)** have almost managed to retain the status quo.” (P417)

“Through its resolution the Conference unconsciously descends to the level of the liberal and monarchist bourgeoisie. **The Party Congress in its resolution**

**consciously raises to its own level those elements of the revolutionary democracy that are capable of waging a struggle and not of acting as brokers.**

Such elements are mostly **to be found among the peasants.** In classifying the big social groups according to their political tendencies, we can, **without danger of serious error, identify revolutionary and republican democracy with the mass of the peasants."** (P156)

And stresses **"the necessity of the proletariat's support for revolutionary democracy."** (P125)

**"Revolutionary democracy, i.e., in the main, the proletariat, and Social-Democracy, the vehicle of its conscious expression, is, by and large, fully in favour of insurrection."** (P162)

These **(preceding) conditions determine also the militant agreement between Social-Democracy and revolutionary democracy for the insurrection.**

(h) **By revolutionary democracy is meant the consistent and firm democratic currents that accept the whole democratic programme of Social-Democracy, do not hold back from any revolutionary measures, but lack the clear Social-Democratic class consciousness .....On the order of the day an agreement not on the condition of declarations, but on the condition of participation in the uprising, not with the liberal democrats, but with the revolutionary democrats."** (P117)

The Editorial Board of Vperyod proposes to the Congress the following tentative agenda: (1) Constitution of the Congress (standing orders, report of the Organising Committee, examination of credentials). (2) Delegates' reports. (3) The Party crisis. (4) Organizational question. (5) Attitude towards insurrection. (6) **Agreement with the revolutionary democrats for purposes of the insurrection.** (7) Attitude towards the liberals. (8) **Work among the peasantry and support of the revolutionary peasant movement.** (9) Work among the troops. (10) Improvement of propaganda and agitation. (11) election of officers." (P113)

Lenin's approach to the subject of reconciliation is, in fact, finds itself in his following words; " The conclusion is clear: to reject compromises "on principle", to reject the permissibility of compromises in general, no matter of what kind, is childishness, which it is difficult even to consider seriously... One must be able to analyse the situation and the concrete conditions of each compromise, or of each variety of compromise." *Lenin, Left Wing Communism*

Lenin clearly states that those who do not understand this reveal **a failure to understand even the smallest grain of Marxism, of modern scientific socialism in general;**

"The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and by the most thorough, careful, attentive, skillful and obligatory use of any, even the smallest, rift between the enemies, any conflict of interests among the



bourgeoisie of the various countries and among the various groups or types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, and also by taking advantage of any, even the smallest, opportunity of winning a mass ally, even though this ally is temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who do not understand this reveal a failure to understand even the smallest grain of Marxism, of modern scientific socialism in general." *\*Lenin, Left wing communism*

Forming practical alliances directed to the achievement of any given aim is subject to the existing conditions and analysis of class relations, balances of power at that given moment. For revolutionary democracy "Our ideal is" says Lenin" purely **Social-Democratic committees in all rural districts**, and then agreement between them and **all revolutionary-democratic elements, groups, and circles of the peasantry for the purpose of establishing revolutionary committees**. There is a perfect analogy here to the independence of the Social-Democratic Labour Party in the towns and its alliance with all the revolutionary democrats for the purpose of insurrection. **We are in favour of a peasant uprising**. We are absolutely opposed to the **mixing and merging of heterogeneous class elements and heterogeneous parties**. We hold that for the purpose of insurrection Social-Democracy should give an impetus to all revolutionary democracy, should help it all to organise, should march shoulder to shoulder with it, but without merging with it, to the barricades in the cities, and against the landlords and the police in the villages. Long live the insurrection in town and country against the autocracy! **Long live revolutionary Social-**

**Democracy, the vanguard of all revolutionary democracy in the present revolution! " (P178)**

**"The union of the proletariat and revolutionary democracy, which we have spoken of on more than one occasion, is becoming a fact.** The radical students, who both in St. Petersburg and in Moscow adopted the slogans of revolutionary Social-Democracy, are the vanguard of all the democratic forces. Loathing the baseness of the "Constitutional Democratic" reformists who have accepted the State Duma, these forces gravitate towards a real and decisive struggle against the accursed enemy of the Russian people **rather than towards a policy of bargaining with the autocracy."** (P199)

"As regards Party divisions, it is natural that members of the same Party will prefer to belong to the same group. But there should be no hard and fast rule debarring members of other parties from joining. It is precisely here that **we must put into practice the alliance, the working agreement (without any merging of parties, of course), between the socialist proletariat and revolutionary democracy.** Whoever wants to **fight for liberty and proves in fact his readiness to do so may be regarded as a revolutionary democrat,** and we must strive to carry on with such people the work of preparing for the uprising (provided, of course, the given person or group is quite trustworthy). **All other "democrats" should be emphatically rejected as quasi-democrats, as liberal windbags who must not be relied on at all, and whom it would be criminal for a revolutionary to trust."** (P210)

In countries where an oppressed minority people exist, either the aim of the struggle is democratic; toppling the Autocracy, or "revolutionary democracy" as a bridge to socialist revolution, alliance will have to contain in it the revolutionary democrats of minority people. Therefore, the insurrection propaganda and activities constitute another important element. **Lenin, who reminds that the socialist support** every revolutionary movements says; " Those words are often interpreted too narrowly and are not taken to imply support for the liberal opposition. It must not be forgotten, however, that **there are periods when every conflict** with the government arising out of progressive social interests, however small, may under certain conditions (of which our support is one) flare up into a general conflagration." *Lenin, "Political Agitation and "The Class Point of View"*

**The issue of the alliance will be of different** quality and content in the uprising in the path of democracy, from the alliance of Revolutionary Democracy as a bridge to socialist revolution. It would be a childish dream to think that the allies, especially the bourgeois, will not cross the ranks on the path of Revolutionary Democracy. At this point, in order to remain in power and to be able to carry out the transition, it is important to note following words of Lenin in order to understand and make the dialectic connection;

"While pointing to **the solidarity of one or other of the various opposition groups with the workers**, the Social-Democrats will always single out the workers from the rest, **they will always point out that this**

**solidarity is temporary and conditional**, they will always emphasise the independent class identity of the proletariat, who **tomorrow may find themselves in opposition to their allies of today.**" (P64)

Criticizing Axelrod's pamphlet for not singling out the revolutionary democrats, Lenin says "In connection with P. B. Axelrod's little pamphlet entitled *The People's Duma and a Workers' Congress*, the following should be noted:.....**Complete inability to single out revolutionary democracy and indicate concrete slogans on a political agreement with the latter.**" (P216)

The class content of alliance determines the class nature of a "democracy". "the resolution should express this idea clearly **instead of being so vague about it.** "says Lenin" because the resolution reflects the fundamental error of the new Iskra, **which is unable to distinguish between revolutionary democracy and liberal-monarchist democracy.**" (P220)

### **3- Overall comparison of alliances in different phases**

Each phase inevitably will have different aims based on the existing conditions, and thus will have different alliances and supporters. War times, struggle against autocracy, struggle for democratic rights, for revolutionary democracy and for socialist revolution, each has different minimal aim subordinated to maximal aim with different alliances.

'In our opinion, to ease the incredible burdens and miseries of the war and also to heal the terrible wounds the war has inflicted on the people, **revolutionary democracy is needed...**

We alone can create such an apparatus, **because we have class-conscious workers disciplined by long capitalist "schooling"**, workers who are capable of forming a workers' militia and of gradually expanding it into a militia embracing the whole people. **The class-conscious workers must lead**, but for the work of administration they can **enlist the vast mass of the working and oppressed people.**" (P542)

**"The present, the period of a democratic revolution, bourgeois in its social and economic content**, is a time when bourgeois democrats, all Constitutional-Democrats, etc., right down to the Socialist-Revolutionaries, are revealing a particular inclination to advocate "comprehensive democratic organisations" and in general to encourage, directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly, non-partisanship, i.e., **an absence of any strict division between the democrats.** Class-conscious representatives of the proletariat must fight this tendency resolutely and ruthlessly, **for it is profoundly bourgeois in essence.** We must bring exact party distinctions into the fore ground, **expose all confusion**, show up the falsity of phrases about **allegedly united, broad, solid democratism**, phrases our liberal newspapers are teeming with. In proposing an alliance with certain sections of the democrats for the achievement of definite tasks, **we should single out only revolutionary democrats**—particularly at a time like this; we should indicate what most clearly distinguishes those "prepared" to fight (right now, in

the ranks of the revolutionary army) **from those who are “prepared” to bargain with the autocracy.**” (P220)

“We must bend every effort to rouse, in addition to the students, **who are the vanguard of revolutionary democracy**, also those broad masses of the people whose movement is not only democratic in a general way (today every turncoat calls himself a democrat), but a genuinely revolutionary movement—**namely, the masses of the peasantry.**” (P245)

**The ranks of revolutionary democracy have been reinforced by a new organisation**, which, of course, shares a good many of the illusions that are characteristic of the small producer, but **which in the present revolution undoubtedly expresses the trend toward a ruthless mass struggle against Asiatic despotism and feudal landlordism.**” (P293)

“In publishing this draft resolution, we invite the impartial reader to say whether this draft provides any excuse for playing with words like “anarchism”, “Blanquism”, etc. Furthermore, which resolution has been justified by experience: the one adopted by the Congress, or this one? Is it not clear now that none but indirect use can be made of the Duma? **Is it not clear now which of these two resolutions more directly meets genuine revolutionary democracy**, and more correctly appraises “Cadetism” as it has manifested itself in practice, in the Duma?” (P269)

The proletariat often hears the bourgeoisie say nowadays: **you must march together with the bourgeois democrats. Without their aid the proletariat will be unable to carry out a revolution. That is true.** But the **question is: with which democrats can and should the proletariat march now?** With the Cadet democrats, or the peasant revolutionary democrats? There can be only one answer to this question: not with the Cadet democrats, but **with the revolutionary democrats; not with the liberals, but with the masses of the peasantry.**

Bearing this reply in mind, we must not lose sight of the fact that the more rapidly the peasants become enlightened and the more openly they act in politics, the more markedly do all revolutionary elements among the bourgeois democrats gravitate towards the peasantry and, of course, also towards the petty-bourgeois townfolk. Minor distinctions become unimportant. What comes to the fore front is the primary question: are the various parties, groups and organisations going all the way with the revolutionary peasantry? **More and more clearly, we see the Socialist-Revolutionaries, certain independent socialists, the most Left of the radicals and a number of peasants organisations merging politically into one revolutionary democracy."** (P281)

#### **4- Alliances of socialist revolution**

Working class is alone when it comes to the socialist revolution. It is made up of proletarian and semi-proletarian masses lead by its vanguard communist party. However, unless both objective and subjective conditions for socialist revolution is ripe and sympathy and support of the middle strata has been gained over or at least neutralized, socialist revolution will have to go through some phases with different alliances. All phases are a part and particular of socialist revolution, only at the final phase the alliance proletariat stands alone. The difference in the use of slogans “Soviet (to) Power” and “All power to the Soviets explains the difference and also marks the class essence of alliances in both. Lenin explains this in different writings clearly.

For one phase of socialist revolution he states; **“We are for a strong revolutionary government.** Whatever the capitalists and their flunkies may shout about us to the contrary, their lies will remain lies.

**The thing is not to let phrases obscure one’s consciousness, disorient one’s mind.** When people speak about “revolution”, “the revolutionary people”, “revolutionary democracy”, and so on, **nine times out of ten this is a lie or self-deception.** The question is—**what class is making this revolution?** A revolution against whom?

**“Against tsarism?** In that sense most of Russia’s landowners and capitalists today are revolutionaries. **When the revolution is an accomplished fact, even reactionaries come into line with it.** There is no deception of the masses at present more



frequent, more detestable, and more harmful than that which lauds the revolution against tsarism." (P479)

"true democracy consists in imitating the way in which **"revolutionary democracy" has composed its "new" government**, where the workers and peasants are "represented" by six Mensheviks and Narodniks while eight Cadets and Octobrists represent the landowners and the capitalists.... the majority of **Russia's population belongs to the class of landowners and capitalists?"** (P444) "The line of the petty bourgeoisie must be separated from that of the wage-earning proletariat." Such "Revolutionary democracy is no good at all; it is a mere phrase. **It covers up rather than lays bare the antagonisms of class interests.** A Bolshevik must open the eyes of the workers and peasants **to the existence of these antagonisms, not gloss them over...** The real work is to bring about the abolition of the standing army, the bureaucracy, and the police, and to arm the whole people." (P441) "The trouble is that **it has become a "custom" "nowadays"**, under the cover of **high-sounding phrases about 'revolutionary democracy'**, to accept democratic (the more so socialist) programmes **"in principle" but reject them in practice.**" (P438)

Differentiation the role and the aim of Revolutionary Democracy Lenin states; "The **pseudo-Marxist lackeys of the bourgeoisie**, who have been joined by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and who argue in this way, do not understand (as an examination of the theoretical basis of their opinion shows) what imperialism is, what capitalist monopoly is, what

the state is, and **what revolutionary democracy is**. For anyone who understands this **is bound to admit that there can be no advance except towards socialism**.

**If it has become a state monopoly**, it means that the state (i.e., the armed organisation of the population, the workers and peasants above all, **provided there is revolutionary democracy**) directs the whole undertaking. In whose interest?

Either in the interest of the landowners and capitalists, in which case **we have not a revolutionary-democratic, but a reactionary-bureaucratic state**, an imperialist republic.

**Or in the interest of revolutionary democracy—and then it is a step towards socialism.**

**Either we have to be revolutionary democrats in fact**, in which case **we must not fear to take steps towards socialism**. Or we fear to take steps towards socialism, condemn them in the Plekhanov, Dan or Chernov way, by arguing that our revolution is a bourgeois revolution, **that socialism cannot be “introduced”**, etc., in which case we inevitably sink to the level of Kerensky, Milyukov and Kornilov, i.e., we in a reactionary-bureaucratic way suppress **the “revolutionary-democratic” aspirations of the workers and peasants.**” There is no middle course.” (P548)

“Comrade Aviloy, throughout his resolution, in all its concrete substance and all its practical proposals, **forgets the class standpoint**, and, like the Mensheviks and Narodniks, lapses into bombast about the “state” in general, **about “revolutionary democracy” in the abstract.**

How can a Marxist forget that in the history of all countries the **capitalists, too, have often been “revolutionary democrats”**, as in England in 1649, in France in 1789, in 1830, 1848, and 1870, and in Russia in February 1917?

Can you have forgotten that **the revolutionary democracy of the capitalists, of the petty bourgeoisie and of the proletariat must be distinguished one from the other?** Does not the whole history of all the revolutions I have just mentioned show a **distinction of classes within “revolutionary democracy”?**

The April crisis (April 20), followed by that of May 6, then May 27–29 (the elections), etc., etc., **have brought about a definite cleavage of classes** in the Russian revolution within the Russian **“revolutionary democracy”**. To ignore this is to **sink to the helpless level of the petty bourgeois.**

To appeal now to the “state” and to “revolutionary democracy” on the matter of predatory capitalism of all questions, **is to drag the working class backward.** In effect it means **preaching complete stoppage of the revolution.”** (P482)

**“The counter-revolution has won,** for the so-called **“revolutionary democracy”** has been placed at its disposal as a convenient shield against the anger of the people.

The counterrevolutionaries are now not alone. **The whole “revolutionary democracy” is working for them.** Now they have at their disposal the “public opinion” of the “land of Russia,” which the defencist gentry will “assiduously” mould. Coronation of counter-evolution—that is the outcome of the Moscow Conference.” (P507)

The importance of class essence of any revolution is that it determines the class essence of "democracy" achieved. Yet, not to minimize the importance of a provisional government Lenin states;

"" an uprising **without the aid of a provisional revolutionary government** can be neither an uprising of the whole people **nor a victorious uprising.** " (P191)

In his short essay entitled "Political Situation," Lenin explains that "**The aim of the insurrection can only be to transfer power to the proletariat, supported by the poor peasants,** with a view to putting our Party programme into effect." (P503)

"**As soon as they began to form the Soviets,** the workers instinctively took up a firm class stand by the very act of establishing them. The Mensheviks and S.R.s, on the other hand, vacillated all the time. And when in the spring and summer of 1917 **their own friends labelled them semi-Bolsheviks,** this was a true description, not merely a witticism. On every single issue they would say "yes" one day and "no" the next, whether it was the question of the Soviets, the revolutionary movement in the countryside, the direct seizure of land, fraternisation at the front, or whether to support imperialism. **They would help on the one hand, and hinder on the other,** all the time displaying their spinelessness and helplessness. Yet their propaganda among the people for the Soviets, which they always referred to as **revolutionary democracy** and contrasted with what they called the propertied elements, **was only a cunning political device on their part,** and the masses whom they addressed were carried away

by this propaganda. Thus, the Menshevik preaching was partly of service to us too.

This is a very complex question with a wealth of history behind it. I need only dwell on it briefly. This policy of the Mensheviks and S.R.s before our very eyes is conclusive proof of our assertion that **it is wrong to regard them as socialists**. If they had at any time been socialists, it was only in their phraseology and reminiscences; in fact, they are nothing but **Russian petty bourgeois**.

I began with the attitude Marxists should adopt **towards the middle peasant**, or, in other words, **towards the petty bourgeois parties**. We are now coming to a stage when **our slogans of the previous period of the revolution must be changed to take proper account of the present turn of events**. You know that in October and November these people wavered.

The Bolshevik Party stood firm then and rightly so. We said we should have to destroy the enemies of the proletariat and were facing a battle on the fundamental issues of war or peace, of bourgeois representation, and of Soviet government. **In all these questions we only had our own forces to rely on**, and we were absolutely right when we refused to compromise with the petty-bourgeois democrats." (P578)

**"the Soviets represent revolutionary democracy insofar as they are joined by those who wish to fight in a revolutionary way. Their doors are not closed** to members of the co-operatives and city dwellers. Those same Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks ran the Soviets.

Those who remained only in the co-operatives, who confined themselves only to municipal (city and Zemstvo) work, **voluntarily separated themselves from the ranks of revolutionary democracy**, thereby attaching themselves to a **democracy that was either reactionary or neutral**. Everybody knows that co-operative and municipal work is done **not only by revolutionaries**, but also by reactionaries; everybody knows that people are elected to co-operatives and municipalities primarily for work that is not of general political scope and importance. "(P531)

### **Conclusion**

The use of terms should not be **in their literal meaning**, but in its **historical context and historical, Marxist Leninist theoretical use of the terms**. Historically, the concept of "People's Democracy" refers to an exceptional form of "proletarian dictatorship" experienced in Eastern Europe. The use of "People's Democracy" for the countries that has completed or in the process of completing the bourgeois democratic revolutions differs in class context. In order to make the distinction in class context, "the use of "Revolutionary Democracy" is more suitable.

History has proven that socialist revolution -with some exceptions - cannot be achieved in one leap. It has to go through intermediate phases one of which valid for most of the countries of the world is democratic phase or phases. " It shows a failure to understand the significance of a revolutionary government as one of the greatest and finest "means" of effecting a political revolution" says Lenin. "The paltry "liberalism" flaunted here

by the Bund in emulation of Iskra (that is to say, we can manage without any government, even a provisional one!) is sheer anarchist liberalism." *Lenin, The Theory of Spontaneous Generation*

We are constantly experiencing the fact that imperialists have no trouble in creating **a justification for the intervention in any country**. The tactical alertness and suggestions of Lenin and especially of Stalin about "intervention" in connection with the "revolutions" are still valid today. Without active work in masses, active participation of large masses, speaking of revolutionary democracy and socialist revolution remains to be an illusion, mere phrase mongering of far-left Trotskyite variations.

"The Marxist solution to the problem of democracy, "says Lenin," is for the proletariat **to utilize all democratic institutions and aspirations in its class struggle against the bourgeoisie in order to prepare for its overthrow and assure its own victory.** "(P430)

Each phase will have its own unique alliances totally contingent on the existing conditions, the balance of power, the existence or nonexistence of revolutionary situation and whether the minimal or maximal aim is on the agenda. One cannot copy from another country in which the conditions are different. One cannot copy the path to revolution, form of struggle means and methods – including the utilization of parliament - of a country where the subjective conditions are ripe, to another country where neither the subjective nor objective conditions exist. One most likely will reject the use of parliament in former, cannot

reject in the latter all of which is translated into the character of alliances for each.

While the character of alliances will be wide range for a struggle against an autocracy, it will be lesser for the democratic struggle, only the proletariat and revolutionary democrats for the struggle towards revolutionary democracy and proletariat alone for the socialist revolution.

The form of struggle and utilization of democratic institution isolated from the existing conditions cannot play a decisive role. **What is important and decisive at any given time** is that what it aims, under whose leadership and the **class character of alliances** formed. The same way, it is not the form of the revolution, but **the class essence of it matters**. Uprisings toward revolution may have different forms and alliances in accord with the specific conditions at given times. The concept of People's power (whatever the name is given) should have a context that brings it **from the abstract down to concrete**, one that has its feet on the ground in a way that people comprehend. The road to "People's Power" goes through the phases of planned uprisings followed by an insurrection and forming a provincial revolutionary government – Revolutionary Democracy. **That should not be taken as the final goal by itself**- which is reformism - but as a means of transforming bridge through **another uprising into socialist revolution**. Based on Lenin's assessments and proven **then**, and especially now, **uprising - majority in parliament - uprising -socialist revolution** seems to be the



**general path to follow** without disregarding the existing conditions in particular.

(E.A, August 2018, updated July 2020)

## **The years of organizing (pre 1903)**

### **The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats**

Written in exile at the end of 1897

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 2

The second half of the nineties witnessed a remarkable increase in the work being done on the presentation and solution of the problems of the Russian revolution. The appearance of a new revolutionary party, Narodnoye Pravo, the growing influence and successes of the Social Democrats, the evolution within Narodnaya Volya—all this has evoked a lively discussion on questions of programme both in study circles of socialist intellectuals and workers and in illegal literature. Regarding the latter sphere, reference should be made to “An Urgent Question” and the “Manifesto” (1894) of the Narodnoye Pravo Party, to the Leaflet of the Narodnaya Volya Group, to *Rabotnik* published abroad by the League of Russian Social-Democrats, to the increasing output of revolutionary pamphlets in Russia, mainly for workers, and the agitation conducted by the Social-Democratic League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class in St. Petersburg around the important strikes there in 1896, etc.

At the present time (the end of 1897), the most urgent question, in our opinion, is that of the practical activities of the Social-Democrats. We emphasize the practical side of Social-Democracy, because on the theoretical side the most critical period—the period of stubborn refusal by its opponents to understand it, of strenuous efforts to suppress the new trend

the moment it arose, on the one hand, and of stalwart defence of the fundamentals of Social-Democracy, on the other—is now apparently behind us. Now the main and basic features of the theoretical views of the Social-Democrats have been sufficiently clarified. The same cannot be said about the practical side of Social-Democracy, about its political programme, its methods, its tactics. It is in this sphere, we think, that misapprehension and mutual misunderstanding mostly prevail, preventing a complete rapprochement between Social-Democracy and those revolutionaries who in theory have completely renounced the principles of the Narodnaya Volya and in practice are either led by the very force of circumstances to carry on propaganda and agitation among the workers—nay, more: to conduct their activities among the workers on the basis of the class struggle—or else strive to base their whole programme and revolutionary activities on democratic tasks. If we are not mistaken, the latter description fits the two revolutionary groups which are operating in Russia at the present time, parallel to the Social-Democrats, namely, the Narodnaya Volya and Narodnoye Pravo.

We, therefore, think it particularly opportune to try to explain the practical tasks of the Social-Democrats and to state the grounds on which we consider their programme to be the most rational of the three now existing and the arguments advanced against it to be based very largely on misunderstanding.

The object of the practical activities of the Social-Democrats is, **as is well known, to lead the class struggle of the proletariat and to organise that struggle in both its manifestations:**

**socialist (the fight against the capitalist class aimed at destroying the class system and organising socialist society), and democratic (the fight against absolutism aimed at winning political liberty in Russia and democratising the political and social system of Russia).** We said as is well known. And indeed, from the very moment they appeared as a separate social-revolutionary trend, the Russian Social-Democrats have always quite definitely indicated this object of their activities, **have always emphasised the dual manifestation and content of the class struggle of the proletariat and have always insisted on the inseparable connection between their socialist and democratic tasks**—a connection clearly expressed in the name they have adopted. Nevertheless, to this day you often meet socialists who have the most distorted notions about the Social-Democrats and accuse them of ignoring the political struggle, etc. Let us, therefore, dwell a little on a description of both aspects of the practical activities of Russian Social-Democracy.

Let us begin with socialist activity. One would have thought that the character of Social-Democratic activity in this respect had become quite clear since the Social-Democratic League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class in St. Petersburg began its activities among the St. Petersburg workers. The socialist activities of Russian Social-Democrats consist in spreading by propaganda the teachings of scientific socialism, in **spreading among the workers a proper understanding of the present social and economic system, its basis and its development, an understanding of the various classes in Russian society, of their interrelations, of the struggle**

between these classes, of the role of the working class in this struggle, of its attitude towards the declining and the developing classes, towards the past and the future of capitalism, an understanding of the historical task of international Social-Democracy and of the Russian working class. Inseparably connected with propaganda is agitation among the workers, which naturally comes to the forefront in the present political conditions of Russia and at the present level of development of the masses of workers. Agitation among the workers means that the Social-Democrats **take part in all the spontaneous manifestations of the working-class struggle, in all the conflicts between the workers and the capitalists** over the working day, wages, working conditions, etc., etc. Our task is to merge our activities with the practical, everyday questions of working-class life, to help the workers understand these questions, to draw the workers' attention to the most important abuses, to help them formulate their demands to the employers more precisely and practically, to develop among the workers consciousness of their solidarity, consciousness of the common interests and common cause of all the Russian workers as a united working class that is part of the international army of the proletariat. To organise study circles among workers, to establish proper and secret connections between them and the central group of Social-Democrats, to publish and distribute working-class literature, to organise the receipt of correspondence from all centres of the working-class movement, to publish agitational leaflets and manifestos and to distribute them, and to train a body of experienced agitators—such, in broad outline, are the

manifestations of the socialist activities of Russian Social-Democracy.

Our work is primarily and mainly directed to the factory, urban workers. Russian Social-Democracy must not dissipate its forces; it must concentrate its activities on the industrial proletariat, who are most susceptible to Social-Democratic ideas, most developed intellectually and politically, and most important by virtue of their numbers and concentration in the country's large political centres. The creation of a durable revolutionary organisation among the factory, urban workers is therefore the first and most urgent task confronting Social-Democracy, one from which it would be highly unwise to let ourselves be diverted at the present time. But, while recognizing the necessity of concentrating our forces on the factory workers and opposing the dissipation of our forces, we do not in the least wish to suggest that the Russian Social-Democrats should ignore other strata of the Russian proletariat and working class. Nothing of the kind. The very conditions of life of the Russian factory workers very often compel them to enter into the closest relations with the handicraftsmen, the industrial proletariat scattered outside the factory in towns and villages, and whose conditions are infinitely worse. The Russian factory worker also comes into direct contact with the rural population (very often the factory worker's family live in the country) and, consequently, he cannot but come into close contact with the rural proletariat, with the many millions of regular farm workers and day labourers, and also with those ruined peasants who, while clinging to their miserable plots of

land, have to work off their debts and take on all sorts of "casual jobs," i.e., are also wage-labourers.

The Russian Social-Democrats think it inopportune to send their forces among the handicraftsmen and rural labourers, but they do not in the least intend to ignore them; they will try to enlighten the advanced workers also on questions affecting the lives of the handicraftsmen and rural labourers, so that when these workers come into contact with the more backward strata of the proletariat, they will imbue them with the ideas of the class struggle, socialism and the political tasks of Russian democracy in general and of the Russian proletariat in particular. It is impractical to send agitators among the handicraftsmen and rural labourers when there is still so much work to be done among the factory, urban workers, but in numerous cases the socialist worker comes willy-nilly into contact with these people and must be able to take advantage of these opportunities and understand the general tasks of Social-Democracy in Russia. Hence, those who accuse the Russian Social-Democrats of being narrow-minded, of trying to ignore the mass of the labouring population for the sake of the factory workers, are profoundly mistaken. On the contrary, **agitation among the advanced sections of the proletariat is the surest and the only way to rouse** (as the movement expands) the entire Russian proletariat. The dissemination of socialism and of the idea of the class struggle among the urban workers will inevitably cause these ideas to flow in the smaller and more scattered channels. This requires that these ideas take deeper root among the better prepared elements and spread throughout the vanguard of the Russian working-class

movement and of the Russian revolution. While concentrating all its forces on activity among the factory workers, Russian Social-Democracy is ready to support those Russian revolutionaries who, in practice, come to base their socialist activities on the class struggle of the proletariat; but **it does not in the least conceal the point that no practical alliances with other groups of revolutionaries can, or should, lead to compromises or concessions on matters of theory, programme or banner.** Convinced that the doctrine of scientific socialism and the class struggle is the only revolutionary theory that can today serve as the banner of the revolutionary movement, the Russian Social-Democrats will exert every effort to spread this doctrine, to guard it against false interpretation and to combat every attempt to impose vaguer doctrines on the still young working-class movement in Russia. Theoretical reasoning proves and the practical activities of the Social-Democrats show that all socialists in Russia should become Social-Democrats.

Let us now deal with the democratic tasks and with the democratic work of the Social-Democrats. Let us repeat, once again, that this work is inseparably connected with socialist activity. In conducting propaganda among the workers, the Social-Democrats cannot avoid political problems, and they would regard any attempt to avoid them, or even to push them aside, as a profound mistake and a departure from the basic principles of international Social-Democracy. Simultaneously with the dissemination of scientific socialism, Russian Social-Democrats set themselves the task of propagating democratic ideas among the working class masses; they strive to spread an understanding of absolutism in all its manifestations, of its class



content, of the necessity to overthrow it, of the impossibility of waging a successful struggle for the workers' cause without achieving political liberty and the democratisation of Russia's political and social system. In conducting agitation among the workers on their immediate economic demands, the Social-Democrats inseparably link this with agitation on the immediate political needs, the distress and the demands of the working class, agitation against police tyranny, manifested in every strike, in every conflict between workers and capitalists, agitation against the restriction of the rights of the workers as Russian citizens in general and as the class suffering the worst oppression and having the least rights in particular, agitation against every prominent representative and flunkey of absolutism who comes into direct contact with the workers and who clearly reveals to the working class its condition of political slavery. Just as there is no issue affecting the life of the workers in the economic field that must be left unused for the purpose of economic agitation, so there is no issue in the political field that does not serve as a subject for political agitation. These two kinds of agitation are inseparably connected in the activities of the Social-Democrats as the two sides of the same medal. Both economic and political agitation are equally necessary to develop the class-consciousness of the proletariat; both economic and political agitation are equally necessary for guiding the class struggle of the Russian workers, because every class struggle is a political struggle. By arousing the class-consciousness of the workers, by organising, disciplining and training them for united action and for the fight for the ideals of Social-Democracy, both kinds of agitation will enable the

workers to test their strength on immediate issues and immediate needs, to wring partial concessions from their enemy and thus improve their economic conditions, compel the capitalists to reckon with the strength of the organised workers, compel the government to extend the workers' rights, to pay heed to their demands and keep the government in constant fear of the hostility of the masses of workers led by a strong Social-Democratic organisation.

**We have pointed to the inseparably close connection between socialist and democratic propaganda and agitation, to the complete parallelism of revolutionary activity in both spheres. Nevertheless, there is a big difference between these two types of activity and struggle. The difference is that in the economic struggle the proletariat stands absolutely alone against both the landed nobility and the bourgeoisie, except, perhaps, for the help it receives (and by no means always) from those elements of the petty bourgeoisie which gravitate towards the proletariat. In the democratic, political struggle, however, the Russian working class does not stand alone; at its side are all the political opposition elements, strata and classes, since they are hostile to absolutism and are fighting it in one form or another. Here side by side with the proletariat stand the opposition elements of the bourgeoisie, or of the educated classes, or of the petty bourgeoisie, or of the nationalities, religions and sects, etc., etc., persecuted by the autocratic government.** The question naturally arises of what the attitude of the working class towards these elements should be. Further, should it not combine with them in the common struggle against the autocracy? After all, all Social-Democrats admit that

the political revolution in Russia must precede the socialist revolution; should they not, therefore, combine with all the elements in the political opposition to fight the autocracy, setting socialism aside for the time being? Is not this essential in order to strengthen the fight against the autocracy?

Let us examine these two questions.

**The attitude of the working class, as a fighter against the autocracy, towards all the other social classes and groups in the political opposition is very precisely determined by the basic principles of Social-Democracy** expounded in the famous Communist Manifesto. The Social-Democrats support the progressive social classes against the reactionary classes, the bourgeoisie against the representatives of privileged landowning estate and the bureaucracy, the big bourgeoisie against the reactionary strivings of the petty bourgeoisie. This support does not presuppose, nor does it call for, any compromise with non-Social-Democratic programmes and principles—it is support given to an ally against a particular enemy. Moreover, the Social-Democrats render this support in order to expedite the fall of the common enemy, but expect nothing for themselves from these temporary allies, and concede nothing to them. **The Social-Democrats support every revolutionary movement against the present social system,** they support all oppressed nationalities, persecuted religions, downtrodden social estates, etc., in their fight for equal rights.

**Support for all elements of the political opposition will be expressed in the propaganda** of the Social-Democrats by the fact that, in showing that the autocracy is hostile to the workers'

cause, they will also point to its hostility towards various other social groups; they will point to the solidarity of the working class with these groups on a particular issue, in a particular task, etc. In agitation, this support will be expressed by the Social-Democrats' taking advantage of every manifestation of the police tyranny of the autocracy to point out to the workers how this tyranny affects all Russian citizens in general, and the representatives of the exceptionally oppressed social estates, nationalities, religions, sects, etc., in particular; and how that tyranny affects the working class especially. Finally, in practice, this support is expressed in the readiness of the Russian Social-Democrats to enter into alliances with revolutionaries of other trends for the purpose of achieving certain particular aims, and this readiness has been shown in practice on more than one occasion.

This brings us to the second question. While pointing to the solidarity of one or other of the various opposition groups with the workers, the Social-Democrats will always single out the workers from the rest, they will always point out that this solidarity is temporary and conditional, they will always emphasise the independent class identity of the proletariat, who tomorrow may find themselves in opposition to their allies of today. We shall be told that "such action will weaken all the fighters for political liberty at the present time." We shall reply that such action will strengthen all the fighters for political liberty. Only those fighters are strong who rely on the consciously recognised real interests of certain classes, and any attempt to obscure these class interests, which already play a predominant role in contemporary society, will only weaken

the fighters. That is the first point. The second point is that, in the fight against the autocracy, the working class must single itself out, for it is the only thoroughly consistent and unreserved enemy of the autocracy, only between the working class and the autocracy is no compromise possible, only in the working class can democracy find a champion who makes no reservations, is not irresolute and does not look back. The hostility of all other classes, groups and strata of the population towards the autocracy is not unqualified; their democracy always looks back.

The bourgeoisie cannot but realise that industrial and social development is being retarded by the autocracy, but it fears the complete democratisation of the political and social system and can at any moment enter into alliance with the autocracy against the proletariat.

The petty bourgeoisie is two-faced by its very nature, and while it gravitates, on the one hand, towards the proletariat and democracy, on the other, it gravitates towards the reactionary classes, tries to hold up the march of history, is apt to be seduced by the experiments and blandishments of the autocracy (for example, the "people's policy" of Alexander III), is capable of concluding an alliance with the ruling classes against the proletariat for the sake of strengthening its own small-proprietor position. Educated people, and the "intelligentsia" generally, cannot but revolt against the savage police tyranny of the autocracy, which hunts down thought and knowledge; but the material interests of this intelligentsia bind it to the autocracy and to the bourgeoisie, compel it to be

inconsistent, to compromise, to sell its oppositional and revolutionary ardour for an official salary, or a share of profits or dividends. As for the democratic elements among the oppressed nationalities and the persecuted religions, everybody knows and sees that the class antagonisms within these categories of the population are much deeper-going and stronger than the solidarity binding all classes within any one category against the autocracy and in favour of democratic institutions.

**The proletariat alone can be—and because of its class position must be—a consistently democratic,** determined enemy of absolutism, incapable of making any concessions or compromises. The proletariat alone can be the vanguard fighter for political liberty and for democratic institutions. Firstly, this is because political tyranny bears most heavily upon the proletariat whose position gives it no opportunity to secure a modification of that tyranny—it has no access to the higher authorities, not even to the officials, and it has no influence on public opinion. Secondly, **the proletariat alone is capable of bringing about the complete democratisation** of the political and social system, since this would place the system in the hands of the workers. That is why the merging of the democratic activities of the working class with the democratic aspirations of other classes and groups would weaken the democratic movement, would weaken the political struggle, would make it less determined, less consistent, more likely to compromise. On the other hand, **if the working class stands out as the vanguard fighter for democratic institutions, this will strength the democratic movement, will strengthen the**

**struggle for political liberty, because the working class will spur on all the other democratic and political opposition elements, will push the liberals towards the political radicals, will push the radicals towards an irrevocable rupture with the whole of the political and social structure of present society.**

We said above that all socialists in Russia should become Social-Democrats. We now add: all true and consistent democrats in Russia should become Social-Democrats.

We will illustrate what we mean by quoting the following example. Take the civil service, the bureaucracy, as representing a special category of persons who specialise in the work of administration and occupy a privileged position as compared with the people. We see this institution everywhere, from autocratic and semi-Asiatic Russia to cultured, free and civilised England, as an essential organ of bourgeois society. The complete lack of rights of the people in relation to government officials and the complete absence of control over the privileged bureaucracy correspond to the backwardness of Russia and to its absolutism. In England powerful popular control is exercised over the administration, but even there that control is far from being complete, even there the bureaucracy retains not a few of its privileges, and not infrequently is the master and not the servant of the people. Even in England we see that powerful social groups support the privileged position of the bureaucracy and hinder the complete democratisation of that institution. Why? Because it is in the interests of the proletariat alone to democratise it completely ; the most progressive strata of the bourgeoisie defend certain prerogatives of the bureaucracy and are opposed to the election

of all officials, opposed to the complete abolition of electoral qualifications, opposed to making officials directly responsible to the people, etc., because these strata realise that the proletariat will take advantage of such complete democratisation in order to use it against the bourgeoisie. This is the case in Russia, too. Many and most diverse strata of the Russian people are opposed to the omnipotent, irresponsible, corrupt, savage, ignorant and parasitic Russian bureaucracy. But except for the proletariat, not one of these strata would agree to the complete democratisation of the bureaucracy, because all these strata (bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, the "intelligentsia" in general) have some ties with the bureaucracy, because all these strata are kith and kin of the Russian bureaucracy. Who does not know how easy it is in Holy Russia for a radical intellectual, or socialist intellectual, to turn into an official of The Imperial Government, an official who takes comfort from the thought that he does "good" within the limits of office routine, an official who pleads this "good" in justification of his political indifference, his servility towards the government of the knout and the whip? The proletariat alone is unreservedly hostile to the autocracy and the Russian bureaucracy, the proletariat alone has no ties with these organs of aristocratic bourgeois society and the proletariat alone is capable of irreconcilable hostility towards them and of waging a determined struggle against them.

When we show that the proletariat, led in its class struggle by Social-Democracy, is the vanguard fighter of Russian democracy, we encounter the very widespread and very strange opinion that Russian Social-Democracy relegates



political tasks and political struggle to the background. As we see, this opinion is the very opposite of the truth. How are we to explain this astonishing failure to understand the principles of Social-Democracy that have often been expounded and were expounded in the very first Russian Social-Democratic publications, in the pamphlets and books published abroad by the Emancipation of Labour group? In our view, the explanation of this amazing fact lies in the following three circumstances.

First, it lies in the general failure of the representatives of old revolutionary theories to understand the principles of Social-Democracy, accustomed **as they are to base their programmes and plans of activity on abstract ideas and not on an exact appraisal of the actual classes operating in the country, classes that have been placed in certain relationships by history.** This lack of realistic discussion of the interests which support Russian democracy can only give rise to the opinion that Russian Social-Democracy leaves the democratic tasks of Russian revolutionaries in the background.

Second, it lies in the failure to understand that when economic and political issues, and socialist and democratic activities, are united into one whole, into the single class struggle of the proletariat, this does not weaken but strengthens the democratic movement and the political struggle, by bringing it closer to the real interests of the mass of the people, dragging political issues out of the "stuffy studies of the intelligentsia" into the street, into the midst of the workers and labouring classes, and replacing abstract ideas by real manifestations of

political oppression from which the greatest sufferers are the proletariat, and on the basis of which the Social-Democrats conduct their agitation. It often seems to the Russian radical that instead of frankly and directly calling upon the advanced workers to join the political struggle, the Social-Democrat points to the task of developing the working-class movement, of organising the class struggle of the proletariat, and thereby retreats from his democracy, relegates the political struggle to the background. But if this is retreat, it is the kind of retreat that is meant in the French proverb: "Il faut reculer pour mieux sauter !" (Step back in order to leap farther forward.)

Third, the misunderstanding arises from the fact that the very term "political struggle" means something different to the Narodovoltsi and Narodopravtsi, on the one hand, and to the Social-Democrats, on the other. The Social-Democrats understand the political struggle differently, they understand it much more broadly than do the representatives of the old revolutionary theories. A clear illustration of this seeming paradox is provided by the Leaflet of the Narodnaya Volya Group, No. 4, December 9, 1895. While heartily welcoming this publication, which testifies to the profound and fruitful thinking that is going on among the present-day Narodovoltsi, we cannot refrain from mentioning P. L. Lavrov's article, "Programme questions" (pp. 19-22), which vividly reveals the different conception of the political struggle entertained by the old-style Narodovoltsi. "... Here," writes P. L. Lavrov, speaking of the relation of the Narodnaya Volya programme to the Social-Democratic programme, "one thing and one thing alone is material, viz., is it possible to organise a strong workers' party

under the autocracy and to do so apart from the organisation of a revolutionary party directed against the autocracy?" (p. 21, col. 2); also, a little before that (in col. 1): ". . . to organise a Russian workers' party while autocracy reigns without at the same time organising a revolutionary party against this autocracy." We cannot at all understand these distinctions which seem to be of such cardinal importance to P. L. Lavrov. What is the meaning of "a workers' party apart from a revolutionary party against the autocracy"?? Is not a workers' party itself a revolutionary party? Is it not directed against the autocracy? This queer idea is explained in the following passage in P. L. Lavrov's article: "A Russian workers' party will have to be organised under the rule of the autocracy with all its charms. If the Social-Democrats succeeded in doing this without at the same time organising a political conspiracy against the autocracy, with all that goes with such a conspiracy, then, of course, their political programme would be a fit and proper programme for Russian socialists, since the emancipation of the workers by the efforts of the workers themselves would be accomplished. But this is very doubtful, if not impossible" (p. 21, col. 1).

So that's the point! To the Narodovoltsi, the term political struggle is synonymous with the term political conspiracy! It must be confessed that in these words P. L. Lavrov has managed to bring out in bold relief the fundamental difference between the tactics in the political struggle adopted by the Narodovoltsi and by the Social-Democrats. Blanquist, conspiratorial traditions are fearfully strong among the former, so much so that they cannot conceive of political struggle except

in the form of political conspiracy. The Social-Democrats, however, are not guilty of such a narrow outlook; they do not believe in conspiracies; they think that the period of conspiracies has long passed away, that to reduce political struggle to conspiracy means, on the one hand, immensely restricting its scope, and, on the other hand, choosing the most unsuitable methods of struggle. Everyone will understand that P. L. Lavrov's remark that "the Russian Social-Democrats take the activities of the West as an unfailing model" (p. 21, col. 1) is nothing more than a polemical manoeuvre, and that actually the Russian Social-Democrats have never forgotten the political conditions here, they have never dreamed of being able to form a workers' party in Russia legally, they have never separated the task of fighting for socialism from that of fighting for political liberty. But they have always thought, and continue to think, that this fight must be waged not by conspirators, but by a revolutionary party based on the working-class movement. They think that the fight against the autocracy must consist not in organising conspiracies, but in educating, disciplining and organising the proletariat, in political agitation among the workers which denounces every manifestation of absolutism, which pillories all the knights of the police government and compels this government to make concessions. Is this not precisely the kind of activity being conducted by the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class? Does not this organisation represent the embryo of a revolutionary party based on the working-class movement, which leads the class struggle of the proletariat against capital and against the autocratic government without

hatching any conspiracies, while deriving its strength from the combination of socialist and democratic struggle into the single, indivisible class struggle of the St. Petersburg proletariat? Brief as they may have been, have not the activities of the League already shown that the proletariat, led by Social-Democracy, is a big political force with which the government is already compelled to reckon, and to which it hastens to make concessions? Both the haste with which the law of June 2, 1897, was passed, and the content of that law clearly reveal its significance as a concession wrung by the proletariat, as a position won from the enemy of the Russian people. This concession is a very tiny one, the position won is very small, but the working-class organisation that has succeeded in forcing this concession is also not distinguished for breadth, stability, long standing or wealth of experience or resources. As is well known, the League of Struggle was formed only in 1895-96, and its appeals to the workers have been confined to hectographed or lithographed leaflets. Can it be denied that an organisation like this, if it united, at least, the biggest centres of the working-class movement in Russia (the St. Petersburg, Moscow-Vladimir, and the southern areas, and also the most important towns like Odessa, Kiev, Saratov, etc.), if it had a revolutionary organ at its disposal and enjoyed as much prestige among the Russian workers generally as the League of Struggle does among the St. Petersburg workers—can it be denied that such an organisation would be a tremendous political factor in contemporary Russia, a factor that the government would have to reckon with in its entire home and foreign policy. By leading the class struggle of the proletariat, developing organisation

and discipline among the workers, helping them to fight for their immediate economic needs and to win position after position from capital, by politically educating the workers and systematically and unswervingly attacking the autocracy and making life a torment for every tsarist bashi-bazouk who makes the proletariat feel the heavy paw of the police government—such an organisation would at one and the same time be a workers' party organisation adapted to our conditions, and a powerful revolutionary party directed against the autocracy. To discuss in advance what methods this organisation will resort to in order to deliver a smashing blow at the autocracy, whether, for example, it will prefer insurrection, a mass political strike, or some other form of attack, to discuss these things in advance and to decide this question now would be empty doctrinairism. It would be akin to generals calling a council of war before they had mustered their troops, mobilised them, and undertaken a campaign against the enemy. When the army of the proletariat fights unswervingly and under the leadership of a strong Social-Democratic organisation for its economic and political emancipation, that army will itself indicate the methods and means of action to the generals. Then, and then only, will it be possible to decide the question of striking the final blow at the autocracy; for the solution of the problem depends on the state of the working-class movement, on its breadth, on the methods of struggle developed by the movement, on the qualities of the revolutionary organisation leading the movement, on the attitude of other social elements to the proletariat and to the autocracy, on the conditions governing home and foreign politics—in a word, it depends on

a thousand and one things which cannot be guessed, and which it would be useless to try to guess in advance.

That is why the following argument of P. L. Lavrov's is also extremely unfair:

*"If, however, they" (the Social-Democrats) "have, in one way or another, not only to group the workers' forces for the struggle against capital, but also to rally revolutionary individuals and groups for the struggle against the autocracy, the Russian Social-Democrats will actually be adopting the programme of their opponents, the Narodnaya Volya, no matter what they may call themselves. Differences of opinion concerning the village community, the destiny of capitalism in Russia and economic materialism are points of detail of very little importance to the real cause, either facilitating or hindering the solution of particular problems, particular methods of preparing the main points, but nothing more" (p. 21, col. 1).*

It is strange to have to challenge this last proposition—that differences of opinion on the fundamental questions of Russian life and of the development of Russian society, on the fundamental problems of the conception of history, concern only "points of detail"! It was said long ago that without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement, and it is hardly necessary to advance proof of this truth at the present time. The theory of the class struggle, the materialist conception of Russian history and the materialist appraisal of the present economic and political situation in Russia, recognition of the need to relate the revolutionary struggle strictly to the definite interests of a definite class and to analyse

its relation to other classes—to call these great revolutionary questions “points of detail” is so colossally wrong and unexpected, coming from a veteran of revolutionary theory, that we are almost prepared to regard this passage as a lapsus. As for the first part of the tirade quoted, its unfairness is still more astonishing. To state in print that the Russian Social-Democrats only group the workers’ forces for the struggle against capital (i.e., only for the economic struggle!) and do not rally revolutionary individuals and groups for the struggle against the autocracy, means that the author either does not know or does not want to know generally known facts concerning the activities of the Russian Social-Democrats. Or, perhaps, P. L. Lavrov does not regard the Social-Democrats who are engaged in practical work in Russia as “revolutionary individuals” and “revolutionary groups”?! Or (and this, perhaps, is more likely) by “struggle” against the autocracy he means only conspiracies against it? (Cf. p. 21, col. 2: “. . . it is a matter of . . . organising a revolutionary conspiracy”; our italics.) Perhaps, in P. L. Lavrov’s opinion, those who do not organise political conspiracies are not engaged in political struggle? We repeat once again: opinions like these fully correspond to the old-time traditions of the old-time Narodnaya Volya, but do not correspond at all either to contemporary conceptions of the political struggle or to contemporary conditions.

We have still to say a few words about the Narodopravtsi. P. L. Lavrov is quite right, in our opinion, when he says that the Social-Democrats “recommend the Narodopravtsi as being more frank, and are ready to support them, without, however,



merging with them" (p. 19, col. 2); he should only have added: as more frank democrats, and to the degree that the Narodopravtsi act as consistent democrats. Unfortunately, this condition is more a matter of the desired future than of the actual present. The Narodopravtsi expressed a desire to free the democratic tasks from Narodism and from the obsolete forms of "Russian socialism" generally; but they themselves were still far from being freed from old prejudices, and were far from consistent when they described their party, exclusively a party for political reforms, as a "social (?!)-revolutionary" party (see their "Manifesto" dated February 19, 1894), and declared in their "Manifesto" that "the term people's rights includes the organisation of people's industry" (we are obliged to quote from memory) and thus introduced Narodnik prejudices sub rosa. Hence, P. L. Lavrov was, perhaps, not altogether wrong when he described them as "masquerade politicians" (p. 20, col. 2). But perhaps it would be fairer to regard the doctrine of Narodnoye Pravo as transitional, to the credit of which it must be said that it was ashamed of the original character of the Narodnik doctrines and openly gave battle to those most abominable Narodnik reactionaries who, despite the existence of absolute rule by the police and the upper class, have the audacity to speak of the desirability of economic and not political reforms (see "An Urgent Question," published by the Narodnoye Pravo Party). If the Narodnoye Pravo Party does not really contain anybody but ex-socialists who conceal their socialist banner for tactical considerations, and who merely don the mask of non-socialist politicians (as P. L. Lavrov assumes, p. 20, col. 2), then, of course, that party has no future whatever.

If, however, the party also contains not masquerade, but real non-socialist politicians, non-socialist democrats, then this party can do no little good by striving to draw closer to the political opposition among our bourgeoisie, by striving to arouse the political consciousness of our petty bourgeoisie, small shopkeepers, small artisans, etc.—the class which, everywhere in Western Europe, played a part in the democratic movement and, in Russia, has made exceptionally rapid progress in cultural and other respects in the post-Reform period, and which cannot avoid feeling the oppression of the police government that gives its cynical support to the big factory owners, the magnates of finance and industrial monopoly. All that is needed for this is that the Narodopravtsi should make it their task to draw closer to various strata of the population and should not confine themselves to the very same “intelligentsia” whose impotence, owing to their isolation from the real interests of the masses, is admitted even in “An Urgent Question.” What is needed is that the Narodopravtsi abandon all idea of merging different social elements and of pushing socialism aside in favour of political tasks, that they abandon the false shame which prevents them from drawing closer to the bourgeois strata of the population, i.e., that they not only talk about a programme for non-socialist politicians, but act according to this programme, rousing and developing the class-consciousness of those social groups and classes for whom socialism is quite unnecessary, but who, as time goes on, increasingly feel the oppression of the autocracy and the need for political liberty.

Russian Social-Democracy is still very young. It is only just emerging from its embryonic state in which theoretical questions predominated. It is only just beginning to develop its practical activity. In place of criticism of Social-Democratic theories and programmes, revolutionaries of other parties have of necessity moved on to criticism of the practical activity of the Russian Social-Democrats. And it must be admitted that this latter criticism differs most sharply from the criticism of theory, differs so much, in fact, that it was possible to float the comical rumour that the St. Petersburg League of Struggle is not a Social-Democratic organisation. The very fact that such a rumour appeared shows how unfounded is the accusation now current that the Social-Democrats ignore the political struggle. The very fact that such a rumour appeared shows that many revolutionaries whom the Social-Democrats' theory could not convince are beginning to be convinced by their practice.

Russian Social-Democracy is still faced with an enormous, almost untouched field of work. The awakening of the Russian working class, its spontaneous striving for knowledge, organisation, socialism, for the struggle against its exploiters and oppressors becomes more widespread, more strikingly apparent every day. The enormous progress made by Russian capitalism in recent times is a guarantee that the working-class movement will grow uninterruptedly in breadth and depth. We are apparently now passing through the period in the capitalist cycle when industry is "prospering," when business is brisk, when the factories are working at full capacity and when countless new factories, new enterprises, joint-stock companies, railway enterprises, etc., etc., are springing up like mushrooms.

One need not be a prophet to foretell the inevitable and fairly sharp crash that is bound to succeed this period of industrial “prosperity.” This crash will ruin masses of small owners, will throw masses of workers into the ranks of the unemployed, and will thus confront all the workers in an acute form with the problems of socialism and democracy which have long faced every class-conscious, every thinking worker. Russian Social-Democrats must see to it that when this crash comes the Russian proletariat is more class-conscious, more united, able to understand the tasks of the Russian working class, capable of putting up resistance to the capitalist class—which is now reaping huge profits and always strives to burden the workers with the losses—and capable of leading Russian democracy in a decisive struggle against the police autocracy, which binds and fetters the Russian workers and the whole of the Russian people.

And so, to work, comrades! Let us not lose precious time! Russian Social-Democrats have much to do to meet the requirements of the awakening proletariat, to organise the working-class movement, to strengthen the revolutionary groups and their mutual ties, to supply the workers with propaganda and agitational literature, and to unite the workers’ circles and Social-Democratic groups scattered all over Russia into a single Social-Democratic Labour Party!

To the Workers and Socialists of St. Petersburg  
From the League of Struggle

The St. Petersburg revolutionaries are experiencing hard times. It seems that the government has concentrated all its forces for

the purpose of crushing the recently born working-class movement which has given such a display of strength. Arrests are being made on an unprecedented scale and the prisons are overcrowded. Intellectuals, men and women, and masses of workers are being dragged off and exiled. Almost every day brings news of ever new victims of the police government, which has flung itself in fury upon its enemies. The government has set itself the aim of preventing the new trend in the Russian revolutionary movement from gaining strength and getting on its feet. The public prosecutors and gendarmes are already boasting that they have smashed the League of Struggle.

This boast is a lie. The League of Struggle is intact, despite all the persecution. With deep satisfaction we declare that the wholesale arrests are doing their job—they are a powerful weapon of agitation among the workers and socialist intellectuals, that the places of the fallen revolutionaries are being taken by new people who are ready, with fresh energy, to join the ranks of the champions of the Russian proletariat and of the entire people of Russia. There can be no struggle without sacrifice, and to the brutal persecution of the tsarist bashibazouks we calmly reply: Revolutionaries have perished—long live the revolution!

So far, increased persecution has only been able to cause a temporary weakening of certain functions of the League of Struggle, a temporary shortage of agents and agitators. This is the shortage that we now feel and that impels us to call upon all class-conscious workers and all intellectuals desirous of devoting their energies to the revolutionary cause. The League

of Struggle needs agents. Let all study circles and all individuals desirous of working in any sphere of revolutionary activity, even the most restricted, inform those in touch with the League of Struggle. (Should any group be unable to contact such individuals—this is very unlikely—they can do so through the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad.) People are needed for all kinds of work, and the more strictly revolutionaries specialise in the various aspects of revolutionary activity, the more strictly they give thought to their methods of underground work and ways of screening it, the more selflessly they concentrate on the minor, unseen, particular jobs, the safer will the whole thing be and the more difficult will it be for the gendarmes and spies to discover the revolutionaries. In advance the government has enmeshed not only the existing centres of anti-government elements, but also possible and probable ones, in a network of agents. The government is steadily developing the size and range of the activities of those of its lackeys who are hounding revolutionaries, is devising new methods, introducing more provocateurs, trying to exert pressure on the arrested by means of intimidation, confrontation with false testimony, forged signatures, planting faked letters, etc., etc. Without a strengthening and development of revolutionary discipline, organisation and underground activity, struggle against the government is impossible. And underground activity demands above all that groups and individuals specialise in different aspects of work and that the job of co-ordination be assigned to the central group of the League of Struggle, with as few members as possible. The aspects of revolutionary work are

extremely varied. Legal agitators are needed who can talk to the workers in a way that does not render them liable to prosecution, and can say just a, leaving it to others to say b and c. Literature and leaflet distributors are needed. Organisers of workers' study circles and groups are needed. Correspondents are needed who can give a complete picture of events in all factories. People are needed who will keep an eye on spies and provocateurs. People are needed who will arrange underground meeting places. People are needed to deliver literature, transmit instructions, and to arrange all kinds of contacts. Fund collectors are needed. Agents are needed to work among the intelligentsia and government officials, people in contact with the workers and factory life, with the administration (with the police, factory inspectors, etc.). People are needed for contact with the different towns of Russia and other countries. People are needed to arrange various ways of running off all sorts of literature. People are needed to look after literature and other things, etc., etc. The smaller and more specific the job undertaken by the individual person or individual group, the greater will be the chance that they will think things out, do the job properly and guarantee it best against failure, that they will consider all the details of underground work and use all possible means of hoodwinking and misleading the gendarmes, the more will success be assured, the harder will it be for the police and gendarmes to keep track of the revolutionaries and their links with their organisations, and the easier for the revolutionary party to replace, without prejudice to the cause as a whole, agents and members who have fallen. We know that specialisation of this

kind is a very difficult matter, difficult because it demands from the individual the greatest endurance and selflessness, demands the giving of all one's strength to work that is inconspicuous, monotonous, that deprives one of contact with comrades and subordinates the revolutionary's entire life to a grim and rigid routine. But it was only in conditions such as these that the greatest men of revolutionary practice in Russia succeeded in carrying out the boldest undertakings, spending years on all-round preparation, and we are profoundly convinced that the Social-Democrats will prove no less self-sacrificing than the revolutionaries of previous generations. We are also aware that the preliminary period envisaged by our system during which the League of Struggle will collect the necessary information about individuals or groups offering their services and give them something to do by way of trial will be a very difficult one for many people eager to devote their energies to revolutionary work. But without this preliminary testing, revolutionary activity in present-day Russia is impossible.

In suggesting this system of work to our new comrades we are expressing a view arrived at after long experience, being deeply convinced that it best of all guarantees successful revolutionary work.



## **The Principal Stages in the History of Bolshevism**

Lenin

“Left-Wing” Communism: an Infantile Disorder

The years of preparation for revolution (1903–05)

The approach of a great storm was sensed everywhere. All classes were in a state of ferment and preparation. Abroad, the press of the political exiles discussed the theoretical aspects of all the fundamental problems of the revolution. Representatives of the three main classes, of the three principal political trends—the liberal-bourgeois, the petty-bourgeois-democratic (concealed behind “social-democratic” and “social-revolutionary” labels and the proletarian-revolutionary—anticipated and prepared the impending open class struggle by waging a most bitter struggle on issues of programme and tactics. All the issues on which the masses waged an armed struggle in 1905–07 and 1917–20 can (and should) be studied, in their embryonic form, in the press of the period. Among these three main trends there were, of course, a host of intermediate, transitional or half-hearted forms. It would be more correct to say that those political and ideological trends which were genuinely of a class nature crystallised in the struggle of press organs, parties, factions and groups; the classes were forging the requisite political and ideological weapons for the impending battles.

The years of revolution (1905–07). All classes came out into the open. All programmatical and tactical views were tested by the action of the masses. In its extent and acuteness, the strike

struggle had no parallel anywhere in the world. The economic strike developed into a political strike, and the latter into insurrection. The relations between the proletariat, as the leader, and the vacillating and unstable peasantry, as the led, were tested in practice. The Soviet form of organisation came into being in the spontaneous development of the struggle. The controversies of that period over the significance of the Soviets anticipated the great struggle of 1917–20. The alternation of parliamentary and non-parliamentary forms of struggle, of the tactics of boycotting parliament and that of participating in parliament, of legal and illegal forms of struggle, and likewise their interrelations and connections—all this was marked by an extraordinary wealth of content. As for teaching the fundamentals of political science to masses and leaders, to classes and parties alike, each month of this period was equivalent to an entire year of “peaceful” and “constitutional” development. Without the “dress rehearsal” of 1905, the victory of the October Revolution in 1917 would have been impossible.

The years of reaction (1907–10). Tsarism was victorious. All the revolutionary and opposition parties were smashed. Depression, demoralisation, splits, discord, defection, and pornography took the place of politics. There was an ever-greater drift towards philosophical idealism; mysticism became the garb of counter-revolutionary sentiments. At the same time, however, it was this great defeat that taught the revolutionary parties and the revolutionary class a real and very useful lesson, a lesson in historical dialectics, a lesson in an understanding of the political struggle, and in the art and science of waging that

struggle. It is at moments of need that one learns who one's friends are. Defeated armies learn their lesson.

Victorious tsarism was compelled to speed up the destruction of the remnants of the pre-bourgeois, patriarchal mode of life in Russia. The country's development along bourgeois lines proceeded apace. Illusions that stood outside and above class distinctions, illusions concerning the possibility of avoiding capitalism, were scattered to the winds. The class struggle manifested itself in a quite new and more distinct way.

The revolutionary parties had to complete their education. They were learning how to attack. Now they had to realise that such knowledge must be supplemented with the knowledge of how to retreat in good order. They had to realise—and it is from bitter experience that the revolutionary class learns to realise this—that victory is impossible unless one has learned how to attack and retreat properly. Of all the defeated opposition and revolutionary parties, the Bolsheviks effected the most orderly retreat, with the least loss to their “army”, with its core best preserved, with the least significant splits (in point of depth and incurability), with the least demoralisation, and in the best condition to resume work on the broadest scale and in the most correct and energetic manner. The Bolsheviks achieved this only because they ruthlessly exposed and expelled the revolutionary phrase-mongers, those who did not wish to understand that one had to retreat, that one had to know how to retreat, and that one had absolutely to learn how to work legally in the most reactionary of parliaments, in the most

reactionary of trade unions, co-operative and insurance societies and similar organisations.

The years of revival (1910–14). At first progress was incredibly slow, then, following the Lena events of 1912, it became somewhat more rapid. Overcoming unprecedented difficulties, the Bolsheviks thrust back the Mensheviks, whose role as bourgeois agents in the working-class movement was clearly realised by the entire bourgeoisie after 1905, and whom the bourgeoisie therefore supported in a thousand ways against the Bolsheviks. But the Bolsheviks would never have succeeded in doing this had they not followed the correct tactics of combining illegal work with the utilisation of “legal opportunities”, which they made a point of doing. In the elections to the arch-reactionary Duma, the Bolsheviks won the full support of the worker curia.

The First Imperialist World War (1914–17). Legal parliamentarianism, with an extremely reactionary “parliament”, rendered most useful service to the Bolsheviks, the party of the revolutionary proletariat. The Bolshevik deputies were exiled to Siberia. All shades of social-imperialism social-chauvinism, social-patriotism, inconsistent and consistent internationalism, pacifism, and the revolutionary repudiation of pacifist illusions found full expression in the Russian émigré press. The learned fools and the old women of the Second International, who had arrogantly and contemptuously turned up their noses at the abundance of “factions” in the Russian socialist movement and at the bitter struggle they were waging among themselves, were unable—

when the war deprived them of their vaunted “legality” in all the advanced countries— to organise anything even approximating such a free (illegal) interchange of views and such a free (illegal) evolution of correct views as the Russian revolutionaries did in Switzerland and in a number of other countries. That was why both the avowed social-patriots and the “Kautskyites” of all countries proved to be the worst traitors to the proletariat. One of the principal reasons why Bolshevism was able to achieve victory in 1917–20 was that, since the end of 1914, it has been ruthlessly exposing the baseness and vileness of social-chauvinism and “Kautskyism” (to which Longuetism in France, the views of the Fabians and the leaders of the Independent Labour Party in Britain, of Turati in Italy, etc., correspond), the masses later becoming more and more convinced, from their own experience, of the correctness of the Bolshevik views.

The second revolution in Russia (February to October 1917). Tsarism’s senility and obsolescence had (with the aid of the blows and hardships of a most agonising war) created an incredibly destructive force directed against it. Within a few days Russia was transformed into a democratic bourgeois republic, freer—in war conditions—than any other country in the world. The leaders of the opposition and revolutionary parties began to set up a government, just as is done in the most “strictly parliamentary” republics; the fact that a man had been a leader of an opposition party in parliament—even in a most reactionary parliament—facilitated his subsequent role in the revolution.

In a few weeks the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries thoroughly assimilated all the methods and manners, the arguments and sophistries of the European heroes of the Second International, of the ministerialists and other opportunist riff-raff. Everything we now read about the Scheidemanns and Noskes, about Kautsky and Hilferding, Renner and Austerlitz, Otto Bauer and Fritz Adler, Turati and Longuet, about the Fabians and the leaders of the Independent Labour Party of Britain—all this seems to us (and indeed is) a dreary repetition, a reiteration, of an old and familiar refrain. We have already witnessed all this in the instance of the Mensheviks. As history would have it, the opportunists of a backward country became the forerunners of the opportunists in a number of advanced countries.

If the heroes of the Second International have all gone bankrupt and have disgraced themselves over the question of the significance and role of the Soviets and Soviet rule; if the leaders of the three very important parties which have now left the Second International (namely, the German Independent Social-Democratic Party, the French Longuetists and the British Independent Labour Party) have disgraced themselves and become entangled in this question in a most “telling” fashion; if they have all shown themselves slaves to the prejudices of petty-bourgeois democracy (fully in the spirit of the petty-bourgeois of 1848 who called themselves “Social-Democrats”)—then we can only say that we have already witnessed all this in the instance of the Mensheviks. As history would have it, the Soviets came into being in Russia in 1905; from February to October 1917 they were turned to a false use

by the Mensheviks, who went bankrupt because of their inability to understand the role and significance of the Soviets; today the idea of Soviet power has emerged throughout the world and is spreading among the proletariat of all countries with extraordinary speed. Like our Mensheviks, the old heroes of the Second International are everywhere going bankrupt, because they are incapable of understanding the role and significance of the Soviets. Experience has proved that, on certain very important questions of the proletarian revolution, all countries will inevitably have to do what Russia has done.

Despite views that are today often to be met with in Europe and America, the Bolsheviks began their victorious struggle against the parliamentary and (in fact) bourgeois republic and against the Mensheviks in a very cautious manner, and the preparations they made for it were by no means simple. At the beginning of the period mentioned, we did not call for the overthrow of the government but explained that it was impossible to overthrow it without first changing the composition and the temper of the Soviets. We did not proclaim a boycott of the bourgeois parliament, the Constituent Assembly, but said—and following the April (1917) Conference of our Party began to state officially in the name of the Party—that a bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly would be better than a bourgeois republic without a Constituent Assembly, but that a “workers’ and peasants’ ” republic, a Soviet republic, would be better than any bourgeois-democratic, parliamentary republic. Without such thorough, circumspect and long preparations, we could not have achieved victory in October 1917, or have consolidated that victory.

## **Two Tactics**

February 14 (1), 1905

Lenin

Collected Works, Volume 8, pages 148-157.

From the very beginning of the mass working-class movement in Russia, i.e., approximately for the past ten years, profound differences have existed among Social-Democrats on questions of tactics. As we know, it was differences of this kind that gave rise, in the late nineties, to the trend of Economism, which led to the split into an opportunist (Rabocheye Dyelo) wing and into a revolutionary (old-Iskra) wing of the Party. Russian Social-Democratic opportunism, however, differed from that of Western Europe in certain peculiar features. It strikingly reflected the point of view, or rather the absence of any independent point of view, of the intellectualist wing of the Party, which was carried away both by the current catchwords of Bernsteinism and by the forms and immediate results of the pure-and-simple labour movement. This infatuation led to wholesale treachery on the part of the legal Marxists, who went over to liberalism, and to the creation by Social-Democrats of the famous "tactics-as-process" theory, which firmly attached to our opportunists the label of "tail-enders". They trailed helplessly behind events, plunged from one extreme to another, and in all cases reduced the scope of activity of the revolutionary proletariat and its faith in its own strength, all of which was usually done on the pretext of raising the independent activity of the proletariat. Strange, but true. No one talked so much about the independent activity of the



workers, and no one did so much by his propaganda to narrow, curtail, and diminish that activity as did the Rabocheye Dyelists.

"Talk less about 'raising the activity of the working masses'," the class-conscious, advanced workers said to their zealous but misguided advisers. "We are far more active than you think, and we are quite able to support, by open street fighting, even demands that do not promise any 'tangible results' whatever. It is not for you to 'raise' our activity, because activity is precisely the thing you yourselves lack. Bow less in subservience to spontaneity, and think more about raising your own activity, gentlemen!" This is how the attitude of the revolutionary workers towards the opportunist intellectuals had to be characterised. (What Is To Be Done? p. 55. )

The two steps back which the new Iskra took towards Rabocheye Dyelo revived this attitude. Once again, the columns of Iskra pour forth the preachings of tail-ism under cover of the same nauseating vows: Verily, O Lord, I do profess and believe in the independent activity of the proletariat. It was in the name of the independent activity of the proletariat that Axelrod, Martynov, Martov, and Lieber (the Bundist) defended at the Congress the right of professors and students to become members of the Party without joining any Party organisation. It was in the name of the independent activity of the proletariat that the "organisation as-process" theory was invented, a theory that justified disorganisation and glorified the anarchism of the intellectuals. It was in the name of the independent activity of the proletariat that the no less famous

“higher-type-of-demonstration” theory was invented, in the form of an agreement between a workers’ delegation, which had been passed through the sieve of a three-stage system of elections, and the Zemstvo men for a peaceful demonstration that was to create no panic fear. It was in the name of the independent activity of the proletariat that the idea of the armed uprising was perverted and vulgarised, debased and confused.

In view of its vast practical importance, we should like to draw the reader’s attention to this question. The development of the working-class movement played a cruel joke on the wise men of the new Iskra. They circulated a letter in Russia, which, in the name of “the process of the systematic development of the class-consciousness and independent activity of the proletariat”, recommended, as a higher type of demonstration, “that the workers’ petitions be posted to the homes of the municipal councillors and a considerable number of copies scattered in the Zemstvo Assembly Hall”; they sent a second letter to Russia, conveying the most sensational discovery that at the present “historical moment the political stage is fully occupied [!] by the conflict between the organised bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy” and that “every [mark well!] revolutionary movement of the lower strata has only one [!] objective meaning, to support the slogans of that one of the two [!!] forces which is interested in breaking down the present regime” (the democratic intelligentsia was declared to be “a force”); hardly had the first letter been circulated and the second letter reached Russia, hardly had the class-conscious workers had time to read these marvellous missives and to have

a good laugh at them, when the events of the real struggle of the proletariat promptly swept all this political rubbish of the new-Iskra publicists on to the waste heap. The proletariat showed that there is a third force (actually, of course, not third, but, in sequence, second and in fighting ability first), which is not merely interested in breaking down the autocratic regime but is ready to start on the actual job of breaking it down. Since the Ninth of January, the working-class movement has been developing before our very eyes into the popular uprising.

Let us see how this transition to the uprising was evaluated by the Social-Democrats, who had discussed it in advance as a question of tactics, and how the workers themselves began to settle this question in practice.

Three years ago, the following was said on insurrection as a slogan that defines our immediate, practical tasks: "Picture to yourselves a popular uprising. Probably everyone will now agree that we must think of this uprising and prepare for it. But how? Surely the Central Committee cannot appoint agents to all localities for the purpose of preparing the uprising! Even if we had a Central Committee, it could achieve absolutely nothing by such appointments under present-day Russian conditions. But a network of agents that would form in the course of establishing and distributing the common newspaper would not have to 'sit about and wait' for the call to insurrection, but could carry on such regular activity as would guarantee the highest probability of success in the event of an insurrection. Such activity would strengthen our connections with the broadest masses of the workers and with all strata that

are discontented with the autocracy, which is of such importance for an uprising. Precisely such activity would serve to cultivate the ability to estimate correctly the general political situation and, consequently, the ability to select the proper moment for the uprising. Precisely such activity would train all local organisations to respond simultaneously to the same political questions, incidents, and events that agitate the whole of Russia and to react to these 'incidents' in the most vigorous, uniform, and expedient manner possible; for the uprising is in essence the most vigorous, most uniform, and most expedient 'answer' of the entire people to the government. And lastly, it is precisely such activity that would train all revolutionary organisations throughout Russia to maintain the most continuous, and at the same time the most secret, contacts with one another, thus creating real Party unity; for without such contacts it will be impossible collectively to discuss the plan for the uprising and to take the necessary preparatory measures on the eve, measures that must be kept in the strictest secrecy.

"In a word, the 'plan for an all-Russian political newspaper', far from representing the fruits of the labour of arm chair workers, infected with dogmatism and bookishness (as it seemed to those who gave but little thought to it), is the most practical plan for immediate and all-round preparation of the uprising, with, at the same time, no loss of sight for a moment of the pressing day-to-day work." (What Is To Be Done? )

The concluding words, which we have underlined, give a clear answer to the question how the revolutionary Social-Democrats envisaged the work of preparing the uprising. But clear as this

answer is, the old tailist tactics could not fail to assert themselves on this point also. Quite recently Martynov published a pamphlet entitled *Two Dictatorships*, which has been strongly recommended by the new *Iskra* (No. 84). The author is stirred to the depths of his Rabocheye Dyelo soul with indignation at the fact that Lenin could bring himself to speak of "preparing, timing, and carrying out the general armed uprising of the people". The stern Martynov smites the enemy with the statement: "On the basis of historical experience and a scientific analysis of the dynamics of social forces, international Social Democracy has always recognised that only palace revolutions and pronunciamientos can be timed in advance and carried out successfully according to a previously prepared plan, for the very reason that they are not popular revolutions, i.e., revolutions in social relations, but only reshufflings among the ruling cliques. Social-Democracy has always and everywhere recognised that a people's revolution cannot be timed in advance, that it is not prepared artificially, but that it comes about of itself."

Perhaps, having read this tirade, the reader will say that obviously Martynov is "anything but" a serious opponent and that it would be absurd to take him seriously. We would quite agree with the reader. We would even say to such a reader that no greater evil on earth could befall us than to have to take all the theories and all the arguments of our new *Iskra* people seriously. The only trouble is that this nonsense appears also in the editorials of *Iskra* (No. 62). Worse still, there are people in the Party, by no means few, who stuff their heads with this nonsense. And so we have to discuss non-serious matters, just

as we have to discuss the “theory” of Rosa Luxemburg, who discovered the “organisation-as process”. We are obliged to explain to Martynov that up rising must not be confused with people’s revolution. We have to keep explaining that profound allusions to a revolution in social relations when what is at issue is the practical question of the ways of overthrowing Russian autocracy are worthy only of a Kifa Mokiyevich.[6] This revolution began in Russia with the abolition of serfdom, and it is the backwardness of our political superstructure as compared with the accomplished revolution in social relations that makes the collapse of the superstructure inevitable; an immediate collapse as the result of a single blow is quite possible, since “the people’s revolution” in Russia has already dealt tsarism a hundred blows, and whether the hundred and first or the hundred and tenth will finish it off is really a matter of conjecture. Only opportunist intellectuals, who try to impute their own philistine ways to the proletarians, can flaunt their high school knowledge of a “revolution in social relations” at a time when practical ways are being discussed for delivering one of the blows in the second hundred. Only the opportunists of the new Iskra can raise hysterical clamours about a sinister “Jacobin” plan, the keynote of which, as we have seen, is all-round mass agitation by means of a political newspaper.

A people’s revolution, true, cannot be timed. We cannot but praise Martynov and the writer of the leader in Iskra, No. 62, for knowing this truth (“what thought of preparing the uprising can there possibly be in our Party?” asked Martynov’s loyal associate, or disciple, in that article, warring on the “utopians”). But if we have really prepared an uprising, and if a popular

uprising is realisable by virtue of the revolutions in social relations that have already taken place, then it is quite possible to time the uprising. We shall attempt to clarify the point for the new-Iskra followers by a simple example. Can the working-class movement be timed? No, it cannot; for that movement is made up of thousands of separate acts arising from a revolution in social relations. Can a strike be timed? It can, despite the fact—just imagine, Comrade Martynov—despite the fact that every strike is the result of a revolution in social relations. When can a strike be timed? When the organisation or group calling it has influence among the masses of the workers involved and is able correctly to gauge the moment when discontent and resentment among them are mounting. Do you see the point now, Comrade Martynov and Comrade “leader-ist” of Iskra, No. 62? If you do, then please take the trouble to compare an uprising with a people’s revolution. “A people’s revolution cannot be timed in advance.” An uprising can be, if those preparing it have influence among the masses and can correctly estimate the situation.

Fortunately, the initiative of the advanced workers happens to be far ahead of the tail-ist philosophy of the new Iskra. While the latter is squeezing itself dry for theories to prove that an uprising cannot be timed by those who have prepared for it and have organised the vanguard of the revolutionary class, events show that those who have not prepared may time, indeed, are sometimes compelled to time an uprising.

Here is a leaflet sent to us by a St. Petersburg comrade. It was set up, printed, and distributed in more than 10,000 copies by

the workers themselves, who had seized a legal printing-press in St. Petersburg on January 10.

“Workers of All Countries, Unite!

“Citizens! Yesterday you witnessed the brutality of the autocratic government. You saw blood flowing in the streets. You saw hundreds of fighters for the working-class cause lying dead; you saw death, you heard the groans of wounded women and defenseless children. The blood and brains of workers bespattered the roadways that workers’ hands had laid. Who directed the troops, the rifles, and the bullets against the workers’ breasts?

“The tsar, the grand dukes, the Ministers, the generals, and the scoundrels at Court.

“They are the murderers! Death to them! To arms, comrades, seize the arsenals, the munitions depots, and armourers’ shops. Break down the prison walls, comrades, and release the fighters for freedom. Smash up the gendarme and police stations and all government institutions. Let us overthrow the tsarist government and establish our own. Long live the revolution! Long live the Constituent Assembly of People’s Representatives!

“Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.”

The call to insurrection issued by this handful of advanced enterprising workers did not meet with success. Several unsuccessful calls to insurrection, or several unsuccessful “timings” of insurrection would not surprise or discourage us. We leave it to the new Iskra to hold forth in this connection on



the necessity of a "revolution in social relations" and grandiloquently to condemn the "utopianism" of the workers who exclaimed, "Let us establish our own government!" Only hopeless pedants or muddle-heads would regard this watchword as the central point of such an appeal. What is important for us to note and emphasise is the remarkably bold and practical manner in which the problem now squarely confronting us was posed.

The call of the St. Petersburg workers was not answered and could not have been answered' as quickly as they wished. This call will be repeated time and again, and the attempts at an uprising may result in more failures. But the very fact that the workers themselves have raised this issue is of tremendous significance. The gain which the working-class movement has made in bringing home the practical urgency of this problem and in moving it closer to the forefront of any popular unrest is a gain that nothing can take away from the proletariat.

As much as three years ago the Social-Democrats had on general grounds advanced the slogan of preparing the uprising. The independent activity of the proletariat arrived at the same slogan as a result of the direct lessons taught by the civil war. There are two kinds of independent activity. There is the independent activity of a proletariat possessed of revolutionary initiative, and there is the independent activity of a proletariat that is undeveloped and is held in leading-strings; there is a consciously Social-Democratic independent activity, and there is a Zubatovist independent activity. And there are Social-Democrats who to this day contemplate with reverence the

second kind of independent activity, who believe that they can evade a direct reply to the pressing questions of the day by repeating the word "class" over and over again. We need but take No. 84 of Iskra. "Why," asks its "leader-ist", bearing down on us with a triumphant air, "why was it not the narrow organisation of professional revolutionaries, but the Workers' Assembly that set this avalanche in motion [January 9]? Because this Assembly was a really [mark this!] broad organisation. based on the independent activity of the working-class masses." If the author of this classical phrase were not an admirer of Martynov, he might have understood that the Assembly rendered a service to the movement of the revolutionary proletariat only when and to the extent that it passed from Zubatovist independent activity to Social-Democratic independent activity (after which it immediately ceased to exist as a legally functioning organisation).

Had the new-Iskrists, or the new-Rabocheye Dyelo-ists not been tail-enders, they would have realised that it was the Ninth of January that justified those who had said that "...in the long run the legalisation of the working-class movement will be to our advantage, and not to that of the Zubatovs" (What Is To Be Done?). It was the Ninth of January that proved again and again the importance of the task formulated in that pamphlet: "...we must prepare reapers, both to cut down the tares of today [paralyse today's corrupting influence of the Zubatov movement] and to reap the wheat of tomorrow" (give a revolutionary lead to the movement that has advanced a step with the aid of legalisation). The Simple Simons of the new Iskra, however, use the bountiful wheat harvest as a pretext for

minimising the importance of a strong organisation of revolutionary reapers.

It would be criminal, the new-Iskra leader-writer continues, "to attack the revolution in the rear". What this sentence means, God only knows. As to its bearing on the general opportunist complexion of Iskra, we shall probably deal with the point on another occasion. Here it will suffice to indicate that this sentence can have but one true political meaning, namely, that the author grovels in the dust before the rear of the revolution and disdainfully turns up his nose at the "narrow" and "Jacobin" van of the revolution.

The more the new Iskra displays its Martynovist zeal, the clearer becomes the contrast between the tactics of tailism and the tactics of revolutionary Social-Democracy. We pointed out in the first issue of Vperyod that an uprising must connect itself with one of the spontaneous movements. Consequently, we do not in the least forget the importance of "guarding the rear", to employ a military term. In Vperyod, No. 4, we referred to the correct tactics of the St. Petersburg Committee members, who from the outset directed all their efforts towards supporting and developing the revolutionary elements in the spontaneous movement, while at the same time maintaining an attitude of reserve and distrust towards the shady, Zubatov rear of that movement. We shall conclude now with a piece of advice, which no doubt we shall have to repeat more than once to the new-Iskrists: Do not minimise the tasks of the revolution's vanguard, do not forget our obligation to support this vanguard by our organised independent activity. Use

fewer platitudes about the development of the independent activity of the workers—the workers display no end of independent revolutionary activity which you do not notice! — but see to it rather that you do not demoralise undeveloped workers by your own tail-ism.

## **The Convening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Congress**

V. I. Lenin

Vperyod, No. 8, February 28, 1905.

Collected Works, Volume 8, pages 177-180.

Extract

**The Third Congress is the first to be convened under conditions whereby its composition** (as set forth in the Party Rules), its proceedings, and the basis of participation are known beforehand. Let all comrades then make the most of these conditions! Let them not forget that our Party Rules guarantee to everybody an opportunity to appeal to the Congress. (See Clause 10: "Every Party member, as well as any person having any dealings with the Party, has the right to demand that any statement he may submit to the Central Committee, to the Editorial Board of the Central Organ, or to a Party Congress be delivered in the original.") Let everyone take advantage of this opportunity immediately. The Editorial Board of Vperyod undertakes to deliver such statements to the Russian Bureau, which has now been constituted as the Organising Committee of the Congress.

The right to vote at the Congress is restricted to representatives of committees and of other qualified Party organisations as defined by the Rules. But the Congress itself may extend to everyone the right of participation with consultative voice, while the Organising Committee may grant this right to delegates from Party organisations not possessing full-rights

status. (Clause 3, Note 2, of the Party Rules: "The Central Committee is authorized to invite to a congress, with consultative voice, delegates from organisations which do not fulfill the conditions stipulated in Note 1," viz., organisations whose qualification has not been confirmed a year prior to the Congress.

It goes without saying that when the Organising Committee is instructed by the majority of the committees to convene a congress against the will of the Bonapartist Central Committee and Council, it takes over all the rights of the C. C. with regard to such convocation.)

**The Editorial Board of Vperyod proposes to the Congress the following tentative agenda:** (1) Constitution of the Congress (standing orders, report of the Organising Committee, examination of credentials). (2) Delegates' reports. (3) The Party crisis. (4) Organizational question. (5) **Attitude towards insurrection.** (6) Agreement with **the revolutionary democrats for purposes of the insurrection.** (7) Attitude towards the liberals. (8) Work among the peasantry and **support of the revolutionary peasant movement.** (9) Work among the troops. (10) Improvement of propaganda and agitation. (11) Election of officers.

The active participation of all Party members in drafting and preparing reports and resolutions on these and other major questions (as well as in the collection of material for reports) is absolutely essential for the success of the Congress. We call upon all adherents of the Party principle to start on this work at once. Everyone who has been involved in one way or other in

the trials and tribulations of the Party crisis can help the Congress by a brief statement of his experiences and his view of the way out. Everyone who has worked in any Party or Party-connected organisation can give invaluable information, based on personal experience, for solving various aspects of the organisational question. (The contributions might cover such points as time and place of the activity; membership of the particular organisation— number of workers and number of intellectuals; the relations between them; whether written rules are needed, and which; whether there should be any fixed rules—and if so, to what extent—governing the limits of autonomy and of the division of labour of the groups belonging to the Party or connected with it, co-optation and expulsion of members; the elective principle; the attitude of the committees to the groups of propagandists, agitators, and organisers, to the district circles and factory circles, to the publicists' committees, technical committees, etc., etc.)

The Vperyod Editorial Board has already received some material on **work among the peasants and the soldiers**. We know of one group which is working systematically on a summary of the experience acquired by its members in the field of propaganda, agitation, and organisation, and is preparing a report for the Congress. **We have been promised the report of a comrade who helped to organise hundreds of workers for armed resistance in the event of an anti-Jewish pogrom in a certain large city**, and a report on the question of street fighting from another comrade who has made a study of military science. It is of the highest importance that the greatest possible number of comrades undertake such and similar work at once.

The Party crisis has been clarified in our literature down to the minutest detail. The discussion of this question cannot and should not take up much time. **The keynote of the Congress should be the new questions of organisation and tactics,** which are being brought to the fore by the new gigantic upswing in our revolutionary movement. In the solution of these questions the collective experience of all Social-Democrats who have been in any way active in the movement will be of inestimable value. But we must gather this experience as soon as possible and make it available for discussion at the Congress.

To work, then, comrades! **Let everyone who has the interests of the Social-Democratic working-class movement at heart bestir himself at once to give the Congress his active aid.** Then the Party will quickly emerge from this period of temporary abasement and enfeeblement on to the path of most active participation in the great Russian revolution, the path leading to victory over the accursed enemy of the Russian people!



## General Plan of the Third Congress Decisions

Lenin

February 1905

Collected Works, Volume 8, pages 184-190.

Resolutions:

1. (a) Real object of the Minority: composition of the centres.
- (b) Non-compliance with Congress decisions.
- (c) Split before the League Congress: **formation of a secret organisation.**
- (d) Dishonesty of this act and all resultant disorganisation.
- (e) The shame of trying to justify disruptive activities by theories concerning organisation-as-process, organisation-as-tendency, by **hypocritical cries about bureaucratism**, formalism, etc.
- (f) Enormous harm done to the constructive work in Russia by their disorganisation.
- (g) Necessity of complete dissociation from the disorganisers.
- (h) Authorisation to the centres to issue a pamphlet briefly setting forth the causes and the history of the split, and notification to international Social-Democracy.
2. (a) It is necessary to have expressions of opinion on the so-called conciliationist tendency.
- (b) Its only honest **non-hypocritical representative** was Plekhanov, when he wrote No. 52 of Iskra.

(c) Congress acknowledges the correctness of Plekhanov's stand at the Second Congress of the Party and at the Congress of the League, and the sincerity of his desire for peace through co-optation.

(d) Unfortunately, Plekhanov failed to maintain his position on concessions **towards the revisionists and individualist anarchists**; the attempts on his part at justification in principle are obviously wrong and are only likely to create confusion in people's minds and introduce an element of artfulness in inner-Party relations.

(e) The **so-called conciliators are nothing but hypocritical Mensheviks**. No independent platform of conciliation exists other than Plekhanov's, and that, too, he has now rejected (personal concessions, but disputes on points of principle with the revisionists and anarcho-individualists).

3. (a) The Congress recognises differences on points of principle between our position and that of the new-Iskrists.

(b) The new-Iskrists' utter instability on points of principle goes back to the Second Congress, where they first wholly opposed the opportunist wing and **ended up** (albeit against their own will and consciousness) by turning towards it.

(c) After the Second Congress the opportunist tendency became still more pronounced; in the organisation itself systematic petty betrayals were justified. The blunting of such a weapon of the proletarian class struggle as organisation. Distortion of Marxism to the extent of justifying and extolling disorganisation and intellectualist anarchism.

(d) In regard to questions of the general line of its policy, Iskra should have admitted the “gulf between the new Iskra and the old Iskra”. A shift towards tail-ism.

(e) In tactics this was expressed in the attitude towards the liberals. The Zemstvo campaign.

(f) “ ” “ ” “ ” “ ” **towards the insurrection.** Attempts to drag back and confuse.

(g) “ ” “ ” “ ” “ ” **towards arming.**

(h) “ ” “ ” “ ” “ ” “ ” towards demoralisation of the backward workers with the slogan “independent activity of the workers”, etc.

(i) On the whole, the new-Iskrists=an opportunist wing of the Party.

Basically ill-assorted elements in their camp.

{

Organisation-as-process

Party and class

Liberals and Zemstvo campaign

Insurrection

Arming

Revolutionary dictatorship

}

Instability on questions of principle (Second Congress).

Shift towards opportunist Rabocheye Dyelo (a gulf).

Their approval by party-fringe intellectuals and open opportunists à la Struve.

Necessity of struggle for the line of the old Iskra.

4. (a) Insincere nature of the cries about a party of the intelligentsia. Utilised by the liberals. New-Iskristis themselves have disavowed it.

(b) Demagogic nature of propaganda among the workers. The **“elective principle”, its necessity under free political conditions, its impossibility on a wide scale in Russia.**

(c) **Empty words about “independent activity of the workers” serving as a screen for tail-ism; they promise organisationally the impossible, use cheap methods to decry “bureaucratism”, “formalism”, etc., but give nothing; they fail to notice the revolutionary independent activity of the workers and hang about the lowest and most backward strata of the movement.**

(d) Warn the workers. Class-conscious workers should know and bear in mind the analogous methods of the Rabocheye Dyelo-ists; they should know and bear in mind the position of the old Iskra, namely, the importance for the working-class masses to advance from their midst class-conscious, Social-Democratic workers, worker-revolutionaries, our Bebels, and **the necessity to organise every district, every factory, etc.**

(e) **Only** the full consciousness of the advanced workers, the complete elimination of all distinctions between intellectuals and workers within Social-Democracy, **can guarantee a Social-Democratic class party of the proletariat.**

5. (a) **Necessity of immediately preparing for the uprising.**

(b) " " creating an organisation or organisations of a fighting character.

+7. (c) Necessity of increasing the number of organisations generally: **organising the revolution.**

(d) **Terrorism must be merged in actual practice with the movement of the masses.**

(e) **Aim of the insurrection: provisional revolutionary government**, arming of the people, Constituent Assembly, revolutionary peasant committees.

(f) Tasks of Social-Democrats in wielding power: full implementation of the whole democratic programme, independent organisation and organisations of the working class, the striving to develop the revolutionary independent activity of the proletariat and the rural poor, **steadfast safeguarding of the class programme and point of view, and a critical attitude towards the illusions of revolutionary democracy.**

or 7: {

(g) These (preceding) conditions determine also the **militant agreement between Social-Democracy and revolutionary democracy for the insurrection.**

(h) **By revolutionary democracy is meant the consistent and firm democratic currents that accept the whole democratic programme of Social-Democracy, do not hold back from any revolutionary measures, but lack the clear Social-Democratic class consciousness [sic.]**

}

9. (a) Starover's resolution is wrong in principle: the crux of the matter is not in declarations but in struggle, in the common struggle.

(b) The declarations and' slogans of the liberals and liberal democrats do not inspire confidence (Struve).

(c) The arbitrary and **false interpretation of these groups as democratic intelligentsia**. Agreement with a force, hut the intelligentsia is not a force. Starover has this muddled.

(d) On the order of the day an agreement not on the condition of declarations, but on the condition of participation in the uprising, **not with the liberal democrats, but with the revolutionary democrats**.

10. (a) Agreement with the Zemstvo men violates even the conditions of Starover's resolution.

(b) As to not frightening the liberals, that is irrelevant and inopportune. Impossibility of justifying this by the danger of anarchism.

(c) The reactionary meaning of the slogans about "a higher type of demonstrations".

(d) The impressionist opportunism of the new Iskra.

(e) **Abuse of words about "class independent activity"** and systematic development of the class.

(f) To publish their first letter for the edification of the young Party members.

11. (a) Most important at the present time:

—N.B.: together with the peasant bourgeoisie against the landlords, together with the rural proletariat against the bourgeoisie.

(b) **to stress the democratic aspects,**

(c) not to overlook for a single moment the socialist (the entire socialist) programme,

(d) to maintain steadfastly the **standpoint of the proletariat generally and of the rural proletariat in particular.**

12{

(e) To support the revolutionary movement of both the rural proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie **against the landlords, down to the complete expropriation of the landlords' lands,** without, however, in any way **indulging the illusions of petty-bourgeois socialism by action or inaction,** but struggling vigorously against monarchist and Caesarist speculations on the reactionary elements of the peasant bourgeoisie.

}

13. (a) **Importance of work among the soldiers:**

(b) Leaflets.

(c) Military organisation, its elements? Special military organisation may be useful je nachdem.

(d)

14. (a) To take the programme as a basis....

(b) Travelling groups.

(c) Lectures and agitational speeches.

\* \*

In the basic resolution against the new-Iskristis it is important to note the following:

(a) **The negation or belittlement of the idea of a strong organisation of the class-conscious proletariat and its vanguard**, the Social-Democratic Labour Party, tends to convert the working-class movement into the **tailpiece of the bourgeois-democratic movement**.

(b) This is the end-result of the demagogic belittlement of the role of the class-conscious Social-Democratic influence on the spontaneous movement of the proletariat and the theoretical vulgarisation of Marxism through an interpretation that acts as a drag on revolutionary initiative and the progressive tasks of Social-Democracy.

This is the end-result, too, of the idea of contraposing the technical and the political leadership of the revolution and—



## The Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.

Lenin

April 1905

Collected Works, Vol. 8, pp. 359-424.

### DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE ATTITUDE OF THE R.S.D.L.P. TOWARDS THE ARMED UPRISING

1. Whereas the proletariat, being, by virtue of its position, the foremost and most consistent revolutionary class, is therefore called upon to **play the role of leader and guide of the general democratic revolutionary movement** in Russia;

2. Whereas **only the performance of this role** during the revolution will ensure the proletariat the most advantageous position in the ensuing struggle for socialism against the propertied classes of the bourgeois-democratic Russia about to be born; and

3. Whereas the proletariat can perform this role only if it is organised **under the banner of Social-Democracy into an independent political force** and if it acts in strikes and demonstrations with the fullest possible unity; --

Therefore, the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. resolves that the task of organising the forces of the proletariat for **direct struggle against the autocracy** by means of mass political strikes and the armed uprising, and of setting up for this purpose an apparatus for information and leadership, is one of the chief tasks of the Party at the present revolutionary moment; for which reason the Congress instructs both the C.C. and the

local committees and leagues to start preparing the political mass strike as well as the **organisation of special groups for the obtainment and distribution of arms**, for the elaboration of a plan of the armed uprising and the direct leadership of the rising. The fulfilment of this task can and should proceed in such a way as will not only not in the least prejudice the general work of awakening the class-consciousness of the proletariat, but, on the contrary, will render that work more effective and successful.

Written on April 14 (27), 1905

#### DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE ARMED UPRISING

The Congress holds, on the basis of the practical experiences of the functionaries and on the basis of the mood of the working-class masses, that **preparations for the uprising imply, not only the preparation of weapons, the formation of groups**, etc., but also the accumulation of experience by means of practical attempts at separate armed actions, such as attacks by armed squads on the police and on troops during public meetings, or on prisons, government offices, etc. While fully relying on the local Party centres and on the C.C. to determine the limits of such actions and the most convenient occasions for them, while fully relying on the comrades' discretion **in avoiding a useless expenditure of effort on petty acts of terror**, the Congress draws the attention of all Party organisations to the need for taking into consideration the above-mentioned facts of experience.

#### SPEECH ON THE QUESTION OF THE ARMED UPRISING

APRIL 15

It has been said here that the question is clear enough in principle. Nevertheless, statements have been made in Social-Democratic literature (see Iskra, No. 62, and Comrade Axelrod's foreword to the pamphlet by "A Worker") which go to show that the question is not so clear after all. Iskra and Axelrod talked about conspiracy and expressed the fear that too much thought would be given to the uprising. The facts show, however, that there has been too little thought on the subject. . . . In his foreword to the pamphlet by "A Worker", Comrade Axelrod maintains that it can only be a question of an uprising of the "uncivilised masses". Events have shown that we are dealing, not with an uprising of the "uncivilised masses", **but with an uprising of politically conscious masses capable of carrying on an organised struggle.** The entire history of the past year proved that we underestimated the significance and the inevitability of the uprising. Attention must be paid to the practical aspect of the matter. In this respect the experience of those engaged in practical work and of the workers of St. Petersburg, Riga, and the Caucasus is of exceptional importance. I would suggest, therefore, that the comrades tell us of their experience; that will make our discussion practical instead of academic. **We must ascertain the mood of the proletariat** -- whether the workers consider themselves fit to struggle and to lead the struggle. **We must sum up this collective experience, from which no generalised conclusions have as yet been drawn.**

SPEECH ON THE QUESTION OF THE ARMED UPRISING

APRIL 16

During the debate the question was put on a practical plane: what is the mood of the masses? Comrade Leskov was right in saying that it was chequered. But Comrade Zharkov is right, too, in saying that **we must reckon with the fact that the uprising, whatever we may think of it, is bound to take place.** The question arises whether there are any differences in principle between the resolutions submitted. I fail totally to see any. Although I am viewed as an arch-intransigent, I will, nevertheless, try to reconcile and bring these two resolutions into line -- I will undertake their reconciliation. I have nothing against the amendment to Comrade Voinov's resolution. Nor do I see any difference in principle in the addendum. **Very energetic participation does not necessarily imply hegemony.** I think Comrade Mikhailov expressed himself in a more positive manner; he emphasises hegemony, and in a concrete form, too. The English proletariat is destined to bring about a socialist revolution -- that is beyond doubt; but its inability to bring it about at the present moment, owing to its lack of socialist organisation and its corruption by the bourgeoisie, is equally beyond dispute. Comrade Voinov expresses the same thought: the most energetic participation is undoubtedly the most decisive participation. **Whether the proletariat will decide the outcome of the revolution -- no one can assert absolutely.** This is likewise true of the role of leader. Comrade Voinov's resolution is worded more carefully. Social-Democracy may organise the uprising, it may even be the deciding factor in it. But whether Social-Democracy will have the leading role in it cannot be predetermined; that will depend

on the strength and organisation of the proletariat. The **petty bourgeoisie may be better organised and its diplomats may prove to be superior and better trained.** Comrade Voinov is the more cautious; he says, "You may be able to do it." "You will do it," says Comrade Mikhailov. The proletariat may possibly decide the outcome of the revolution, but this cannot be asserted positively. Comrades Mikhailov and Sosnovsky are guilty of the very error they charge Comrade Voinov with: "Count not your trophies before the battle."

"For guarantee, it is necessary," says Voinov; "necessary and sufficient," say Mikhailov and Sosnovsky. As to organising special fighting groups, I might say that I consider them necessary. We need not fear to form them.

#### RESOLUTION ON THE ARMED UPRISING

1. Whereas the proletariat being, by virtue of its position, the foremost and only consistently revolutionary class, is therefore called upon to play the leading role in the general democratic revolutionary movement in Russia;

2. Whereas this movement at the present time has already led to the necessity of an armed uprising;

3. Whereas the proletariat will inevitably take the most energetic part in this uprising, which participation will decide the destiny of the revolution in Russia;

4. Whereas the proletariat can play the leading role in this revolution only if it is united in a single and independent political force under the banner of the Social-Democratic

Labour Party, which directs its struggle both ideologically and practically; and

5. Whereas only the performance of this role will ensure to the proletariat the most advantageous conditions for the struggle for socialism against the propertied classes of bourgeois-democratic Russia; --

Therefore, the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. holds that the task of organising the proletariat for direct struggle against the autocracy by means of the armed uprising is one of the major and most urgent tasks of the Party at the present revolutionary moment.

Accordingly, the Congress instructs all Party organisations:

a) to explain to the proletariat by means of propaganda and agitation, **not only the political significance, but the practical organisational aspect of the impending armed uprising,**

b) to explain in that propaganda and agitation the role of mass political strikes, which may be of great importance at the beginning and during the progress of the uprising, and

c) to take the most energetic steps towards arming the proletariat, as well as drawing up a plan of the armed uprising and of direct leadership thereof, for which purpose special groups of Party workers should be formed as and when necessary.

Written on April 16 , 1905

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE QUESTION OF OPEN POLITICAL ACTION BY THE R.S.D.L.P.

1. Whereas the revolutionary movement in Russia has already to a certain degree shaken and disorganised the autocratic government, which has been compelled to tolerate the comparatively extensive exercise of freedom of political action by the classes inimical to it;

2. Whereas this freedom of political action is mostly, almost exclusively, enjoyed by the bourgeois classes, which thereby strengthen their existing economic and political domination over the working class and increase the danger that the proletariat may be transformed into a mere appendage of bourgeois democracy; and

3. Whereas there is developing (breaking through, coming to light) among increasingly wider masses of the workers the urge towards independent open action in the political arena, even though (on occasions of lesser importance) without the participation of the Social-Democrats; --

Therefore, the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. calls the attention of all Party organisations to the fact that it is necessary

a) to make use of each and every case of open political action on the part of the educated spheres and the people, whether in the press, in associations, or at meetings, for the purpose of **contraposing the independent class demands of the proletariat to the general democratic demands**, so as to develop its class-consciousness and to organise it in the course of such actions into an independent socialist force;

b) -- to make use of all legal and semi-legal channels for creating workers' societies, associations, and organisations, and

to put forward every effort towards securing (in whatever way) the predominance of Social-Democratic influence in such associations and to convert them into bases for the future openly functioning Social-Democratic working-class party in Russia;

c) to take the necessary steps to ensure that our Party organisations, while maintaining and developing their underground machinery, will proceed at once to the preparation of expedient forms of transition, wherever and whenever possible, to open Social-Democratic activity, even to the point of clashes with the armed forces of the government.

Written on April 19, 1905

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE PARTICIPATION OF THE  
SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS IN A PROVISIONAL  
REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT

1. Whereas a really free and open mass struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie requires the widest possible political liberty and, consequently, the fullest possible realisation of republican forms of government;

2. Whereas various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois sections of the population, the peasantry, etc., are now coming out in increasing numbers with revolutionary-democratic slogans, which are the natural and inevitable expression of the basic needs of the masses, the satisfaction of which -- impossible under the autocracy -- has been made imperative by the objective development of the entire socio-economic life of Russia;



3. Whereas international revolutionary Social-Democracy has always recognised that the proletariat must render most energetic support to the revolutionary bourgeoisie in its struggle against all reactionary classes and institutions, provided that the party of the proletariat maintain absolute independence and a strictly critical attitude towards its temporary allies;

4. Whereas the overthrow of the autocratic government in Russia is inconceivable without its replacement by a provisional revolutionary government, and whereas only such a change can ensure real freedom and a true expression of the will of the whole people during the inauguration of the new political system in Russia and guarantee the realisation of our programme of immediate and direct political and economic changes;

5. Whereas **without the replacement of the autocratic government by a provisional revolutionary government supported by all revolutionary-democratic classes and class elements** in Russia, it will be impossible to achieve a republican form of government and win over to the revolution the backward and undeveloped sections of the proletariat and particularly of the peasantry -- **those sections whose interests are completely opposed to the absolutist, serf-holding order** and which cling to the autocracy or stand apart from the struggle against it largely on account of the oppressive stupefying atmosphere; and

6. Whereas with the existence in Russia of a Social-Democratic party of the working class, which, though only in

the initial stage of its development, is nevertheless already organised and capable, particularly under conditions of political freedom, of controlling and directing the actions of its delegates in a provisional revolutionary government, the danger that these delegates may deviate from the correct class line is not insurmountable; --

Therefore, the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. holds that **representatives of the Party may participate in the provisional revolutionary government for the purpose of relentlessly combating, together with the revolutionary bourgeois democrats**, all attempts at counter-revolution, and of defending the independent class interests of the proletariat, provided that the Party maintain strict control over its representatives and firmly safeguard the independence of the Social-Democratic Labour Party, which aims at the complete socialist revolution and is in this respect hostile to all bourgeois-democratic parties and classes.

Written on April 19 (May 2), 1905

#### DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT

1. Whereas both the direct interests of the Russian proletariat and those of its struggle for the ultimate aims of socialism require the fullest possible measure of political freedom, and, consequently, the replacement of the autocratic form of government by the democratic republic;

2. Whereas the armed uprising of the people, if completely successful, i.e., if the autocracy is overthrown, will necessarily

bring about the establishment of a provisional revolutionary government, which alone is capable of securing complete freedom of agitation and of convening a Constituent Assembly that will really express the will of the people, an Assembly elected on the basis of universal, direct, and equal suffrage by secret ballot; and

3. Whereas this democratic revolution in Russia will not weaken, but, on the contrary, will strengthen the domination of the bourgeoisie, which, at a certain juncture, will inevitably go to all lengths to take away from the Russian proletariat as many of the gains of the revolutionary period as possible; --

Therefore, the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. resolves:

a) that we should spread among the working class the conviction that a provisional revolutionary government is absolutely necessary, and discuss at workers' meetings the conditions required for the full and prompt realisation of all the immediate political and economic demands of our programme;

b) that in the event of the victorious uprising of the people and the complete overthrow of the autocracy, representatives of our Party may participate in the provisional revolutionary government for the purpose of waging a relentless struggle against all counter-revolutionary attempts and of defending the independent interests of the working class;

c) that essential conditions for such participation are strict control of its representatives by the Party, and the constant safeguarding of the independence of the Social-Democratic Party, which strives for the complete socialist revolution, and,

consequently, is irreconcilably opposed to all the bourgeois parties;

d) that, irrespective of whether participation of Social-Democrats in the provisional revolutionary government is possible or not, we must propagate among the broadest sections of the proletariat the idea that the armed proletariat, led by the Social-Democratic Party, must bring to bear constant pressure on the provisional government for the purpose of defending, consolidating, and extending the gains of the revolution.

Written prior to April 18 (May 1), 1905

SPEECH ON THE QUESTION OF THE RELATIONS  
BETWEEN WORKERS AND INTELLECTUALS WITHIN THE  
SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATIONS

APRIL 20 (MAY 3)

I cannot agree with the comrades who said it was inappropriate to broaden the scope of this question. It is quite appropriate.

It has been said here that the exponents of Social-Democratic ideas have been mainly intellectuals. That is not so. During the period of Economism the exponents of revolutionary ideas were workers, not intellectuals. This is confirmed by "A Worker", the author of the pamphlet published with a foreword by Comrade Axelrod.

Comrade Sergeyev asserted here that the elective principle will not make for better information. That is not so. If the elective principle were applied in practice, we should unquestionably be much better informed than we now are.

It has also been pointed out that splits have usually been the work of intellectuals. This is an important point, but it does not settle the question. In my writings for the press I have long urged that as many workers as possible should be placed on the committees. The period since the Second Congress has been marked by inadequate attention to this duty -- such is the impression I have received from talks with comrades engaged in practical Party work. If in Saratov only one worker was placed on the committee, this means that they did not know how to choose suitable people from among the workers. No doubt, this was due also to the split within the Party; the struggle for the committees has had a damaging effect on practical work. For this very reason we endeavoured in every way possible to speed the convening of the Congress.

It will be the task of the future centre to reorganise a considerable number of our committees; the inertness of the committee-men has to be overcome. (Applause and booing.)

I can hear Comrade Sergeyev booing while the non-committee-men applaud. I think we should look at the matter more broadly. To place workers on the committees is a political, not only a pedagogical, task. Workers have the class instinct, and, given some political experience, they pretty soon become staunch Social-Democrats. **I should be strongly in favour of having eight workers to every two intellectuals on our committees.** Should the advice given in our Party literature -- to place as many workers as possible on the committees -- be insufficient, it would be advisable for this recommendation to be given in the name of the Congress. A clear and definite

directive from the Congress will give you a radical means of fighting demagoguery; this is the express will of the Congress.

## SPEECH ON AN AGREEMENT WITH THE SOCIALISTS-REVOLUTIONARIES

APRIL 23 (MAY 6)

I have to inform the Congress of an unsuccessful attempt to come to an agreement with the Socialists-Revolutionaries. Comrade Gapon arrived abroad. He met with the Socialists-Revolutionaries, then with the Iskra people, and finally with me. He told me that he shared the point of view of the Social-Democrats, but for various reasons did not deem it possible to say so openly. I told him that diplomacy was a good thing, but not between revolutionaries. I shall not repeat our conversation; it was reported in Vperyod. He impressed me as being an enterprising and clever man, unquestionably devoted to the revolution, though unfortunately without a consistent revolutionary outlook.

Sometime later I received a written invitation from Comrade Gapon to attend a conference of socialist organisations, convened, according to his idea, for the purpose of coordinating their activities. Here is a list of the eighteen organisations which, according to that letter, were invited to Comrade Gapon's conference:

- (1) The Socialist-Revolutionary Party,
- (2) the Vperyod R.S.D.L.P.,
- (3) the Iskra R.S.D.L.P.,
- (4) the Polish Socialist Party,
- (5) the Social-Democracy of Poland and Lithuania,
- (6) the P.S.P., Proletariat,
- (7) the Lettish Social-Democratic Labour Party,
- (8)

the Bund, (9) the Armenian Social-Democratic Labour Organisation, (10) the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Droshak), (11) The Byelorussian Socialist Hromada, (12) the Lettish Social-Democratic League, (13) the Active Resistance Party of Finland, (14) the Workers' Party of Finland, (15) the Georgian Party of Socialist-Federalist Revolutionaries, (16) the Ukrainian Revolutionary Party, (17) the Lithuanian Social-Democratic Party, and (18) the Ukrainian Socialist Party.

I pointed out both to Comrade Gapon and to a prominent Socialist-Revolutionary that the dubious make-up of the conference might create difficulties. The Socialists-Revolutionaries were building up an overwhelming conference majority. The convocation of the conference was greatly delayed. Iskra replied, as documents submitted to me by Comrade Gapon show, that it preferred direct agreements with organised parties. A "gentle" hint at Vperyod's being an alleged disrupter, etc. In the end Iskra did not attend the conference. We, the representatives of both the Vperyod Editorial Board and the Bureau of Committees of the Majority, did attend. Arriving on the scene, we saw that the conference was a Socialist-Revolutionary affair. As it became clear, either the working-class parties had not been invited at all, or there was no record of their having been invited. Thus, the Active Resistance Party of Finland was represented, but not the Workers' Party of Finland.

When we asked for the reason, we were told that the invitation to the Workers' Party of Finland had been sent via the Active Resistance Party, since, in the words of the Socialist-

Revolutionary who offered the explanation, they did not know how to send it directly. Yet anyone who is at all familiar with things abroad knows that connections with the Workers' Party of Finland can be established, if only through Branting, the leader of the Swedish Social-Democratic Labour Party. There were representatives from the Polish Socialist Party in attendance, but no representative from the Social-Democracy of Poland and Lithuania. Nor was it possible to ascertain whether an invitation had been extended. No reply had been received from the Lithuanian Social-Democracy or from the Ukrainian Revolutionary Party, we were told by the same Socialist-Revolutionary.

From the outset the national question was made an issue. The Polish Socialist Party raised the question of having several constituent assemblies. This gives me reason to say that in the future it will be necessary for us either to refuse outright to take any part in such conferences, or to convene a conference of representatives of the working-class parties of one nationality, or to invite to the conference representatives of local party committees from the regions with a non-Russian population. But I certainly do not infer from this that conferences are impossible because of differences on points of principle. All that is necessary is that only practical questions be taken up. We cannot control the composition of conferences, etc., from abroad. The Russian centre must be represented, and representatives of the local committees must take part without fail. The question that led to our withdrawal concerned the Letts. On leaving the conference we submitted the following declaration:



"The important historical period through which Russia is passing confronts the Social-Democratic and revolutionary-democratic parties and organisations working within the country with the task of reaching a practical agreement for a more effective attack on the autocratic regime.

"While, therefore, attaching very great importance to the conference called for that purpose, we must naturally subject the composition of the conference to the closest scrutiny.

"In the conference called by Comrade Gapon this condition, so essential to its success, has unfortunately not been properly observed, and we were therefore obliged, at its very initiation, to take measures calculated to ensure the genuine success of the gathering.

"The fact that the conference was to deal solely with practical matters made it necessary, in the first place, that only organisations truly constituting a real force in Russia should be afforded participation.

"Actually, the composition of the conference, as far as the reality of some of the organisations is concerned, is most unsatisfactory. Even an organisation of whose fictitious nature there is not the slightest doubt, found representation. We refer to the Lettish Social-Democratic League.

"The representative of the Lettish Social-Democratic Labour Party objected to the seating of this League and couched his objection in the form of an ultimatum.

"The utter fictitiousness of the 'League', as subsequently established at a special meeting of the representatives of the four Social-Democratic organisations and the delegates of the 'League', naturally compelled us, the remaining Social-Democratic organisations and parties attending the conference, to endorse the ultimatum.

"At the outset, however, we came up against the strong resistance of all the revolutionary-democratic parties, which, in refusing to meet our peremptory demand, showed that they preferred one fictitious group to a number of well-known Social-Democratic organisations.

"Finally, the practical significance of the conference was still further lowered by the absence of a number of other Social-Democratic organisations, whose participation, as far as we could ascertain, no proper measures had been taken to ensure.

"Though compelled, in view of all this, to leave the conference, we express our conviction that the failure of this one attempt will not stand in the way of earnest efforts to renew the endeavour in the very near future, and that the task that confronts all revolutionary parties of reaching a practical agreement will be accomplished by the coming conference, to be composed of

organisations actually working in Russia, and not of fictitious organisations.

"For the Lettish S.D.L.P. . . . . F. Rozin.

"For the Vperyod R.S.D.L.P. . . . . N. Lenin.

"For the Central Committee of the Bund I. Gelfin.

"For the Armenian Social-Democratic  
Labour Organisation . . Lerr."

A week and a half or two weeks later Comrade Gapon sent me the following statement:

"Dear Comrade,

"I am forwarding to you two declarations issued by the conference of which you know, and I request that you communicate their contents to the forthcoming Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. I deem it my duty to state that for my own part I accept these declarations with certain reservations on the questions of the socialist programme and the principle of federalism.

"Georgi Gapon."

This statement was accompanied by two interesting documents, containing the following striking passages:

"The application of the federative principle to the relations between nationalities remaining under one state roof. . . .

"Socialisation, i.e., the transfer under public administration to the use by the labouring agricultural

population of all lands whose cultivation is based on the exploitation of the labour of others; the determination of the concrete forms this measure is to take, of the order in which it is to be instituted, and of its scope, is to remain within the jurisdiction of the parties of the different nationalities, in keeping with the specific local conditions of each country; the development of public, municipal, and communal economy. . . .

". . . Bread for the starving!

"The land and its bounties for all the toilers!

". . . A Constituent Assembly of representatives of all parts of the Russian Empire, exclusive of Poland and Finland!

". . . Convocation of a Constituent Assembly for the Caucasus, as an autonomous part of Russia with which it is to be federated. . . ."

The result of the conference, as appears from these quotations has fully confirmed the fears which induced us to leave the conference. We have here a copy of the Socialist-Revolutionary programme with all sorts of concessions to the nationalist non-proletarian parties. It was strange taking part in deciding the questions raised at the conference without the participation of the national proletarian parties. For instance, the conference presented the demand for a separate Constituent Assembly for Poland. We can be neither for nor against the demand. Our programme recognises the principle of the self-determination of nationalities. But to decide this question without the Social-

Democracy of Poland and Lithuania is impermissible. The conference divided up the Constituent Assembly, and this in the absence of the working-class parties! We cannot allow any practical solution of such questions to be reached without the party of the proletariat.

At the same time, I find that differences on points of principle do not exclude the possibility of practical conferences, provided, first, that they be held in Russia; secondly, that the reality of the forces be verified; and, thirdly, that questions concerning the various nationalities be dealt with separately, or at least, that representatives of the local committees of the regions where there are Social-Democratic and non-Social-Democratic national parties be invited to the conference.

I now pass to the proposed resolution on practical agreements with the Socialists-Revolutionaries. (The speaker reads the draft as worded by Comrade Voinov ):

"Confirming the attitude of the R.S.D.L.P. towards the Socialist-Revolutionary Party as set forth in the resolution of the Second Congress, and

"1. Whereas temporary militant agreements between the Social-Democratic Party and the organisation of the Socialists-Revolutionaries for the purposes of combating the autocracy are on the whole desirable at the present time, and

"2. Whereas such agreements should under no circumstance restrict the complete independence of the

Social-Democratic Labour Party, or affect the integrity and purity of its proletarian tactics and principles; --

"Therefore, the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. instructs the C.C. and the local committees, should the necessity arise, to enter into temporary militant agreements with the Socialist-Revolutionary organisations, provided that local agreements are concluded only under the direct supervision of the C.C."

I agree with this draft. We might perhaps tone down the end. For instance, instead of "under the direct supervision of the Central Committee", we might have only "under the supervision of the Central Committee."

## **Social-Democracy and the Provisional Revolutionary Government**

V. I. Lenin

April 1905, CW, Volume 8, pages 275-292.

Engels points to the danger of failure on the part of the leaders of the proletariat to understand the non-proletarian character of the revolution, but our sage Martynov infers from this the danger that the leaders of the proletariat, who, by their programme, their tactics (i.e., their entire propaganda and agitation), and their organisation, have separated themselves from the revolutionary democrats, will play a leading part in establishing the democratic republic. Engels sees the danger in the leader's confounding of the pseudo-socialist with the really democratic character of the revolution, while our sage Martynov infers from this the danger that the proletariat, together with the peasantry, may consciously assume the dictatorship in the establishment of the democratic republic, the last form of bourgeois domination and the best form for the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. Engels sees the danger in the false, deceptive position of saying one thing and doing another, of promising the domination of one class and actually ensuring that of another. Engels sees the irrevocable political doom consequent upon such a false position, while our sage Martynov deduces the danger that the bourgeois adherents of democracy will not permit the proletariat and the peasantry to secure a really democratic republic. Our sage Martynov cannot for the life of him understand that such a doom, the doom of the leader of the

proletariat, the doom of thousands of proletarians in the struggle for a truly democratic republic, would well be a physical doom, but not, however, a political doom; on the contrary, it would be a momentous political victory of the proletariat, a momentous achievement of its hegemony in the struggle for liberty. Engels speaks of the political doom of one who unconsciously strays from the path of his own class to that of an alien class, while our sage Martynov, reverently quoting Engels, speaks of the doom of one who goes further and further along the sure road of his own class.

The difference between the point of view of revolutionary Social-Democracy and that of tail-ism is glaringly obvious. Martynov and the new Iskra shrink from the task which the proletariat, together with the peasantry, is called upon to shoulder—the task of the most radical democratic revolution; they shrink from the Social-Democratic leadership of this revolution and thus surrender, albeit unwittingly, the interests of the proletariat into the hands of the bourgeois democrats. From Marx's correct idea that we must prepare, not a government party, but an opposition party of the future, Martynov draws the conclusion that we must form a tail-ist opposition to the present revolution. This is what his political wisdom adds up to. His line of reasoning, which we strongly advise the reader to ponder, is as follows:

“The proletariat cannot win political power in the state, either wholly or in part, until it has made the socialist revolution. This is the indisputable proposition which separates us from opportunist Jaurèsism...” (Martynov, *op. cit.*, p. 58)



—and which, we would add, conclusively proves that the worthy Martynov is incapable of grasping what the whole thing is about. To confound the participation of the proletariat in a government that is resisting the socialist revolution with its participation in the democratic revolution is to miss the point hopelessly. It is Like confounding Millerand's participation in the Cabinet of the murderer Galliffet with Varlin's participation in the Commune, which defended and safeguarded the republic.

But listen further, and see what a tangle our author gets himself into:

*"But that being the case, it is evident that the coming revolution cannot realise any political forms against the will of the whole bourgeoisie, for the latter will be the master tomorrow..."* (Martynov's italics).

In the first place, why are only political forms mentioned here, when the previous sentence referred to the power of the proletariat in general, even to the extent of the socialist revolution? Why does not the author speak of realising economic forms? Because, without noticing it, he has already leaped from the socialist to the democratic revolution. Secondly, that being the case, the author is absolutely wrong in speaking tout court (bluntly) of "the will of the whole bourgeoisie", because the very thing that distinguishes the epoch of democratic revolution is the diversity of wills of the various strata of the bourgeoisie which is just emancipating itself from absolutism. To speak of the democratic revolution and confine oneself to a bald contrast of "proletariat" and

“bourgeoisie” is sheer nonsense, for that revolution marks the period in the development of society in which the mass of society virtually stands between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and constitutes an immense petty-bourgeois, peasant stratum. For the very reason that the democratic revolution has not yet been consummated, this immense stratum has far more interests in common with the “proletariat” in the matter of realising political forms than has the “bourgeoisie” in the real and strict sense of the word. Failure to understand this simple thing is one of the main sources of Martynov’s muddle.

Further:

“That being the case, the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, by simply frightening the majority of the bourgeois elements, can have but one result—the restoration of absolutism in its original form ... and, of course, the proletariat will not halt before this possible result; at the worst, if things tend decidedly towards a revival and strengthening of the decaying autocratic regime by means of a pseudo-constitutional concession, it will not hold back from frightening the bourgeoisie. In entering the struggle, however, the proletariat obviously does not have this ‘worst’ in view.”

Can you make anything of this, dear reader? The proletariat will not hold back from frightening the bourgeoisie, which course will lead to the restoration of absolutism, if there should be a threat of a pseudo-constitutional concession! This is as much as to say: I am threatened with an Egyptian plague in the form of a one-day conversation with Martynov alone; therefore,

if the worst comes to the worst, I shall fall back on the method of intimidation, which can lead only to a two-day conversation with Martynov and Martov. This is the sheerest gibberish, sir!

The idea that haunted Martynov when he wrote the nonsense here quoted was the following: if in the period of the democratic revolution the proletariat uses the threat of the socialist revolution to frighten the bourgeoisie, this can lead only to reaction, which will also weaken the democratic gains already won. That and nothing more. There can be no question, of course, either of restoring absolutism in its original form or of the proletariat's readiness, if the worst comes to the worst, to resort to the worst kind of stupidity. The whole thing takes us back to the difference between the democratic and the socialist revolution, overlooked by Martynov, to the existence of that immense peasant and petty-bourgeois population which is capable of supporting the democratic revolution, but is at present incapable of supporting the socialist revolution.

Let us listen further to our sage Martynov:

"Evidently, the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie on the eve of the bourgeois revolution must differ in some respects from the same struggle at its concluding stage, on the eve of the socialist revolution...."

Yes, this is evident; and if Martynov had paused to think what this difference actually is, he would hardly have written the above-given drivel, or, indeed, his whole pamphlet.

"The struggle to influence the course and outcome of the bourgeois revolution can find expression only in the exertion of

revolutionary pressure by the proletariat on the will of the liberal and radical bourgeoisie, and in the compulsion on the part of the more democratic 'lower strata' of society to bring the 'upper strata' into agreement to carry through the bourgeois revolution to its logical conclusion. The struggle will find expression in the fact that the proletariat will at every opportunity confront the bourgeoisie with the dilemma—either backward, into the strangling grip of absolutism, or forward, with the people."

This tirade is the central point of Martynov's pamphlet. We have here its sum and substance, all its fundamental "ideas". And what do all these clever ideas turn out to be? Who are these "lower strata" of society, the "people" of whom our sage has at last be thought himself? They are precisely that multitudinous petty-bourgeois stratum of town and village which is quite capable of functioning in a revolutionary democratic capacity. And what is this pressure that the proletariat and the peasantry can exert on the upper social strata, what is meant by the proletariat advancing together with the people in despite of the upper social strata? It is that same revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry against which our tail-ender is declaiming! Only he is afraid to think to the end, to call a spade a spade. And so he utters words whose meaning he does not understand. in ludicrous, florid language, he timidly repeats slogans, the true significance of which escapes him.

None but a tail-ender could deliver himself of such a curio in the most "interesting" part of his summary as: revolutionary

pressure of the proletariat and the “people” on the upper strata of society, but without a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. Only a Martynov could show himself so adept! Martynov wants the proletariat to threaten the upper strata of society that it will go forward with the people, while at the same time firmly deciding with its new-Iskra leaders not to go forward along the democratic path, because that is the path of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship. Martynov wants the proletariat to exert pressure on the will of the upper strata by displaying its own lack of will. Martynov wants the proletariat to bring the upper strata “into agreement” to carry the bourgeois revolution through to its logical, democratic-republican conclusion, but to do so by expressing its own fear of assuming, jointly with the people, the task of carrying the revolution through, its fear of taking power and forming the democratic dictatorship. Martynov wants the proletariat to be the vanguard in the democratic revolution and therefore our sage Martynov frightens the proletariat with the perspective of participation in the provisional revolutionary government in the event of the success of the insurrection!

Reactionary tail-ism could go no further. We should all prostrate ourselves before Martynov, as we would before a saint, for having developed the tail-ist tendencies of the new Iskra to their logical conclusion and for having given them emphatic and systematic expression with regard to the most pressing and basic political questions.

What is Martynov’s muddle-headedness due to? To the fact that he confounds democratic revolution with socialist revolution;

that he overlooks the role of the intermediate stratum of the people lying between the “bourgeoisie” and the “proletariat” (the petty-bourgeois masses of the urban and rural poor, the “semi-proletarians”, the semi-proprietors); and that he fails to understand the true meaning of our minimum programme. Martynov has heard that it is wrong for a socialist to participate in a bourgeois Cabinet (when the proletariat is struggling for the socialist revolution), and he hastens to “understand” this as meaning that we should not participate with the revolutionary bourgeois democrats in the democratic revolution and in the dictatorship that is essential for the full accomplishment of such a revolution. Martynov read our minimum programme, but he missed the fact that the strict distinction it draws between transformations that can be carried out in a bourgeois society and socialist transformations is not merely booklore but is of the most vital, practical significance; he missed the fact that in a revolutionary period this programme must be immediately tested and applied in practice. It did not occur to him that rejecting the idea of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship in the period of the autocracy’s downfall is tantamount to renouncing the fulfilment of our minimum programme. Indeed, let us but consider all the economic and political transformations formulated in that programme—the demand for the republic, for arming the people, for the separation of the Church from the State, for full democratic liberties, and for decisive economic reforms. Is it not clear that these transformations cannot possibly be brought about in a bourgeois society without the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the lower classes? Is it not clear that it is not the

proletariat alone, as distinct from the "bourgeoisie", that is referred to here, but the "lower classes", which are the active motive force of every democratic revolution? These classes are the proletariat plus the scores of millions of urban and rural poor whose conditions of existence are petty bourgeois. Without a doubt, very many representatives of these masses belong to the bourgeoisie. But there is still less doubt that the complete establishment of democracy is in the interests of these masses, and that the more enlightened these masses are, the more inevitable will be their struggle for the complete establishment of democracy. Of course, a Social-Democrat will never forget the dual political and economic nature of the petty-bourgeois urban and rural masses; he will never forget the need for a separate and independent class organisation of the proletariat, which struggles for socialism. But neither will he forget that these masses have "a future as well as a past, judgement as well as prejudices", a judgement that urges them onward towards the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship; he will not forget that enlightenment is not obtained from books alone, and not so much from books even as from the very progress of the revolution, which opens the eyes of the people and gives them a political schooling. Under such circumstances, a theory that rejects the idea of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship cannot be otherwise designated than as a philosophical justification of political backwardness.

The revolutionary Social-Democrat will reject such a theory with contempt. He will not confine himself on the eve of the revolution to pointing out what will happen "if the worst comes to the worst". Rather, he will also show the possibility of a better

outcome. He will dream—he is obliged to dream if he is not a hopeless philistine—that, after the vast experience of Europe, after the unparalleled upsurge of energy among the working class in Russia, we shall succeed in lighting a revolutionary beacon that will illumine more brightly than ever before the path of the unenlightened and downtrodden masses; that we shall succeed, standing as we do on the shoulders of a number of revolutionary generations of Europe, in realising all the democratic transformations, the whole of our minimum programme, with a thoroughness never equalled before. We shall succeed in ensuring that the Russian revolution is not a movement of a few months, but a movement of many years; that it leads, not merely to a few paltry concessions from the powers that be, but to the complete overthrow of those powers. And if we succeed in achieving this, then ... the revolutionary conflagration will spread to Europe; the European worker, languishing under bourgeois reaction, will rise in his turn and show us “how it is done”; then the revolutionary upsurge in Europe will have a repercussive effect upon Russia and will convert an epoch of a few revolutionary years into an era of several revolutionary decades; then—but we shall have ample time to say what we shall do “then”, not from the cursed remoteness of Geneva, but at meetings of thousands of workers in the streets of Moscow and St. Petersburg, at the free village meetings of the Russian “muzhiks”.



Lenin

Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution

July 1905

CW Volume 9, PP. 15-140

**The Tactics of "Eliminating the Conservatives from the Government"**

The article in the organ of the Tiflis Menshevik "Committee" (Sotsial-Demokrat, No. 1) to which we have just referred is entitled "The Zemsky Sobor and Our Tactics." Its author has not yet entirely forgotten our program; he advances the slogan of a republic, but this is how he discusses tactics:

"It is possible to point to two ways of achieving this goal" (a republic): "either completely ignore the Zemsky Sobor that is being convened by the government and defeat the government by force of arms, form a revolutionary government and convene a constituent assembly, or declare the Zemsky Sobor the centre of our actions, influencing its composition and activity by force of arms and either forcibly compelling it to declare itself a constituent assembly or convening a constituent assembly through it. These two tactics differ very sharply from one another. Let us see which of them is more advantageous to us."

This is how the Russian new-Iskraists set forth the ideas that were subsequently incorporated in the resolution we have analysed. Note that this was written before the battle of Tsushima, when the Bulygin "scheme" had not yet seen the light of the day. Even the liberals were losing patience and

expressing their lack of confidence in the pages of the legal press; but a new Iskra-ist Social-Democrat proved more credulous than the liberals. He declares that the Zemsky Sobor "is being convened" and trusts the tsar so much that he proposes to make this as yet non-existent Zemsky Sobor (or, possibly, "State Duma" or "Advisory Legislative Assembly"?) the centre of our actions. Being more outspoken and straightforward than the authors of the resolution adopted at the Conference, our Tiflisian does not put the two "tactics" (which he expounds with inimitable naïveté) on a par but declares that the second is more "advantageous." Just listen:

"The first tactics. As you know, the coming revolution is a bourgeois revolution, i.e., its purpose is to effect such changes in the present system as are of interest not only to the proletariat but to the whole of bourgeois society. All classes are opposed to the government, even the capitalists themselves. The militant proletariat and the militant bourgeoisie are in a certain sense marching together and jointly attacking the autocracy from different sides. The government is completely isolated and lacks public sympathy. For this reason, it is very easy to destroy it. The Russian proletariat as a whole is not yet sufficiently class conscious and organised to be able to carry out the revolution by itself. And even if it were able to do so, it would carry through a proletarian (socialist) revolution and not a bourgeois revolution. Hence, it is in our interest that the government remain without allies, that it be unable to disunite the opposition, unable to ally the bourgeoisie to itself and leave the proletariat isolated...."

So, it is in the interests of the proletariat that the tsarist government shall not be able to disunite the bourgeoisie and the proletariat! Is it not by mistake that this Georgian organ is called Sotsial-Demokrat instead of Osvobozhdeniye? And note its peerless philosophy of democratic revolution! Is it not obvious that this poor Tiflisian is hopelessly confused by the pedantic khvostist interpretation of the concept "bourgeois revolution"? He discusses the question of the possible isolation of the proletariat in a democratic revolution and forgets ... forgets about a trifle ... about the peasantry! of the possible allies of the proletariat he knows and favours the landowning Zemstvo-ists and is not aware of the peasants. And this in the Caucasus! Well, were we not right when we said that by its method of reasoning the new Iskra was sinking to the level of the monarchist bourgeoisie instead of raising the revolutionary peasantry to the position of our ally?

"... Otherwise the defeat of the proletariat and the victory of the government is inevitable. This is just what the autocracy is striving for. In its Zemsky Sobor it will undoubtedly attract to its side the representatives of the nobility, of the Zemstvos, the cities, the universities and similar bourgeois institutions. It will try to appease them with petty concessions and thereby reconcile them to itself. Strengthened in this way, it will direct all its blows against the working people who will have been isolated. It is our duty to prevent such an unfortunate outcome. But can this be done of the first method? Let us assume that we paid no attention whatever to the Zemsky Sobor, but started to prepare for insurrection ourselves, and one fine day came out in the streets armed and ready for battle. The result would be

that we would be confronted not with one but with two enemies: the government and the Zemsky Sobor. While we were preparing, they would manage to come to terms, enter into an agreement with one another, draw up a constitution advantageous to themselves and divide power between them. These tactics are of direct advantage to the government, and we must reject them in the most energetic fashion....”

Now this is frank! We must resolutely reject the “tactics” of preparing an insurrection because “meanwhile” the government would come to terms with the bourgeoisie! Can one find in the old literature of the most rabid “Economism” anything that would even approximate such a disgrace to revolutionary Social-Democracy? That insurrections and outbreaks of workers and peasants are occurring, first in one place and then in another, is a fact. The Zemsky Sobor, however, is a Bulygin promise. And the Sotsial-Demokrat of the city of Tiflis decides: to reject the tactics of preparing an insurrection and to wait for a “centre of influence”—the Zemsky Sobor....

“...The second tactics, on the contrary, consist in placing the Zemsky Sobor under our surveillance, in not giving it the opportunity to act according to its own will and enter into an agreement with the government.

“We support the Zemsky Sobor to the extent that it fights the autocracy, and we fight it in those cases when it becomes reconciled with the autocracy. By energetic interference and force we shall cause a split among the deputies, rally the

radicals to our side, eliminate the conservatives from the government and thus put the whole Zemsky Sobor on the path of revolution. Thanks to such tactics the government will always remain isolated, the opposition strong and the establishment of a democratic system will thereby be facilitated.”

Well, well! Let anyone now say that we exaggerate the new Iskra-ists’ turn to the most vulgar semblance of Economism. This is positively like the famous powder for exterminating flies: you catch the fly, sprinkle it with the powder and the fly will die. Split the deputies of the Zemsky Sobor by force, “eliminate the conservatives from the government”—and the whole Zemsky Sobor will take the path of revolution. . . . No “Jacobin” armed insurrection of any sort, but just like that, in genteel, almost parliamentary fashion, “influencing” the members of the Zemsky Sobor.

Poor Russia! It has been said that she always wears the old-fashioned bonnets that Europe discards. We have no parliament as yet, even Bulygin has not yet promised one, but we have any amount of parliamentary cretinism.

“. . . How should this interference be effected? First of all, we shall demand that the Zemsky Sobor be convened on the basis of universal and equal suffrage, direct elections and secret ballot. Simultaneously with the announcement of this method of election, complete freedom to carry on the election campaign, i.e., freedom of assembly, of speech and of the press, the inviolability of the electors and the candidates and the release of all political prisoners must be made law. The elections

themselves must be fixed as late as possible so that we have sufficient time to inform and prepare the people. And since the drafting of the regulations governing the convocation of the Sobor has been entrusted to a commission headed by Bulygin, Minister of the Interior, we should also exert pressure on this commission and on its members. If the Bulygin Commission refuses to satisfy our demands and grants suffrage only to property owners, then we must interfere in these elections and, by revolutionary means, force the voters to elect progressive candidates and in the Zemsky Sobor demand a constituent assembly. Finally, we must, by all possible measures: demonstrations, strikes and insurrection if need be, compel the Zemsky Sobor to convene a constituent assembly or declare itself to be such. The armed proletariat must constitute itself the defender of the constituent assembly, and both together will march forward to a democratic republic.

“Such are the Social-Democratic tactics, and they alone will secure us victory.”

Let not the reader imagine that this incredible nonsense is simply a maiden attempt at writing on the part of some new Iskra adherent with no authority or influence. No, this is what is stated in the organ of an entire committee of new Iskra-ists, the Tiflis Committee. More than that. This nonsense has been openly endorsed by the “Iskra” in No. 100 of which we read the following about that issue of the Sotsial-Demokrat :

“The first issue is edited in a lively and talented manner. The experienced hand of a capable editor and writer is perceptible.

. . . It may be said with all confidence that the newspaper will brilliantly carry out the task it has set itself."

Yes! If that task is clearly to show all and sundry the utter ideological decay of new Iskra, then it has indeed been carried out "brilliantly." No one could have expressed the new Iskra degradation to liberal bourgeois opportunism in a more "lively, talented and capable" manner.

## **The Boycott of the Bulygin Duma, and Insurrection**

V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, August 1905

### Excerpts

At present the political situation in Russia is as follows: the Bulygin Duma may soon be convened -- a consultative assembly of representatives of the landlords and the big bourgeoisie, elected under the supervision and with the assistance of the autocratic government's servants on the basis of an electoral system so indirect, so blatantly based on property and social-estate qualifications, that it is sheer mockery of the idea of popular representation. What should our attitude towards this Duma be? The liberal democrats give two replies to this question. The Left wing, represented by the "Union of Unions" -- mostly representatives of the bourgeois intelligentsia -- is in favour of boycotting this Duma, of abstaining from participation in the elections, and of taking advantage of the opportunity for increased agitation for a democratic constitution on the basis of universal suffrage. The Right wing, as represented by the Zemstvo and Municipal Congress of July, or, to be more correct, by a certain section of that Congress, is opposed to a boycott and favours participation in the elections and getting as many of its candidates as possible elected to the Duma. True, the Congress has not yet passed any resolution on this question and has postponed the matter until the next Congress which is to be convened by telegraph following promulgation of the Bulygin "constitution". However, the opinion of liberal democracy's Right wing has already taken shape.



Revolutionary democracy, i.e., in the main, the proletariat, and Social-Democracy, the vehicle of its conscious expression, is, by and large, fully in favour of insurrection.

This difference in tactics has been correctly appraised by *Osvobozhdeniye*, organ of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie. Its latest issue (No. 74), on the one hand roundly condemns "open advocacy of insurrection" as "insane and criminal"; on the other hand it criticises the idea of a boycott as "fruitless for practical purposes" and expresses the conviction that not only the Zemstvo section of the Constitutional "Democratic" (read: Monarchist) Party but the Union of Unions, too, will "pass their state examination", i.e., abandon the idea of a boycott.

The question arises: what attitude should the party of the class-conscious proletariat take towards the idea of a boycott, and what tactical slogan should it bring into the foreground for the masses of the people? For a reply to this question we must first of all call to mind the essence and radical significance of the Bulygin "constitution". It is, in fact, tsarism's deal with the landlords and big bourgeoisie, who, in return for innocent, pseudo-constitutional sops that are quite innocuous to the autocracy, are to be gradually drawn away from the revolution, i.e., from the fighting people, and reconciled with the autocracy. The possibility of such a deal cannot be doubted, since all our Constitutional-"Democratic" Party is eager to preserve the monarchy and the upper chamber (i.e., in advance to secure for the moneyed "upper ten thousand" political privileges and political domination in the country's system of state). Moreover, such a deal is sooner or later inevitable in one form or another,

at least with a section of the bourgeoisie, for it is prescribed by the very class position of the bourgeoisie in the capitalist system. The only question is when and how this deal will take place. The task confronting the party of the proletariat is to delay conclusion of this deal for as long as possible, to split up the bourgeoisie as much as possible, to derive from the bourgeoisie's temporary appeals to the people the greatest possible advantage for the revolution, and meanwhile to prepare the forces of the revolutionary people (the proletariat and the peasantry) for the forcible overthrow of the autocracy and for the alienation, the neutralisation of the treacherous bourgeoisie.

(..)

As we have already said, "an active boycott" means agitation, recruiting, organising revolutionary forces on a larger scale, with redoubled energy, and bringing redoubled pressure to bear. Such work, however, is unthinkable without a clear, precise, and immediate slogan. Only an armed uprising can be that slogan. The government's convocation of a crudely faked "popular" representative body provides excellent opportunities for agitation for a truly popular representative body, for making the broadest masses of the people understand that at present (after the tsar's frauds and his mockery of the people) only a provisional revolutionary government can convene a truly representative body, and that to establish such a government the victory of an insurrection and the actual overthrow of tsarist rule are necessary. It would be hard to imagine a better time for widespread agitation for an uprising

and in order to conduct that agitation full clarity regarding the programme of a provisional revolutionary government is also necessary. This programme should consist of the six points which we have indicated previously (see Proletary, No. 7, "The Revolutionary Army and the Revolutionary Government"[\*]): 1) convocation of a popular constituent assembly; 2) arming of the people; 3) political freedom -- the immediate repeal of all laws that contradict it; 4) complete cultural and political freedom for all oppressed and disfranchised nationalities -- the Russian people cannot win liberty for themselves without fighting for the liberty of the other nationalities; 5) an eight-hour working day; 6) the establishment of peasant committees for the support and implementation of all democratic reforms, among them agrarian reforms, up to and including the confiscation of the landlords' land.

To sum up: the most energetic support for the idea of a boycott; exposure of the Right wing of bourgeois democracy, which rejects the boycott, as traitors; making the boycott an active one, i.e., building up a most widespread agitation; advocating an insurrection and calling for the immediate organisation of combat squads and contingents of a revolutionary army for the overthrow of the autocracy and the establishment of a provisional revolutionary government; spreading and popularising the fundamental and absolutely obligatory programme of this provisional revolutionary government, a programme which is to serve as the banner of the uprising and as a model for all future repetitions of the Odessa events.

## **Oneness of the Tsar and the People, and of the People and the Tsar**

Lenin

August 29, 1905

Collected Works, Vol. 9, pp. 191-99.

In Proletary, No. 12, which appeared on August 3(16), we spoke of the possibility of the Bulygin Duma being convened in the near future, and analysed the tactics of Social-Democracy towards it. The Bulygin scheme has now become law and the Manifesto of August 6 (19) has proclaimed that a "State Duma" will be called "no later than mid-January 1906".

It is on the anniversary of January 9, when the St. Petersburg workers placed the seal of their blood on the beginning of the revolution in Russia and showed their determination to fight desperately for its victory -- it is on the anniversary of that great day that the tsar proposes to convene this grossly faked, police-sifted assembly of landowners, capitalists, and a negligible number of rich peasants who cringe to the authorities. The tsar intends to consult this assembly as one consisting of representatives of the "people". But the entire working class, all the millions of toilers and those who are not householders are completely barred from the elections of the "people's representatives". We shall wait and see whether the tsar is right in banking thus on the impotence of the working class. . . .

Until the revolutionary proletariat has armed itself and defeated the autocratic government nothing more could have been expected than this sop to the big bourgeoisie, one that

costs the tsar nothing and commits him to nothing. Even this sop would, probably, not have been given at this time, if the ominous question of war or peace had not loomed large. Without consulting the landlords and capitalists, the autocratic government does not venture either to impose on the people the burden of the senseless continuation of the war, or to work out measures to shift the entire burden of paying for the war from the shoulders of the rich to the shoulders of the workers and peasants.

As for the provisions of the State Duma Act, they fully confirm our worst expectations. It is not known as yet whether this Duma will actually be convened. Such doles can easily be taken away again, and the autocratic monarchs of every country have made and broken similar promises by the score. It is not yet known to what extent this future Duma, if it meets at all and is not wrecked, will be able to become the centre of really far-reaching political agitation among the masses of the people, against the autocracy. But there can be no doubt that the very provisions of the new State Duma Act furnish us with a wealth of material with which to conduct agitation, explain the nature of the autocracy, disclose its class basis, reveal the irreconcilability of its interests with those of the people, and spread and popularise our revolutionary-democratic demands. It may be stated without exaggeration that the Manifesto and Act of August 6 (19) ought now to become a vademecum to every political agitator, every class-conscious worker, for it faithfully reflects all the infamy, viciousness, Asiatic barbarity, violence, and exploitation that pervade the whole social and political system of Russia. Practically every sentence in the

Manifesto and the Act provides excellent basis for the most comprehensive and convincing political commentaries, which will stimulate democratic thought and revolutionary consciousness.

As the Russian saying runs: "Leave it alone and it won't stink." When one reads the Manifesto and the State Duma Act one feels as though a mass of sewage that has been accumulating since time immemorial were being stirred up under one's very nose.

Centuries of oppression of the working people, the ignorance and downtrodden state of the people, and the stagnation in economic life and all fields of culture have enabled the autocracy to maintain its position. This formed the background for the untrammelled development and hypocritical dissemination of the doctrine of "the indissoluble oneness of the tsar and the people and the oneness of the people and the tsar", the doctrine that the tsar's autocratic power stands above all social estates and classes of the nation, above the division of the people into rich and poor, and expresses the general interests of the entire nation. What we now have before us is a practical attempt to display this "oneness" in the most diffident and embryonic fashion, through simple consultation with the "elected representatives of the whole of Russia". And what do we see? We at once see that "the oneness of the tsar and the people" is possible only through the medium of an army of bureaucrats and policemen who see to it that the muzzle put on the people is kept firmly in place. This "oneness" requires that the people should not dare to open their mouths. By "people" is meant only the landlords and capitalists, who are allowed to

take part in the two-stage elections (voting first for electors, by rural districts or city wards, and these electors in their turn elect the members of the State Duma). Peasant householders are classed among the people only after having been sifted through four-stage elections, under the supervision and with the assistance and instruction of the Marshals of the Nobility, the Rural Superintendents, and police officials. First the householders elect members of the volost assembly; then the volost assemblies elect delegates from the volosts, two from each assembly; then these volost delegates elect the gubernia electors. Finally, the gubernia electors of the peasants, together with the gubernia electors of the landlords and (urban) capitalists elect the members of the State Duma! Almost everywhere the peasants constitute a minority of the gubernia electors. They are guaranteed the election of only one member of the State Duma from each gubernia, who has to be a peasant, i.e., 51 seats out of 412 (in the 51 gubernias of European Russia).

The entire urban working class, all the village poor, agricultural labourers, and peasants who are not householders, take no part whatever in any elections.

The oneness of the tsar and the people is in effect the oneness of the tsar and the landlords and capitalists, with a handful of rich peasants thrown in, and with all elections placed under the strictest police control. Freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, and of association, without which elections are a mere farce, are not even mentioned.

The State Duma has no rights whatever, for none of its decisions are binding, being merely of an advisory nature. All its

decisions are submitted for consideration and approval to the Council of State, i.e., again to the bureaucrats. It is only a flimsy annexe to the bureaucratic and police edifice. The public are not admitted to sittings of the State Duma. Reports on the proceedings of the State Duma may be published in the press only when its sittings are not held in camera; any session may be closed, however, by an official order, which means that the Minister has merely to qualify the matter under consideration as a state secret.

The new State Duma is the same old Russian police station, only on a larger scale. The rich landlord and capitalist manufacturer (on rare occasions, a rich peasant) are admitted for "consultation" to the "open" sittings of the police station (or the Rural Superintendent, or factory inspector, etc.); they always have the right to submit their opinion for the "gracious attention" of the Emperor . . . I mean the police inspector. As for "the common people", the city workers and the rural poor, it goes without saying that they are never admitted to any kind of "consultation" whatever.

The only difference is that there are many police stations and everything in them is kept out of sight, whereas there is only one State Duma, and it has now become necessary to publish the rules governing its election and the extent of its rights. Publication of this is, we repeat, in itself an excellent exposure of the utter viciousness of the tsarist autocracy.

From the standpoint of the people's interests the State Duma is the most barefaced mockery of "popular representation". And, as if to emphasise this mockery we have, on top of this, such



facts as Mr. Durnovo's speech, the arrest of Mr. Milyukov and Co., the scandalous statement made by Mr. Sharapov. In his speech Mr. Durnovo, the new Governor General of Moscow, who is being rapturously hailed by the reactionary press, blurted out the real plans of the government, which, besides the August 6 Manifesto and the State Duma Act, issued an ukase on the same day, revoking the "ukase to the Senate" of February 18, 1905. The ukase of February 18 permitted private individuals to work out projects and propositions designed to improve organisation of the state. Zemstvo members and representatives of the intelligentsia appealed to this ukase whenever they held meetings, conferences, and congresses tolerated by the police. Now this ukase has been revoked, and all "projects and propositions designed to improve organisation of the state" must be "submitted" to the autocratic government "according to the procedure provided for in establishing the State Duma"! This means the end of agitation, the end of meetings, and congresses. There is a State Duma; and there is nothing more to discuss. This is just what Mr. Durnovo stated when he declared that they would no longer tolerate Zemstvo congresses of any kind.

The liberals of our "Constitutional-Democratic" (read: Monarchist) Party find themselves duped again. They counted on a constitution, and now they are forbidden to carry on any agitation for a constitution on the occasion of the "granting" of an institution which makes a mockery of constitution!

Mr. Sharapov has blurted out still more. In his government-subsidised paper (Russkoye Dyelo ) he suggests nothing less

than the stationing of Cossacks in the palace where the Duma is to sit . . . to provide against the contingency of "unseemly" behaviour on the part of the Duma. The oneness of the tsar and the people requires that the latter's representatives should speak and act as the tsar wishes. Otherwise the Cossacks will disperse the Duma. Otherwise the members of the Duma may be arrested, even without the assistance of the Cossacks, before they ever get into the Duma. The Manifesto on the oneness of the tsar with the people appeared on Saturday, August 6. On Sunday, August 7, Mr. Milyukov, one of the leaders of the moderate wing of the Osvobozhdeniye League or the "Constitutional-Democratic" (read: Monarchist) Party, was arrested near St. Petersburg, together with some ten of his political colleagues. They are to be prosecuted for membership of the Union of Unions. In all probability they will soon be released, but it will be an easy matter to shut the doors of the Duma against them: all that is needed is to announce that they are "under court investigation". . . !

The Russian people are getting their first little lessons in constitutionalism. All these laws on the elections of popular representatives are not worth a brass farthing until the sovereignty of the people has actually been won and there is complete freedom of speech, the press, assembly, and association, until citizens are armed and are able to safeguard the inviolability of the person. We have said above that the State Duma is a mockery of popular representation. That is undoubtedly so from the standpoint of the theory of the sovereignty of the people. But this theory is recognised neither by the autocratic government nor by the monarchist-liberal

bourgeoisie (the Osvobozhdeniye League or the Constitutional-Monarchist Party). In present-day Russia we have before us three political theories, of whose significance we shall yet speak on more than one occasion. These are: 1) The theory of the tsar's consultation with the people (or "the oneness of the tsar and the people, and of the people and the tsar", as it is put in the Manifesto of August 6). 2) The theory of an agreement between the tsar and the people (the programme of the Osvobozhdeniye League and the Zemstvo Congress). 3) The theory of the sovereignty of the people (the programme of Social-Democracy, as well as of revolutionary democracy in general).

From the standpoint of the consultation theory it is quite natural that the tsar should consult only those he wishes to, and only by the methods he wishes. The State Duma is a splendid object lesson showing whom the tsar wants to consult and how. From the standpoint of the theory of an agreement, the tsar is not subject to the will of the people; he must only take it into account. But how he is to take it into account and to what extent, cannot be gathered from the Osvobozhdeniye theory of "agreement", and whilst power is in the tsar's hands the Osvobozhdeniye bourgeoisie is inevitably condemned to the wretched position of a cadger, or a go-between, who would use the people's victories against the people. From the angle of the sovereignty of the people full freedom of agitation and election should first be secured in practice, and then a really popular constituent assembly convened, i.e., an assembly elected by universal and equal suffrage, direct elections, and secret ballot, and endowed with complete power -- full, integral, and

indivisible power -- an assembly which will actually express the sovereignty of the people.

This brings us to our slogan of agitation (the slogan of the R.S.D.L.P.) on the State Duma. Who can really guarantee freedom of elections and full power to a constituent assembly? Only the armed people, organised in a revolutionary army, which has won over to its side all decent and honest elements in the tsar's army, has overcome the tsar's forces and substituted a provisional revolutionary government for the tsar's autocratic government. The setting up of the State Duma, which, on the one hand, "lures" the people with the idea of a representative form of government, and, on the other hand, is the crudest counterfeit of popular representation, will prove an inexhaustible source of the most widespread revolutionary agitation among the masses, will serve as an excellent occasion for meetings, demonstrations, political strikes, etc. The slogan for all this agitation will be: insurrection, the immediate formation of combat squads and contingents of a revolutionary army, the overthrow of tsarist rule, and the establishment of a provisional revolutionary government which is to convene a popular constituent assembly. The timing of the uprising will depend, of course, on local conditions. We can only state that, generally speaking, it is now in the interests of the revolutionary proletariat to put off somewhat the timing of an uprising: the workers are being armed gradually, the troops are becoming more and more unreliable, the war crisis is reaching its climax (war or an onerous peace), and in such conditions premature attempts at insurrection may cause enormous harm.

In conclusion, it remains for us to draw a comparison between the tactical slogan briefly outlined above, and other slogans. As we have already stated in *Proletary*, No. 12, our slogan coincides with what the majority of the comrades working in Russia understand by the term "active boycott". The tactics of *Iskra*, which in its No. 106 recommended the immediate setting up of revolutionary self-government bodies and election by the people of their own representatives as a possible prologue to an uprising, is absolutely erroneous. So long as the forces for an armed uprising and its victory are still lacking, it is ridiculous even to speak of revolutionary people's self-government. That is not the prologue to an uprising, but its epilogue. Such erroneous tactics would merely play into the hands of the *Osvobozhdeniye* bourgeoisie, in the first place by obscuring or shelving the slogan of an uprising, and replacing it with the slogan of the organisation of revolutionary self-government. In the second place, it would make it easier for the liberal bourgeois to represent their (*Zemstvo* and municipal) elections as popular elections, since there can be no popular elections so long as the tsar retains power, and the liberals may yet succeed in carrying out *Zemstvo* and municipal elections despite Mr. *Durnovo's* threats.

The proletariat has been barred from the Duma elections. Actually, the proletariat has no need to boycott the Duma, since by its very institution this tsarist Duma is itself boycotting the proletariat. It is to the proletariat's advantage, however, to support that section of the bourgeois democrats which is inclined to prefer revolutionary action to haggling, and which favours boycotting the Duma and more intensive agitation

among the people for a protest against this Duma. The proletariat must not pass over in silence this first betrayal or inconsistency on the part of the bourgeois democrats, which is expressed in the fact that their representatives talk of boycotting the Duma (at the July Zemstvo Congress the first voting even showed a majority in favour of a boycott), utter pompous phrases about appealing to the people and not to the tsar (Mr. I. Petrunkevich at that same Congress), whereas in reality they are prepared to overlook this new flouting of the people's demands, without making a protest in the real sense of the word or giving it wide publicity, and to abandon the idea of a boycott and enter the Duma. The proletariat cannot but refute the false phrases that are now so much in vogue in articles published in the legal liberal press (see, for instance, *Rus* of August 7), which has entered the fray against the idea of a boycott. The gentlemen of the liberal press are corrupting the people with their assurances that the peaceful path, a "peaceful clash of opinions" is possible (why is it that Milyukov could not struggle "peacefully" against Sharapov, gentlemen, why?). The gentlemen of the liberal press are deceiving the people when they declare that the Zemstvos "can to a certain extent [!] paralyse [!!] the pressure which will, undoubtedly, be brought to bear on the peasant electors by the Rural Superintendents and by the local authorities in general". (*Rus*, loc. cit.) The liberal journalists are wholly distorting the role of the State Duma in the Russian revolution, when they compare it with the Prussian Chamber of the period of the budget conflict with Bismarck (1863). Actually, if one is to make a comparison at all, one must take as an example not a constitutional period but a period of

struggle for a constitution, a period of incipient revolution. To do otherwise means to skip directly from a period when the bourgeoisie is revolutionary into a period when the bourgeoisie has made its peace with reaction. (cf. Proletary, No. 5 on the comparison drawn between our Messrs. Petrunkeviches and Mr. Andrassy, "once a revolutionary" and subsequently a Minister.) The State Duma brings to mind the Prussian "United Landtag" (Diet) established on February 3, 1847, one year before the revolution. The Prussian liberals of those days were also preparing -- although they never actually got round to it -- to boycott this consultative chamber of landlords, and were asking the people: "Annehmen oder ablehnen?" ("Accept or Decline?" -- the title of a pamphlet by Heinrich Simon, a bourgeois liberal, which was published in 1847.) The Prussian United Landtag met (the first session was opened on April 11, 1847, and closed on June 26, 1847) and gave rise to a series of clashes between the constitutionalists and the autocratic government; nevertheless it remained a lifeless institution, until the revolutionary people, headed by the proletariat of Berlin, defeated the royal army in the uprising of March 18, 1848. Then the State Duma . . . I mean the United Landtag -- went up in smoke. An assembly of people's representatives was then convened (unfortunately not by a revolutionary government but by the king, whom the heroic workers of Berlin had "not finished off") on the basis of universal suffrage with relative freedom to carry on agitation.

Let the bourgeois betrayers of the revolution enter this still-born State Duma. The proletariat of Russia will intensify its agitation and its preparations for our Russian March 18, 1848 (or better still, August 10, 1792).

Lenin,

**Social-Democracy's Attitude Towards the Peasant Movement,**

September 14, 1905.

Collected Works, Vol. 9, pp. 230-39

New material on this question is provided by a letter we have received from a Moscow comrade (issued in the form of a hectographed leaflet). We print this letter in full:

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND  
TO THE COMRADES WORKING IN THE RURAL DISTRICTS

Comrades,

The regional organisation of the Moscow Committee has taken up work among the peasants. The lack of experience in organising such work, the special conditions prevailing in the rural districts of Central Russia, and also the lack of clarity in the directives contained in the resolutions of the Third Congress on this question, and the almost complete absence of material in the periodical and other press on work among the peasantry, compel us to appeal to the Central Committee to send us detailed directives, covering both the theoretical aspect and the practical questions involved, while we ask comrades who are doing similar work to acquaint us with the practical knowledge your experience has given you.

We consider it necessary to inform you about the misgivings that have arisen among us after reading the resolution of the Third Congress "on the attitude towards the peasant



movement", and about the organisational plan which we are already beginning to apply in our work in the rural districts.

" § a) To carry on propaganda among the mass of the people, explaining that Social-Democracy aims at giving the most energetic support to all revolutionary measures taken by the peasantry and likely to improve their condition, measures including confiscation of land belonging to the landlords, the state, the church, the monasteries, and the imperial family" (from the resolution of the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.).

First of all, this paragraph does not clarify how Party organisations will, or should, carry on their propaganda. Propaganda requires, first and foremost, an organisation standing very close to those who are to be propagandised. Whether this organisation should consist of committees of the rural proletariat, or whether other organisational forms of oral and printed propaganda are possible -- this question remains unanswered.

The same applies to the promise to give energetic support. To give support, and energetic support at that, is also possible only if local organisations exist. To us the question of "energetic support" seems in general very vague. Can Social-Democracy support the expropriation of landlords' estates that are farmed most intensively with the use of machinery, cultivating high-grade crops, etc.? The transfer of such estates to petty-bourgeois proprietors, however important improvement of their condition may be, would be a step back from the standpoint of the capitalist development of the given estate. In our opinion we as Social-Democrats should have made a reservation on this

matter of "support": "provided the expropriation of this land and its transfer to peasant (petty-bourgeois) ownership results in a higher form of economic development on these estates."

Further:

" § d) To strive for the independent organisation of the rural proletariat, for its fusion with the urban proletariat under the banner of the Social-Democratic Party, and for the inclusion of its representatives in the peasant committees."

Doubts arise with regard to the latter part of this paragraph. The fact is that bourgeois-democratic organisations such as the Peasant Union, and reactionary-utopian organisations such as the Socialist Revolutionaries organise under their banner both bourgeois and proletarian elements of the peasantry. By bringing into such "peasant" committees our representatives from rural proletarian organisations we shall be contradicting ourselves, our stand regarding a bloc, etc.

Here, too, we believe, amendments, and very serious ones, are needed.

These are a few general remarks on the resolutions of the Third Congress. These should be analyzed as soon and in as great detail as possible.

As regards the plan for a "rural" organisation in our Regional Organisation, we must say that we have to work under conditions which are not even mentioned in the resolutions of the Third Congress. First of all, it should be noted that the territory we cover -- Moscow Gubernia and the adjoining uyezds of neighboring gubernias -- is mainly an industrial area

with a relatively low level of handicraft industry and with a very small section of the population engaged exclusively in agriculture. Huge textile mills, each employing 10,000 to 15,000 workers, alternate with small factories, employing 500 to 1,000 workers and scattered in out-of-the-way hamlets and villages. One would think that in such conditions Social-Democracy would find here a most favourable field for its activities, but facts have proved that so superficial an assumption does not hold water. Although some of the factories have been in existence for 40 or 50 years, the overwhelming majority of our "proletariat" have not yet become divorced from the land. The "village" has such a strong hold over them, that none of the psychological and other characteristics acquired by a "pure" proletarian in the course of collective work develops among our proletarians. The farming carried on by our "proletarians" is of a peculiarly linsey-woolsey type. A weaver employed in a mill hires a labourer to till his patch of land. His wife (if she is not working at the mill), his children, and the aged and invalid members of the family work on this same piece of land, and he himself will work on it when he becomes old or maimed or is discharged for violent or suspicious behaviour. Such "proletarians" can hardly be called proletarians. Their economic status is that of paupers; their ideology is that of petty bourgeois. They are ignorant and conservative. It is from such that Black-Hundred elements are recruited. However, even among these people class-consciousness has begun to awaken of late. Through the agency of "pure" proletarians we are endeavouring to rouse these ignorant masses from their age-old slumber, and not without success. Our contacts are increasing

in number, and in places our foothold is becoming firmer, the paupers are coming under our influence, beginning to adopt our ideology, both in the factory and in the village. And we believe that it will not be unorthodox to form organisations in an environment that is not "purely" proletarian. We have no other environment and were we to insist on orthodoxy and organise only the rural "proletariat", we would have to disband our organisation and those in the neighboring districts. We know we shall have difficulties in struggling against the urge to expropriate the arable and other land neglected by the landlords, or those lands which the holy fathers in cowl and cassock have not been able to farm properly. We know that bourgeois democracy, from the "democratic"-monarchist faction (such a faction exists in Ruza Uyezd) down to the "Peasant" Union, will fight us for influence among the "paupers", but we shall arm the latter to oppose the former. We shall make use of all Social-Democratic forces in the region, both intellectual and proletarian, to set up and consolidate our Social-Democratic committees of "paupers". And we shall do this in accordance with the following plan. In each uyezd town, or big industrial centre we shall set up uyezd committees of groups coming under the Regional Organisation. In addition to setting up factory committees in its district the uyezd committee will also set up "peasant" committees. For reasons of secrecy these committees should not have many people on them and should be made up of the most revolutionary and capable pauperized peasants. Wherever there are both factories and peasants, workers and peasants should be organised in a single subgroup committee.

In the first place, such committees should have a clear and exact idea of local conditions: A) Agrarian relationships: 1) peasant allotments, leases, form of tenure (communal, by households, etc.); 2) the neighboring land: a) to whom it belongs; b) the amount of land; c) what relation the peasants have to this land; d) on what terms the land is held: 1) labour rent, 2) excessive rent for cut-off lands, etc.; e) indebtedness to kulaks, landlords, etc. B) Imposts, taxes, the rate of assessment of peasant and landlord lands respectively. C) Migratory labour and handicraft industries, passports, whether there is winter hiring,[93] etc. D) Local factories and plants: the working conditions there; 1) wages, 2) working hours, 3) the attitude of the management, 4) housing conditions, etc. E) The administration: the Rural Superintendents, the volost headman, the clerk, the volost judges, constables, the priest. F) The Zemstvo: councillors representing the peasants, Zemstvo employees: the teacher, the doctor, libraries, schools, tea-rooms. G) Volost assemblies: their composition and procedure. H) Organisations: the Peasant Union, Socialist-Revolutionaries, Social-Democrats.

After familiarising itself with all these data the Peasant Social-Democratic Committee is obliged to get such decisions passed by the assemblies as may be necessitated by any abnormal state of affairs. This committee should simultaneously carry on among the masses intense propaganda and agitation for the ideas of Social-Democracy, organise study circles, impromptu meetings, mass meetings, distribute leaflets and other literature, collect funds for the Party, and keep in touch with the Regional Organisation through the uyezd group.

I we succeed in setting up a number of such committees the success of Social-Democracy will be assured.

### Regional Organiser

It goes without saying that we shall not undertake the task of working out the detailed practical directives to which the comrade refers: this is a matter for the comrades on the spot and for the central body in Russia which is guiding the practical work. We propose to take the opportunity presented by our Moscow comrade's interesting letter to explain the resolution of the Third Congress and the urgent tasks of the Party in general. It is obvious from the letter that the misunderstandings caused by the resolution of the Third Congress are only partly due to doubts in the field of theory. Another source is the new question, which has not arisen before, about the relations between the "revolutionary peasant committees" and the "Social-Democratic Committees" which are working among the peasants. The very posing of this question testifies to the big step forward made in Social-Democratic work among the peasants. Questions of -- relatively speaking -- detail are now being brought into the foreground by the practical requirements of "rural" agitation, which is striking root and assuming stable and permanent forms. And the author of the letter keeps forgetting that when he blames the Congress resolution for lack of clarity, he is in fact seeking an answer to a question which the Congress of the Party did not raise and could not have raised.

For instance, the author is not quite right when he says that both propagation of our ideas and support for the peasant

movement are possible "only" if local organisations exist. Of course, such organisations are desirable, and as the work increases they will become necessary; but such work is possible and necessary even where no such organisations exist. In all our activities, even when carried on exclusively among the urban proletariat, we must never lose sight of the peasant question and must disseminate the declaration made by the entire party of the class-conscious proletariat in the person of the Third Congress, namely, that we support a peasant uprising. The peasants must learn this -- from literature, from the workers, from special organisations, etc. The peasants must learn that in giving this support the Social-Democratic proletariat will not stop short of any form of confiscation of the land (i.e., expropriation without compensation to the owners).

A question of theory has in this connection been raised by the author of the letter, whether the expropriation of the big estates and their transfer to "peasant, petty-bourgeois ownership" should not be specifically qualified. But by proposing such a reservation the author has arbitrarily limited the purport of the resolution of the Third Congress. There is not a word in the resolution about the Social-Democratic Party undertaking to support transfer of the confiscated land to petty-bourgeois proprietors. The resolution states: we support . . . "up to and including confiscation", i.e., including expropriation without compensation; however, the resolution does not in any way decide to whom the expropriated land is to be given. It was not by chance that the question was left open: it is obvious from the articles in *Vperyod* (Nos. 11, 12, 15[\*]) that it was deemed unwise to decide this question in advance. It was stated there,

for instance, that under a democratic republic Social-Democracy cannot pledge itself and have its hands tied with regard to nationalisation of the land.

Indeed, it is **the revolutionary-democratic aspect of the peasant uprisings and a particular organisation of the rural proletariat in a class party that at present form the crux of the matter for us**, as distinct from the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionaries. It is not schemes of a "general redistribution" or nationalisation that is the kernel of the question; the essential thing is that the peasantry see the need for, and accomplish, the revolutionary demolition of the old order. That is why the Socialist-Revolutionaries are pressing for "socialisation", etc., while we are pressing for revolutionary peasant committees: without the latter, we say, all reforms amount to nothing. With them and supported by them the victory of the peasant uprising is possible.

**We must help the peasant uprising in every way**, up to and including confiscation of the land, but certainly not including all sorts of petty-bourgeois schemes. We support the peasant movement to the extent that it is revolutionary democratic. We are making ready (doing so now, at once) to fight it when, and to the extent that, it becomes reactionary and anti-proletarian. The essence of Marxism lies in that double task, which only those who do not understand Marxism can vulgarise or compress into a single and simple task.

Let us take a concrete instance. Let us assume that the peasant uprising has been victorious. The revolutionary peasant committees and the provisional revolutionary government



(relying, in part, on these very committees) can proceed to any confiscation of big property. We are in favour of confiscation, as we have already declared. But to whom shall we recommend giving the confiscated land. On this question we have not committed ourselves nor shall we ever do so by declarations like those rashly proposed by the author of the letter. The latter has forgotten that the same resolution of the Third Congress speaks of "purging the revolutionary-democratic content of the peasant movement of all reactionary admixtures " -- that is one point -- and, secondly, of the need "in all cases and under all circumstances for the independent organisation of the rural proletariat ". These are our directives. There will always be reactionary admixtures in the peasant movement, and we declare war on them in advance. Class antagonism between the rural proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie is unavoidable, and we disclose it in advance, explain it, and prepare for the struggle on the basis of that antagonism. One of the immediate causes of such a struggle may very likely be provided by the question: to whom shall the confiscated land be given, and how? We do not gloss over that question, nor do we promise equalitarian distribution, "socialisation", etc. What we do say is that this is a question we shall fight out later on, fight again, on a new field and with other allies. There, we shall certainly be with the rural proletariat, with the entire working class, against the peasant bourgeoisie. In practice this may mean the transfer of the land to the class of petty peasant proprietors -- wherever big estates based on bondage and feudal servitude still prevail, and there are as yet no material conditions for large-scale socialist production; it may mean nationalisation -- given

complete victory of the democratic revolution -- or the big capitalist estates being transferred to workers' associations, for from the democratic revolution we shall at once, and precisely in accordance with the measure of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organised proletariat, begin to pass to the socialist revolution. We stand for uninterrupted revolution. We shall not stop half-way. If we do not now and immediately promise all sorts of "socialisation", that is because we know the actual conditions for that task to be accomplished, and we do not gloss over the new class struggle burgeoning within the peasantry but reveal that struggle.

At first, we support the peasantry en masse against the landlords, support it to the hilt and with all means, including confiscation, and then (it would be better to say, at the same time) we support the proletariat against the peasantry en masse. To try to calculate now what the combination of forces will be within the peasantry "on the day after" the revolution (the democratic revolution) is empty utopianism. Without falling into adventurism or going against our conscience in matters of science, without striving for cheap popularity we can and do assert only one thing : we shall bend every effort to help the entire peasantry achieve the democratic revolution, in order thereby to make it easier for us, the party of the proletariat, to pass on as quickly as possible to the new and higher task -- the socialist revolution. We promise no harmony, no equalitarianism or "socialisation" following the victory of the present peasant uprising, on the contrary, we "promise" a new struggle, new inequality, the new revolution we are striving for. Our doctrine is less "sweet" than the legends of the Socialist-

Revolutionaries but let those who want to be fed solely on sweets join the Socialist-Revolutionaries; we shall say to such people: good riddance.

In our opinion this Marxist point of view settles also the question of the committees. In our opinion there should be no Social-Democratic peasant committees. If they are Social-Democratic, that means they are not purely peasant committees; if they are peasant committees, that means they are not purely proletarian, not Social-Democratic committees. There is a host of such who would confuse the two, but we are not of their number. Wherever possible we shall strive to set up our committees, committees of the Social-

Democratic Labour Party. They will consist of peasants, paupers, intellectuals, prostitutes (a worker recently asked us in a letter why not carry on agitation among the prostitutes), soldiers, teachers, workers -- in short, all Social Democrats, and none but Social-Democrats. These committees will conduct the whole of Social-Democratic work, in its full scope, striving, however, to organise the rural proletariat especially and particularly, since the Social-Democratic Party is the class party of the proletariat. To consider it "unorthodox" to organise a proletariat which has not entirely freed itself from various relics of the past is a tremendous delusion, and we would like to think that the relevant passages of the letter are due to a mere misunderstanding. The urban and industrial proletariat will inevitably be the nucleus of our Social-Democratic Labour Party, but we must attract to it, enlighten, and organise all who labour and are exploited, as stated in our programme -- all

without exception: handicraftsmen, paupers, beggars, servants, tramps, prostitutes -- of course, subject to the necessary and obligatory condition that they join the Social-Democratic movement and not that the Social-Democratic movement join them, that they adopt the standpoint of the proletariat, and not that the proletariat adopt theirs.

The reader may ask -- what is the point, then, of having revolutionary peasant committees? Does this mean that they are not necessary? No, they are necessary. Our ideal is purely Social-Democratic committees in all rural districts, and then agreement between them and all revolutionary democratic elements, groups, and circles of the peasantry for the purpose of establishing revolutionary committees. There is a perfect analogy here to the independence of the Social-Democratic Labour Party in the towns and its alliance with all the revolutionary democrats for the purpose of insurrection. We are in favour of a peasant uprising. We are absolutely opposed to the mixing and merging of heterogeneous class elements and heterogeneous parties. We hold that for the purpose of insurrection Social-Democracy should give an impetus to all revolutionary democracy, should help it all to organise, should march shoulder to shoulder with it, but without merging with it, to the barricades in the cities, and against the landlords and the police in the villages.

**Long live the insurrection in town and country against the autocracy! Long live revolutionary Social-Democracy, the vanguard of all revolutionary democracy in the present revolution!**

Lenin,

**The Theory of Spontaneous Generation,**

September 14 (1), 1905

Collected Works, Vol. 9, pp. 246-51.

"Iskra has shown that a constituent assembly can be formed by way of spontaneous generation, without the aid of any government whatever, and consequently without the aid of a provisional government as well. Henceforth this terrible problem may be regarded as settled, and all disputes in connection with it must cease."

Thus, runs the Bund statement made in No. 247 of *Posledniye Izvestia*, dated September 1 (August 19). Unless this is irony, no better "development" of Iskra 's views could be imagined. In any case, the theory of "spontaneous generation" has been established, the "terrible problem" has been settled, and disputes "must cease". What a blessing! We shall now live without disputes about this terrible question, cherishing this new, recently discovered, and simple theory of "spontaneous generation", a theory as clear as the eyes of a child. True, this theory of spontaneous generation was not generated spontaneously, but appeared to the common view as the fruit of cohabitation between the Bund and the new Iskra -- but after all what is important is not the origin, but the value of a theory!

How slow-witted were those unfortunate Russian Social-Democrats who discussed this "terrible question" both at the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. and at the Conference of new-Iskrist: some of these discussed at length the question of a provisional government for the purpose of generating, but not

spontaneously, a constituent assembly. Others (the Conference resolution) thought it possible that "the revolution's decisive victory over tsarism may be marked" also by the "decision of some representative institution to call, under the direct revolutionary pressure of the people, a constituent assembly". No one, however, not even the new Iskra 's Editorial Board, who attended the Conference in full together with Plekhanov, could ever have thought up what "'Iskra' has now shown ", and what the Bund has now summarised, confirmed, and christened with a magnificent name. Like all great discoveries, the theory of the spontaneous generation of a constituent assembly immediately sheds light on what was utter confusion. Now everything has become clear. There is no need to think of a revolutionary provisional government (remember Iskra 's famous dictum: let not the combination of the words "long live" and "government" defile your lips); there is no need to make the members of the State Duma give a "revolutionary pledge" to "transform the State Duma into a revolutionary assembly" (Cherevanin, in Iskra, No. 108). A constituent assembly can be generated spontaneously!! It will be immaculately brought forth by the people themselves, who will not defile themselves with any "intermediary" by way of a government, even a provisional, even a revolutionary one. This will be birth "without original sin", by the pure method of general elections with no "Jacobin" struggle for power, with no defilement of the holy cause through betrayal by bourgeois representative assemblies, and even without any coarse midwives, who hitherto in this profane, sinful, and unclean world had

punctually appeared on the scene every time the old society was pregnant with a new one.

Hail spontaneous generation! Let all the revolutionary peoples of all Russia now appreciate its "possibility" -- and consequently its necessity to them as the most rational, easy, and simple road to freedom! Let a monument be speedily erected in honour of the Bund and the new Iskra, the spontaneous progenitors of the theory of spontaneous generation!

But however much we may be blinded by the glaring light of this new scientific discovery, we must touch up on certain base features in this sublime creation. Just as the moon is very badly made in Hamburg,[94] so too new theories are fabricated none too carefully at the editorial office of *Posledniye Izvestia*. The recipe is a simple one, long a favourite with people who could never be accused of harbouring a single original thought -- take contrasting views, mix them, and divide into two parts! From Proletary we take the criticism of popular elections under the autocracy, from Iskra -- condemnation of the "terrible problem"; from Proletary -- the active boycott, from Iskra -- the uselessness of insurrection as a slogan . . . "like a bee that gathers a fee from each flowering tree". And the good Bundists are smugly preening themselves, rejoicing at the termination of disputes on the terrible problem, and admiring themselves: how superior they are to the narrow and biased views of both contending parties!

It doesn't work out, comrades of the Bund. You have shown no other "way of spontaneous generation" than that of the new

Iskra. And as regards the latter, you yourselves have had to admit that "under the autocracy and against the will of the government, which holds the entire machinery of state in its hands", elections of popular representatives can only be farcical elections. Do not abandon us half-way, O creators of the new theory; tell us in what "way" other than the new Iskra 's you "visualise" "spontaneous generation"?

In opposition to Iskra, Proletary wrote that the only people who will be able to conduct elections under the autocracy are the Osvobozhdeniye League, who will willingly call them popular elections.\* The Bund replies: "This argument does not hold water, since it is beyond doubt that the autocracy will allow no one -- not even the Osvobozhdeniye League -- to conduct elections except within limits established by law." We may respectfully remark: the Zemstvos, municipal councillors, and members of "unions" have held, and are holding, elections. That is a fact. Their numerous bureaux provide proof of it.

The Bund writes: "We should not start agitation against the Duma and for an insurrection in general [!] since insurrection, as merely a means of effecting a political revolution, cannot in this case [and not "in general"?] serve as a slogan for agitation. We can and must reply to the Duma by extending and intensifying political agitation for a constituent assembly to be elected on the basis of universal, etc., suffrage." To this we answer: in the first place, had the Bundists done a little thinking, or even simply consulted our Party programme, they would have seen that a constituent assembly, too, is only a "means". It is illogical to declare one "means" suitable as a slogan, and



another unsuitable "in general". Secondly, we have already for a long time past repeatedly explained in detail that a slogan calling for a constituent assembly alone is inadequate, since it has become an Osvobozhdeniye slogan, the slogan of the bourgeois "compromisers" (see Proletary, Nos. 3 and 4). It is quite natural for the liberal monarchist bourgeoisie to gloss over the question of the method of convening a constituent assembly. For representatives of the revolutionary proletariat it is totally impermissible. The theory of spontaneous generation fully befits the former, but as regards the latter, it can only disgrace them in the eyes of class-conscious workers.

The Bund's final argument: "An armed uprising is imperative, and we must keep on preparing for it all the time. However, we are as yet unable to launch an uprising, therefore [!!] there is no point in linking it up with the Duma." To this we reply: 1) to acknowledge that insurrection and preparations for it are imperative and at the same time to turn up one's nose contemptuously at the question of "combat squads" ("taken from the Vperyod arsenal", as the Bund writes) means to defeat one's own purpose and reveal a lack of thought in one's writings. 2) A provisional revolutionary government is an organ of insurrection. This principle, which is clearly expressed in a resolution of the Third Congress, was accepted in essence by the new-Iskra Conference too, although, in our opinion, it was less aptly put (a provisional revolutionary government "emerging from a victorious popular insurrection": both logic and historical experience show that it is possible to have provisional revolutionary governments as organs of insurrection which are far from victorious, or which are not

completely victorious; moreover, a provisional revolutionary government does not only "emerge" from an uprising, but also directs it). The Bundists do not attempt to dispute this proposition, and indeed it cannot be disputed. To recognise that an uprising and preparations for it are imperative, and at the same time to demand the cessation of disputes about the "terrible problem" of a provisional government means to write without thinking. 3) The phrase about the formation of a constituent assembly "without the aid of any government whatever, and consequently, without the aid of a provisional government as well" is an anarchist one. It is wholly on a level with the famous Iskra phrase about "defiling" the lips by combining the words "long live" with "government". It shows a failure to understand the significance of a revolutionary government as one of the greatest and finest "means" of effecting a political revolution. The paltry "liberalism" flaunted here by the Bund in emulation of Iskra (that is to say, we can manage without any government, even a provisional one!) is sheer anarchist liberalism. The formation of a constituent assembly without the aid of an uprising is an idea worthy only of bourgeois philistines, as even the comrades of the Bund realise. Moreover, an uprising without the aid of a provisional revolutionary government can be neither an uprising of the whole people nor a victorious uprising. Again and again we must state with regret that the Bundists' conclusions do not hang together. 4) If it is necessary to prepare for an uprising, such preparation must of necessity include the dissemination and explanation of slogans calling for an armed uprising of the people, the formation of a revolutionary army, and the

establishment of a provisional revolutionary government. We must ourselves study new methods of struggle, their conditions, their forms, their dangers, their practical realisation, etc., and enlighten the masses on these matters. 5) The proposition: "we are as yet unable to launch an uprising" is wrong. The Potemkin events have proved rather that we are unable to prevent premature outbreaks of the uprising that is being prepared. The Potemkin sailors were less prepared than those on other ships, and the sweep of the uprising was less than it might have been. What is the conclusion to be drawn from this? First, that the task of preparing an uprising should include that of preventing premature outbreaks of an uprising that is being or has almost been prepared. Secondly, that the uprising now developing spontaneously is outstripping the purposeful and planned work we are doing to prepare it. We are unable now to restrain the insurrectionary outbreaks which occur here and there sporadically, disconnectedly, and spontaneously. So much the more are we in duty bound to speed up dissemination and explanation of all the political tasks and political requisites of a successful uprising. All the more ill-advised, therefore, are suggestions that an end be put to the disputes about the "terrible problem" of a provisional government. 6) Is the idea that "there is no point in linking up insurrection with the Duma" correct? No, it is wrong. To determine beforehand just when the uprising should take place is absurd, especially for us who are living abroad. In this sense there can be no question of any "linking up", as has been repeatedly pointed out by Proletary. But agitation in favour of insurrection and advocacy of the latter must of necessity be

"linked up" with all the important political events which are stirring the people. Our entire dispute now centres on the slogan of agitation which should be made the hub of our "Duma" agitation campaign. Is the Duma an event of that kind? Undoubtedly, it is. Will the workers and peasants ask us: What would be the best reply to the Duma? Undoubtedly, they will, and are even doing so already. How are we to reply to these questions? Not by referring to spontaneous generation (which can only be treated as a joke), but by explaining the conditions, forms, prerequisites, tasks, and organs of an insurrection. The more we achieve by such explanations, the more likely will it be that the inevitable insurrectionary outbreaks will be able to develop more smoothly and rapidly into a successful and victorious uprising.

Lenin,

**The Political Strike and the Street Fighting in Moscow,**

October 17 (4), 1905, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 347-55.

The revolutionary events in Moscow have been the first flashes of lightning in a thunderstorm and they have lit up a new field of battle. The promulgation of the State Duma Act and the conclusion of peace have marked the beginning of a new period in the history of the Russian revolution. Already weary of the workers' persistent struggle and disturbed by the spectre of "uninterrupted revolution", the liberal bourgeoisie has heaved a sigh of relief and joyously caught at the sop thrown to it. All along the line a struggle has begun against the idea of a boycott, and liberalism has turned openly towards the right. Unfortunately, even among the Social-Democrats (in the new-Iskra camp) there are unstable people who are prepared on certain terms to support these bourgeois traitors to the revolution, and to take the State Duma "seriously". The events in Moscow, it may be hoped, will put the sceptics to shame, and will help the doubters to make a proper appraisal of the state of affairs on the new field of battle. Anaemic intellectuals' dreams of the possibility of popular elections under the autocracy, as well as illusions harboured by dull-witted liberals regarding the State Duma's crucial importance, vanished into thin air at the very first major revolutionary action by the proletariat.

Our information on the Moscow events is as yet (October 12, N.S.) very meagre. It is confined to brief and often contradictory reports in foreign newspapers, and to censor screened accounts of the beginning of the movement, published in the legal press.

One thing is certain: in its initial stage the Moscow workers' struggle proceeded along lines that have become customary during the past revolutionary year. The working-class movement has left its imprint on the entire Russian revolution. Starting with sporadic strikes it rapidly developed into mass strikes, on the one hand, and into street demonstrations, on the other. In 1905 the political strike has become an established form of the movement, developing before our eyes into insurrection. Whereas it took the entire working-class movement of Russia ten years to reach its present (and of course far from final) stage, the movement in certain parts of the country has progressed in a few days from a mere strike to a tremendous revolutionary outbreak.

The compositors' strike in Moscow, we are informed, was started by politically backward workers. But the movement immediately slipped out of their control and became a broad trade union movement. Workers of other trades joined in. Street demonstrations by workers, inevitable if only for the purpose of letting uninformed fellow-workers learn of the strike, turned into political demonstrations, with revolutionary songs and speeches. Long suppressed bitterness against the vile farce of "popular" elections to the State Duma came to the surface. The mass strike developed into a mass mobilisation of fighters for genuine liberty. The radical students appeared on the scene, who in Moscow passed a resolution absolutely analogous to that of the St. Petersburg students. In the language of free citizens, not of cringing officials, this resolution very properly branded the State Duma as brazen mockery of the people, and called for a struggle for a republic, for the convocation of a

genuinely popular and genuinely constituent assembly by a revolutionary provisional government. The proletariat and progressive sections of the revolutionary democrats began street fighting against the tsarist army and police.

This is how the movement developed in Moscow. On Saturday, September 24 (October 7), the compositors were no longer alone -- the tobacco factories and electric trams were also at a standstill, and a bakers' strike had begun. In the evening big demonstrations were held, attended, besides workers and students, by very many "outsiders" (revolutionary workers and radical students no longer regarded each other as outsiders at open actions by the people). The Cossacks and gendarmes did their utmost to disperse the demonstrators, who kept reassembling. The crowd offered resistance to the police and the Cossacks; revolver shots were fired, and many policemen were wounded.

On Sunday, September 25 (October 8), events at once took a formidable turn. At 11 a. m. workers began to assemble in the streets, with the crowd singing the Marseillaise. Revolutionary mass meetings were held, and printing-shops whose staff refused to strike were wrecked. Bakeries and gunsmiths' shops were attacked, for the workers needed bread to live and arms to fight for freedom (just as the French revolutionary song has it). It was only after stubborn resistance that the Cossacks managed to disperse the demonstrators. There was a regular battle in Tverskaya Street, near the Governor General's house. In front of the Filippov bakery a crowd of bakers' apprentices assembled. As the management of the bakery subsequently

declared, they were going out peacefully into the street, after stopping work in solidarity with the other strikers. A Cossack detachment attacked the crowd, who made their way into a house, climbed on to the roof and into the garrets, and showered the soldiers with stones. There began a regular siege of the house, with the troops firing on the workers. All communication was cut. Two companies of grenadiers made a flank movement, penetrated into the house from the rear, and captured the enemy's stronghold. One hundred and ninety-two apprentices were arrested, of whom eight were injured; two workers were killed. There were injured among the police and the troops, a captain of gendarmes sustaining fatal injuries.

Naturally, this information is extremely incomplete. According to private telegrams, quoted in some foreign newspapers, the brutality of the Cossacks and soldiers knew no bounds. The Filippov bakery management has protested against the unprovoked outrages perpetrated by the troops. A reputable Belgian newspaper has published a report that janitors were busy cleaning the streets of traces of blood. This minor detail -- it says -- testifies to the seriousness of the struggle more than lengthy reports can. On the basis of information from private sources that has found its way into the press, Vorwärts has stated that in Tverskaya Street 10,000 strikers clashed with an infantry battalion, which fired several volleys. The ambulance service had its hands full. It is estimated that no less than 50 people were killed and as many as 600 injured. The arrested are reported to have been taken to army barracks, where they were mercilessly and brutally manhandled, being made to run the gauntlet. It is further



reported that during the street fighting the officers distinguished themselves by their inhuman brutality, even towards women (a St. Petersburg cable from the special correspondent of the conservative bourgeois Temps, dated October 10 [September 27]).

Information on the events of the subsequent days is more and more scanty. The workers' wrath mounted frightfully, the movement gathering momentum. The government took all measures to ban or slash all reports. Foreign newspapers have openly written of the contradiction between the reassuring news from the official agencies (which at one time were believed) and the news transmitted to St. Petersburg by telephone. Gaston Leroux wired to the Paris Matin that the censorship was performing prodigies by way of preventing the spread of news that might be in the least alarming. Monday, September 26 (October 9), he wrote, was one of the most sanguinary days in the history of Russia. There was fighting in all the main streets and even near the Governor General's residence. The demonstrators unfurled a red flag. Many were killed or injured.

The reports in other papers are contradictory. Only one thing is certain -- the strike is spreading and has been joined by most workers employed at the big factories, and even in the light industries. The railwaymen too have stopped work. The strike is becoming general. (Tuesday, October 10 [September 27], and Wednesday.)

The situation is extremely grave. The movement is spreading to St. Petersburg: the workers of the San-Galli Works have already downed tools.

This is as far as our information goes to date. Any complete appraisal of the Moscow events on the strength of such information is, of course, out of the question. One still cannot say whether these events are a full-scale rehearsal for a decisive proletarian onslaught on the autocracy, or whether they are actually the beginning of this onslaught; whether they are only an extension of the "usual" methods of struggle described above to a new area of Central Russia, or whether they are destined to mark the beginning of a higher form of struggle and of a more decisive uprising.

To all appearances, the answer to these questions will be forthcoming in the near future. One thing is certain: before our very eyes, the insurrection is spreading, the struggle is becoming ever more widespread, and its forms ever more acute. All over Russia the proletariat is pressing onward with heroic efforts, indicating now here, now there, in what direction the armed uprising can and, undoubtedly, will develop. True, even the present form of struggle, already created by the movement of the working masses, is dealing very telling blows at tsarism. The civil war has assumed the form of desperately stubborn and universal guerilla warfare. The working class is giving the enemy no respite, disrupting industrial life, constantly bringing the entire machinery of local government to a standstill, creating a state of alarm all over the country, and is mobilising ever new forces for the struggle. No state is able

to hold out for long against such an onslaught, least of all the utterly corrupt tsarist government, from which its supporters are falling away one by one. And if the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie finds the struggle at times too persistent, if it is terrified by the civil war and by the alarming state of uncertainty which has gripped the country, the continuation of this state of affairs and the prolongation of the struggle is a matter of the utmost necessity to the revolutionary proletariat. If, among ideologists of the bourgeoisie, people are beginning to appear who are set on smothering the revolutionary conflagration with their sermons on peaceful and law-abiding progress, and are concerned with blunting the political crisis instead of making it more acute, the class-conscious proletariat, which has never doubted the treacherous nature of the bourgeois love of freedom, will march straight ahead, rousing the peasantry to follow it, and causing disaffection in the tsar's army. The workers' persistent struggle, the constant strikes and demonstrations, the partial uprisings -- all these, so to say, test battles and clashes are inexorably drawing the army into political life and consequently into the sphere of revolutionary problems. Experience in the struggle enlightens more rapidly and more profoundly than years of propaganda under other circumstances. The foreign war is over, but the government is obviously afraid of the return home of war prisoners and of the army in Manchuria. Reports of the revolutionary temper of the latter are coming in thick and fast. The proposed agricultural colonies in Siberia for officers and men of the army in Manchuria cannot but increase the unrest, even if these plans remain on paper. Mobilisation has not ceased, though peace has

been concluded. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the army is needed wholly and exclusively against the revolution. Under such circumstances, we revolutionaries do not in the least object to the mobilisation; we are even prepared to welcome it. In delaying the denouement by involving ever more army units in the struggle, and in getting more and more troops used to civil war, the government is not doing away with the source of all crises, but, on the contrary, is extending the field for them. It is winning some respite at the price of the inevitable extension of the field of battle and of rendering the struggle more acute. It is stirring to action the most backward people, the most ignorant, the most cowed, and the politically inert -- and the struggle will enlighten, rouse, and enliven these people. The longer the present state of civil war lasts, the more inevitably will large numbers of neutrals and a nucleus of champions of revolution be drawn from the ranks of the army of counter-revolution.

The entire course of the Russian revolution during the last few months shows that the stage now reached is not, and cannot be, the peak stage. The movement is still on the upgrade, as it has been ever since January 9. It was then that for the first time we saw a movement that amazed the world with the unanimity and solidarity of the huge masses of workers who had risen to advance political demands. This movement was still quite devoid of revolutionary consciousness, and helpless as regards arms and military preparedness. Poland and the Caucasus have provided an example of struggle on a higher plane; there the proletariat has partly begun to fight with weapons, and hostilities have assumed a protracted form. The Odessa

uprising was marked by a new and important factor needed for victory -- part of the forces went over to the side of the people. It is true that this did not bring immediate success; the difficult task of "coordinating operations of land and sea forces" (a most difficult task even for a regular army) had not yet been accomplished. But the problem was posed, and by all tokens the Odessa events will not remain an isolated incident. The Moscow strike shows us the spread of the struggle to a "genuinely Russian" region, whose reliability had so long delighted the hearts of the reactionaries. The revolutionary action that has started in this region is of enormous significance even if only for the fact that proletarian masses here, who are receiving their baptism of fire, have been most inert and at the same time are concentrated in a relatively small area in numbers unequalled in any other part of Russia. The movement started in St. Petersburg, spread through all the marginal regions of Russia, and mobilised Riga, Poland, Odessa, and the Caucasus; the conflagration has now spread to the very heart of Russia.

The disgraceful farce of the State Duma appears all the more contemptible in comparison with this genuinely revolutionary action by a class ready for battle and truly progressive. **The union of the proletariat and revolutionary democracy**, which we have spoken of on more than one occasion, **is becoming a fact**. The radical students, who both in St. Petersburg and in Moscow **adopted the slogans of revolutionary Social-Democracy**, are the vanguard of all the democratic forces. Loathing the baseness of the "Constitutional Democratic" reformists who have accepted the State Duma, these forces

gravitate towards a real and decisive struggle against the accursed enemy of the Russian people rather than towards a policy of bargaining with the autocracy.

Look at the liberal professors, rectors, vice-rectors, and the entire company of Trubetskois, Manuilovs, and their like. **These people are the finest representatives of liberalism and the Constitutional-Democratic Party, the most enlightened, the best educated, the most disinterested, the least affected by the direct pressure and the influence of the money-bag.** And how do these best people behave? What use did they make of the first authority they obtained, authority they were invested with by election, their authority over the universities? **They are already afraid of the revolution,** they fear the aggravation and the extension of the movement, they are already trying to extinguish the fire and bring about tranquillity, thereby earning well-merited insults in the form of praise from the Princes Meshchersky.

And they were well punished, these philistines of bourgeois science. They closed Moscow University, fearing a shamble on its premises. They merely succeeded in precipitating incomparably greater slaughter in the streets. They wanted to extinguish revolution in the University, but they only kindled it in the streets. They got into a quandary, along with the Trepovs and the Romanovs, whom they now hasten to persuade that freedom of assembly is needed: If you shut the University -- you open the way for street fighting. If you open the University -- you provide a platform for revolutionary mass

meetings which will train new and even more determined champions of liberty.

How infinitely instructive is the instance of these liberal professors for an appraisal of our State Duma! Is it not clear now, from the experience of the universities, that the liberals and the Constitutional-Democrats will tremble for the "fate of the Duma" just as much as these miserable knights of cheap-jack science tremble for the "fate of the universities"? **Is it not now clear that the liberals and the Constitutional-Democrats cannot use the Duma in any other way save the purpose of still more extensive and still more evil smelling preaching of peaceful and law-abiding progress?** Is it not clear now how ridiculous are the hopes of **transforming the Duma into a revolutionary assembly?** Is it not clear that there is only one method of "influencing" -- not specifically the Duma or specifically the universities but the whole of the old autocratic regime -- the method of the Moscow workers, the method of insurrection by the people? It is this alone that will not merely force the Manuilovs in the universities to ask for freedom of assembly, and the Petrunkeviches in the Duma to ask for liberty for the people but will win genuine liberty for the people.

The Moscow events have shown the real alignment of social forces: the liberals scampered from the government to the radicals, urging the latter to desist from the revolutionary struggle. The radicals fought in the ranks of the proletariat. Let us not forget this lesson: it also bears directly on the State Duma.

Let the Petrunkeviches and the other Constitutional Democrats play at parliamentarianism in autocratic Russia --

**the workers will wage a revolutionary struggle for genuine sovereignty of the people.**

Irrespective of how the insurrectionary outbreak in Moscow ends, the revolutionary movement will in any case emerge even stronger than before, will spread to a wider area, and gather new forces. Let us even assume that the tsarist troops are now celebrating a complete victory in Moscow -- a few more such victories and the utter collapse of tsardom will become a fact. This will then be the actual, genuine collapse of the entire heritage of serf-ownership, autocracy, and obscurantism -- not the flabby, craven, and hypocritical patching up of tattered rags, **with which the liberal bourgeois are trying to delude themselves and others.** Let us even assume that tomorrow's post will bring us the sad news that the insurrectionary outbreak has been crushed once again. We shall then exclaim **once again -- hail insurrection!**



Lenin,

**Tasks of Revolutionary Army Contingents, October 1905**

Collected Works, Volume 9, pages 420-424.

1. Independent military action.
2. Leadership of the mass.

The contingents may be of any strength, beginning with two or three people.

They must arm themselves as best they can (rifles, revolvers, bombs, knives, knuckle-dusters, sticks, rags soaked in kerosene for starting fires, ropes or rope ladders, shovels for building barricades, pyroxylin cartridges, barbed wire, nails [against cavalry], etc., etc.). Under no circumstances should they wait for help from other sources, from above, from the outside; they must procure everything themselves.

As far as possible, the contingents should consist of people who either live near each other, or who meet frequently and regularly at definite hours (preferably people of both categories, for regular meetings may be interrupted by the uprising). They must arrange matters so as to be able to get together at the most critical moments, when things may take the most unexpected turns. Therefore, each group must work out beforehand ways and means of joint action: signs in windows, etc., so as to find each other easily; previously agreed upon calls or whistles so that the comrades recognise one another in a crowd; previously arranged signals in the event of meetings at night, etc., etc. Any energetic person, with the aid of two or three comrades, could work out a whole series of such rules and

methods, which should be drawn up, learned and practised beforehand. It must not be forgotten that the chances are 100 to 1 that events will take us unawares, and that it will be necessary to come together under terribly difficult conditions.

Even without arms, the groups can play a most important part: 1) by leading the mass; 2) by attacking, whenever a favourable opportunity presents itself, policemen, stray Cossacks (as was the case in Moscow), etc., and seizing their arms; 3) by rescuing the arrested or injured, when there are only few police about; 4) by getting on to the roofs or upper stories of houses, etc., and showering stones or pouring boiling water on the troops, etc. Given sufficient push, an organised and well-knit combat group constitutes a tremendous force. Under no circumstances should the formation of the group be abandoned or postponed on the plea of lack of arms.

As far as possible members of combat groups should have their duties assigned in advance, leaders or chiefs of groups being sometimes selected in this way. It would be unwise, of course, to play at conferring ranks, but the enormous importance of uniform leadership and rapid and determined action should not be forgotten. Determination and push are three-quarters of success.

As soon as the groups are formed—i.e., right now—they must get down to comprehensive work—not only theoretical, but most certainly practical work as well. By theoretical work we mean a study of military science, an acquaintance with military problems, the arrangement of lecture meetings on military questions, talks by military men (officers, non-commissioned

officers, etc., etc., including also workers who have served in the army); the reading, discussion and assimilation of illegal pamphlets and newspaper articles on street fighting, etc., etc.

Practical work, we repeat, should be started at once. This falls into preparatory work and military operations. The preparatory work includes procuring all kinds of arms and ammunition, securing premises favourably located for street fighting (convenient for fighting from above, for storing bombs and stones, etc., or acids to be poured on the police, etc., etc.; also suitable for headquarters, for collecting information, for sheltering fugitives from the police, for use as hospitals, etc., etc.). Further, preliminary activity includes the immediate work of reconnaissance and gathering information—obtaining plans of prisons, police stations, ministries, etc., ascertaining the routine in government offices, banks, etc., and learning how they are guarded, endeavouring to establish contacts which could be of use (with employees in police departments, banks, courts, prisons, post- and telegraph-offices, etc.), ascertaining the whereabouts of arsenals, of all the gunsmiths' shops in the city, etc. There is a great deal of this sort of work to be done, and—what is more—it is work in which even those who are quite incapable of engaging in street fighting, even the very weak, women, youngsters, old people, and so on, can be of immense service. Efforts should be made immediately to get into combat groups absolutely all those who want to take part in the uprising, for there is no such person, nor can there be one, who, provided he desires to work, cannot be of immense value, even if he is unarmed and is personally incapable of fighting.

Further, revolutionary army groups should under no circumstances confine themselves to preparatory work alone, but should begin military action as soon as possible so as to 1) train their fighting forces; 2) reconnoitre the enemy's vulnerable spots; 3) inflict partial defeats on the enemy; 4) rescue prisoners (the arrested); 5) procure arms; 6) obtain funds for the uprising (confiscation of government funds), and so on and so forth. The groups can and should immediately take advantage of every opportunity for active work and must by no means put matters off until a general uprising, because fitness for the uprising cannot be acquired except by training under fire.

All extremes, of course, are bad. All that is good and useful, if carried to extremes, may become—and beyond a certain limit is bound to become—bad and injurious. Disorderly, unorganised and petty terrorist acts may, if carried to extremes, only scatter and squander our forces. That is a fact, which, of course, should not be forgotten. On the other hand, under no circumstances should it be forgotten that a slogan calling for an uprising has already been issued, that the uprising has already begun. To launch attacks under favourable circumstances is not only every revolutionary's right, but his plain duty. The killing of spies, policemen, gendarmes, the blowing up of police stations, the liberation of prisoners, the seizure of government funds for the needs of the uprising—such operations are already being carried out wherever insurrection is rife, in Poland and in the Caucasus, and every detachment of the revolutionary army must be ready to start such operations at a moment's notice. Each group should remember that if it allows a favourable opportunity for such an operation to slip by today, it will be

guilty of unpardonable inactivity, of passivity—and such an offence is the greatest crime a revolutionary can commit at a time of insurrection, the greatest disgrace that can befall anyone who is striving for liberty in deed, and not in word alone.

As for the composition of these combat groups, the following may be said. Experience will show how many members are desirable in each group, and how their duties should be distributed. Each group must itself begin to acquire this experience, without waiting for instructions from outside. The local revolutionary organisation should, of course, be asked to send a revolutionary with military experience to deliver lectures, conduct discussions and give advice, but if such a person is not available it is absolutely incumbent upon the group to do this work itself.

As regards Party divisions, it is natural that members of the same Party will prefer to belong to the same group. But there should be no hard and fast rule debarring members of other parties from joining. It is precisely here that we must put into practice the alliance, the working agreement (without any merging of parties, of course), between the socialist proletariat and revolutionary democracy. Whoever wants to fight for liberty and proves in fact his readiness to do so may be regarded as a revolutionary democrat, and we must strive to carry on with such people the work of preparing for the uprising (provided, of course, the given person or group is quite trustworthy). All other “democrats” should be emphatically rejected as quasi-democrats, as liberal windbags who must not

be relied on at all, and whom it would be criminal for a revolutionary to trust.

It is, of course, desirable for combat groups to unite their activities. It would be extremely useful to work out the forms and terms of joint action. Under no circumstances, however, should this be carried to the extreme of inventing complex plans and general schemes, or of postponing practical work for the sake of pedantic concoctions, etc. The uprising will inevitably take place under circumstances in which the unorganised elements will outnumber the organised thousands of times over; there will inevitably be cases when it will be necessary to take immediate action, right then and there, in twos or even singly—and one must be prepared to act on one's own initiative, and at one's own risk. All delays, disputes, procrastination and indecision spell ruin to the cause of the uprising. Supreme determination, maximum energy, immediate utilisation of each suitable moment, immediate stimulation of the revolutionary ardour of the mass and the direction of this ardour to more vigorous and the most determined action—such is the prime duty of a revolutionary.

The fight against the Black Hundreds is an excellent type of military action, which will train the soldiers of the revolutionary army, give them their baptism of fire, and at the same time be of tremendous benefit to the revolution. Revolutionary army groups must at once find out who organises the Black Hundreds and where and how they are organised, and then, without confining themselves to propaganda (which is useful, but inadequate) they must act

with armed force, beat up and kill the members of the Black-Hundred gangs, blow up their headquarters, etc., etc.

Lenin,

**On P. B. Axelrod's Pamphlet, the People's Duma and a Workers' Congress,**

October 1905

Collected Works, Volume 9, pages 417-419.

Analysis of the Pamphlet

In connection with P. B. Axelrod's little pamphlet entitled *The People's Duma and a Workers' Congress*, the following should be noted:

This is the prototype of all of Iskra's follies — both of a parallel parliament and a deal with the Constitutionalists Democrats.

By and large, it is all playing at parliamentarianism — in the People's Duma, and in arranging a deal with the Constitutionalists-Democrats — in the parliamentary interpretation of a "Workers' Congress" with illustrations "from Lassalle" (who was working in conditions of a constitution ten years after it had been won by a revolution).

We have no end of ineptitudes here: "the first and primary foundation" (page 13) "of serious negotiations and agreements between our party and liberal organisations"... of action. What kind?

{ { { Comrade P. B. Axelrod (is three years late! Can this be considered an agreement with a political party? It amounts to services rendered, technical in the first place, which were sufficient three years ago.

1) Material means...



2) premises...

3) arms “delivery”]

4) influence on public institutions, utilisation of connections

5) in the bureaucracy and the military, in the interests of open political action.

“School-level pedagogy”: even if the convoking of a People’s Duma and a Workers’ Congress is a failure (page 12), “the agitation and organisational work done will not have been lost”.

Compare with an insurrection—can organisational work in one “have been lost”? No. And agitation work? No, **since an insurrection is in progress, is a fact.** As for the People’s Duma—that is a comedy, a phantom, a hollow phrase.

A saccharine approach to the workers.

Page.7: “of a constituent popular assembly, i.e., a really ‘People’s Duma’.”

{ Not “i.e.” and not “really”}

(page 7) “The duties’ of the People’s Duma

1°r; 1) “to present to the State Duma the demand that a constituent assembly be convened, and that it declare [?—and?] itself non-competent, without the right to function.”

2) ~”~ !! ha-ha! and what about the “right” to convene a constituent assembly?

11°r; 3) “to serve as the centre and spokesman of the will of all democratic (page 7) sections of the population, and organiser of defensive and offensive action by these sections against the government and its allies.”

Compare this nonsense **with a provisional revolutionary government as the organ of insurrection.**

A spate of meaningless words, and the reality of revolution. The difficulty of an uprising=the difficulty of climbing Mt. Blanc. The difficulty of a “People’s Duma” under the autocracy=“the difficulty” of flying through the air on to the top of Mt. Blanc.

Note should be taken of confirmation of our Central Committee’s opinion, as expressed in its leaflet, that Iskra’s plan is a piece of invention coming from abroad. Axelrod wants to bring round to his point of view his correspondent, who (a) (page 6) doubts whether the slogans of the People’s Duma and a Workers’ Congress will win over the mass of the people; (b) (page 14) has motivated the policy of an “active boycott” (page 15 and page 14 in fine).

Axelrod considers the policy of an active boycott reactionary and utopian

— reaction?—a conference of Social-Democrats+Osvobozhdeniye have settled this question. A coalition with the Black Hundreds?—fear of Moskovskiy Vedomosti and Novoye Vremya.

— utopia? Two “utopias”: insurrection and playing at parliamentarianism.

Which of these is being effected is shown by the general strike and street fighting all over Russia.

The utter jumble of ideas about a “deal”, an “agreement” (page7) “with the central organisations of liberal democracy”.

Complete inability to single out revolutionary democracy and indicate concrete slogans on a political agreement with the latter. Axelrod’s slogans are all of an Osvobozhdeniye nature.

Regarding a “workers’ congress”.

The Third Congress: utilisation of open action so as to create points d’appui for the Party.

(Clear and precise.)

With P. B. Axelrod one cannot make out anything.

An All-Russia workers’ congress sans phrase (page 3)—or a “phrase”?

Quid est?

It would be best to have two congresses

1) a “General Congress” (page 4)

2) a “Social-Democratic congress” (“of members of a General Congress

?|| who share our programme, plus representatives of our Party organisations, for a reform of the whole Party”. Page 4)

|| The ridiculousness of a comparison with the Lassalle affair:

1) there was already a constitution then. 2) Then Lassalle was openly appealed to, and his appeal was an open one. 3) Then the formation of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiter-Verein

was a pretext for abuse of “workers’ independent activity”  
against the Social-Democratic Workers’ Party

Lenin,

**The Latest in Iskra Tactics, or Mock Elections as a New Incentive to an Uprising,**

October 17, 1905

Collected Works Vol. 9, pp. 356-73.

We have spoken many times already about the inefficacy of the Iskra tactics in the "Duma" campaign. The two main lines of this tactics -- the urge to support the Osvobozhdenzye League which wants to enter the Duma on the strength of certain revolutionary pledges and the release of a slogan calling for "revolutionary self-government of citizens" and for popular elections to a constituent assembly under the autocracy -- are both unsound. In the resolution of the Mensheviks' "Southern Constituent [?] Conference" we at last have an attempt to formulate the Iskra tactics accurately and officially. At this Conference the best of the new-Iskra forces in Russia were represented. The resolution is an attempt at a business-like exposition of purely practical advice addressed to the proletariat. That is why a careful analysis of this resolution is so essential, both for the purpose of evolving a definite line of practical activity and for an appraisal of Iskra 's tactical stand as a whole.

**We quote the full text of the resolution:**

**Resolution on the State Duma**

Adopted by the Constituent Conference of the Southern Organisations

Whereas,

we see the only way out of the present difficult conditions, compatible with the interests of the whole people, in the convocation of a constituent assembly elected on the basis of universal and equal suffrage, direct elections and a secret ballot, for the purpose of abolishing the autocratic regime, and establishing a democratic republic necessary in the first place to the proletariat in its struggle against all the foundations of the bourgeois system and for the achievement of socialism; and whereas,

1) the system of elections to the State Duma does not enable the whole people to participate in them, the proletariat being excluded from the elections by reason of the high property qualification fixed for urban dwellers, while the peasantry -- a mere section of it at that -- will vote on the basis of a four-stage system, which provides the authorities with every opportunity for exerting pressure on them and whereas,

2.) the whole of Russia is still deprived of all essential civil liberties, in the absence of which there can be no election campaign and, consequently, no elections conducted with any degree of fairness, and whereas, on the contrary, at the present time the authorities' arbitrary procedure is everywhere becoming worse than ever before, and vast areas are one after the other placed under martial law; and, finally, whereas,

3) a system of representation which is even more of a travesty is being worked out for all the marginal regions; --

The Conference urges all organisations to build up a most energetic campaign of agitation to expose the entire travesty of representation by which the autocratic government proposes to deceive the people, and declares deliberate traitors to the people all those who are prepared to content themselves with the State Duma, and who will not at this decisive moment set themselves the task of supporting by their actions and tactics the revolutionary people's demand for the convocation of a constituent assembly elected on the basis of universal and equal suffrage, direct elections and a secret ballot.

To achieve the speediest possible realisation of the said demand, the Southern Conference recommends the following tactics to the Party organisations:

1) The launching of an energetic agitation campaign among the industrial proletariat and the peasant masses for the creation of comprehensive democratic organisations and their amalgamation in an all-Russia organisation with the purpose of waging an energetic struggle against the State Duma and for the establishment of a popular constituent assembly with the immediate introduction of freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, and the right to strike. The establishment of this all-Russia people's

organisation should proceed through the formation of agitation committees elected by the workers at their respective factories, and the amalgamation of these agitation committees; through the creation of similar agitation committees among the peasantry; through the establishment of closer ties between the urban and rural committees; through the setting up of gubernia committees and the establishment of contact between them.

2) If this organisation proves sufficiently strong, and the working masses' temper appropriate, the inauguration of the election campaign should be used to organise nation-wide popular elections to a constituent assembly, bearing in mind the prospect that the organised movement of the people, aimed at getting these elections held, may naturally lead to the whole people rising against tsarism, since inevitable resistance by the latter and the clash with it on the occasion of the elections will provide the rising with new incentives, while the people's preliminary organisation will give the rising universality and unity.

3) In addition, the Conference proposes that efforts be made to secure freedom of election meetings and recommends energetic intervention in the election campaign, intervention by the people in electors' meetings, and public discussion of the tasks confronting representatives elected to the State Duma, these discussions to be conducted by electors at mass



meetings. At the same time, the Social-Democratic Party must induce those sections of the population with the right to vote in the State Duma elections, to take to the road of revolution. This may find expression either in their joining an uprising led by the democratic organisations of the people, or, in the absence of such, in their striving to transform the incipient State Duma into a revolutionary assembly that will convoke a popular constituent assembly, or facilitate its convocation by the democratic organisations of the people.

4) Preparations should be made for exerting pressure on the State Duma along the same lines, should the mass movement fail to have brought about the overthrow of the autocracy and the establishment of a constituent assembly by the time the Duma is finally convened. Preparations should be made for an ultimatum to the State Duma demanding the convocation of a constituent assembly and the immediate introduction of freedom of speech, assembly, the press and association, and the arming of the people. Preparations should be made to back up this ultimatum with a political strike and other mass action by the people.

5) All these tactics shall be approved at general mass meetings, organised prior to and during the election campaign among the proletariat and the peasantry.

We shall not dwell on the shortcomings in the redaction of the resolution which is far too wordy. Let us deal with its fundamental mistakes.

1. The preamble speaks of the only way out of the present situation. In this connection the entire stress is placed on the idea of a constituent assembly, and not a word is said as to who is to call it, so that the "way out" should be not merely on paper, but in actual fact. Silence on this score amounts to Social-Democrats yielding to the Osvobozhdeniye gentry. As we have repeatedly pointed out, it is the interests of the monarchist-liberal bourgeoisie that oblige the Osvobozhdeniye gentry to limit themselves to the convocation of a popular constituent assembly and pass over in silence the question of who is to call it. This, as we have repeatedly pointed out, is the very question that the developing revolution has brought into the forefront, and herein at present lies the fundamental difference between the bourgeoisie's opportunist ("compromise") tactics and the proletariat's revolutionary tactics. By their resolution the new-Iskra supporters have furnished documentary proof of their incurable blindness in fundamental questions of tactics, and of their relapsing into Osvobozhdeniye slogans.

In the succeeding sections the resolution still more confuses the question of the convocation of a popular constituent assembly. Propaganda which proclaims confidence in the State Duma on this score is downright reactionary, while to say that a constituent assembly should be convened by a "democratic organisation of the people" is much like proposing to call a constituent assembly through a committee of friends of the people living on the planet Mars. At their all-Russia Conference the new-Iskrists committed an unpardonable error in placing the convocation of a popular constituent assembly by a revolutionary government on a par with its convocation by a

representative institution. The new-Iskristis have now gone even farther in reverse: they have not even mentioned a revolutionary provisional government. Why? On what grounds? In what respect have their views changed? All this remains a mystery. Instead of developing tactical directives, the Mensheviks' conferences merely provide exhibitions of plunges and vacillations now to the right, now to the left.

2. To call "deliberate traitors to the people all those who are prepared to content themselves with the State Duma", etc., is just such a plunge ostensibly to the left, but one that is not towards a genuinely revolutionary path, but rather towards revolutionary phrase-mongering. In the first place, what is the point of the stinging adjective "deliberate" (traitor)? Was Johann Jacoby, who entered the State Duma or the United Landtag in 1847 as a bourgeois liberal, and went over to the Social-Democrats after the war of 1870-71, a deliberate traitor to the people? Will any peasant who goes into the Duma and is "prepared" to content himself with very, very little be a deliberate traitor? Secondly, is it reasonable to establish as criteria of treachery things like: "whoever is prepared to content himself", "whoever does not set himself the task", etc.? How does one reveal one's "being prepared" and "setting oneself the task" -- in word, or in deed? If in word, then it is necessary to obtain from those C.D.s ("Constitutional-Democrats", as the Osvobozhdeniye gentry now call themselves) who are entering the State Duma, a written promise or revolutionary pledge (Parvus, Cherevanin, Martov). In that case the resolution should express this idea clearly instead of being so vague about it. On the other hand, if being "prepared" is proved indeed, then

why does the resolution not state openly and straightforwardly what "actions" it considers proof of this preparedness? The reason is because the resolution reflects the fundamental error of the new Iskra, which is unable to distinguish between revolutionary democracy and liberal-monarchist democracy. Thirdly, is it rational for a militant party to talk in general about persons ("all who") instead of speaking concretely about trends or parties? At present it is of particular importance for us to expose to the proletariat that trend -- the Party of Constitutional-Democrats -- whose "actions" have already shown us what demands it supports, and how it does so. Addressing the workers in the name of Social-Democratic organisations, speaking to them about entrants into the Duma, and about Duma electors, etc., while keeping silent about the Constitutional-Democratic Party (i.e., the Osvobozhdeniye people) means either shilly-shallying and scheming (coming to terms on the sly with the Osvobozhdeniye people to support them on conditions stipulated by Parvus or Cherevanin), or unwittingly spreading corruption among the workers and giving up the struggle against the Constitutional-Democrats.

Besides the historical facts regarding the activity of Osvobozhdeniye, its adherents, the Zemstvo members, and all other Constitutional-Democrats, we have no important data for gauging the "preparedness" of democrats from among the bourgeoisie to fight together with the people. The new-Iskrists ignore these facts and dismiss the matter with meaningless phrases. Yet Plekhanov is still trying to convince us that the organisational vagueness in Iskra 's views is not supplemented by vagueness in tactics!

The Iskra supporters have in fact not only shut their eyes to the Constitutional-Democrats' "preparedness" to commit treachery, proved by their obvious and universally noted turn to the right during the period between the July and September Zemstvo congresses, but have even assisted these Constitutional-Democrats by fighting against the boycott! The Iskrista are threatening hypothetical Osvobozhdeniye adherents ("all those who are prepared", etc.) with "frightfully terrifying" words, but by their tactics they are assisting the genuine Osvobozhdeniye adherents. This is wholly in the spirit of Rodichev, one of the Constitutional-Democratic leaders, who thunders: "We will not accept liberty from hands steeped in the blood of the people!" (this statement of Rodichev's, uttered at a private meeting and directed against William Stead, is now making the rounds of the entire foreign press) -- and in the same breath demands that those very hands convoke a popular constituent assembly.

3. The next fundamental error in the resolution is the slogan for "the creation of comprehensive democratic organisations and their amalgamation in an all-Russia organisation". The frivolity of the Social-Democrats who advance such a slogan is simply staggering. What does create comprehensive democratic organisations mean? It can mean one of two things: either the socialists' organisation (the R.S.D.L.P.) being submerged in the democrats' organisation (and the new-Iskrista cannot do that deliberately, for it would be sheer betrayal of the proletariat) -- or a temporary alliance between the Social-Democrats and certain sections of the bourgeois democrats. If the new-Iskrista want to advocate such an alliance, why do they

not say so frankly and openly? Why do they hide behind the word "creation"? Why do they not specify the exact trends and groups in the bourgeois-democratic camp, with which they are urging the Social-Democrats to unite? Is this not a fresh example of impermissible vagueness of tactics, which in practice inevitably transforms the working class into an appendage to the bourgeois democracy?

The resolution's only definition of the nature of these "comprehensive democratic organisations" consists of a statement of the two aims set them: 1) a struggle against the State Duma, and 2) a struggle for a popular constituent assembly. The latter aim, as lamely formulated by Iskra, i.e., without any indication of who is to convene the popular constituent assembly, has been fully endorsed by the Constitutional-Democrats. Does this mean that the Iskristis advocate an alliance between the Social-Democrats and the Constitutional-Democrats, but are ashamed to say so openly? The former aim is formulated with an obscurity we are accustomed to seeing only in Russian laws, which are deliberately designed to deceive the people. What is meant by a struggle against the State Duma? If we take the expression literally -- assuming the authors of the resolution want to express themselves unequivocally -- it means a boycott of the Duma, for to fight against an institution that does not yet exist means opposing its establishment. But we know that the Iskristis are opposed to the boycott, we see from the resolution itself that further on they no longer talk of a struggle against the State Duma, but of exerting pressure on the State Duma, of a striving to transform it into a revolutionary assembly, etc. This means

that the words "struggle against the State Duma" should not be taken literally, or in their narrow sense. But in that case, how should they be taken? Perhaps, as understood by Mr. M. Kovalevsky, who reads papers criticising the State Duma? What constitutes a struggle against the State Duma? That remains a mystery. Our muddle-heads have said nothing precise on this score. Aware of the class-conscious workers' mood, which is definitely opposed to the tactic of agreements with the Constitutional-Democrats, the tactic of supporting the Duma on certain conditions, our new-Iskristis have cravenly taken a middle course: on the one hand, they repeat the slogan "Struggle against the State Duma" which is popular among the proletariat and, on the other hand, they are depriving this slogan of any exact meaning, are throwing dust into the eyes of the people, are interpreting the struggle against the Duma in the sense of exerting pressure on the Duma, etc. And this wretched muddle is being advanced by the most influential of the new-Iskra organisations at a time the Osvobozhdeniye gentry are loudly protesting for the world to hear that they are entering the State Duma only in order to carry on a struggle and exclusively for the struggle, that they are "prepared" to make a complete break with the government!

We ask the readers: has more disgraceful vacillation in tactics ever been seen anywhere in the Social-Democratic movement? Is it possible to imagine anything more ruinous to Social-Democracy than this advocacy of "creating comprehensive democratic organisations" together with the Osvobozhdeniye people (for the Constitutional-Democrats are in agreement with

the aims of such organisations as set forth by Iskra ), but without mentioning these people by name??

And Plekhanov, who has degraded himself in the eyes of all Russian revolutionary Social-Democrats by defending Iskra 's "organisational vagueness" for almost two years, will now try to assure us that this new-Iskra tactic is good ! . . .

4. Further. It is most unwise to call an alliance of comprehensive (and amorphous) democratic organisations "an all-Russia people's organisation" or "a democratic organisation of the people". First of all, this is incorrect theoretically. As we know, the Economists erred by confusing party with class. Reviving old mistakes, the Iskristis are now confusing the sum of democratic parties or organisations with an organisation of the people. That is empty, false, and harmful phrasemongering. It is empty because it has no specific meaning whatever, owing to the absence of any reference to definite democratic parties or trends. It is false because in a capitalist society even the proletariat, the most advanced class, is not in a position to create a party embracing the entire class -- and as for the whole people creating such a party, that is entirely out of the question. It is harmful because it clutters up the mind with bombastic words and does nothing to further the real work of explaining the actual significance of actual democratic parties, their class basis, the degree of their closeness to the proletariat, etc. The present, the period of a democratic revolution, bourgeois in its social and economic content, is a time when bourgeois democrats, all Constitutional-Democrats, etc., right down to the Socialist-Revolutionaries, are revealing a particular



inclination to advocate "comprehensive democratic organisations" and in general to encourage, directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly, non-partisanship, i.e., an absence of any strict division between the democrats. Class-conscious representatives of the proletariat must fight this tendency resolutely and ruthlessly, for it is profoundly bourgeois in essence. We must bring exact party distinctions into the foreground, expose all confusion, show up the falsity of phrases about allegedly united, broad, solid democratism, phrases our liberal newspapers are teeming with. In proposing an alliance with certain sections of the democrats for the achievement of definite tasks, we should single out only revolutionary democrats -- particularly at a time like this; we should indicate what most clearly distinguishes those "prepared" to fight (right now, in the ranks of the revolutionary army) from those who are "prepared" to bargain with the autocracy.

To bring home their mistake to the Iskrist, let us take a very simple example. Our programme speaks of peasant committees. The resolution of the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. defines their role more precisely by calling them revolutionary peasant committees (in this respect the new Iskra Conference agreed, in essence, with the Third Congress). We have set them the task of bringing about democratic reforms in general and agrarian reforms in particular, going as far as the confiscation of the landed estates by revolutionary action. The Iskra resolution now recommends a new kind of "agitation committees among the peasantry". Such advice is worthy not of socialist workers but of liberal bourgeois. Had they been formed, such "peasant committees of agitation" would play

right into the hands of the Osvobozhdeniye gentry, for their revolutionary character would be supplanted by liberalism. We have already pointed out that the content of the agitation of these committees, as defined by Iskra (the struggle "against" the State Duma and for a popular constituent assembly), does not exceed the limits set by the Osvobozhdeniye programme. Is it now clear to the new-Iskristas that by supplementing the slogan of revolutionary peasant committees with one calling for "peasant committees of agitation" it is transforming Social-Democratic slogans into Osvobozhdeniye slogans?

5. Finally, we reach the main task of this "all-Russia people's organisation" -- the organisation of nation-wide popular elections to a constituent assembly. Nation-wide popular elections with the autocracy left intact! And "clashes" with the autocracy provide "new incentives for an uprising". . . . Mock elections as a new incentive for an uprising is what this amounts to!

The slogan calling for "revolutionary self-government", and the theory of the "spontaneous generation" of a constituent assembly could not but lead to this absurdity, which is destined to become classical. To speak of nation-wide popular elections under the rule of the Trepovs, i.e., before the victory of the uprising, before the actual overthrow of the tsarist government, is the height of Manilovism, and can serve only to spread incredible political corruption among the workers. Only people attuned to phrase-mongering by the new Iskra can accept such slogans, which crumble to dust at the merest contact with sober criticism. One has only to reflect a little on precisely what is

meant by nation-wide popular elections, if the term be taken seriously; one has only to remember that they imply freedom of agitation, keeping the entire population informed, and recognition by the entire population of the centre or local centres that will register the entire population, and canvass literally everyone, with no exceptions -- one has only to give such things a little thought to realise that the "nation-wide popular elections" proposed by Iskra would amount to a nation-wide joke or a nation-wide swindle. Not a single deputy who could claim to have been "elected by the entire people", i.e., who has had 50,000 to 100,000 votes freely and consciously cast for him -- not one such deputy can be elected anywhere in Russia "in the inauguration of the election campaign".

The Iskra resolution advises the proletariat to stage a farce, and no reservations or excuses can change the farcical import of this resolution. We are told that elections can be carried out only "if this organisation proves sufficiently strong", only when "preliminary organisation will give the rising universality and unity". Our answer to this is that strength is revealed in action, not in word. Prior to the victory of an uprising it is ridiculous to talk of a force that will be able, without evoking laughter, even to proclaim, "nation-wide popular elections", let alone conduct them. No organisation, no matter how universal or united, can ensure the victory of an uprising unless 1) this organisation consists of people who are really capable of insurrection (and we have seen that the resolution advocates merely "comprehensive", organisations, i.e., actually organisations of the Osvobozhdeniye type which would undoubtedly betray an uprising once it had started); and unless

2) there exist forces for the victory of the uprising (and to achieve victory, the material force of a revolutionary army is needed, besides the moral force of public opinion, the people's welfare, etc.). To put the main stress on this moral force and on high-sounding phrases about "the whole people", while maintaining silence, in a call to arms, about the actual material force, is to reduce the revolutionary slogans of the proletariat to bourgeois-democratic phrase-mongering.

Mock elections do not constitute a "natural transition to an uprising", but rather an artificial transition invented by a handful of intellectuals. The fabrication of such artificial transitions is absolutely similar to Nadezhdin's old occupation -- the concoction of "excitative" terrorist acts. In the same way, the new-Iskristis want to "excite" the people to insurrection artificially -- an idea that is basically false. We cannot create an organisation that will really embrace the whole people; any elections we would take it into our heads to appoint under the autocracy would inevitably be a farce, and to utilise such a fabricated pretext for an uprising is just like decreeing an uprising at a moment when the people are not genuinely roused. Only people who have no faith in the proletariat's revolutionary activity, only intellectuals who are fond of using fancy words, could start inventing "new incentives for an uprising", in September 1905. One might think that we in Russia lack genuine incentives for an uprising and need farcical ones, that there are so few cases of genuine unrest among the masses that such a sentiment has to be staged or faked! Mock elections will never rouse the masses. However, a strike, a demonstration, mutiny in the armed forces, a serious students'

outbreak, famine, mobilisation, or a conflict in the State Duma, etc., etc., etc., can really rouse the masses, constantly, at any hour. Not only is it the crassest stupidity to think of concocting "new incentives for an uprising", but the very thought of indicating in advance that this and no other will be the real incentive for the masses would be foolish. People who have the slightest degree of self-respect, who are in the least earnest in what they say, would never allow themselves to concoct "new incentives for an uprising".

What is lacking is not "new incentives", my most esteemed Manilovs, but a military force, the military force of the revolutionary people (and not the people in general), consisting of 1) the armed proletariat and peasantry, 2) organised advance detachments of representatives of these classes, and 3) sections of the army that are prepared to come over to the side of the people. It is all this taken together that constitutes a revolutionary army. To talk of an uprising, of its force, of a natural transition to it, and to say nothing of a revolutionary army is folly and muddle-headedness -- and the greater the degree of the counter-revolutionary army's mobilisation, the more that is so. To invent "new incentives for an uprising" at a time of uprisings in the Caucasus and on the Black Sea, in Poland and Riga means deliberately withdrawing into one's shell and isolating oneself from the movement. We are witnesses of the greatest unrest among the workers and peasants, of a series of insurrectionary outbreaks which have been steadily and with enormous speed spreading and becoming more forceful and more stubborn ever since January 9. No one can guarantee that these outbreaks will not repeat

themselves tomorrow in any big city, or any military camp, or any village. On the contrary, everything goes to show that such outbreaks are probable, imminent, and inevitable. Their success depends, first of all, on the success of revolutionary agitation and organisation -- revolutionary and not the "comprehensively democratic" agitation and organisation that Iskra prattles of, since among democrats there are many non-revolutionaries. In the second place, success depends on the might and preparedness of the revolutionary army. The first condition has long been acknowledged by all, and is being applied throughout Russia by all revolutionaries, at literally all meetings of study circles, group gatherings, impromptu and mass meetings. The second condition is as yet very little recognised. By reason of its class stand, the liberal bourgeoisie does not care to recognise it, and cannot afford to do so. As for the revolutionaries, only those who are hopelessly plodding along in the wake of the monarchist bourgeoisie are silent about it.

"Insurrection" is an important word. A call to insurrection is an extremely serious call. The more complex the social system, the better the organisation of state power, and the more perfected the military machine, the more impermissible is it to launch such a slogan without due thought. And we have stated repeatedly that the revolutionary Social-Democrats have long been preparing to launch it, but have launched it as a direct call only when there could be no doubt whatever of the gravity, widespread and deep roots of the revolutionary movement, no doubt of matters having literally come to a head. Important words must be used with circumspection. Enormous

difficulties have to be faced in translating them into important deeds. It is precisely for that reason that it would be unpardonable to dismiss these difficulties with a mere phrase, to use Manilovist inventions to brush aside serious tasks or to put on one's eyes the blinkers of sweet dreams of so-called "natural transitions" to these difficult tasks.

A revolutionary army are also important words. **The creation of a revolutionary army is an arduous, complex, and lengthy process.** But when we see that it has already begun and is proceeding on all sides -- though desultorily and by fits and starts -- **when we know that a genuine victory of the revolution is impossible without such an army,** we must issue a definite and direct slogan, advocate it, make it the touchstone of the current political tasks. **It would be a mistake to think** that the revolutionary classes are invariably strong enough to effect a revolution whenever such a revolution has **fully matured by virtue of the conditions of social and economic development.** No, human society is not constituted so rationally or so "conveniently" for progressive elements. **A revolution may be ripe, and yet the forces of its creators may prove insufficient to carry it out,** in which case society decays, and this process of decay sometimes drags on for very many years. There is no doubt that Russia is ripe for a democratic revolution, but it still remains to be seen **whether the revolutionary classes have sufficient strength at present to carry it out.** This will be settled by the struggle, whose crucial moment is approaching at tremendous speed -- if the numerous direct and indirect indications do not deceive us. The moral preponderance is indubitable -- the moral force is already overwhelmingly great;

without it, of course, there could be no question of any revolution whatever. It is a necessary condition, but it is not sufficient. Only the outcome of the struggle will show whether it will be translated into a material force sufficient to smash the very serious (we shall not close our eyes to this) resistance of the autocracy. **The slogan of insurrection is a slogan for deciding the issue by material force**, which in present-day European civilisation **can only be military force**. This slogan should not be put forward **until the general prerequisites for revolution have matured**, until the masses have definitely shown that they have been roused and are ready to act, until the external circumstances have led to an open crisis. But once such a slogan has been issued, it would be an arrant disgrace to retreat from it, back to moral force again, to one of the conditions that prepare the ground for an uprising, to a "possible transition", etc., etc. No, once the die is cast, all subterfuges must be done with; it must be explained directly and openly to the masses what the practical conditions for a successful revolution are at the present time.

We have by no means exhausted the list of mistakes in the Iskra resolution, which -- to people who think and who do not confine themselves to "clutching at opportunities" -- will long remain a sad memento of a vulgarisation of Social-Democracy's tasks. It seems to us more important to investigate the underlying source of the errors rather than to enumerate all, including even the comparatively petty manifestations of the basic fallacy. We shall therefore only note, in passing, the absurdity and reactionary nature of the idea of presenting "ultimatums" (a military term, which in the absence of a trained



military force, sounds like vulgar bragging) to the Duma, of the endeavour to transform this Duma into a revolutionary assembly, and will pass on to the general meaning of the slogan: "revolutionary self-government of the people".

\* If we prove strong in the impending decisive conflict with tsarism, the State Duma will inevitably turn to the left (at least its liberal section will do so -- we are not speaking about its reactionary section), but to attempt to influence the State Duma seriously without destroying the rule of the tsar would be just as stupid as for Japan to present "ultimatums" to China or to attach much weight to Chinese assistance without destroying the military might of Russia. After March 18, 1848, the Prussian State Duma (the United Landtag) immediately affixed its signature to a paper providing for the convocation of a constituent assembly, but until that all "ultimatums" [cont. onto p. 370. -- DJR] of the revolutionaries, all their "endeavours" to influence the State Duma, all their threats, were hollow phrases to the Petrunkeviches, Rodichevs, Milyukovs, and their like, who sat in that State Duma.

This slogan or rather its conversion into the focal slogan is at the root of all Iskra 's shilly-shallying. Iskra has attempted to defend it by referring to "dialectics" -- the very same Plekhanov dialectics, by virtue of which Iskra 's "organisational vagueness" was first defended by Plekhanov, and then exposed by him!

**Revolutionary self-government of the people**, we have said, **is not a prologue to an uprising**, nor is it a "natural transition to it", **it is its epilogue**. There can be no serious talk of genuine and complete self-government **unless the uprising is**

**victorious.** And we have added that the very idea of placing the main emphasis on state administration rather than on state organisation is reactionary, that to identify revolutionary self-government with a revolutionary army is the height of absurdity, that a **victorious revolutionary army necessarily presupposes a revolutionary self-government**, whereas a revolutionary self-government **does not necessarily include a revolutionary army.**

Iskra tried to defend the confusion in its deliberately chosen slogans by referring to the "dialectics" of the unconscious and spontaneous process. Life, it says, knows of no sharply defined boundaries. Labour exchanges exist even now (Sotsial-Demokrat,[124] No. 12) -- here you have the elements of self-government. In a dialectical process of development, the prologue and the epilogue often intertwine, it says.

The latter consideration is quite true. Yes, the process of actual development is always tangled, with bits of the epilogue emerging before the true prologue. But does this mean that it is permissible for a leader of a class-conscious party to jumble the tasks of the struggle, **to confuse the prologue with the epilogue?** Can the dialectics of a jumbled and spontaneous process justify confusion in the logic of conscious Social-Democrats? Does not this imply substitution of dialectics à la Plekhanov for Marxist dialectics?

To make our idea clearer, let us take an example. **Let us assume that we are discussing not a democratic but a socialist revolution.** The crisis is maturing, the epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat is approaching. At this point the opportunists

make the establishment of consumers' societies their central slogan, while the revolutionaries advance a slogan calling for the conquest of political power by the proletariat. The opportunists argue that consumers' societies constitute a real force for the proletariat, the conquest of a real economic position, and a genuine bit of socialism; you revolutionaries do not understand dialectical development, the evolution of capitalism into socialism, the **penetration of nuclei of socialism into the very heart of capitalism**, the purging of capitalism by giving it a new socialist content.

Yes, the revolutionaries answer, **we agree that in a way consumers' societies do constitute a bit of socialism**. In the first place, socialist society is one big consumers' society with production for consumption organised according to plan. In the second place, **socialism cannot be achieved without a powerful, many-sided working-class movement, and consumers' societies will inevitably be one of these many sides**. But that is not the point at all. While power remains in the hands of the bourgeoisie, consumers' societies will remain a paltry fragment, **ensuring no serious changes whatever**, introducing no decisive alterations whatever, and sometimes even diverting attention from a serious struggle for revolution. No one disputes the fact that the habits acquired by the workers in consumers' societies are very useful. But only transfer of power to the proletariat can give **full scope to these habits**. Then the system of consumers' societies will have surplus-value at its disposal; at present the scope of this useful institution is bound to be paltry by reason of the paltry wages. Then it will become a consumers' union of really free workers; at present it

is a union of wage-slaves, oppressed and stifled by capitalism. Thus, the consumers' societies are a fragment of socialism. The dialectical process of development really does intrude elements of the new society, elements both material and spiritual, even under capitalism. But **socialists should be able to distinguish the part from the whole**; they should demand the whole in their slogan, and not a part; they must contrapose to bits of patch work, which often divert fighters from the truly revolutionary path, the basic requisites for a real revolution.

What is Iskra 's opinion, who is right in this dispute?

It is the same with the **slogan calling for "revolutionary self-government" in the period of a democratic revolution**. We are not against revolutionary self-government, we long ago gave it a certain modest place in **our minimum programme** (see the paragraph on extensive local self-government). We agree that **it is a fragment of a democratic revolution**, as has already been stated in No. 15 of Proletary [\*] with reference to the Smolensk Municipal Council. **A democratic revolution would be impossible without a powerful and many-sided democratic movement**, and the movement for self-government is one of those many sides. However, the democratic revolution would likewise be impossible without, for example, revolutionary schools, which are as much an indubitable sign of tsarism's actual disintegration as are labour exchanges, which exist despite the police ban, as the unrest among the clergy, as local self-government instituted in violation of the law, etc. Comrades of the Iskra, consider what conclusion should be drawn from all this! Is it that all these elements of disintegration

should be summed up in an integral slogan of insurrection? Or that the slogan of insurrection should be mutilated by tying it down to one of the elements, namely, self-government?

"The organisation of revolutionary self-government, or, what amounts to the same, the organisation of popular forces for an uprising," wrote the audacious Iskra (No. 109, page 2, line 1). **That is just like saying that organising revolutionary schools means organising forces for an uprising,** that organising unrest among the clergy means organising forces for an uprising, or that organising consumers' societies means organising forces for a socialist revolution. No, you are poor dialecticians, comrades of the Iskra. **You are unable to reason dialectically,** although you are very well able to **twist and squirm**, like Plekhanov, when it comes to the question of the **organisational and tactical vagueness of your views.** You have overlooked the fact that, given victory of the uprising, all these fragments of revolution will inevitably merge in an integral and complete "epilogue" to the uprising, whereas if the uprising is not victorious these fragments will remain fragments, paltry, changing nothing, and satisfying only the philistines.

The moral is: 1) Both on the eve of a socialist revolution and on the eve of a democratic revolution, **opportunists in the Social-Democratic movement** have a bad habit of working themselves up over a single petty fragment of a big process, **exalting this fragment to the status of the whole, and subordinating the whole to this fragment, thereby mutilating the whole, and thereby themselves becoming toadies to the inconsistent and cowardly reformists.** 2) The dialectics of the

spontaneous process, which is always and necessarily confused, **does not justify confusion** in logical conclusions and political slogans which are quite often (but not necessarily) confused.

P. S. This article was already in the page proofs when we received the resolutions of the Southern Constituent Conference, published abroad by Iskra. The text of the resolution on the State Duma differs somewhat from the one published in Russia, which we have reproduced above. But these differences are not essential, and do not affect our criticism in any way.

Lenin,

**The Lessons of the Moscow Events,**

October 24 (11), 1905.

CW, Vol. 9, pp. 376-87

The rising tide of revolutionary enthusiasm among the Moscow proletariat, so vividly expressed in the political strike and in the street fighting, has not yet subsided. The strike continues. It has to some extent spread to St. Petersburg, where the compositors are striking in sympathy with their Moscow comrades. It is still uncertain whether the present movement will subside and await the next rise of the tide, or whether it will be of a sustained character. But certain results of the Moscow events, and very instructive ones at that, are already apparent, and it would be worthwhile to dwell on them.

On the whole, the movement in Moscow did not attain the pitch of a decisive battle between the revolutionary workers and the tsarist forces. It consisted only of small skirmishes at the outposts, part perhaps of a military demonstration in the civil war, but it was not one of those battles that determine the outcome of a war. Of the two suppositions we advanced a week ago, it is apparently the first that is being justified, namely, that what we are witnessing is not the beginning of the decisive onslaught, but only a rehearsal. This rehearsal has nevertheless fully revealed all the characters in the historical drama, thus spotlighting the probable -- and in part even inevitable -- development of the drama itself.

The Moscow events were inaugurated by incidents which at first glance appear to have been of a purely academic character. The government conferred partial "autonomy", or alleged autonomy, on the universities. The professorate were granted self-government, and the students were granted the right of assembly. Thus, a small breach was forced in the general system of autocratic-feudal oppression. New revolutionary currents immediately swept into this breach with unexpected force. A miserable concession, a paltry reform, granted with the object of blunting the edge of the political antagonisms and of "reconciling" robbers and robbed, actually served to stimulate the struggle tremendously, and increase the number of its participants. Workers flocked to the students' gatherings, which began to develop into popular revolutionary meetings, where the proletariat, the foremost class in the struggle for liberty, predominated. The government was outraged. The "respectable" liberals who had received professorial self-government began to scurry back and forth between the revolutionary students and the government of police rule and the knout. The liberals made use of liberty in order to betray liberty, restrain the students from extending and intensifying the struggle, and appeal for "order" -- this in the face of the bashi-bazouks and Black Hundreds, the Trepovs and the Romanovs! The liberals made use of self-government so as to do the work of the butchers of the people, and to close the University, that holy sanctuary of "science" permitted by the knout-wielders, which the students defiled by allowing the "rabble" to enter it for discussion of questions "unauthorised" by the autocratic gang. The self-governing liberals betrayed the



people and liberty, because they feared carnage in the University. They were punished in exemplary fashion for their contemptible cowardice. By closing the revolutionary University, they opened the way to revolution in the streets. Wretched pedants that they are, they were ready to jubilate in concert with rascals like Glazov over the fact that they had managed to extinguish the conflagration in the school. But as a matter of fact they only started a conflagration in a huge industrial city. These manikins on stilts forbade the workers to go to the students, but they only drove the students to the revolutionary workers. They appraised all political matters from the standpoint of their own chicken coop, which reeks of age-old hidebound officialism. They implored the students to spare this chicken coop. The first fresh breeze -- the manifestation of the free and youthful revolutionary elements -- was enough for the chicken coop to be forgotten, for the breeze freshened and grew into a blast against the tsarist autocracy, the prime source of all officialism and all the humiliations heaped upon the Russian people. And even now, when the first danger has passed and the storm has clearly subsided, the lackeys of the autocracy still quake at the mere recollection of the chasm that yawned before them during the days of bloodshed in Moscow. "It is not yet a conflagration, but that it is arson is already beyond question," mutters Mr. Menshikov in the servile *Novoye Vremya* (of September 30). "It is not yet a revolution . . . but it is already the prologue to a revolution." "It is on the move," [Mr. Menshikov] argued in April. And what frightful strides 'it' has since made! The popular element has been stirred to its very depths. . . ."

Yes, the Trepovs and the Romanovs, together with the treacherous liberal bourgeoisie, have got themselves into a predicament. Open the University -- and you provide a platform for popular revolutionary meetings, and render invaluable service to the Social-Democrats. Close the University down -- and you open the way for a street struggle. And so our knights of the knout dash to and fro, gnashing their teeth. They reopen Moscow University, pretending that they want to allow the students to maintain order themselves during street processions; they turn a blind eye to revolutionary self-government of the students, who are dividing into Social-Democrats, Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., thus bringing about proper political representation in the student "parliament" (and, we are confident, will not confine themselves to revolutionary self-government, but will immediately and in dead earnest set about organising and equipping contingents of a revolutionary army). Together with Trepov, the liberal professors are dashing to and from, hastening one day to persuade the students to be more moderate, and the next day to persuade the knout-wielders to be more lenient. The scurryings of both of these give us the greatest satisfaction; they show that a fine revolutionary breeze must be blowing if the political commanders and the political turncoats are staggering about on the upper deck in such a lively manner.

But besides legitimate pride and legitimate satisfaction, true revolutionists must derive something else from the Moscow events -- an understanding of the social forces operating in the Russian revolution and just how they operate, and a clearer idea of the forms they take when they operate. Call to mind the

political sequence of the Moscow events, and you will see a remarkably typical picture of the whole revolution, one that is characteristic of the class relationships. Here is the sequence: a small breach is forced in the old order; the government tries to mend the breach with petty concessions, illusory "reforms", etc.; instead of calming down, the struggle becomes even more acute and widespread; the liberal bourgeoisie wavers and dashes from one thing to another, urging the revolutionists to desist from revolution, and the police to desist from reaction; headed by the proletariat, the revolutionary people arrive on the scene, and the open struggle gives rise to a new political situation; the conflict shifts to the newly won battlefield -- a more elevated and broader field -- a new breach is made in the enemy strongholds, and in that way the movement proceeds to an ever higher plane. A general retreat on the part of the government is taking place before our eyes, as *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* aptly remarked recently. A certain liberal newspaper rather cleverly added: a retreat under cover of rearguard action. On October 3 (16) the St. Petersburg correspondent of the liberal Berlin *Vossische Zeitung* wired to his paper about his interview with Trepov's chef de cabinet. As the police underling told the correspondent: "You cannot expect the government to follow a consistent plan of action, since every day brings with it events that could not have been foreseen. The government is obliged to manoeuvre. Force cannot crush the present movement which may last for two months or two years."

Indeed the government's tactics have now become quite clear. They indubitably lie in manoeuvring and retreating under cover of rearguard action. Such tactics are quite correct

from the standpoint of the autocracy's interests. It would be a grievous error and a fatal illusion for revolutionists to forget that the government can still continue to retreat for a very long time to come, without losing what is most essential. The example of the abortive, unfinished semi-revolution in Germany, in 1848 -- an example to which we shall return in the next issue of Proletary, and which we shall never tire of recalling -- shows that even if it retreats so far as to convoke a (nominally ) constituent assembly, the government will still retain sufficient strength to defeat the revolution in the final and decisive battle. That is why, in studying the Moscow events, the most recent in a long series of conflicts in our civil war, we must soberly consider the developments, prepare with the maximum of energy and persistence for a long and desperate war, and be on our guard against such allies that are already turncoat allies. When absolutely nothing decisive has as yet been won, when the enemy still has an enormous area for further advantageous and safe retreats, when battles are becoming ever more serious -- confidence in such allies, attempts to conclude agreements with them or simply to support them on certain conditions may prove not only stupid but even treacherous to the proletariat.

Indeed, was the liberal professors' behaviour before and during the Moscow events fortuitous? Was it an exception, or is it the rule for the entire Constitutional-Democratic Party? Does this behaviour express the individual peculiarities of a given group of the liberal bourgeoisie, or does it express the fundamental interests of this entire class in general? Among socialists there can be no two opinions on these questions, but

not all socialists know how to consistently pursue genuinely socialist tactics.

For a clearer understanding of the gist of the matter, let us take the liberals' own exposition of their tactics. They avoid coming out against the Social-Democrats or even speaking directly about them in the columns of the Russian press. But here is an interesting report in the Berlin *Vossische Zeitung*, which undoubtedly is more outspoken in its expression of the liberals' views:

"Extremely stormy student disturbances have reoccurred both in St. Petersburg and in Moscow since the very beginning of the academic year, although autonomy has been granted -- belatedly, it is true -- to the universities and other higher educational institutions. Moreover, in Moscow these disturbances are accompanied by a widespread workers' movement. These disturbances indicate that a new phase has begun in the Russian revolutionary movement. The course of the student meetings and their resolutions show that the students have adopted the watchword of the Social-Democratic leaders to convert the universities into popular meeting places, and thus spread revolution among wide sections of the population. The Moscow students have already shown how this is being put into effect: they invited to the University premises such large numbers of workers and other persons who have no connection with the University that the students themselves were in a minority. It stands to reason that such a state of affairs cannot go on for long under the existing conditions. The government will close the universities rather

than tolerate such meetings. This is so obvious that at first glance it appears inconceivable that the Social-Democratic leaders could have issued such a watchword. They knew perfectly well what this would lead to, but what they wanted was for the government to close the universities. For what purpose? Simply because they intend to hinder the liberal movement by all available means. They admit that they are not strong enough to effect any major political action with their own forces; therefore the liberals and radicals must not do anything either, for that would allegedly only harm the socialist proletariat. The latter must win its rights for itself. The Russian Social-Democratic Party may take great pride in these 'inflexible' (unbeugsame ) tactics, but they must appear very short-sighted to any unprejudiced observer; they will scarcely lead Russian Social-Democracy to victories. It is quite incomprehensible what it will gain by the closing of the universities, which is inevitable if the present tactics continue. On the other hand, it is of the utmost importance to all progressive parties that there should be no interruption in the work of the universities and higher schools. The protracted strikes of students and professors have already caused great damage to Russian culture. It is imperative that academic work be resumed. Autonomy has enabled the professors to conduct their classes freely. That is why the professors of all universities and higher schools are agreed that it is necessary to start tuition once more and in energetic fashion. They are exerting all their influence to persuade the students to abandon their efforts to give effect to the Social-Democratic watchword."

Thus, the struggle between bourgeois liberalism (the Constitutional-Democrats) and the Social-Democrats has taken definite shape. Do not hinder the liberal movement! Such is the slogan so splendidly expressed in the article quoted above. What does this liberal movement amount to? It is a retrograde movement, for the professors use and desire to use the freedom of the universities not for revolutionary propaganda, but for counter-revolutionary propaganda; not to fan the conflagration, but to extinguish it; not to extend the field of battle, but to draw the masses away from decisive struggle and induce them to collaborate peacefully with the Trepovs. With the struggle becoming more acute, the "liberal" movement (as we have seen in practice) has become marked by desertion from revolution to reaction. Of course, the liberals are, in a way, useful to us, since they introduce vacillation into the ranks of the Trepovs and other lackeys of Romanov. This good, however, will be outweighed by the harm they cause by bringing vacillation into our ranks, unless we make a clean break with the Constitutional-Democrats, and brand every hesitant step they take. Their knowledge, or, more frequently, their sense of their dominant position in the existing economic system has led the liberals to aspire to dominate the revolution as well. They say that each step aimed at continuing, extending and intensifying the revolution and taking it farther than the most ordinary patchwork is a "hindrance" to the liberal movement. Fearful for the fate of the so-called freedom of the universities granted by Trepov, they are today fighting against revolutionary freedom. Fearful for the legal "freedom of assembly" which the government will grant tomorrow in a

police-distorted form, they will hold us back from using these assemblies for genuinely proletarian aims. Fearful for the fate of the State Duma, they already displayed wise moderation at the September Congress, and continue to display it now by combating the idea of a boycott; why, they say, you must not hinder us from getting things done in the State Duma!

It must be confessed that, to the shame of Social-Democracy, there have been opportunists in its ranks who fell for this bait by reason of their doctrinaire and lifeless distortion of Marxism! They argue that the revolution is a bourgeois one and therefore . . . therefore we must retrace our steps in the measure the bourgeoisie succeeds in obtaining concessions from tsarism. To this day the new-Iskristis have not seen the real significance of the State Duma, because they are themselves drawing back and therefore naturally do not notice the Constitutional-Democrats' regression. That the Iskristis have already retraced their steps since the promulgation of the State Duma Act is an indisputable fact. Prior to the State Duma Act they never thought of placing the question of an agreement with the Constitutional-Democrats on the order of the day. After the State Duma Act they (Parvus, Cherevanin and Martov) raised this question, and not merely as a matter of theory, but in an immediately practical form. Prior to the State Duma Act they presented quite stringent conditions to the democrats (right up to co-operation in arming the people, etc.). After the State Duma Act they immediately reduced the conditions, confining themselves to a promise to convert the Black-Hundred or the liberal Duma into a revolutionary one. Prior to the State Duma Act the reply their official resolution gave to the question as to who should



convoke the popular constituent assembly was: either a provisional revolutionary government or a representative institution. After the State Duma Act they deleted the provisional revolutionary government, and they now say: either "democratic" (like the Constitutional-Democrats?) "organisations of the people" (?), or . . . or the State Duma. We thus see in fact how the new-Iskristis are guided by their magnificent principle: the revolution is a bourgeois revolution -- therefore, comrades, watch out lest the bourgeoisie recoil!

The Moscow events, which for the first time since the State Duma Act have shown the real nature of the Constitutional-Democrats' tactics at grave political junctures, have also shown that Social-Democracy's opportunist appendage, which we have described, is inevitably being transformed into a mere appendage to the bourgeoisie. We have just said: a Black-Hundred or a liberal State Duma. To an Iskra supporter these words would appear monstrous, for he considers distinction between a Black-Hundred State Duma and a liberal State Duma highly important. But these selfsame Moscow events have disclosed the fallaciousness of this "parliamentary" idea, which had been so inappropriately advanced in a pre-parliamentary period. The Moscow events have shown that the liberal turncoat has actually played the part of a Trepov. The closing of the University, which would have been decreed by Trepov yesterday, has been carried out today by Messrs. Manuilov and Trubetskoi. Is it not clear that the "Duma" liberals will also scurry back and forth between Trepov and Romanov, on the one hand, and the revolutionary people on the other? Is it not

clear that the slightest support for liberal turncoats is something befitting only political simpletons?

Under a parliamentary system it is often necessary to support a more liberal party against a less liberal one. But during a revolutionary struggle for a parliamentary system it is treachery to support liberal turncoats who are "reconciling" Trepov with the revolution.

The events in Moscow have revealed in practice the alignment of social forces that Proletary has spoken of so many times: the socialist proletariat and the vanguard of revolutionary bourgeois democracy have waged a struggle, while the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie has conducted negotiations. Therefore, fellow-workers, study the lessons of the Moscow events, and do so most attentively. For it is in this way, and inevitably so, that matters will take their course throughout the whole of the Russian revolution. We must rally more solidly than ever in a genuinely socialist party, which shall consciously express the interests of the working class, and not drift along in the wake of the masses. In the struggle we must place reliance only on revolutionary democrats, permit agreements with them alone, and carry out these agreements only on the field of battle against the Trepovs and Romanov. We must bend every effort to rouse, in addition to the students, who are the vanguard of revolutionary democracy, also those broad masses of the people whose movement is not only democratic in a general way (today every turncoat calls himself a democrat), but a genuinely revolutionary movement -- namely, the masses of the peasantry. We must remember that

the liberals and Constitutional-Democrats, who are bringing vacillation into the ranks of supporters of the autocracy, will inevitably strive in every way to bring vacillation into our ranks as well. Only an open revolutionary struggle which consigns all liberal chicken coops and all liberal Dumas to the rubbish heap will be of serious and decisive consequence. Therefore, prepare for ever new battles, without losing a single moment! Arm as best you can; immediately form squads of fighters who will be prepared to battle with devoted energy against the accursed autocracy; remember that tomorrow or the following day events will certainly call you to rise in revolt, and the question now is only whether you will be able to take prepared and united action, or whether you will be caught off your guard and disunited!

The events in Moscow have once again and for the hundredth time confuted the sceptics. They have shown that we are still inclined to underestimate the revolutionary activity of the masses. They will bring round many of those who have already begun to waver, who have begun to lose faith in the idea of an uprising after the conclusion of peace and the granting of a Duma. No, it is precisely now that the uprising is gaining ground and increasing in intensity with unparalleled rapidity. Let us all be at our posts when the imminent explosion comes, one in comparison with which both January 9 and the memorable Odessa days will seem mere child's play.

## Petty-Bourgeois and Proletarian Socialism

Proletary, No. 24, November 7 (October 25), 1905

Collected Works, Volume 9, pages 438-446.

Of the various socialist doctrines, Marxism is now predominant in Europe, the struggle for the achievement of a socialist order being almost entirely waged as a struggle of the working class under the guidance of the Social-Democratic parties. This complete predominance of proletarian socialism grounded in the teachings of Marxism was not achieved all at once, but only after a long struggle against all sorts of outworn doctrines, petty-bourgeois socialism, anarchism, and so on. Some thirty years ago, Marxism was not predominant even in Germany, where the prevailing views of the time were in fact transitional, mixed and eclectic, lying between petty-bourgeois and proletarian socialism. The most widespread doctrines among advanced workers in the Romance countries, in France, Spain and Belgium, were Proudhonism, Blanquism and anarchism, which obviously expressed the viewpoint of the petty bourgeois, not of the proletarian.

What has been the cause of this rapid and complete victory of Marxism during the last decades? **The correctness of the Marxist views has been confirmed to an ever-greater extent by all the development of contemporary societies, both politically and economically,** and by the whole experience of the revolutionary movement and of the struggle of the oppressed classes. The decline of the petty bourgeoisie inevitably led, sooner or later, to the extinction of all kinds of petty-bourgeois prejudices, while the growth of capitalism and

the intensification of the class struggle within capitalist society were the best agitation for the ideas of proletarian socialism.

Russia's backwardness naturally accounts for the firm footing that various obsolete socialist doctrines gained in our country. **The entire history of Russian revolutionary thought during the last quarter of a century is the history of the struggle waged by Marxism against petty-bourgeois Narodnik socialism.** While the rapid growth and remarkable successes of the Russian working-class movement have already brought victory to Marxism in Russia too, the development of an indubitably revolutionary peasant movement—especially after the famous peasant revolts in the Ukraine in 1902—has on the other hand caused a certain revival of senile Narodism. The Narodnik theories of old, embellished with modish European opportunism (revisionism, Bernsteinism, and criticism of Marx), make up all the original ideological stock-in-trade of the so-called Socialist-Revolutionaries. That is why the peasant question is focal in the Marxists' controversies with both the pure Narodniks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

To a certain extent Narodism was an integral and consistent doctrine. It denied the domination of capitalism in Russia; it denied the factory workers' role as the front-line fighters of the entire proletariat; **it denied the importance of a political revolution and bourgeois political liberty;** it preached an immediate socialist revolution, stemming from the peasant commune with its petty forms of husbandry. All that now survives of this integral theory is mere shreds, but to understand the controversies of the present day intelligently,

and to prevent these controversies from degenerating into mere squabbles, one should always remember the general and basic Narodnik roots of the errors of our Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The **Narodniks considered the muzhik the man of the future in Russia**, this view springing inevitably from their faith in the socialist character of the peasant commune, from their lack of faith in the future of capitalism. The Marxists considered the worker the man of the future in Russia, and the development of Russian capitalism in both agriculture and industry is providing more and more confirmation of their views. The working-class movement in Russia has won recognition for itself, but as for the peasant movement, the gulf separating Narodism and Marxism is to this day revealed in their different interpretations of this movement. To the Narodniks the peasant movement provides a refutation of Marxism. It is a movement that stands for a direct socialist revolution; it does not recognise bourgeois political liberty; it stems from small-scale, not large-scale, production. In a word, to the Narodnik, it is the peasant movement that is the genuine, truly socialist and immediately socialist movement. The Narodnik faith in the peasant commune and the Narodnik brand of anarchism fully explain why such conclusions are inevitable.

To the Marxist, **the peasant movement is a democratic, not a socialist, movement**. In Russia, just as was the case in other countries, it is a necessary concomitant of the democratic revolution, which is bourgeois in its social and economic content. It is not in the least directed against the foundations of the bourgeois order, against commodity production, or against

capital. On the contrary, it is directed against the old, serf, pre-capitalist relationships in the rural districts, and against landlordism, which is the mainstay of all the survivals of serf-ownership. Consequently, full victory of this peasant movement will not abolish capitalism; on the contrary, it will create a broader foundation for its development, and will hasten and intensify purely capitalist development. **Full victory of the peasant uprising can only create a stronghold for a democratic bourgeois republic**, within which a proletarian struggle against the bourgeoisie will for the first time **develop in its purest form**.

These, then, are the two contrasting views which must be clearly understood by anyone who wishes to examine the gulf in principles that lies between the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Social-Democrats. According to one view, the peasant movement is socialist, while according to the other it is a democratic-bourgeois movement. Hence one can see what ignorance our Socialist-Revolutionaries reveal when they repeat for the hundredth time (see, for example, *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya*, No. 75) that orthodox Marxists have ignored the peasant question. There is only one way of combating such crass ignorance, and that is by repeating the ABC, by setting forth the old consistently Narodnik views, and by pointing out for the hundredth or the thousandth time that the real distinction between us does not lie in a desire or the non-desire to reckon with the peasant question, in recognition or non-recognition of it, but in our different appraisals of the present-day peasant movement and of the present-day peasant question in Russia. He who says that the Marxists ignore the

peasant question in Russia is, in the first place, an absolute ignoramus since all the principal writings of Russian Marxists, beginning with Plekhanov's *Our Differences* (which appeared over twenty years ago), have in the main been devoted to explaining the erroneousness of the Narodnik views on the Russian peasant question. Secondly, he who says that the Marxists ignore the peasant question thereby proves his desire to avoid giving a complete appraisal of the actual difference in principles, giving the answer to the question whether or not the present-day peasant movement is democratic-bourgeois, whether or not it is objectively directed against the survivals of serfdom.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries have never given, nor will they ever be able to give, a clear and precise answer to this question, for they are floundering hopelessly between the old Narodnik view and the present-day Marxist view on the peasant question in Russia. The Marxists say that the Socialist-Revolutionaries represent the standpoint of the petty bourgeoisie (are ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie) **for the very reason that they cannot rid themselves of petty-bourgeois illusions** and of the Narodnik imaginings in appraising the peasant movement.

That is why we have to go over the ABC once again. What is the present-day peasant movement in Russia striving for? For land and liberty. What significance will the complete victory of this movement have? After winning liberty, it will abolish the rule of the landlords and bureaucrats in the administration of the state. After securing the land, it will give the landlords' estates



to the peasants. Will the fullest liberty and expropriation of the landlords do away with commodity production? No, it will not. Will the fullest liberty and expropriation of the landlords abolish individual farming by peasant households on communal, or "socialised", land? No, it will not. Will the fullest liberty and expropriation of the landlords bridge the deep gulf that separates the rich peasant, with his numerous horses and cows, from the farm-hand, the day-labourer, i.e., the gulf that separates the peasant bourgeoisie from the rural proletariat? No, it will not. On the contrary, the more completely the highest social-estate (the landlords) is routed and annihilated, the more profound will the class distinction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat be. What will be the objective significance of the complete victory of the peasant uprising? This victory will do away with all survivals of serfdom, but it will by no means destroy the bourgeois economic system, or destroy capitalism or the division of society into classes—into rich and poor, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Why is the present-day peasant movement a democratic-bourgeois movement? Because, after destroying the power of the bureaucracy and the landlords, it will set up a democratic system of society, **without, however, altering the bourgeois foundation of that democratic society,** without abolishing the rule of capital. How should the class-conscious worker, the socialist, regard the present-day peasant movement? He must support this movement, help the peasants in the most energetic fashion, help them throw off completely both the rule of the bureaucracy and that of the landlords. At the same time, however, he should explain to the peasants that it is not enough to overthrow the rule of the bureaucracy and

the landlords. When they overthrow that rule, **they must at the same time prepare for the abolition of the rule of capital**, the rule of the bourgeoisie, and for that purpose a doctrine that is fully socialist, i.e., Marxist, should be immediately disseminated, the rural proletarians should be united, welded together, and organised for the struggle against the peasant bourgeoisie and the entire Russian bourgeoisie. **Can a class-conscious worker forget the democratic struggle for the sake of the socialist struggle, or forget the latter for the sake of the former? No, a class-conscious worker calls himself a Social-Democrat for the reason that he understands the relation between the two struggles. He knows that there is no other road to socialism save the road through democracy, through political liberty.** He therefore strives to achieve democratism completely and consistently in order to attain the ultimate goal—socialism. **Why are the conditions for the democratic struggle not the same as those for the socialist struggle? Because the workers will certainly have different allies in each of those two struggles.** The democratic struggle is waged by the workers together with a section of the bourgeoisie, especially the petty bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the socialist struggle is waged by the workers against the whole of the bourgeoisie. The struggle against the bureaucrat and the landlord can and must be waged together with all the peasants, even the well-to-do and the middle peasants. On the other hand, it is only together with the rural proletariat that the struggle against the bourgeoisie, and therefore against the well-to-do peasants too, can be properly waged.

If we keep in mind all these elementary Marxist truths, which the Socialist-Revolutionaries always prefer to avoid going into, we shall have no difficulty in appraising the latter's "latest" objections to Marxism, such as the following:

"Why was it necessary," *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* (No. 75) exclaims, "first to support the peasant in general against the landlord, and then (i.e., at the same time) to support the proletariat against the peasant in general, instead of at once supporting the proletariat against the landlord; and what Marxism has to do with this, heaven alone knows."

This is the standpoint of the most primitive, childishly naïve anarchism. For many centuries and even for thousands of years, mankind has dreamt of doing away "at once" with all and every kind of exploitation. These dreams remained mere dreams until millions of the exploited all over the world began to unite for a consistent, staunch and comprehensive struggle to change capitalist society in the direction the evolution of that society is naturally taking. Socialist dreams turned into the socialist struggle of the millions only when Marx's scientific socialism had linked up the urge for change with the struggle of a definite class. Outside the class struggle, socialism is either a hollow phrase or a naïve dream. In Russia, however, two different struggles of two different social forces are taking place before our very eyes. The proletariat is fighting against the bourgeoisie wherever capitalist relations of production exist (and they exist—be it known to our Socialist-Revolutionaries— even in the peasant commune, i.e., on the land which from their standpoint is one hundred per cent "socialised"). As a stratum

of small landowners, of petty bourgeois, the peasantry, is fighting against all survivals of serfdom, against the bureaucrats and the landlords. Only those who are completely ignorant of political economy and of the history of revolutions throughout the world can fail to see that these are two distinct and different social wars. To shut one's eyes to the diversity of these wars by demanding "at once", is like hiding one's head under one's wing and refusing to make any analysis of reality.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries, who have lost the integrity of the old Narodnik views, have even forgotten many of the teachings of the Narodniks themselves. As the selfsame *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* writes in the same article: "By helping the peasantry to expropriate the landlords, Mr. Lenin is unconsciously assisting in building up petty-bourgeois economy on the ruins of the more or less developed forms of capitalist agriculture. Is not this a 'step backward' from the standpoint of orthodox Marxism?"

For shame, gentlemen! Why, you have forgotten your own Mr. V. V.! Consult his *Destiny of Capitalism*, the *Sketches* by Mr. Nikolai — on, and other sources of your wisdom. You will then recollect that landlord farming in Russia combines within itself features both of capitalism and of serf-ownership. You will then find out that there is a system of economy based on labour rent, which is a direct survival of the *corvée* system. If, moreover, you take the trouble to consult such an orthodox Marxist book as the third volume of Marx's *Capital*, you will find that nowhere could the *corvée* system develop, and nowhere did it develop, and turn into capitalist farming except through the

medium of petty-bourgeois peasant farming. In your efforts to scatter Marxism to the winds, you resort to methods too primitive, methods too long ago exposed; you ascribe to Marxism a grotesquely oversimplified conception of large-scale capitalist farming directly succeeding to large-scale farming based on the *corvée* system. You argue that since the yield on the landlords' estates is higher than on the peasant farms the expropriation of the landlords is a step backward. This argument is worthy of a fourth-form schoolboy. Just consider, gentlemen: was it not a "step backward" to separate the low-yielding peasant lands from the high-yielding landlords' estates when serfdom was abolished?

Present-day landlord economy in Russia combines features of both capitalism and serf-ownership. Objectively, the peasants' struggle against the landlords today is a struggle against survivals of serfdom. However, to attempt to enumerate all individual cases, to weigh each individual case, and to determine with the precision of an apothecary's scales exactly where serf-ownership ends and pure capitalism begins, is to ascribe one's own pedantry to the Marxists. We cannot calculate what portion of the price of provisions bought from a petty shopkeeper represents labour-value and what part of it represents swindling, etc. Does that mean, gentlemen, that we must discard the theory of labour-value?

Contemporary landlord economy combines features of both capitalism and serfdom. But only pedants can conclude from this that it is our duty to weigh, count and copy out every minute feature in every particular instance, and pigeon-hole it

in this or that social category. Only utopians can hence conclude that “there is no need” for us to draw a distinction between the two different social wars. Indeed, the only actual conclusion that does follow is that both in our programme and in our tactics we must combine the purely proletarian struggle against capitalism with the general ‘democratic (and general peasant) struggle against serfdom.

The more marked the capitalist features in present-day landlord semi-feudal economy, the more imperative is it to get right down to organising the rural proletariat separately, for this will help ‘purely capitalist, or purely proletarian, antagonisms to assert themselves the sooner, whenever confiscation takes place. The more marked the capitalist features in landlord economy, the sooner will democratic confiscation give an impetus to the real struggle for socialism—and, consequently, the more dangerous is false idealisation of the democratic revolution through use of the catchword of “socialisation”. Such is the conclusion to be drawn from the fact that landlord economy is a mixture of capitalism and serf-ownership relations.

Thus, we must combine the purely proletarian struggle with the general peasant struggle, but not confuse the two. We must support the general democratic and general peasant struggle, but not become submerged in this non-class struggle; we must never idealise it with false catchwords such as “socialisation”, or ever forget the necessity of organising both the urban and the rural proletariat in an entirely independent class party of Social-Democracy. While giving the utmost support to the most

determined democratism, that party will not allow itself to be diverted from the revolutionary path by reactionary dreams and experiments in "equalisation" under the system of commodity production. The peasants' struggle against the landlords is now a revolutionary struggle; the confiscation of the landlords' estates at the present stage of economic and political evolution is revolutionary in every respect, and we back this revolutionary-democratic measure. However, to call this measure "socialisation", and to deceive oneself and the people concerning the possibility of "equality" in land tenure under the system of commodity production, is a reactionary petty-bourgeois utopia, which we leave to the socialist-reactionaries.

Lenin

**The Bolshevik Resolution on the State Duma**

May 9, 1906

Collected Works, Volume 10, page 401.

In publishing **this draft resolution**, we invite the impartial reader to say whether this draft provides any excuse for playing with words like “anarchism”, “Blanquism”, etc. Furthermore, which resolution has been justified by experience: the one adopted by the Congress, or this one? Is it not clear now that none but indirect use can be made of the Duma? **Is it not clear now which of these two resolutions more directly meets genuine revolutionary democracy**, and more correctly appraises “Cadetism” as it has manifested itself in practice, in the Duma?



Lenin

THE UNITY CONGRESS OF THE R.S.D.L.P.

April 10 (23) - April 25 (May 8), 1906

Collected Works, Vol. 10, pp. 277-309.

**DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE STATE DUMA** Submitted  
TO THE UNITY CONGRESS

Whereas:

(1) the election Law of December 11 and the conditions in which the elections were actually conducted prevented the proletariat and the Social-Democratic Party from participating in the elections by putting up and independently securing the election of real Party candidates;

(2) in view of this, the real significance of participation by the workers in the elections was bound to, and as experience has shown, actually did, lead to the obscuring of the strictly class position of the proletariat as a consequence of agreements with the Cadets or other bourgeois groups;

(3) only complete and consistent boycott enabled the Social-Democrats to maintain the slogan of convening a constituent assembly by revolutionary means, to place all responsibility for the State Duma on the Cadet Party and to warn the proletariat and the peasant or revolutionary democrats against constitutional illusions;

(4) the State Duma, with its now evident (predominantly) Cadet composition, cannot possibly fulfil the function of a real

representative of the people, and can only indirectly help to develop a new, wider and deeper revolutionary crisis;

We are of the opinion and propose that the Congress should agree:

(1) that by boycotting the State Duma and the Duma elections, the Party organisations acted correctly;

(2) that the attempt to form a Social-Democratic parliamentary group in present political conditions, and in view of the absence in the Duma of really party Social-Democrats capable of representing the Social-Democratic Party, holds out no promise of reasonable success, but rather threatens to compromise the R.S.D.L.P. and place upon it responsibility for a particularly harmful type of parliamentarians, mid-way between the Cadets and the Social-Democrats;

(3) that in view of the foregoing, conditions do not yet exist to enable our Party to take the parliamentary path;

(4) that the Social-Democrats must utilise the State Duma and its conflicts with the government, or the conflicts within the Duma itself, fighting its reactionary elements, ruthlessly exposing the inconsistency and vacillation of the Cadets, paying particular attention to the peasant revolutionary democrats, uniting them, contrasting them with the Cadets, supporting such of their actions as are in the interests of the proletariat, and preparing to call upon the proletariat to launch a determined attack on the autocracy at the moment when, perhaps, in connection with a crisis in the Duma, the general revolutionary crisis becomes most acute;

(5) in view of the possibility that the government will dissolve the State Duma and convene a new Duma, this Congress resolves that in the subsequent election campaign no blocs or agreements shall be permitted with the Cadet Party or any similar non-revolutionary elements; as for the question whether our Party should take part in a new election campaign, it will be decided by the Russian Social-Democrats in accordance with the concrete circumstances prevailing at the time.

Volna, No. 12, May 9, 1906

#### CO-REPORT ON THE QUESTION OF THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE STATE DUMA

Comrades, I will not read you the Bolshevik resolution, as in all probability you are all familiar with it. (Nevertheless, in response to requests from delegates, the speaker reads the Bolshevik resolution again.) If you compare this resolution with that of the Mensheviks, you will find the following four main points of difference, or four main defects in the latter:

(1) The Menshevik resolution contains no appraisal of the elections, no assessment of the objective results of our political experience in this field.

(2) This resolution is permeated with an imprudent, to put it mildly, or optimistic attitude towards the State Duma.

(3) The resolution does not clearly distinguish the various trends or parties among the bourgeois democrats, from the point of view of our tactics towards them.

(4) Your resolution proposes that a parliamentary group be formed under conditions and at a time when the value of such a step for the proletarian party cannot in any way be proved.

Such are the real disagreements between us, if we examine our disagreements seriously, and not seize upon words or trivialities.

Let us examine these four points.

It is highly important to sum up our experience of the elections if we want to base our conclusions on the actual alignment of political forces, and not on general phrases about parliamentarism in general, and so forth. We have advanced, and advance today, the very definite proposition that participation in the elections really means supporting the Cadets; that participation is impossible without blocs with the Cadets. Do you analyse the substance of this proposition? Do you examine the situation in the light of the actual facts on this question? Nothing of the kind. Axelrod completely evaded the first two points, and on the next two he made two contradictory statements. At first he referred to blocs with the Cadets in general in the most disparaging terms. Then he said that he would have no objection to such blocs, provided, of course, they were not arranged by the old hole-and-corner methods and backstairs agreements, but by public and direct methods visible to the whole proletariat. This last "proposition" of Axelrod's is a magnificent specimen of "Cadet" dreaming, of real "pious wishes" engendered by constitutional illusions. In reality we have no constitution and no basis for open activities; what we have is Dubasov "constitutionalism". Axelrod's dreams will

remain empty dreams, while the Cadets will obtain real benefit from the agreements, tacit or signed, formal or informal.

And when people talk about our "self-elimination" from the elections, they always forget that it was the political conditions and not our desire that kept our Party out; kept it out of newspapers and meetings; prevented us from putting up prominent members of the Party as candidates. In these circumstances, parliamentarism is a futile and pitiful game rather than a means of educating the proletariat. It is naïve to take parliamentarism "in its pure form", as an "idea", isolated from the real situation.

When people talk about the elections they usually forget that actually the contest took place, on the basis of Dubasov constitutionalism, between two strong "parties" -- the Cadets and the Black Hundreds. The Cadets were right when they told the voters that any split in the vote, any nomination of "third" candidates, could lead only to the victory of the Black Hundreds. Take the case of Moscow, for example. Guchkov receives, say, 900 votes and the Cadet, 1,300. It would have been enough for the Social-Democrats to obtain 401 votes for the Black-Hundred candidate to win. Thus the Cadets rightly understood the significance of Social-Democratic participation in the elections (they gave the Moscow workers a seat in the State Duma as a reward for participating in the elections), while you Mensheviks misunderstand its significance and thus indulge in an empty and idle dream. Either don't take up parliamentarism and don't talk commonplaces about it, or take it up seriously. Your present position is no use at all.

The second point. Axelrod in his speech even more glaringly revealed the defects in the resolution that I have pointed to. The resolution speaks of transforming the Duma into an instrument of the revolution. You regard the Duma exclusively in the light of the pressure the government exercises on us, of the government's efforts to crush the revolution. We regard the State Duma as a body that represents a definite class, as an institution that has a definite party composition. Your argument is absolutely wrong, incomplete and non-Marxist in its approach. You fail to take into account the Duma's internal structure, which is conditioned by the class composition of the Cadet Party. You say that the government is strangling the revolution, but you forget to add that the Cadets have already fully displayed their desire to extinguish it. A Cadet Duma cannot but display the characteristics of the Cadet Party. You completely overlook the example of the Frankfurt Parliament which, although a representative institution in a revolutionary period, betrayed an obvious desire to extinguish the revolution (owing to the petty-bourgeois narrow-mindedness and cowardice of the Frankfurt windbags).

The reference to "authority recognised by the tsar and established by law", is most unfortunate in a Social-Democratic resolution. The Duma is not really an authority. The reference to the law does not strengthen, but weakens your whole argument and all your agitational slogans that follow from this resolution. Witte will most readily of all appeal to the "law" and to the "will of the tsar", in thwarting the slightest attempt of the Duma to go beyond the ridiculously narrow limits of its

powers. Not the Social-Democrats, but Russkoye Gosudarstvo stands to gain by these references to the tsar and the law.

I come now to the third point. A fundamental mistake in the resolution, and one closely connected with all the preceding ones, is the absence of a clear characterisation of the Cadets, the refusal to expose all their tactics, the failure to draw a distinction between the Cadets and the peasant and revolutionary democrats. Yet it is the Cadets who are masters of the situation in the present Duma. And these Cadets have already revealed more than once their betrayal of the "people's freedom". When, after the elections, the amiable windbag Vodovozov, wanting to be more Left than the Cadets, reminded the latter of the promises they had made about a constituent assembly, and so forth, Rech, adopting a "Great Power" tone, rudely and coarsely told him that it did not need gratuitous advice.

And your resolution is equally mistaken as regards the striving to weaken the revolution. As I have already said, this striving exists not only in the government, but also in those petty-bourgeois compromisers who are now making the most noise on the surface of our political life.

Your resolution says that the Duma is trying to lean on the people. This is only half true, and therefore not true at all. What is the State Duma? Is it tolerable that we should confine ourselves to general references to this institution, instead of analysing the classes and parties that actually determine its content and significance? Which Duma is striving to lean on the people? Not the Octobrist Duma, because such a striving is

totally alien to the Octobrists. And not the peasant Duma, for the peasant deputies are an inseparable part of the people, and there is no need for them to "strive to lean on the people". The striving to lean on the people is characteristic precisely of the Cadet Duma. But characteristic of the Cadets is both their striving to lean on the people and their fear of independent revolutionary activity by the people. By pointing to one aspect of the question and saying nothing at all about the second, your resolution presents not only a wrong, but a positively harmful picture. Objectively, silence on this second aspect -- which is emphasised in our resolution on the attitude to be adopted towards other parties -- is the utterance of a lie.

In defining our tactics towards the bourgeois democrats we cannot possibly remain silent about the Cadets, or refrain from criticising them sharply. We can, and must, seek the support only of the peasant and revolutionary democrats, and not of those who try to blunt the political contradictions of the present time.

Lastly, let us glance at the proposal to form a parliamentary group. Even the Mensheviks dare not deny that Social-Democrats must handle this new weapon, "parliamentarism", very cautiously. They are quite ready to admit this "in principle". But the point now is not admitting things in principle; the point is to make a correct appraisal of concrete conditions. Recognition of caution "in principle" is worth less if actual conditions transform this recognition into innocent and idle dreams. The comrades from the Caucasus, for example, talk very finely about independent elections, about purely Party



candidates and about repudiating blocs with the Cadets. But what are these fine phrases worth when -- as one of the comrades from the Caucasus informed me in conversation -- in Tiflis, that Menshevik stronghold in the Caucasus, the Left Cadet Argutinsky will probably be elected and, probably, not without the aid of the Social-Democrats? What good are our wishes for public and open statements before the masses if we only have -- as we have now -- the Partiiniye Izvestia of the Central Committee against a host of Cadet newspapers?

Note also that even the most optimistic Social-Democrats hope to get their candidates elected only through the peasant curia. Thus they want to "start parliamentarism" in the practice of the workers' party with the petty-bourgeois, semi-Socialist-Revolutionary curia and not with the workers' curia. Just think, which has most chance of emerging out of this situation -- a Social-Democratic or a non-Social-Democratic workers' policy?

#### SPEECH ON THE QUESTION OF ARMED UPRISING

A comrade stated recently that we were collecting material for agitation against the decisions of the Congress. I at once answered that this was a very strange thing to say about voting by roll-call. Anyone who is dissatisfied with the Congress decisions will always agitate against them. Comrade Vorobyov said that the "Mensheviks" could not work in one party with us "Bolsheviks". I am glad that Comrade Vorobyov was the first to raise this subject. I have not the slightest doubt that his statement will serve as "material for agitation". But material for agitation on questions of principle is more important, of course. And better material for agitation against the present Congress

than your resolution against armed uprising could not be imagined.

Plekhanov said that this important question ought to be discussed calmly. He is a thousand times right. Calm discussion, however, is indicated, not by the absence of debate before and at the Congress, but by the really calm and practical content of the resolutions to be discussed. And precisely from this standpoint, a comparison of the two resolutions is particularly edifying. It is not the polemics in the "Menshevik" resolution that we object to -- Plekhanov entirely misunderstood what Comrade Winter[143] said on that score - - it is not the polemics we object to, but the petty, paltry polemics running through the "Menshevik" resolution. Take the question of appraising the experience of the past, the question of the criticism of the proletarian movement by the conscious exponent of that movement, the Social-Democratic Party. Here criticism and "polemics" are absolutely essential; but it must be open, straightforward, obvious and clear criticism and not petty attacks, pinpricks or intellectual insinuations. And so our resolution, scientifically summing up the experience of the past year, straightforwardly criticises and says: the peaceful strike has proved to be "dissipation of forces", it is becoming obsolete. Insurrection is becoming the main form of struggle, and strikes the auxiliary form. Take the "Menshevik" resolution. Instead of calm discussion, instead of a consideration of experience, instead of a study of the relationship between strikes and insurrection, we get a covert, sneakily covert renunciation of the December uprising. Your resolution is thoroughly saturated with Plekhanov's view: "It was wrong to take up arms"

(although the majority of the "Mensheviks" in Russia have declared that they do not agree with Plekhanov). Comrade Cherevanin completely gave himself away in his speech when, in order to defend the "Menshevik" resolution, he had to depict the December uprising as a hopeless manifestation of "despair", as an insurrection which did not prove in the least that armed struggle is possible.

Kautsky, as you know, has expressed a different opinion. He has admitted that the December uprising in Russia makes it necessary to "reconsider" Engels's view that barricade fighting was no longer possible, and that the December uprising marks the beginning of new tactics. K. Kautsky's view may be wrong, of course, and the "Mensheviks" may be nearer to the truth. If you attach any value to "calm" and serious discussion, and not to petty criticism, you should openly and straightforwardly express your opinion in your resolution and say: "It was wrong to take up arms." But it is impermissible to express this view in a resolution covertly, without definitely formulating it. It is this sneaking, covert disavowal of the December insurrection, unsupported by the slightest criticism of past experience, that is the main and vast defect in your resolution. And it is this defect that provides an enormous amount of material for agitation against a resolution which virtually inclines towards Comrade Akimov's views, only hiding its rough edges.

The first clause in your resolution suffers from the same defect. It starts with a platitude, for "stupid stubbornness" is typical of all reactionary governments; but this in itself does not prove that insurrection is necessary and inevitable.

"Wrest power" is the same as "seize power", and it is amusing to note that those who opposed the latter term accepted the former. Thereby they revealed the hollowness of all their declamations against Narodnaya Volya-ism, etc. Comrade Plekhanov's proposal to substitute the term "wrest their rights" for "wrest power" is particularly unfortunate, because this is a purely Cadet formula. The main thing, I repeat, is that your resolution approaches the question of "wresting power" and of armed uprising on the basis of unproved and unprovable platitudes, and not of a study and consideration of past experience and of the facts about the growth of the movement.

Lenin,

**The Peasant, or "Trudovik", Group and the R.S.D.L.P.,**

May 11, 1906

Collected Works, Volume 10, pages 410-413.

Yesterday we examined the attitude of the Social-Democrats towards the Workers' Group in the Duma. Let us now look at the question of the Trudovik Group.

This is the name of the group of 130 to 140 peasant deputies in the Duma who are beginning to dissociate themselves from the Cadets and to form an independent party. This process of dissociation is far from being completed, but it has become quite marked. Goremykin magnificently expressed this by his winged words: one-third of the members of the Duma (the Trudovik and Workers' Groups together roughly make up one-third) are asking for the gallows.

**These winged words have clearly defined the difference between the revolutionary and the non-revolutionary (Cadet) bourgeois democrats.** In what way is the Peasant Group revolutionary? Not so much in its political demands—which are far from being stated in full—as in its agrarian demands. The peasants are demanding land, and all the land at that. The peasants are demanding land on terms that will really improve their conditions, i.e., without compensation, or with a very moderate compensation. In other words, **the peasants are virtually demanding an agrarian revolution, and not agrarian reform.** They are demanding a revolution that will not in the least affect the power of money: it will not affect the

foundations of bourgeois society but will very drastically undermine the economic foundations of the old serf-owning system, the whole of semi-feudal Russia— Russia of the landlords and bureaucrats. That is why **the socialist proletariat will with all its heart and all its energy help the peasants to achieve their demands in full.** Unless the peasants are completely victorious over all their oppressors left over from the old order, it will be impossible to achieve the complete victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. But the whole people need such a victory, and the proletariat needs it in the interests of its great struggle for socialism.

But **while supporting the revolutionary peasantry, the proletariat must not for a moment forget about its own class independence and its own special class aims.** The peasant movement is the movement of another class. It is not a proletarian struggle, but a struggle waged by small proprietors. It is not a struggle against the foundations of capitalism, **but a struggle to cleanse them of all the survivals of serfdom.** The masses of the peasantry are engrossed in their great struggle. It naturally appears to them that by taking all the land they will solve the agrarian problem. They long for an equalised distribution of the land and for its transfer to all the toilers; but they forget about the power of capital, about the power of money, about commodity economy, which even under the “fairest” division will inevitably again give rise to inequality and exploitation. Engrossed in their struggle against survivals of serfdom, they do not see the subsequent, still greater and more arduous struggle against capitalist society as a whole for the complete achievement of socialism. The working class will

always wage this struggle, and for this purpose will organise itself in an independent political party. And the harsh lessons of capitalism will inevitably enlighten the small proprietors more and more rapidly, convincing them that the Social-Democrats are right, and will induce them to side with the proletarian Social-Democratic Party.

The proletariat often hears the bourgeoisie say nowadays: you must march together with the bourgeois democrats. **Without their aid the proletariat will be unable to carry out a revolution. That is true.** But the question is: **with which democrats** can and should the proletariat march now? With the Cadet democrats, or **the peasant revolutionary democrats?** There can be only one answer to this question: not with the Cadet democrats, but with the revolutionary democrats; not with the liberals, but **with the masses of the peasantry.**

Bearing this reply in mind, we must not lose sight of the fact that the more rapidly the peasants become enlightened and the more openly they act in politics, the more markedly do all revolutionary elements among the bourgeois democrats gravitate towards the peasantry and, of course, also towards the petty-bourgeois townfolk. Minor distinctions become unimportant. What comes to the fore front is the primary question: are the various parties, groups and organisations going all the way with the revolutionary peasantry? More and more clearly, we see the Socialist-Revolutionaries, certain independent socialists, the most Left of the radicals and a number of peasant organisations merging politically into one revolutionary democracy.

That is why the Right Social-Democrats at the Congress (Martynov and Plekhanov) were greatly mistaken when they exclaimed: "The Cadets are more important as a party than the Socialist-Revolutionaries." Taken by themselves, the Socialist-Revolutionaries are a cipher. But as exponents of the spontaneous aspirations of the peasantry, the **Socialist-Revolutionaries are a part of the broad, mighty revolutionary-democratic masses without whose support the proletariat cannot even think of achieving the complete victory of our revolution.** The rapprochement between the Peasant, or "Trudovik", Group in the Duma and the Socialist-Revolutionaries is not an accident. A section of the peasantry will, of course, understand the consistent point of view of the Social-Democratic proletariat; but the other section will undoubtedly regard "equalised" land tenure as the solution of the agrarian problem.

**The Trudovik Group will no doubt play an important role both inside and, what is more important,** outside the Duma. The class-conscious workers must do all in their power to increase their agitation among the peasants, to induce the Trudovik Group to separate from the Cadets, and to get this group to advance full and explicit political demands. Let the Trudovik Group organise itself more compactly and independently, let it enlarge the scope of its contacts outside the Duma, let it remember that the great land question will not be settled in the Duma. That question will be settled by the people's struggle against the old regime, and not by voting in the Duma.



Today there is nothing more important for the success of the revolution than this organisation, education and political **training of the revolutionary bourgeois democrats**. The socialist proletariat, while ruthlessly exposing the instability of the Cadets, **will do everything it can to promote this great work**. And in doing so it will shun all petty-bourgeois illusions. It will abide by the strictly class and proletarian struggle for socialism.

Long live the complete victory of the peasants over all their oppressors, the proletariat will say. That victory will be the surest earnest of success in our proletarian struggle for socialism.

Lenin,

**The Unsound Arguments of the “Non-Party” Boycotters,**

July 1, 1906

Collected Works, Volume 11, pages 77-82.

In a leading article the other day Mysl argued that the Trudovik Group in the State Duma must not be “split” by the formation of party groups. The boycott of the Duma, it says, made it a foregone conclusion that the extreme parties would not have their groups in the Duma. The Trudovik Group will be far more useful as a non-party organisation working in conjunction with its local, non-party “supporting groups”.

This argument is utterly false. Non-party revolutionism is a necessary and an inevitable phenomenon in the period of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. The Bolshevik Social-Democrats have repeatedly emphasised this. Parties are the result and the political expression of highly developed class antagonisms. The characteristic feature of a bourgeois revolution is that these antagonisms are undeveloped. The growth and expansion of the non-party revolutionary-democratic element is therefore inevitable in such a revolution.

The Social-Democrats, as the representatives of the class-conscious proletariat, cannot pledge themselves not to participate in the activities of the various non-party revolutionary associations. Such for example, were the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies, the Peasant Union, and to some extent the Teachers’ Union, Railwaymen’s Union, etc. We must regard participation in the activities of such associations as a

temporary fighting alliance between the Social-Democrats and the revolutionary bourgeois democrats. Only if we look at it in this light can we avoid injury to the vital and fundamental interests of the proletariat, vindicate the absolutely independent socialist point of view of the Marxists, and form independent Social-Democratic Party organisations wherever there is the slightest opportunity for doing so.

To regard the formation of such independent Social-Democratic organisations as “splitting” the non-party revolutionary organisations is to display, firstly, a purely bourgeois outlook, and secondly, insincerity or shallow thinking in one’s claim to be non-party. Only bourgeois ideologists can regard the organisation of socialists in a separate party as a “split”. Only those who are insincere, i.e., those who have inward qualms about their own concealed bias for a party, or those who have not given sufficient thought to the question, can regard the formation of party organisations as the “splitting” of the non-party organisations. It is illogical, gentlemen. To be non-party means being neutral towards the different parties (within the limits of the general aims of revolutionary democracy). The condemnation of adherence to a party that is expressed in the word “split”, is a departure from neutrality and from being non-party and shows obvious bias for a party. You are either hypocrites, or you cannot think logically, gentlemen. In point of fact your outcry against splits and in favour of non-party organisation is intended to cover up your qualms about your own bias for a party. A genuinely non-party advocate of, let us say, a constituent assembly would not regard it as a split if some

of those who held the same view formed an independent party, while continuing fully to subscribe to this demand.

Thus, let non-party revolutionaries develop non-party revolutionary organisations. Good luck to them! But let them stop shouting so much about the party revolutionaries who, they allege, are "splitting" the non-party revolutionaries.

Now about the boycott. We are convinced that the boycott was not a blunder. In the concrete historical situation that prevailed at the beginning of 1906 it was necessary and correct. After sweeping away the Bulygin Duma, and after December, it was the duty of the Social-Democrats to continue with equal vigour to hold aloft the banner of struggle for a constituent assembly and to exert all efforts to sweep away the Witte Duma too. We performed our revolutionary duty. And despite all calumnies and the belated repentance of some people, the boycott did a great deal to sustain the revolutionary spirit and Social-Democratic consciousness of the workers. The best criteria of this are: 1) the fact that the rank-and-file workers supported it; 2) the brilliant way in which it was carried out in the particularly oppressed border regions; 3) the fact that the government issued a special law against the boycott.

The opinion that the boycott was mistaken and useless is wrong and short-sighted. It was useful not only from the moral and political, but also from the immediate and practical point of view. It diverted all the attention and efforts of the government to the struggle against the boycotters. It put the government in a ludicrous and idiotic position that was much to our advantage. The government was compelled to fight for the

convocation of the Duma and as a consequence, it could pay very little attention to the composition of the Duma. The boycott was, to use a military term, a frontal attack, or a feint frontal attack, without which it would have been impossible to outflank the enemy. This is exactly what happened. We revolutionaries made a feint frontal attack, of which the government was mortally afraid, so much so that it passed an incredibly idiotic law. Meanwhile, the liberal bourgeoisie and the non-party revolutionaries took advantage of this frontal attack, which drew the main forces of the enemy to the centre, to start a flanking movement. They got into the enemy's rear and stealthily made their way into the Duma, penetrating the enemy camp in disguise.

Everybody behaves after his own kind. The proletariat fights; the bourgeoisie uses stealth.

Now, too, we put the political responsibility for the Duma that was convened by the camarilla, that is subordinated to the camarilla, and is haggling with the camarilla, entirely upon the Cadets. It was our bounden duty to do this because of the dual nature of the composition and activities of the Duma; it has something that we must support, and something that we must strenuously combat. Only bourgeois politicians can forget, or refuse to see, this duality. Only bourgeois politicians can stubbornly ignore the role of the Duma as the instrument of a counter-revolutionary deal between the autocracy and the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie against the proletariat and peasantry. Whether this deal will succeed even temporarily, and what its consequences may be, no one can tell at present. In

the last analysis, this will depend on the strength, organisation and political consciousness of the popular movement outside the Duma. That the representatives of the class that is capable of making such a deal predominate in the Duma, that negotiations for it are now in progress, and that the first, tentative steps towards it are being taken, are facts. No “denials” by the Cadets, nor the silence of the Mensheviks can conceal them.

If that is so—and it certainly is—then it is clear that the interests of the proletarian class struggle imperatively demanded that the proletariat should maintain complete political independence. It had to act differently from the liberal bourgeoisie, which is ready to snatch eagerly at any sop that is thrown to it. It had to warn the people with all the energy at its command against the trap that was being contrived by the camarilla. It had to do all in its power to prevent the convocation of a sham, Cadet, “representative assembly of the people”. All this it tried to achieve by means of the boycott.

That is why the arguments of those Right-wing Social-Democrats who, to the amusement of the bourgeoisie, are now repudiating the boycott and denouncing their own conduct in the recent past are extremely trivial and amazingly unhistorical. For after all the Mensheviks, too, were boycotters; only they wanted to boycott the Duma at a different stage. It is enough to recall two historical facts,, to forget which would be unpardonable for a Social-Democrat who attaches any value to his past. The first fact: the leaflet of the Joint Central Committee of our Party, which consisted of an equal number of Bolsheviks

and Mensheviks, plainly stated that both sides agreed with the idea of a boycott and disagreed only about the stage at which it should be carried out. The second fact: not a single Menshevik in any Menshevik publication advocated going into the Duma; and even Comrade Plekhanov, who is so “resolute”, did not dare to do so. For a Social-Democrat to repudiate the boycott is tantamount to distorting the recent history of the Party.

But does the fact that we boycotted the Duma necessarily mean that we must not form our Party Group in the Duma? Not at all. The boycotters who, like Mysl, think so, are mistaken. We were obliged to do—and did—everything in our power to prevent the convocation of a sham representative body. That is so. But since it has been convened in spite of all our efforts, we cannot shirk the task of utilising it. Only bourgeois politicians who care nothing for the revolutionary struggle, and for the struggle for the complete success of the revolution, can see anything illogical in this. Let us recall the example of Liebknecht, who denounced, flayed and spurned the German Reichstag in 1869, but went into the Reichstag after 1870. Liebknecht fully appreciated the importance of the revolutionary struggle for a revolutionary and not a treacherously bourgeois representative assembly of the people. He did not cravenly repudiate his past actions. He quite rightly said: I did all I could to fight against such a Reichstag, to fight for the best possible result. The result turned out to be the worst. I shall be able to make use even of this worst result without betraying my revolutionary traditions.

Thus, the boycott cannot be used to deduce that we must refrain from utilising the Duma, or from forming our Party Group in

it. The issue is an entirely different one, namely, that we must exercise the greatest caution (and this is the issue that the Bolsheviks raised at the Unity Congress, as anyone can see by reading their draft resolution). We must consider whether we can utilise the Duma now by working inside it; whether we have Social-Democrats who are suit able for this work, and whether the external conditions are favourable for it.

We think that the answer to these questions is in the affirmative. We have had occasion to point out minor mistakes our Duma deputies have made, but on the whole they have adopted a correct position. An alignment has arisen in the Duma actually corresponding to the revolutionary situation; the Octobrists and the Cadets on the right, the Social-Democrats and the Trudoviks (or more correctly, the best of the Trudoviks), on the left. We can and must utilise this alignment to warn the people against the dangerous side of the Cadet Duma, so as to develop a revolutionary movement not restricted to the Duma, to Duma tactics, to Duma aims, etc. In view of this alignment we shall—if we manage things properly—also utilise the non-party revolutionary democrats, and at the same time come forward definitely and determinedly as a Social-Democratic, proletarian party.



Lenin,

**Before the Storm,**

August 21, 1906

Collected Works, Volume 11, pages 133-140.

A month has passed since the State Duma was dissolved. The first wave of armed uprisings and of strikes in an attempt to support the insurgents, has passed. In some places the zeal of the authorities, who have been employing "emergency" and "special emergency" measures for the defence of the government against the people, is beginning to subside. The significance of the past stage of the revolution is becoming more and more apparent. A new wave is drawing nearer and nearer.

The Russian revolution is proceeding along a hard and difficult road. Every upsurge, every partial success is followed by defeat, bloodshed and outrage committed by the autocracy against the champions of freedom. But after every "defeat" the movement spreads, the struggle becomes more intense, ever larger masses of people are drawn into the fight, more classes and groups of people participate in it. Every onslaught of the revolution, every step forward in organising the militant democrats is followed by a positively frantic attack by the reaction, by another step taken in organising the Black-Hundred elements of the people, and by the increased arrogance of the counter-revolution, desperately fighting for its very existence. But in spite of all these efforts, the forces of reaction are steadily declining. More and more workers, peasants and soldiers, who only yesterday were indifferent, or

even sided with the Black Hundreds, are now passing over to the side of the revolution. One by one, the illusions and prejudices which made the Russian people confiding, patient, simple-minded, obedient, all-enduring and all-forgiving, are being destroyed.

Many wounds have been inflicted on the autocracy, but it has yet not been killed. The autocracy is swathed in band ages, but it is still holding out, it is still creaking along, and is even becoming more ferocious as its life-blood oozes away. The revolutionary classes of the people, headed by the proletariat, take advantage of every lull to gather new forces, to strike fresh blows at the enemy, so as to root out at last the accursed canker of Asiatic tyranny and serfdom which is poisoning Russia.

There is no surer means of overcoming faint-heartedness and of refuting all narrow, one-sided, petty and cowardly views on the future of our revolution than by casting a general glance at its past. The history of the Russian revolution is still a short one, but it has sufficiently demonstrated and proved to us that the strength of the revolutionary classes and the wealth of their historical, creative power are far greater than they seem to be in times of calm. Every rising wave of the revolution has revealed an unobtrusive and relatively silent accumulation of forces for the fulfilment of the new and loftier task, and every time the short sighted and timid appraisals of political slogans have been refuted by an outburst of these accumulated forces.

Three main stages of our revolution have become clearly discernible. The first stage was the period of "confidence", the period of mass pleadings, petitions and declarations about the

need for a constitution. The second stage was the period of constitutional manifestoes, acts and laws. The third stage was the beginning of the realisation of constitutionalism, the period of the State Duma. At first the tsar was begged to grant a constitution. Later on the solemn recognition of a constitution was forcibly wrested from the tsar. Now... now, after the dissolution of the Duma, experience teaches us that a constitution bestowed by the tsar, acknowledged by the laws of the tsar, and carried out by the tsarist officials, is not worth a brass farthing.

In each of these periods we see the forefront at first occupied by the liberal bourgeoisie, noisy, bragging, full of narrow, petty-bourgeois prejudices and conceit, cocksure of its "right of inheritance", patronisingly teaching its "younger brother" the ways of peaceful struggle, of loyal opposition, of harmonising the freedom of the people with the tsarist regime. And on every occasion this liberal bourgeoisie succeeded in confusing some Social-Democrats (of the Right wing), in securing their acceptance of its political slogans and subjecting them to its political leadership. But in reality, obscured by the hullabaloo of the liberals' political game, the revolutionary forces among the masses grew and matured. In reality, the solution of the political problem which history had brought to the forefront was undertaken each time by the proletarians, who attracted the advanced peasants to their side and came out into the streets, cast aside all old laws and conventions and gave the world new forms and methods of direct revolutionary struggle, and combined means of waging it.

Recall January 9. To everyone's surprise the heroic action of the workers put an end to the period of the tsar's "confidence" in the people and the people's "confidence" in the tsar! At one stroke they raised the whole movement to a new and higher plane! And yet, on the surface, January 9 was a complete defeat. Thousands of proletarians killed and wounded, an orgy of repression, the dark cloud of the Trepov regime hanging over Russia.

The liberals again came to the fore. They organised brilliant congresses, spectacular deputations to the tsar. They clutched with both hands at the sop that was thrown to them, the Bulygin Duma. They already began to growl at the revolution like dogs who have spied a choice titbit and appealed to the students to go on with their studies and not to meddle in politics. And the faint-hearted among the adherents of the revolution began to say: Let us go into the Duma; after the Potemkin affair an armed uprising is hope less; now that peace has been concluded, militant, mass action is improbable.

The real solution of the next historical problem was again supplied only by the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. The Manifesto granting a constitution was wrung from the tsar by the all-Russian strike in October. The spirit of the peasants and the soldiers revived, and they turned towards liberty and light in the wake of the workers. Short weeks of liberty followed, succeeded by weeks of pogroms, Black-Hundred brutality, a terrible sharpening of the struggle, unprecedentedly bloody reprisals against all who had taken up arms in defence of the liberties wrested from the tsar.

The movement was once again raised to a higher stage and yet, on the surface, the proletariat again seemed to have suffered utter defeat. Frantic repression, overcrowded prisons, endless executions, the despicable howling of the liberals dissociating themselves from the uprising and the revolution.

The loyal liberal philistines are again in the forefront. They make capital out of the last remaining prejudices of the peasants, who trust the tsar. They assert that the victory of democracy at the elections will cause the walls of Jericho to fall. They are predominant in the Duma and again begin to behave like well-fed watchdogs towards “beggars” —the proletariat and the revolutionary peasantry.

The dissolution of the Duma marks the end of the hegemony of the liberals, which was holding back and degrading the revolution. The peasants have learned more from the Duma than anyone. Their gain is that they are now losing their most baneful illusions. And the whole people is emerging from the experience of the Duma different from what it was before. As a result of the suffering caused by the failure of the representative body on which so many had placed all their hopes, the people now more definitely appreciate the task ahead. The Duma has enabled them to gauge the forces more precisely; it has concentrated at least some of the elements of the popular movement, it has shown in reality how the different parties act, it has revealed much more vividly to ever wider masses of the people the political character of the liberal bourgeoisie and of the peasantry.

The Cadets were unmasked, the Trudoviks were consolidated—such are some of the most important gains of the Duma period. The pseudo-democracy of the Cadets was branded in the Duma itself scores of times, and that by men who were prepared to trust them. The Russian muzhik has ceased to be a political sphinx. In spite of all distortions of the freedom of election, he has managed to assert himself and has created a new political type, the Trudovik. Hence forth, in addition to the signatures of organisations and parties which were built up in the course of decades, revolutionary manifestoes will bear the signature of the Trudovik Group, which was formed in the course of a few weeks. The ranks of revolutionary democracy have been reinforced by a new organisation, which, of course, shares a good many of the illusions that are characteristic of the small producer, but which in the present revolution undoubtedly expresses the trend toward a ruthless mass struggle against Asiatic despotism and feudal landlordism.

The revolutionary classes are emerging from the experience of the Duma more united, more closely bound to one another, more capable of undertaking a general onslaught. Another wound has been inflicted on the autocracy. It has become still more isolated. It is still more helpless in the face of the problems which it is quite incapable of solving. And starvation and unemployment are becoming more acute. Peasant revolts are breaking out more and more frequently.

Sveaborg and Kronstadt have revealed the spirit of the army and navy. The uprisings have been suppressed, but the uprising

lives, is spreading and gaining strength. Many Black-Hundred elements joined the strike that was called in support of the insurgents. The advanced workers stopped this strike, and they were right to do so, because the strike began to develop into a demonstration, whereas the task was to organise a great and decisive struggle.

The advanced workers were right in their estimate of the situation. They quickly rectified the false strategical move and husbanded their forces for the coming battle. They instinctively understood the inevitability of a strike as part of an uprising and the harmfulness of a strike as a demonstration.

All evidence goes to show that temper is rising. An explosion is inevitable and may be near at hand. The executions in Sveaborg and Kronstadt, the reprisals against the peasants, the persecution of the Trudovik members of the Duma— all this serves only to intensify hatred, to spread determination and concentrated readiness for battle. More audacity, comrades! More confidence in the strength of the revolutionary classes, especially the proletariat, enriched as they now are by new experience; more independent initiative! All the signs indicate that we are on the eve of a great struggle. All efforts must be directed towards making it simultaneous, concentrated, full of that heroism of the masses which has marked all the great stages of the great Russian revolution. Let the liberals cravenly hint at this coming struggle solely for the purpose of threatening the government, let these narrow-minded philistines concentrate the whole force of their “mind and sentiments” on the expectation of a new election—the

proletariat is preparing for the struggle; it is unitedly and boldly marching to meet the storm, eager to plunge into the thick of the fight. We have had enough of the hegemony of the cowardly Cadets, those "stupid penguins" who "timidly hide their fat bodies behind the rocks".

"Let the storm rage louder!



## The Social-Democrats and Electoral Agreements

V. I. Lenin

Collected Works, Volume 11, pages 275-298. , October 1906

The election campaign for the Second Duma is now a subject of great interest in the workers' party. Special attention is being devoted to the question of "blocs", i.e., permanent or temporary electoral agreements between the Social-Democrats and other parties. The bourgeois, Cadet press— *Rech*, *Tovarishch*, *Novy Put*, *Okno*, etc.—are doing their utmost to convince the workers of the need for a "bloc" (an electoral agreement) between the Social-Democrats and the Cadets. Some Menshevik Social-Democrats are also advocating such blocs (Cherevanin in *Nashe Dyelo* and *Tovarishch*), others are opposed to them (Martov in *Tovarishch*). The Bolshevik Social-Democrats are opposed to such blocs and agree only to partial agreements at the higher stages of the election campaign on the distribution of seats in proportion to the polling strength of the revolutionary and opposition parties at the primary ballot.

We shall try to state briefly the case for this last standpoint.

Social-Democrats regard parliamentarism (participation in representative assemblies) as one of the means of enlightening and educating the proletariat and organising it in an independent class party; as one of the methods of the political struggle for the emancipation of the workers. This Marxist standpoint radically distinguishes Social-Democracy from bourgeois democracy, on the one hand, and from anarchism on the other. Bourgeois liberals and radicals regard

parliamentarism as the “natural” and the only normal and legitimate method of conducting state affairs in general, and they repudiate the class struggle and the class character of modern parliamentarism. The bourgeoisie exerts every effort, by every possible means and on every possible occasion, to put blinkers on the eyes of the workers to prevent them from seeing that parliamentarism is an instrument of bourgeois oppression, to prevent them from realising the historically limited importance of parliamentarism. The anarchists are also unable to appreciate the historically defined importance of parliamentarism and entirely renounce this method of struggle. That is why the Social-Democrats in Russia strenuously combat both anarchism and the efforts of the bourgeoisie to stop the revolution as soon as possible by coming to terms with the old regime on a parliamentary basis. They subordinate their parliamentary activities entirely and absolutely to the general interests of the working-class movement and to the special tasks of the proletariat in the present bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Hence it follows, firstly, that the participation of the Social-Democrats in the Duma campaign is of a quite different nature from that of other parties. Unlike them, we do not regard this campaign as an end in itself or even as being of cardinal importance. Unlike them, we subordinate this campaign to the interests of the class struggle. Unlike them, the slogan we put forward in this campaign is not parliamentarism for the sake of parliamentary reforms, but the revolutionary struggle for a constituent assembly. Moreover, we wage this struggle in its highest forms, which have arisen from the historical

development of the forms of struggle during the last few years.[1]

## Notes

[1] We shall not here touch on the question of boycott, as this does not come within the scope of this pamphlet. We shall only remark that this question cannot be properly appraised apart from the concrete historical situation. The boycott of the Bulygin Duma was successful. The boycott of the Witte Duma was necessary and correct. The revolutionary Social-Democrats must be the first to take the line of the most resolute, the most direct struggle, and must be the last to adopt more circuitous methods of struggle. The Stolypin Duma cannot be boycotted in the old way, and it would be wrong to do so after the experience of the First Duma.—Lenin

What conclusion follows from the foregoing in regard to electoral agreements? First of all, that our basic, main task is to develop the class-consciousness and independent class organisation of the proletariat, as the only class that remains revolutionary to the end, as the only possible leader of a victorious bourgeois-democratic revolution. Therefore, class independence throughout the election and Duma campaigns is our most important general task. This does not exclude other, partial tasks, but the latter must always be subordinate to and in conformity with it. This general premise, which is confirmed by the theory of Marxism and the whole experience of the international Social-Democratic movement, must be our point of departure.

The special tasks of the proletariat in the Russian revolution may seem at once to controvert this general premise on the following grounds: the big bourgeoisie has already betrayed the revolution through the Octobrists, or has made it its aim to put a stop to the revolution by means of a constitution (the Cadets); the victory of the revolution is possible only if the proletariat is supported by the most progressive and politically conscious section of the peasantry, whose objective position impels it to fight and not to compromise, to carry through and not to curb the revolution. Hence, some may conclude, the Social-Democrats must enter into agreements with the democratic peasantry for the whole duration of the elections.

But such a conclusion cannot be drawn from the absolutely correct premise that the complete victory of our revolution is possible only in the form of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. It has yet to be proved that a bloc with the democratic peasantry for the whole duration of the elections is possible and advantageous from the point of view of present party relationships (the democratic peasantry in our country is now represented not by one, but by various parties) and from the point of view of the present electoral system. It has yet to be proved that by forming a bloc with this or that party we shall express and uphold the interests of the truly revolutionary sections of the peasantry better than by preserving the complete independence of our Party in criticising such-and-such democratic peasant parties, and in counterposing some elements of the democratic peasantry to others. The premise that the proletariat is closest to the revolutionary peasantry in the present revolution undoubtedly

leads to the general political "line" of Social-Democracy: together with the democratic peasantry against the treacherous big-bourgeois "democrats" (the Cadets). But whether it leads to the formation at the present time of an election bloc with the Popular Socialists (Popular Socialist Party), or the Socialist-Revolutionaries cannot lie decided without an analysis of the features which distinguish these parties from each other and from the Cadets, without an analysis of the present electoral system with its numerous stages. Only one thing follows from it, directly and absolutely: under no circumstances can we during our election campaign confine ourselves to baldly and abstractly counterposing the proletariat to the bourgeois democrats in general. On the contrary, we must devote our whole attention to drawing a precise distinction, based on the historical facts of our revolution, between the liberal-monarchist and the revolutionary-democratic bourgeoisie, or, to put it more concretely, to the distinction between the Cadets, Popular Socialists, and Socialist-Revolutionaries. Only by drawing such a distinction shall we be able to determine most correctly who our closest "allies" are. But, firstly, we shall not forget that the Social-Democrats must watch every ally from the bourgeois democrats as they would an enemy. Secondly, we shall examine very carefully to see which is most advantageous: to tie our hands in a general bloc with some Popular Socialists (for instance), or to preserve complete independence so as to be quite free at the decisive moment to split the non-party "Trudoviks" into opportunists (P. S.'s) and revolutionaries (S.-R.'s), to counterpose the latter to the former, etc.

Thus, the argument about the proletarian-peasant character of our revolution does not entitle us to conclude that we must enter into agreements with this or that democratic peasant party at this or that stage of the elections to the Second Duma. It is not even a sufficient argument for limiting the class independence of the proletariat during the elections, let alone for renouncing this independence.

In order to come nearer to the solution of our problem we must, firstly, examine the fundamental party groupings in the elections to the Second Duma and, secondly, examine the specific features of the present electoral system.

Electoral agreements are concluded between parties. What are the main types of parties that will contest the elections? The Black Hundreds will no doubt unite even more closely than during the elections to the First Duma. The Octobrists and the Party of Peaceful Renovation will join either the Black Hundreds or the Cadets, or, more probably, will oscillate between the two. In any case, to regard the Octobrists as a "party of the Centre" (as L. Martov does in his latest pamphlet, *Political Parties in Russia*) is a fundamental error: in the actual struggle which must finally decide the outcome of our revolution, the Cadets form the Centre. The Cadets are an organised party that is going into the elections independently and, moreover, is intoxicated with its success at the First Duma elections. But the discipline of this party is not of the strictest and its solidarity not of the strongest. The Left-wing Cadets are disgruntled about the defeat at Helsingfors and are protesting. Some of them (Mr. Alexinsky in Moscow, recently) are going

over to the Popular Socialists. In the First Duma there were some "exceptionally rare" Cadets who even gave their signatures to the Bill of the "33" for the abolition of all private ownership of land (Badamshin, Zubchenko and Lozhkin). Hence, to split off at least a small section from this "Centre" and bring it towards the Left is not a hopeless proposition. The Cadets are only too conscious of their weakness among the mass of the people (quite recently even the Cadet Tovarishch had to admit this), and they would readily agree to a bloc with the Lefts. It is not for nothing that the Cadet newspapers have with such tender joy opened their columns to the Social-Democrats Martov and Cherevanin to discuss the question of a bloc between the Social-Democrats and the Cadets. We, of course, will never forget, and will tell it to the masses during the election campaign, that the Cadets failed to keep their promises in the First Duma, that they obstructed the Trudoviks, played at making constitutions, etc., etc., going to the extent of keeping silent about the "four points", the Draconian Bills, and so forth.

Next come the "Trudoviks". The parties of this type, namely the petty-bourgeois and predominantly peasant parties, are divided into the non-party "Trudovik Group" (which held a congress recently), the Popular Socialists and the Socialist-Revolutionaries (the Polish Socialist Party, etc., correspond more or less to the Socialist-Revolutionaries). The only more or less consistent and determined revolutionaries and republicans among them are the S.-R.'s. The Popular Socialists are much worse opportunists than our Mensheviks; strictly speaking, they are semi-Cadets. The non-party "Trudovik Group" has,

perhaps, more influence among the peasantry than the others; but the strength of its democratic convictions is difficult to determine, although it is undoubtedly far more Left than the Cadets, and evidently belongs to the camp of revolutionary democracy.

The Social-Democratic Party is the only party which, in spite of internal dissensions, will enter the elections as a thoroughly disciplined body, which has a fully definite and strictly class basis, and which has united all the Social- Democratic parties of all the nationalities in Russia.

But how are we to enter into a general bloc with the Trudoviks, considering the composition of this type of party, as outlined above? What sureties have we for the non-party Trudoviks? Is a bloc possible between party and non-party people? How do we know that Alexinsky & Co. will not, tomorrow, turn from the Popular Socialists back to the Cadets?

It is clear that a real party agreement with the Trudoviks is impossible. It is clear that we must not under any circumstances help to unite the opportunist Popular Socialists with the revolutionary S.-R.'s; on the contrary, we must split them and counterpose one to the other. It is clear that the existence of a non-party Trudovik Group makes it more to our advantage in all respects to preserve complete independence in order to exert a really revolutionary influence upon them than to tie our hands and blur the distinctions between the monarchists and the republicans, etc. It is absolutely impermissible for Social-Democrats to blur these distinctions; and for this reason alone it is necessary to reject blocs altogether, once the present



grouping of parties unites the non-party Trudoviks, the Popular Socialists and the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

Can they really unite, and are they doing so? They certainly can unite, for they have the same petty-bourgeois class basis. They were, in fact, united in the First Duma, in the press during the October period, in the press of the Duma period, and in the ballots among the students (*si licet parva componere magnis*—if the small may be compared with the great). A minor symptom, but a characteristic one when connected with others, is the fact that in the ballots of the “autonomous” students there were often three conflicting lists: the Cadets, the bloc of the Trudoviks, Popular Socialists, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Polish Socialist Party, and, lastly, the Social-Democrats.

From the point of view of the proletariat, clarity as regards the class grouping of the parties is of supreme importance; and the advantage of independently influencing the non-party Trudoviks (or those who are oscillating between the Popular Socialists and the Socialist-Revolutionaries) is obvious compared with attempts by the Party to reach an agreement with the non-party people. The facts relating to the parties compel the following conclusion: no agreements whatsoever at the lower stage, when agitation is carried on among the masses; at the higher stages all efforts must be directed towards defeating the Cadets during the distribution of seats by means of a partial agreement between the Social-Democrats and Trudoviks, and towards defeating the Popular Socialists by means of a partial agreement between the Social-Democrats and the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The objection will be raised: while you incorrigibly utopian Bolsheviks are dreaming of defeating the Cadets, you will all be defeated by the Black Hundreds, because you will split the vote! The Social-Democrats, the Trudoviks and the Cadets together would rout the Black Hundreds for certain; but by acting separately, you may present the common enemy with an easy victory. Let us assume that the Black Hundreds get 26 per cent of the votes, the Trudoviks and Cadets 25 per cent each, and the Social-Democrats 24 per cent. The Black Hundreds will get in unless the Social Democrats, the Trudoviks and the Cadets form a bloc.

This objection is often taken seriously, and so we must carefully analyse it. But in order to analyse it, we must examine the given, i.e., the present electoral system in Russia.

Our Duma elections are not direct, but multiple-stage elections. In multiple-stage elections the splitting of votes is dangerous only at the lower stage. It is only when the primary voters go to the poll that the division of the votes is an unknown quantity; it is only in our agitation among the masses that we have to work "in the dark". At the higher stages, when the elected representatives vote, the general engagement is over; all that remains is to distribute the seats by partial agreements among the parties, which know the exact number of their candidates and their votes.

The lowest stage in the elections is the election of electors in the cities, the election of representatives—one per ten households—in the villages, and the election of delegates to the workers' curia.

In the cities, in every electoral area (ward, etc.), we face a great mass of voters. There is, undoubtedly, a danger of splitting the vote. It cannot be denied that in the cities Black-Hundred electors may be elected in some places exclusively because of the absence of a "bloc of the Lefts", exclusively because, let us say, the Social-Democrats may divert part of the votes from the Cadets. It will be recalled that in Moscow Guchkov received something like 900 votes, and the Cadets about 1,400. If a Social-Democrat had taken 501 votes from the Cadet, Guchkov would have won. And there is no doubt that the general public will take this simple calculation into account; they will be afraid of splitting the vote, and because of that will be inclined to cast their votes only for the most moderate of the opposition candidates. We shall have what is called in England a "three-cornered" fight, when the urban petty bourgeoisie are afraid to vote for a socialist candidate because it would take votes from the liberal and thus allow the conservative to win.

How can this danger be averted? There is only one way: to conclude an agreement at the lower stage, that is, put up a joint list of electors in which the number of candidates of each party is determined by a definite agreement of the parties before the contest. All the parties entering into the agreement call upon the electorate to vote for this joint list.

Let us examine the arguments for and against this method. The arguments for are as follows: agitation can be conducted upon strictly party lines. Let the Social-Democrats criticise the Cadets before the masses as much as they like but let them add: yet

they are better than the Black Hundreds, and therefore we have agreed upon a joint list.

The arguments against are as follows: a joint list would be in crying contradiction to the whole independent class policy of the Social-Democratic Party. By recommending a joint list of Cadets and Social-Democrats to the masses we would be bound to cause hopeless confusion of class and political divisions. We would undermine the principles and the general revolutionary significance of our campaign for the sake of gaining a seat in the Duma for a liberal! We would be subordinating class policy to parliamentarism instead of subordinating parliamentarism to class policy. We would deprive ourselves of the opportunity to gain an estimate of our forces. We would lose what is lasting and durable in all elections—the development of the class-consciousness and solidarity of the socialist proletariat. We would gain what is transient, relative and untrue—superiority of the Cadet over the Octobrist.

Why should we jeopardize our consistent work of socialist education? Because of the danger of Black-Hundred candidates? But all the cities in Russia combined have only 35 of the 524 seats in the Duma (St. Petersburg 6, Moscow 4, Warsaw and Tashkent 2 each, the other 21 cities 1 each). This means that the cities by themselves cannot under any circumstances materially affect the composition of the Duma. Besides, we cannot confine ourselves to the merely formal consideration of the arithmetical possibility of splitting the votes. We must ascertain whether there is any great political probability of this happening. An analysis shows that the Black

Hundreds obtained a very small minority even in the elections to the First Duma, that cases like the “Guchkov” case mentioned above were exceptional. According to statistics in *Vestnik Kadetskoi Partii* (No. 7, April 19, 1906), in 20 cities, which sent 28 deputies to the Duma— out of 1,761 electors 1,468 were Cadets, 32 Progressists, 25 non-party, 128 Octobrists, 32 of the Commercial and Industrial Party, and 76 of the Right, i.e., total Rights 236, less than 15 per cent. In ten cities not a single elector of the Rights was returned; in three cities not more than ten electors (out of eighty) of the Rights were returned in each of them. Is it reasonable, under such circumstances, to give up the struggle for our own class candidates because of an exaggerated fear of the Black Hundreds? Would not such a policy, even from a narrow, practical point of view, betray short-sightedness, not to speak of instability of principles?

And what about a bloc with the Trudoviks against the Cadets? we shall be asked. But we have already pointed out the special features of the party relations among the Trudoviks, which make such a bloc undesirable and inexpedient. In the cities, where the working-class population is mostly concentrated, we must never, except in case of extreme necessity, refrain from putting up absolutely independent Social-Democratic candidates. And there is no such urgent necessity. A few Cadets or Trudoviks more or less (especially of the Popular-Socialist type!) are of no serious political importance, for the Duma itself can, at best, play only a subsidiary, secondary role. It is the peasantry, the gubernia assemblies of electors, that are of decisive political importance in determining the results of the Duma elections, and not the cities.[1] In the gubernia assemblies

of electors, however, we shall achieve our general political alliance with the Trudoviks against the Cadets far better and more certainly, without in the least infringing our strict principles, than at the lower stage of the elections in the countryside. We shall now discuss the elections in the countryside.

#### Notes

[1] The small towns, of course, also affect the composition of the gubernia electoral assemblies, through the town conferences. Here, too, the Cadets and the Progressists have had a great majority of votes: for instance, out of 571. electors elected by town conferences, 424 were Cadets and Progressists and 147 of the Right (*Vestnik Kadetskoi Partii*, No. 5, March 28, 1906). The figures for the separate towns fluctuate very considerably, of course. Under such circumstances we could probably, in very many cases, have put up an independent fight against the Cadets without fearing any accidental splitting of the votes, and without making ourselves dependent upon any non-Social-Democratic party. As for blocs at the lowest stage of elections in the workers' curia, probably not a single Social-Democrat will speak of them seriously. Complete independence of the Social-Democrats is particularly necessary among the working-class masses—Lenin

In the big cities, as is well known, there were cases where the state of organisation of the political parties swept away one stage of the elections. By law the elections consisted of two stages. In practice, however, the elections sometimes proved to be direct, or almost direct, as the electorate definitely knew the

character of the contending parties, and in some cases, they even knew the persons whom a given party intended to send into the Duma. In the countryside, on the contrary, there are so many stages, the electorate is so scattered, and the obstacles to open party action are so great that the elections to the First Duma were, and those to the Second Duma will be, conducted very much "under a cloak". In other words, very often, and even in the majority of cases, party propagandists will speak to the electors on parties in general, deliberately mentioning no names out of fear of the police. The radical and revolutionary peasants (and not only peasants) will deliberately screen themselves behind the title "non-party". At the election of one delegate per ten households it is knowledge of the person as such, personal confidence in this or that candidate, sympathy with his Social-Democratic speeches that will decide the issue. Here the number of Social-Democrats backed by a local Party organisation will be very small. But the number of Social-Democrats who win the sympathies of the local rural population may prove to be much larger than might be expected from the number of local Party units in those districts.

Petty-bourgeois romanticists like the Popular Socialists, who are dreaming of a legal Socialist Party under the existing order, do not understand how confidence in and sympathy with the underground party are growing because of its consistent, uncompromising, militant spirit and the elusiveness of its organisation, which influences the masses not through Party men alone. A real revolutionary illegal party, steeled in battle, accustomed to the Plehves, and undismayed by the stern measures of the Stolypins, may, in the period of civil war, be

capable of influencing the masses to a greater extent than any legal party which, with “callow simplicity”, takes a “strictly constitutional path”.

The Social-Democrats who are members of the Party, and Social-Democrats who do not belong to it, will have good chances of success at the elections of the one-per-ten-household representatives and the delegates. A bloc with the Trudoviks, or a joint list, is not at all important for success at this stage of the election in the countryside. On the one hand, the electoral units are quite small there, and on the other, real party Trudoviks, or such as at all resemble them, will be quite rare. The strict Party spirit of the Social-Democrats, their unconditional submission to the Party which has been able to exist illegally for many years and has reached a membership of 100,000 to 150,000 of all nationalities, the only Party on the extreme Left which formed a Party Group in the First Duma—this Party spirit will be a powerful recommendation and guarantee for all those who are not afraid of a resolute struggle and wish for it whole-heartedly, but do not altogether trust their own strength, are afraid of taking the initiative and are afraid to come out openly. We must utilise this advantage of being a strict, “illegal” party to the utmost, and we have nothing to gain by weakening it even slightly by any kind of permanent bloc. The only other resolute and determinedly revolutionary party likely to compete with us are the Socialist-Revolutionaries. But a bloc with them on a really party basis at the first stage of the rural elections would be possible only as an exception: one has only to picture to oneself clearly what the actual election conditions are like in the country side to become



convinced of this.[1] Insofar as the non-party revolutionary peasants will be active, while deliberately refraining from associating with any one party, it will be more to our advantage in all respects to influence them in the sense we desire along strictly party lines. The non-party character of the association, of the agitation, need not hamper the party Social-Democrat, for the revolutionary peasants will never wish to exclude him; and his participation in a non-party revolutionary association is especially sanctioned by the resolution of the Unity Congress on supporting the peasant movement. Thus, while preserving and upholding our Party principle, utilising fully its enormous moral and political advantages, we can at the same time fully adapt ourselves to the task of working among the non-party revolutionary peasants, in the non-party revolutionary associations, circles and meetings, of working with the aid of our non-party revolutionary connections, and so forth. Instead of forming a bloc with the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who have succeeded in organising only a very small fraction of the revolutionary peasantry—a bloc that would restrict and cramp our strict Party principle—we shall make wider and freer use of our Party position and of all the advantages of working among the non-party “Trudoviks”.

The conclusion to be drawn is that at the lower stages of the election campaign in the countryside, that is, at the election of the one-per-ten-household representatives and of the delegates (sometimes the election of the delegates will, in practice, probably be tantamount to a first stage election), there is no need for us to enter into any electoral agreements. The percentage of men with definite political views who are suitable

as candidates for the office of one-per-ten-household representatives, or delegates, is so small that the Social-Democrats who have gained the confidence and respect of the peasants (and without this condition no serious candidature is conceivable) have every chance, almost to a man, of being elected as one-per-ten-household representatives and delegates, without having to enter into any agreement with other parties.

As for the assemblies of delegates, there we shall be able to base our policy upon the exact results of the primary election contests which have decided the whole matter in advance. Here we can and must enter into—not blocs, of course, not close and permanent agreements—but partial agreements on the distribution of seats. Here, and even more so on the assemblies of electors for the election of the Duma deputies, we must, in conjunction with the Trudoviks, defeat the Cadets, and in conjunction with the Socialist-Revolutionaries, defeat the Popular Socialists, etc.

#### Notes

[1] It was certainly no accident that the Socialist-Revolutionaries could not come forward as a party in the First Duma; could not rather than would not. The Socialist-Revolutionaries in the Duma, as well as those in the University, thought it more advantageous to hide behind the non-party Trudoviks, or to enter into a bloc with them. —Lenin

Thus, an examination of the actual electoral system shows that blocs at the lower stages of the elections are particularly undesirable in the cities and are not essential. In the

countryside, at the lower stages (i.e., at the election of the one-per-ten-household representatives and of the delegates), blocs are both undesirable and quite unnecessary. The uyezd assemblies of delegates and the gubernia assemblies of electors are of decisive political importance. Here, i.e., at the higher stages, partial agreements are necessary and possible without undesirable infringement of party principle; for the contest before the masses has ended, and there is no need to advocate before the masses directly or indirectly (or even by assumption) a non-party policy; neither is there the least danger of obscuring the strictly independent class policy of the proletariat.[1]

Now let us examine, first from the formal, arithmetical point of view, so to speak, what forms these partial electoral agreements will assume at the higher stages.

We shall take approximate percentages, i.e., the distribution of electors (and delegates, who are included in what follows) according to party, per hundred electors. To succeed in an assembly of electors a candidate must obtain at least 51 votes out of every 100. This indicates that the general tactical rule of the Social-Democratic electors must be: to try to win over a sufficient number of bourgeois-democratic electors who sympathise with Social-Democracy, or such as most deserve support, in order jointly with them to defeat the rest and thus secure the election of in part Social-Democratic and in part the best bourgeois-democratic electors.[2]

We shall illustrate this rule by simple examples. Let us assume that out of 100 electors, 49 are Black Hundreds, 40 are Cadets and 11 are Social-Democrats. A partial agreement between the

Social-Democrats and the Cadets is necessary in order to secure the election in full of a joint list of Duma candidates, on the basis, of course, of a proportional distribution of Duma seats according to the number of electors (i.e., in this case, one-fifth of the Duma seats from the whole gubernia, say, two out of ten, would go to the Social-Democrats, and four-fifths, or eight out of ten, would go to the Cadets). If there are 49 Cadets, 40 Trudoviks and 11 Social-Democrats, we must try to reach an agreement with the Trudoviks so as to defeat the Cadets and to win one-fifth of the seats for ourselves and four-fifths for the Trudoviks. In such a case we would have a splendid opportunity to test the consistency and steadfastness of the democratic convictions of the Trudoviks: would they agree to turn away from the Cadets entirely and defeat them in conjunction with the electors of the workers' party, or would they rather choose to "save" this or that Cadet or, perhaps, even prefer a bloc with the Cadets to one with the Social-Democrats? Here we can, and must, demonstrate and prove to the whole people to what extent particular petty-bourgeois elements are gravitating towards the monarchist bourgeoisie or towards the revolutionary proletariat.

In the last example the Trudoviks stand to gain an obvious advantage by forming a bloc with the Social-Democrats and not with the Cadets, for in the former case they would obtain four-fifths of the total number of seats, whereas in the latter case they would obtain only four-ninths. Still more interesting would be the reverse case: 11 Cadets, 40 Trudoviks and 49 Social-Democrats. In such a case the prospect of an obvious advantage would impel the Trudoviks to enter into a bloc with the Cadets:

in that case “we” shall get more seats in the Duma, they will say. But loyalty to the principles of democracy and to the interests of the real working masses would certainly call for a bloc with the Social-Democrats, even at the cost of some seats in the Duma. The representatives of the proletariat must carefully take all such cases into account and explain to the electors and to the whole people (the results of agreements in the assemblies of delegates and electors must be publicly announced) the significance from the point of view of principle of this election arithmetic.

Further, in the last example we see a case where both the prospect of obvious advantage and considerations of principle are inducements to the Social-Democrats to split the Trudoviks. If among them there are, say, two fully party Socialist-Revolutionaries, we must exert every effort to win them to our side and with 51 votes defeat all the Cadets and all the rest of the less revolutionary Trudoviks. If among the Trudoviks there are two Socialist-Revolutionaries and 38 Popular Socialists, we shall have an opportunity to test the loyalty of the Socialist-Revolutionaries to the interests of democracy and to the interests of the working masses. We would say: vote for the republican democrats and against the Popular Socialists, who tolerate the monarchy; vote for the confiscation of the landlords’ land and against the Popular Socialists, who tolerate redemption payments; vote for those who are for arming the whole people and against the Popular Socialists, who accept a standing army. And then we would see whom the Socialist-Revolutionaries would prefer—the Social-Cadets [3] or the Social-Democrats.

This brings us to the question of the significance of this election arithmetic from the point of view of political principle. Our duty here is to oppose seat-hunting and to put forward an absolutely firm and consistent defense of the standpoint of the socialist proletariat and of the interests of the complete victory of our bourgeois-democratic revolution. Under no circumstances, and in no way, should our Social-Democratic delegates and electors keep silent about our socialist aims, our strictly class position as a proletarian party. But a mere repetition of the word "class" is not sufficient to indicate the role of the proletariat as the vanguard in the present revolution. Expounding our socialist doctrine and the general theory of Marxism is not sufficient to prove the leading role of the proletariat. This requires, in addition, the ability to show in practice, in analyzing the burning questions of the present revolution, that the members of the workers' party are more consistent, more unerring, more determined and more skillful than all others in defending the interests of this revolution, the cause of its complete victory. This is no easy task, and the fundamental and chief duty of every Social-Democrat who is entering the election campaign is to prepare for it.

To determine the differences between the parties and shades of parties at the assemblies of delegates and of electors (as well as throughout the election campaign—that goes without saying) will be a small, but useful practical task. In this matter, incidentally, the course of events will settle many controversial questions which are agitating the members of the Social-Democratic Labour Party. The Right wing of the Party, from the extreme opportunists of Nashe Dyelo to the moderate

opportunists of Sotsial-Demokrat, are doing their utmost to obliterate and distort the difference between the Trudoviks and the Cadets, evidently failing to notice a new and very important phenomenon, namely, the division of the Trudoviks into Popular Socialists, Socialist Revolutionaries, and those who are gravitating to the one or the other. Of course, the history of the First Duma and its dissolution already provided documentary evidence making the drawing of a distinction between the Cadets and the Trudoviks absolutely imperative and proving that the latter are more consistently and staunchly democratic than the former. The election campaign to the Second Duma must prove and show this even more graphically, more exactly, more fully, and more widely. As we have tried to show by examples, the election campaign itself will teach the Social-Democrats to distinguish correctly between the various bourgeois-democratic parties and will refute, or, more correctly, sweep aside, the deeply mistaken opinion that the Cadets are the chief or, at any rate, important representatives of our bourgeois democracy in general.

Let us point out, too, that in the election campaign in general, and in concluding electoral agreements at the higher stages, the Social-Democrats must speak simply and clearly, in a language comprehensible to the masses, absolutely discarding the heavy artillery of erudite terms, foreign words and stock slogans, definitions and conclusion which are as yet unfamiliar and unintelligible to the masses. Without flamboyant phrases, without rhetoric, but with facts and figures, they must be able to explain the questions of social ism and of the present Russian revolution.

Two fundamental questions of this revolution, the questions of freedom and of land, will inevitably arise here. Upon these fundamental questions which are agitating the vast mass of the people we must concentrate both purely socialist propaganda—the difference between the standpoint of the small proprietor and that of the proletariat—and the distinction between the parties fighting for influence over the people. The Black Hundreds, right up to the Octobrists inclusively, are against freedom, against giving the land to the people. They want to stop the revolution by force, bribery and deceit. The liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie, the Cadets, are also striving to stop the revolution, but by means of a number of concessions. They do not want to give the people either complete freedom, or all the land. They want to preserve landlordism by means of redemption payments and local land committees not elected on the basis of universal, direct and equal suffrage by secret ballot. The Trudoviks, i.e., the petty bourgeoisie, especially the rural petty bourgeoisie, are striving to secure all the land and complete freedom, but are pursuing this aim hesitatingly, not consciously, timidly, vacillating between the opportunism of the Social-Cadets (the Popular Socialists)—who justify the hegemony of the liberal bourgeoisie over the peasantry and elevate it to a theory—and utopian equality, alleged to be possible under commodity production. Social-Democracy must consistently uphold the standpoint of the proletariat and purge the revolutionary consciousness of the peasantry of Popular-Socialist opportunism and of utopianism, which obscure the really urgent tasks of the present revolution. Only when its complete victory is attained can the working class, and the



whole people, really, quickly, boldly, freely and widely set to work to solve the fundamental problem of the whole of civilised mankind: the emancipation of labour from the yoke of capital.

We shall also deal carefully with the question of the means of struggle in the election campaign and in the conclusion of partial agreements with other parties. We shall explain what a constituent assembly is, and why the Cadets fear it. We shall ask the liberal bourgeoisie, the Cadets, what measures they intend to advocate and put into practice independently to make it impossible for anyone to treat the people's representatives in the way the deputies of the "first enrolment" were "treated". We shall remind the Cadets of their vile and treacherous attitude towards the October-December forms of struggle last year, and make it known to the widest possible sections of the people. We shall ask every candidate whether he intends to subordinate all his activities in the Duma entirely to the interests of the struggle outside the Duma and the interests of wide popular movement for land and freedom. We must take advantage of the election campaign to organise the revolution, i.e., to organise the proletariat and the really revolutionary elements of bourgeois democracy.

Such is the positive content which we must try to impart to the whole election campaign and, in particular, to the matter of entering into partial agreements with other parties.

#### Notes

[1] It is interesting to note that experience of the distinction between agreements at a lower stage and those at higher stages is to be found, too, in the practice of the international Social-

Democratic movement. In France, the election of Senators takes place in two stages: the voters elect departmental electors, who, in their turn, elect the Senators. The revolutionary French Social-Democrats, the Guesdists, have never permitted any agreements or joint lists at the lower stage, but have permitted partial agreements at the higher stage, i.e., for the distribution of seats in the assemblies of the departmental electors. The opportunists, however, the Jaurèsists, entered into agreements even at the lower stage. —Lenin

[2] For the sake of simplicity, we are assuming a purely and exclusively party distribution of electors. In practice, of course, we shall meet with many non-party electors. The task of the Social-Democratic electors will be to try as far as possible to ascertain the political character of all, especially of the bourgeois-democratic electors, and to form a “Left majority” consisting of the Social-Democrats and the bourgeois candidates most desirable for the Social-Democrats. The main criteria for distinguishing between party trends we shall discuss later. —Lenin

[3] This is what *Soznatel'naya Rossiya* called the Popular Socialists. Incidentally, the first and second issues of this publication have given us great satisfaction. Chernov, Vadimov and others brilliantly criticise both Peshekhonov and Tag—in. Particularly good is the refutation of Tag—in’s arguments from the point of view of the theory of commodity production, developing through capitalism into socialism. —Lenin

To sum up.

In their general election tactics, the Social-Democrats must take as their starting-point the complete independence of the class party of the revolutionary proletariat.

This general principle may be departed from only in cases of extreme necessity and under specially limited conditions.

The specific features of the Russian electoral system and the political groupings among the overwhelming mass of the population, tie peasantry, do riot give rise to this extreme necessity at the lower stages of the election campaign, i.e., during the election of electors in the big cities and of the one-per-ten-household representatives and delegates in the countryside. It does not arise in the big cities because here the importance of the elections is not at all determined by the number of deputies to be sent into the Duma, but by the opportunities for the Social-Democrats to address the widest and most concentrated sections of the population, which are the "most Social-Democratic" in virtue of their whole position.

In the countryside, the fact that the masses are politically undeveloped and amorphous, the sparse and scattered nature of the population, and the external conditions of the elections especially provoke the development of non-party (and non-party revolutionary) organisations, associations, circles, assemblies, opinions and strivings. Under these circumstances, blocs are quite unnecessary at the lower stages. Strict adherence to Party principle in all respects is the most correct and most expedient policy for Social-Democrats.

Thus, the general proposition that an alliance between the proletariat and the revolutionary peasantry is necessary leads

us to the conclusion that the only agreements that are necessary are partial agreements (such as agreements with the Trudoviks against the Cadets) at the higher stages of the electoral system, i.e., in the assemblies of delegates and electors. The special features of the political divisions among the Trudoviks also recommend this solution of the problem.

In all these partial agreements the Social-Democrats must strictly distinguish between the different bourgeois-democratic parties and the various shades among them according to the degree of consistency and steadfastness of their democratic convictions.

The ideological and political content of the election campaign and of the partial agreements will lie in explaining the theory of socialism and the independent, slogans of the Social-Democrats in the present revolution, both in regard to the aims of this revolution and the ways and means of achieving them.

This pamphlet was written before *Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 5, had appeared. Prior to the issue of this number our Party had every reason to hope that the Central Committee of our Party would absolutely disapprove of first-stage agreements with bourgeois parties, agreements which should be impermissible for socialists. We could not help thinking so, for such an influential Menshevik as Comrade L. Martov had emphatically expressed his opposition to all agreements at the first stage, writing not only in *Tovarishch*, but also in a letter sent out from the Central Committee to the organisations (written by Martov) on the question of preparing for the election campaign.

It now turns out that our Central Committee has gone over to Cherevanin or, at least, has wavered. The leading article in *Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 5, sanctions blocs at the first stage, without even indicating precisely with which bourgeois parties! Today's (October 31) letter from Plekhanov, who for the purpose of defending a bloc with the Cadets has migrated to the Cadet newspaper *Tovarishch*, makes it clear to all whose influence it was that caused the Central Committee to waver. And Plekhanov, as usual, with the air of an oracle, delivers the most banal platitudes, entirely evading the class aims of the socialist proletariat (perhaps out of politeness to the bourgeois newspaper which has given him shelter), and does not even attempt to touch on concrete facts and arguments.

Will this "peremptory command" from Geneva be sufficient to cause the Central Committee to slip from Martov ... to Cherevanin?

Will the decision of the Unity Congress, which prohibited all agreements with bourgeois parties, be nullified by the Central Committee that was elected at that Congress?

The united election campaign of the Social-Democrats is threatened with serious danger.

The socialist workers' party is threatened with the danger of first-stage agreements with the bourgeois parties, which will demoralise the Party and prove fatal to the class independence of the proletariat.

Let all revolutionary Social-Democrats rally and declare relentless war upon opportunist confusion and vacillation!

Lenin,

**The Social-Democratic Election Campaign in St. Petersburg,**

January 21, 1907

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 12, pages 15-23

St. Petersburg, January 18, 1907

The election campaign in St. Petersburg is in full swing. The decisive moment is approaching in the first place, the next few days will reveal the final grouping of the parties in the elections—who is allied with whom, and who is against whom. Secondly, the elections themselves are now very near.

The elections in the capital are of immense importance. The eyes of all Russia are now turned towards St. Petersburg. Here, the pulse of political life beats faster and the government makes itself felt more than elsewhere. Here are the headquarters of all the parties, the leading newspapers of all trends and shades, and the best public speakers at election meetings.

We can already say definitely and emphatically—St. Petersburg has passed the test. The election campaign in St. Petersburg has already provided an amazing abundance of political-educational material, and day by day continues providing more. This material must be assiduously studied. It must be systematically collected and serve to bring out in the greatest possible relief the class basis of the various parties. And this live, direct knowledge, which interests and agitates everybody, must be carried to the broadest possible strata of workers and to the most remote rural areas.

We will try to begin collecting this material, in the form of a synopsis, of course. Let the reader look back and ponder over the whole course of the election campaign in St. Petersburg, so as to obtain a true and consistent picture of the role played by the Social-Democrats, and not allow himself to be carried away by the minor events of the day and the kaleidoscope of loud-mouthed political chicanery.

The first stage. The Social-Democrats make the theoretical preparations for the elections. The most prominent representatives of the Right and the Left wings express their views. At first the Mensheviks do nothing but vacillate: (1) Cherevanin is for agreements with the Cadets. (2) The Cadet press is jubilant and spreads the glad tidings to all corners of Russia. (3) Martov protests in *Tovarishch*, favouring a purely Social-Democratic election list, and reproaching the Bolsheviks (*Proletary*, No. 1) even for their general recognition of the possibility of agreements with the Trudoviks against the Cadets. (4) The Bolsheviks come out in favour of a purely Social-Democratic election list, but do not exclude agreements with the revolutionary democrats. (5) In the bourgeois press Plekhanov advocates blocs with the Cadets. (6) Vacillation among the Mensheviks: Larin wrathfully condemns blocs with the Cadets as a disgrace to Social-Democracy, *Nik. I—sky* admits the possibility of blocs with the Cadets but prefers a bloc with the Trudoviks against the Cadets. (7) Martov and all the Mensheviks describe an arc of 180°r,, and swing over to Plekhanov.

The All-Russian Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party registers two definite trends: the Mensheviks and the Bundists are in favour of blocs with the Cadets; the Bolsheviks, Poles and Letts are unreservedly against such blocs, but admit the possibility of agreements with the revolutionary democrats.

The second stage. The idea of a bloc with the Cadets is developed in the press. Plekhanov goes so far as to speak of "a Duma with full powers", thus threatening to reduce Menshevism to an absurdity. Wishing to bring the Mensheviks and the Cadets closer together, he achieves the very opposite (owing to his utter failure to understand the political situation): he widens the rift between them. On the one hand, the Cadet Party solemnly and officially rejects the idea of "a Duma with full powers" as a revolutionary illusion, and jeers at Plekhanov. It is quite clear that the Cadets want and demand an ideological bloc, the subordination of the Lefts to Cadet leadership, to compromising, anti-revolutionary Cadet tactics. On the other hand, Plekhanov's excess of zeal causes confusion in the ranks of the Mensheviks: both the Bundists and the Caucasian Mensheviks have made a public condemnation, in the press, of Plekhanov's pronouncements. Confused and perplexed, the Central Committee, where the Mensheviks have a majority, remains silent. Plekhanov is isolated and is silent, too.

The third stage. The beginning of mass action. Election meetings in Moscow and St. Petersburg. A gust of fresh air from the street penetrates into the musty atmosphere of intellectualist political chicanery. The mythical nature of the



Black-Hundred danger at once becomes apparent; the street supports the Bolshevik contention that, by their outcry against the Black-Hundred danger, the Cadets are leading the opportunists by the nose in order to avert the danger threatening them from the Left. The struggle at election meetings in St. Petersburg and Moscow is, in substance, a struggle between the Cadets and the Social-Democrats, mainly the Bolshevik Social-Democrats. The Cadets try to drag everybody—the street, the crowd, the masses—to the Right; they oppose revolutionary demands, and, under the guise of following the path of “peaceful parliamentarianism”, have high praise for a deal with the reactionaries. The Bolshevik Social-Democrats call the masses to the Left, and expose the fraudulent, selfish, class character of the fairy-tales about peaceful methods. The Mensheviks fade into the background (on the admission of the very Cadet press which is so enamoured of them); they timidly criticise the Cadets, not in a manner befitting socialist but like Left Cadets, and they talk just as timidly about the need for an agreement with the Cadets.

The fourth stage. The Conference of the St. Petersburg Social-Democratic organisation takes place. At this Conference, which has been elected by all the members of the Social-Democratic Party on the basis of discussions (i.e., the general opinion on the question of agreements with the Cadets was solicited), the Bolsheviks are in absolute preponderance—irrespective of whether votes challenged by either side are counted, uncounted, or counted at a special quota. The Mensheviks walk out of the Conference and launch splitting tactics. Formally, they try to screen their conduct by means of ridiculous and

miserable hair-splitting on points of organisation (they allege that the Bolshevik endorsement of credentials is irregular, although the Bolsheviks preponderate, no matter how the credentials are counted; secondly, that the Conference has refused to divide into two sections, a city section and gubernia section, although the Central Committee has no right to demand this according to the rules, and has not demanded it of Wilno, Odessa, or any other cities).

Actually, the reason why the Mensheviks are creating a split is obvious to everyone: the opportunist Social-Democrats are deserting the proletariat for the liberal bourgeoisie, deserting the workers' Social-Democratic organisations for amorphous, non-party election groups.

The Conference pays absolutely no attention to the Menshevik walk-out and carries on with its own work. In St. Petersburg there are disputes even among the Bolsheviks; the so-called pure Bolsheviks would have no agreements with any other party whatsoever. The so-called dissenters are in favour of an agreement with revolutionary democracy, with the Trudoviks, in order to smash the hegemony of the Cadets over the unenlightened working-class masses in the capital of Russia. In certain cases, these disputes between the "purists" and the "dissenters" become acute, but actually all the Bolsheviks realise full well that this disagreement does not divide them on questions of principle but merely serves to stimulate a thorough and business-like discussion of all chances and prospects in the elections.

The socialist proletariat cannot refuse the non-socialist petty-bourgeois masses permission to follow its leadership in order that it may emancipate them from the influence of the Cadets. After a thorough discussion the Conference passes a resolution to offer the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Committee of the Trudovik Group agreements on the following basis: two places to the worker curia, two to the Social-Democrats, and two to the Trudoviks.

In St. Petersburg this was the only correct and the only possible decision; the task of defeating the Cadets could not be neglected; there would be no Black-Hundred danger if there were two Left election lists; but there could be if the Lefts were split still further, and it would be impossible to rally the masses of voters. The Conference's offer left the preponderance of the Social-Democrats intact; it consolidated the ideological and political hegemony of Social-Democracy in all the purity of its principles.

As for the Popular Socialist Party, the Conference decided to exclude it from the bloc as a semi-Cadet party, evasive on fundamental issues of the struggle outside the Duma. It is well known that after the Duma was dissolved this party separated from the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie and began to preach caution and moderation, in the legal press.

It goes without saying that revolutionary Social-Democracy had to demand that the Socialist-Revolutionaries adopt a definite attitude towards such a party, and either insist on its exclusion (this would probably have been quite feasible if the Mensheviks had not deserted the socialists for the Cadets at the

decisive moment), or at least to disclaim all responsibility for such “Trudoviks”.

The fifth stage. The split caused by the Mensheviks raises the hopes of the whole liberal bourgeoisie. The whole Cadet press is jubilant—jubilant over the “isolation” of the hated Bolsheviks, and the “courageous” way in which the Mensheviks went over from the revolution to the “opposition bloc”. Rech, the author of this latter expression, has outspokenly given the Mensheviks and Popular Socialists the title of “moderate socialist parties”. Indeed, the impression is created that the Cadets will win over the whole of the petty bourgeoisie (i.e., all the Trudoviks, including the Socialist-Revolutionaries) and the whole petty-bourgeois section of the workers’ party, i.e., the Mensheviks.

The Bolsheviks calmly continue their independent activities. We are glad, they say, to isolate ourselves from this dirty business, from the treachery and vacillation of the petty bourgeoisie. We shall not subordinate our tactics to seat-hunting. We declare: in any case there will be three election lists in St. Petersburg: the Black-Hundred, the Cadet, and the Social-Democratic.

The sixth stage. The elections in the worker curia and the exposure of the duplicity of the Trudoviks.

In the worker curia the Social-Democrats win, but the Socialist-Revolutionaries obtain a much larger share of the votes than we expected. It turns out that it was mainly Mensheviks that the Socialist-Revolutionaries defeated in the worker curia. We are informed that in Vyborg District, the Menshevik stronghold,

more Socialist-Revolutionaries have been elected than Social-Democrats!

Our country, therefore, bears out a phenomenon that has long been observed in other countries. Opportunism in Social-Democracy is so repulsive to the working masses that they swing over to the revolutionary bourgeoisie. The highly unstable and vacillating policy of the Mensheviks immensely weakens Social-Democracy and plays into the hands of the Cadets in the urban curia, and of the Socialist-Revolutionaries in the worker curia.

It is only revolutionary Social-Democracy that can meet the needs of the proletarian masses and permanently alienate them from all petty-bourgeois parties.

On the other hand, however, the events also reveal Trudovik duplicity. In the worker curia they (the Socialist-Revolutionaries) defeat us by routing the Mensheviks, who favour a bloc with the Cadets. At the same time, they are playing a most unprincipled game in the election campaign. They make no party declarations, publish no independent organisational decisions, conduct no open discussion on the question of blocs with the Cadets. One would think that they were deliberately blowing out all the candles—like people who need the dark for their dark deeds.

It is said that the Socialist-Revolutionaries have formed a bloc with the Popular Socialists. No one knows the terms or the character of that bloc. It is all guess-work. It is said (cf. *Rodnaya Zemlya* of January 15; this is the newspaper that Mr. Tan writes for) that the Socialist-Revolutionaries are in favour of a bloc

with the Cadets. No one knows the truth. It is all guess-work. The same confusion is revealed at election meetings: one Socialist-Revolutionary, jointly with the Popular Socialists, advocates a bloc with the Cadets; another gets a resolution carried against a bloc with the Cadets and for a bloc of all the Lefts against the Cadets.

The utter instability and duplicity of the entire petty bourgeoisie, including its most revolutionary section, is now clearly demonstrated to the masses. Were it not for the petty-bourgeois opportunists in our own Social-Democratic ranks, we should have an excellent opportunity of explaining to all the workers why only the Social-Democrats are capable of defending their interests honestly and consistently.

It is on that basis that the Bolsheviks are carrying on their agitation. The Bolsheviks are unswervingly pursuing their own line. In St. Petersburg there are sure to be Cadet and Social-Democratic election lists. Our decision does not depend on the vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie: if they respond to our call and follow the proletariat against the liberals, so much the better for them. If not, so much the worse for them; in any case we shall pursue the Social-Democratic path.

The seventh stage. Disintegration. The Cadets get themselves mixed up in negotiations with the Black Hundreds. The petty-bourgeois opportunists get themselves mixed up in negotiations with the Cadets. The Bolsheviks unswervingly pursue their own line.

The newspapers report: (1) that Mr. Stolypin has granted an audience to Mr. Milyukov; (2) that, according to reports in the

foreign press, the government is willing to legalise the Cadet Party on condition that it forms no blocs with the Lefts.

A ray of light is thrown on the backstage machinations of the liberal traitors. The Cadets are afraid to reject the offer of the Black Hundreds, for the latter threaten to dissolve the Duma.

That is the real reason why the Cadets, to the horror of the petty bourgeois opportunists, have suddenly become so "adamant" on the question of agreements.

The Cadets are obdurate. More than two seats for all the Lefts? Never! In issue after issue the Cadet Rech explains very distinctly and didactically that it is willing to lead the moderate socialists (two seats out of six) in order to combat "revolutionary illusions", to combat revolution. March with the revolution? Never!

The opportunists are in despair. The tone of the articles in *Tovarishch* against Rech grows positively hysterical. Mr. Bogucharsky, the renegade Social-Democrat, twists and turns, exhorting Rech, and, jointly with other writers on *Tovarishch*, urges it to consider what it is doing, etc. The recent joint jubilation of Rech and *Tovarishch* over the isolation of the Bolsheviks and the submission of the moderate socialists to the liberals now gives way to angry recriminations and a free fight. On January 7, St. Petersburg learned of the decision of the St. Petersburg Social-Democratic Conference. Today is January 18. But so far, the Cadets and the opportunists have not decided anything. The tone of Rech today is particularly uncompromising towards *Tovarishch*, and the tone of

Tovarishch today is particularly sharp and perplexed in its remarks against Rech.

The Bolsheviks are unswervingly pursuing their own line. There will be three election lists in St. Petersburg. Where the petty bourgeoisie will find themselves is their business: the revolutionary proletariat will do its duty in any case.

What the eighth stage will be we do not know. This, in the final analysis, depends on the negotiations, on the relations between the Cadets and the Black-Hundred government. If they “come to terms” on the immediate legalisation of the Cadets, or on some other point, the petty bourgeoisie will be isolated. If, for the time being, the Cadets and the Black Hundreds fail to come to terms, the Cadets may even concede three seats to the petty bourgeoisie. The Social-Democrats will not allow this to determine their policy.

The course of events in the St. Petersburg election campaign provides us with a miniature but excellent picture of the relations between the Black Hundreds, the Cadets and the revolutionary proletariat. And this course of events strikingly confirms the old, tested and uncompromising tactics of the revolutionary Social-Democrats.

A straight policy is the best policy. A policy based on principles is the most practical policy. Such a policy alone can really win Social-Democracy the lasting sympathy and confidence of the masses. It alone can free the workers’ party from responsibility for the negotiations between Stolypin and Milyukov, and between Milyukov and Annensky, Dan or Chernov.



Henceforth, this responsibility must forever be borne by the opportunist Social-Democrats and the “Trudovik parties”.

It is not surprising that the vacillating Mensheviks are trying to save themselves by resorting to hypocrisy. We are in favour either of a struggle against the Black Hundred danger or of purely Social-Democratic election lists, say the Social-Democrats who left the Conference (if we are to believe today’s newspapers). This is an amusing subterfuge, which only very simple-minded people can believe! It has been proved that there is no Black-Hundred danger in St. Petersburg if there are two Left election lists. But what if there are three? Are the Mensheviks anxious to try this?! No, they are simply clutching at anything, for the course of events has forced them to the wall: they must either desert to the Cadets and submit entirely to their ideological and political hegemony, or follow the Bolsheviks, the Social-Democratic election list to which the Trudoviks may be admitted.

In St. Petersburg such an election list would probably defeat both the Black Hundreds and the Cadets. And having chosen a correct line from the very outset, revolutionary Social-Democrats will unswervingly pursue it, undaunted by the possibility of temporary defeats in the event of the petty bourgeoisie deserting to the liberals—drawing new strength and determination from the vacillation and indecision of the opportunists.

There will be three election lists in St. Petersburg: The Black-Hundred, the Cadet, and the Social-Democratic!

Citizens make your choice!

Lenin,

**The Fifth Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party,**

May 1907

Collected Works, Volume 12, pages 437-488

Speech on the Attitude Towards Bourgeois Parties

The question of our attitude to the bourgeois parties is the nub of the differences in matters of principle that have long divided Russian Social-Democracy into two camps. Even before the first major successes of the revolution, or even before the revolution—if it is permissible to express oneself in this way about the first half of 1905—two distinct points of view on this question already existed. The disputes were over the appraisal of the bourgeois revolution in Russia. The two trends in the Social-Democracy agreed that this revolution was a bourgeois revolution. But they parted company in their understanding of this category, and in their appraisal of the practical and political conclusions to be drawn from it. One wing of the Social-Democracy—the Mensheviks—interpreted this concept to mean that the bourgeoisie was the motive force in the bourgeois revolution, and that the proletariat could occupy only the position of the “extreme opposition”. The proletariat could not undertake the task of conducting the revolution independently or of leading it. These differences of opinion stood out in particularly high relief during the disputes on the question of a provisional government (to be more exact, whether the Social-Democrats should participate in a provisional government)—

disputes which raged in 1905. The Mensheviks denied that the Social-Democrats could be permitted to participate in a provisional revolutionary government, primarily because they considered the bourgeoisie the motive force or leader in the bourgeois revolution. This view found most clear expression in the resolution of the Caucasian Mensheviks (1905), approved by the new Iskra. This resolution stated forth right that Social-Democratic participation in a provisional government might frighten the bourgeoisie away, and thereby reduce the scope of the revolution. We have here a clear admission that the proletariat cannot and should not go further than the bourgeoisie in the bourgeois revolution.

The Bolsheviks held the opposite view. They maintained unequivocally that in its social and economic content our revolution was a bourgeois revolution. This means that the aims of the revolution that is now taking place in Russia do not exceed the bounds of bourgeois society. Even the fullest possible victory of the present revolution— in other words, the achievement of the most democratic republic possible, and the confiscation of all landed estates by the peasantry—would not in any way affect the foundations of the bourgeois social system. Private ownership of the means of production (or private farming on the land, irrespective of its juridical owner) and commodity economy will remain. The contradictions of capitalist society—and the most important of them is the contradiction between wage-labour and capital—will not only remain, but become even more acute and profound, developing in a more extensive and purer form.

All this should be absolutely beyond doubt to any Marxist. But from this it does not at all follow that the bourgeoisie is the motive force or leader in the revolution. Such a conclusion would be a vulgarisation of Marxism, would be a failure to understand the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The fact of the matter is that our revolution is taking place at a time when the proletariat has already begun to recognise itself as distinct class and to unite in an independent, class organisation. Under such circumstances the proletariat makes use of all the achievements of democracy, makes use of every step towards freedom, to strengthen its class organisation against the bourgeoisie. Hence the inevitable endeavour of the bourgeoisie to smooth off the sharp corners of the revolution, not to allow it to reach its culmination, not to give the proletariat the opportunity of carrying on its class struggle unhampered. The antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat forces the bourgeoisie to strive to preserve certain instruments and institutions of the old regime in order to use them against the proletariat.

At the very best, therefore, the bourgeoisie, in the period of greatest revolutionary upsurge, still constitutes an element that wavers between revolution and reaction (and does not do so fortuitously, but of necessity, by force of its economic interests). Hence the bourgeoisie cannot be the leader in our revolution.

The major distinguishing feature of this revolution is the acuteness of the agrarian question. It is much more acute in Russia than in any other country in similar conditions. The so-called peasant reform of 1861 was carried out so inconsistently

and so undemocratically that the principal foundations of feudal landlord domination remained unshaken. For this reason, the agrarian question, that is, the struggle of the peasants against the landowners for the land, proved one of the touchstones of the present revolution. This struggle for the land inevitably forces enormous masses of the peasantry into the democratic revolution, for only democracy can give them land by giving them supremacy in the state. The victory of the peasantry presupposes the complete destruction of landlordism.

Such an alignment of social forces inevitably leads to the conclusion that the bourgeoisie can be neither the motive force nor the leader in the revolution. Only the proletariat is capable of consummating the revolution, that is, of achieving a complete victory. But this victory can be achieved only provided the proletariat succeeds in getting a large section of the peasantry to follow its lead. The victory of the present revolution in Russia is possible only as the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

The correctness of this presentation of the question, which dates back to the beginning of 1905—I am referring to the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in the spring of 1905—found full confirmation in events at all the most important stages of the Russian revolution. Our theoretical conclusions were confirmed in practice in the course of the revolutionary struggle. In October 1905, at the very height of the revolution, the proletariat was at the head, the bourgeoisie wavered and vacillated, and the peasantry wrecked the landed estates. In all

the embryonic organs of revolutionary power (the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, the Soviets of Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies, etc.) representatives of the proletariat were the main participants, followed by the most advanced of the insurgent peasantry. At the time of the First Duma, the peasants immediately formed a democratic "Trudovik" group, which was more to the Left, in other words, more revolutionary, than the liberals—the Cadets. In the elections to the Second Duma, the peasants defeated the liberals outright. The proletariat marched ahead, the peasantry more or less resolutely following it against the autocracy and against the vacillating liberals.

I shall now pass to the draft resolutions we have before us. The difference in points of view I have described is fully reflected in the antithesis between the Bolshevik and Menshevik resolutions. The Bolshevik draft is based on a definition of the class content of the principal types of bourgeois parties. We drew up our resolution in the same way for the Unity Congress in Stockholm. There we noted three principal types of bourgeois parties: the Octobrists, the liberals and the peasant democrats (at that time they were not yet fully delineated, and the word "Trudovik" did not exist in the Russian political vocabulary). Our resolution of today retains that same structure. It is simply a modification of the Stockholm resolution. The course of events has confirmed its basic postulates to such an extent that only very small changes were required for due consideration to be paid to experience acquired in the First and Second Dumas.

The Menshevik resolution for the Unity Congress gave no analysis whatever either of types of parties or their class content. The resolution states helplessly that "bourgeois-democratic parties are only just forming in Russia and therefore have not yet had the time to acquire the character of stable parties", and that "at the present historical moment in Russia there are no parties in existence that could simultaneously blend within themselves a consistent democracy and a revolutionary character". Is this not a helpless declaration? Is this not a deviation from Marxist tasks? Outside the ranks of the proletariat there will never be absolute stability of parties or fully "consistent" democracy. It is, however, our duty to lay bare the class roots of all parties that appear on the historical scene. And our resolution shows that this is something quite feasible. The three types of parties outlined in this resolution have proved sufficiently "stable" throughout a whole year of revolution, as I have already shown by the example of the First and Second Dumas.

What has proved unstable is the views of the Mensheviks. Their present resolution is a tremendous step backward in comparison with their draft of last year. Let us examine this resolution, which was published in *Narodnaya Duma*, No. 12 (March 24, 1907). The preamble to this resolution points first to a "number of tasks common" to the proletariat and to bourgeois democracy; secondly, it says that the proletariat must "combine its activities with those of other social classes and groups"; thirdly, it says that in a country where the peasantry predominates and urban democracy is weak, the proletariat "by its own movement impels forward"... "the entire bourgeois

democracy of the country"; fourthly, "that the democratic movement of the country has not yet found its ultimate expression in the present grouping of bourgeois parties", which reflects the "realism" and unpreparedness to fight on the part of the urban bourgeoisie at one extreme, and at the other, peasant "illusions of petty-bourgeois revolutionism and agrarian utopias". Such is the preamble. Now let us look at the conclusions; the first conclusion is that, while pursuing an independent policy, the proletariat must fight both against the opportunism and constitutional illusions of the one, and the revolutionary illusions and reactionary economic projects of the other. The second conclusion is that it is necessary to "combine our activities with the activities of the other parties".

A resolution like this does not answer any one of the questions that every Marxist is obliged to ask himself, if he wants to define the attitude of the workers' party to the bourgeois parties. What are these general questions? First of all, it is necessary to define the class nature of the parties. Then it is necessary to make clear to oneself the basic alignment of the various classes in the present revolution in general, that is, in what relation the interests of these classes stand to the continuation or development of the revolution. Further, it is necessary to pass over from classes in general to the present-day role of the various parties, or various groups of parties. Finally, it is necessary to furnish practical directives concerning the policy of the workers' party on this question.

There is nothing of this in the Menshevik resolution. It is simply an evasion of these questions, evasion by means of general



phrase-mongering about “combining” the policy of the proletariat with the policy of the bourgeoisie. Not a word is said about how to “combine”, and with precisely which bourgeois-democratic parties. This is a resolution about parties, but without parties. This is a resolution to define our attitude, which does nothing to define our attitude towards the various parties. It is impossible to take such a resolution as a guide, for it provides the greatest freedom to “combine” anything you like and in any way you like. Such a resolution does not restrict anyone; it is a most “liberal” resolution in the fullest sense of that word. It can be interpreted backwards and forwards. But of Marxism— not a grain. The fundamental propositions of Marxism have been so thoroughly forgotten here that any Left Cadet could have subscribed to such a resolution. Take its main points— “tasks in common” for the proletariat and bourgeois democracy—is that not the very thing the entire liberal press is vociferating about?... The need to “combine”—the very thing the Cadets are demanding.... The struggle against opportunism on the Right and revolutionism on the Left— but that is the pet slogan of the Left Cadets, who say they want to sit between the Trudoviks and bourgeois liberals! This is not the position of a workers’ party distinct from and independent of bourgeois democracy; it is the position of a liberal who wants to occupy the “centre” in the midst of the bourgeois democrats.

Let us examine the gist of the Mensheviks’ proposition: by its own movement the proletariat “impels forward” “the entire bourgeois democracy of the country”. Is this true? Absolutely not. Just recall the major events in our revolution. Take the Bulygin Duma. In reply to the tsar’s appeal to take the legal

path, to adopt his, the tsar's, conditions for convening the first popular representative body, the proletariat answered with a resolute refusal. The proletariat called on the people to wipe out this institution, to prevent its birth. The proletariat called on all the revolutionary classes to fight for better conditions for the convocation of a popular representative body. This in no way ruled out the question of utilising even bad institutions if they actually came into being despite all our efforts. This was a fight against allowing the implementation of worse conditions for convening a popular representative body. In appraising the boycott, the logical and historical mistake is often made of confusing the fight on the basis of the given institution, with the fight against the establishment of that institution.

What reply did the liberal bourgeoisie make to the proletariat's appeal? It replied with a general outcry against the boycott. It invited us to the Bulygin Duma. The liberal professors urged the students to go on with their studies, instead of organising strikes. In reply to the proletariat's appeal to fight, the bourgeoisie answered by fighting against the proletariat. As far back as that, the antagonism between these classes, even in a democratic revolution, manifested itself fully and definitely. The bourgeoisie wanted to narrow the scope of the proletariat's struggle, to prevent it going beyond the bounds of the convocation of the Bulygin Duma.

Professor Vinogradov, the shining light of liberal science, wrote just at that time: "It would be the good fortune of Russia if our revolution proceeded along the road of 1848-49, and its misfortune if it proceeded along the road taken by the

revolution of 1789-93." What this "democrat" called good fortune was the road of an unconsummated revolution, the road of a defeated uprising! If our revolution were to deal as ruthlessly with its enemies as the French revolution did in 1793, then, according to this "liberal", it would be necessary to call upon the Prussian drill sergeant to re-establish law and order. The Mensheviks say that our bourgeoisie are "unprepared to fight". Actually, however, the bourgeoisie were prepared to fight, prepared to fight against the proletariat, to fight against the "excessive" victories of the revolution.

To proceed. Take October to December 1905. There is no need to prove that during this period of the high tide of our revolution, the bourgeoisie displayed "preparedness to fight" against the proletariat. This was fully acknowledged by the Menshevik press of that day. The bourgeoisie, including the Cadets, tried in every way to denigrate the revolution, to picture it as blind and savage anarchy. The bourgeoisie not only failed to support the organs of insurrection set up by the people—all the various Soviets of Workers' Deputies, Soviets of Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies, etc.—but it feared these institutions and fought against them. Call to mind Struve, who termed these institutions a degrading spectacle. In them the bourgeoisie saw a revolution that had gone too far ahead. The liberal bourgeoisie wanted to divert the energy of the popular revolutionary struggle into the narrow channel of police-controlled constitutional reaction.

There is no need to dwell at length on the behaviour of the liberals in the First and the Second Dumas. Even the

Mensheviks acknowledged that, in the First Duma, the Cadets hindered the revolutionary policy of the Social-Democrats and, to some extent, of the Trudoviks, that they hampered their activity. And in the Second Duma the Cadets openly joined up with the Black Hundreds, gave outright support to the government.

To say at present that the movement of the proletariat “impels the entire bourgeois democracy of the country forward” means scorning facts. To maintain silence at the present time about the counter-revolutionary nature of our bourgeoisie means departing entirely from the Marxist point of view, means completely forgetting the viewpoint of the class struggle.

In their resolution, the Mensheviks speak of the “realism” of the urban bourgeois classes. Strange terminology this, which betrays them, against their will. We are accustomed to seeing a special meaning attached to the word realism, among the Right-wing Social-Democrats. For instance, Plekhanov’s *Sovremennaya Zhizn* contrasted the “realism” of the Right Social-Democrats with the “revolutionary romanticism” of the Left Social-Democrats. What then does the Menshevik resolution have in view when it speaks of realism? It appears that the resolution praises the bourgeoisie for its moderation and punctiliousness!

These arguments of the Mensheviks about the “realism” of the bourgeoisie, about its “unpreparedness” to fight— taken in conjunction with the open declaration of their tactical platform on the “one-sided hostility” of the Social-Democrats towards the liberals—speak of one thing, and of one thing only. In point

of fact, it all means that the independent policy of the workers' party is replaced by a policy of dependence on the liberal bourgeoisie. And this, the substance of Menshevism, is not something that we have invented or have drawn solely from their theoretical arguments—it has manifested itself in all the major steps of their policy throughout the past year. Take the "responsible ministry", blocs with the Cadets, voting for Golovin, etc. This is what has actually constituted the policy of dependence on the liberals.

And what do the Mensheviks say about peasant democracy? The resolution puts the "realism" of the bourgeoisie and the "agrarian utopias" of the peasantry on a par, off setting the one by the other as being of equal significance or at any rate wholly analogous. We must fight, say the Mensheviks, equally against the opportunism of the bourgeoisie and against the utopianism, the "petty-bourgeois revolutionism", of the peasantry. This is typical of the Menshevik line of reasoning. And it is worthwhile dwelling on this, for it is radically wrong. From it inevitably ensue a number of mistaken conclusions in practical policy. This criticism of peasant utopias harbors a lack of understanding of the proletariat's task—to urge the peasantry on ward to complete victory in the democratic revolution.

Just look carefully at what is behind the agrarian utopias of the peasantry in the present revolution. What is their main utopia? Undoubtedly, it is the idea of equalitarianism, the conviction that the abolition of the private property in land and the equal division of the land (or of land tenure) are able to destroy the roots of want, poverty, unemployment and exploitation.

No one disputes the fact that, from the point of view of socialism, this is a utopia, a utopia of the petty bourgeois. From the point of view of socialism, this is a reactionary prejudice, for proletarian socialism sees its ideal, not in the equality of small proprietors, but in large-scale socialised production. But do not forget that what we are now appraising is the significance of the peasants' ideals, not in the socialist movement, but in the present, bourgeois-democratic revolution. Can we say that it is utopian or reactionary in the present revolution for all the land to be taken away from the landlords and be handed over to, or divided up equally among, the peasants?! No! Not only is this non-reactionary, but, on the contrary, it reflects most conclusively and most consistently the desire for the most thorough abolition of the entire old regime, of all the remnants of serfdom. The idea that "equality" can exist under commodity production and even serve as a foundation for semi-socialism is utopian. The peasants' desire to take the land away from the landlords at once and divide it up on an equalitarian basis is not utopian, but revolutionary in the fullest, strictest, scientific meaning of the word. Such confiscation and such division would lay the foundation for the speediest, broadest and freest development of capitalism.

Speaking objectively, from the point of view not of our desires, but of the present economic development of Russia, the basic question of our revolution is whether it will secure the development of capitalism through the peasants' complete victory over the landowners or through the landowners' victory over the peasants. A bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia's economy is absolutely inevitable. No power on earth

can hinder it. But this revolution is possible in either of two ways: in the Prussian, if one might say so, or in the American way. This means the following; the landlords may win, may foist compensation payments or other petty concessions on the peasants, may unite with a handful of the wealthy, pauperise the masses, and convert their own farms into Junker-type, capitalist, farms. Such a revolution will be bourgeois-democratic, but it will be to the least advantage of the peasants—to their least advantage from the angle of the rapidity of capitalist development. Or, on the contrary, the complete victory of the peasant uprising, the confiscation of all landed estates and their equal division will signify the most rapid development of capitalism, the form of bourgeois-democratic revolution most advantageous to the peasants.

Nor is this most advantageous to the peasants alone. It is just as advantageous to the proletariat. The class conscious proletariat knows that there is, and there can be, no path leading to socialism otherwise than through a bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Hence the more incomplete and irresolute this revolution, the longer and the more heavily will general democratic tasks, and not socialist, not purely class, proletarian tasks, weigh upon the proletariat. The more complete the victory of the peasantry, the sooner will the proletariat stand out as a distinct class, and the more clearly will it put forward its purely socialist tasks and aims.

From this, you see that the peasants' ideas on equality, reactionary and utopian from the standpoint of socialism, are

revolutionary from the standpoint of bourgeois democracy. That is why the equating of the liberals' reactionary nature in the present revolution and the reactionary utopianism of the peasants in their ideas of the socialist revolution is a glaring logical and historical error. To put on a par the liberals' endeavours to cut the present revolution off short at compensation for land, a constitutional monarchy, at the level of the Cadet agrarian programme, etc., and the peasants' attempts at utopian idealization, in a reactionary spirit, of their endeavours to crush the landlords immediately, to confiscate all the land, to divide it all up—to attempt to equate these things is to abandon completely, not only the standpoint of the proletariat, but also the standpoint of a consistent revolutionary democrat. To write a resolution on the struggle against liberal opportunism and muzhik revolutionism in the present revolution is to write a resolution that is not Social-Democratic. This is not a Social-Democrat writing, but an intellectual who sits between the liberal and the muzhik in the camp of bourgeois democracy.

I cannot deal here in as great detail as I should on the famous tactical platform of the Mensheviks with their much vaunted slogan of struggle against the "one-sided hostility of the proletariat towards liberalism". The non-Marxist and non-proletarian nature of such a slogan is more than obvious.

In conclusion, I shall deal with a frequent objection that is raised against us. In the majority of cases, we are told, "your" Trudoviks follow the Cadets against us. That is true, but it is no



objection against our point of view and our resolution, since we have quite definitely and outspokenly admitted it.

The Trudoviks are definitely not fully consistent democrats. The Trudoviks (including the Socialist-Revolutionaries) undoubtedly vacillate between the liberals and the revolutionary proletariat. We have said this, and it had to be said. Such vacillation is by no means fortuitous. It is an inevitable consequence of the very nature of the economic condition of the small producer. On the one hand, he is oppressed and subject to exploitation. He is unconsciously impelled into the fight against this position, into the fight for democracy, for the ideas of abolishing exploitation. On the other hand, he is a petty proprietor. In the peasant lives the instinct of a proprietor—if not of today, then of tomorrow. It is the proprietor's, the owner's instinct that repels the peasant from the proletariat, engendering in him an aspiration to become someone in the world, to become a bourgeois, to hem himself in against all society on his own plot of land, on his own dung-heap, as Marx irately remarked.

Vacillation in the peasantry and the peasant democratic parties is inevitable. And the Social-Democratic Party, therefore, must not for a moment be embarrassed at the fear of isolating itself from such vacillation. Every time the Trudoviks display lack of courage, and drag along in the wake of the liberals, we must fearlessly and quite firmly oppose the Trudoviks, expose and castigate their petty-bourgeois inconsistency and flaccidity.

Our revolution is passing through difficult times. We need all the will-power, all the endurance and fortitude of the organised

proletarian party, in order to be capable of resisting sentiments of distrust, despondency, indifference, and denial of the struggle. The petty bourgeoisie will always and inevitably succumb most easily to such sentiments, display irresolution, betray the revolutionary path, whine and repent. And in all such cases, the workers' party will isolate itself from the vacillating petty-bourgeois democrats. In all such cases we must be able to unmask the irresolute democrats openly, even from the Duma platform. "Peasants!" we must say in the Duma in such circumstances, "peasants! You should know that your representatives are betraying you by following in the wake of the liberal landlords. Your Duma deputies are betraying the cause of the peasantry to the liberal windbags and advocates." Let the peasants know — we must demonstrate this to them by facts — that only the workers' party is the genuinely reliable and thoroughly faithful defender of the interests, not only of socialism but also of democracy, not only of all working and exploited people, but also of the entire peasant masses, who are fighting against feudal exploitation.

If we pursue this policy persistently and undeviatingly, we shall derive from our revolution enormous material for the class development of the proletariat; we shall achieve this under all circumstances, whatever vicissitudes may be in store for us, whatever setbacks for the revolution (under particularly unfavourable circumstances) may fall to our lot. A firm proletarian policy will give the entire working class such a wealth of ideas, such clarity of understanding and such endurance in the struggle that no one on earth will be able to win them away from Social-Democracy. Even if the revolution

suffers defeat, the proletariat will learn, first and foremost, to understand the economic class foundations of both the liberal and the democratic parties; then it will learn to hate the bourgeoisie's treacheries and to despise the petty bourgeoisie's infirmity of purpose and its vacillations.

And it is only with such a fund of knowledge, with such habits of thinking, that the proletariat will be able to approach the new, the socialist revolution more unitedly and more boldly. (Applause from the Bolsheviks and the Centre.)

Stalin,

**The Advanced Proletariat and the Fifth Party Congress**

April 8, 1907

Works, Vol. 2, 1907 - 1913

The preparations for the congress are drawing to a close. 1 The relative strength of the different groups is gradually becoming revealed. It is becoming apparent that the industrial districts largely support the Bolsheviks. St. Petersburg, Moscow, the Central Industrial region, Poland, the Baltic region and the Urals—these are the regions where the Bolsheviks' tactics are trusted. The Caucasus, the trans-Caspian region, South Russia, several towns in the areas where the Bund 2 has influence, and the peasant organisations of the Spilka 3 — these are the sources from which the Menshevik comrades draw their strength. South Russia is the only industrial area where the Mensheviks enjoy confidence. The rest of the Menshevik strongholds are for the most part centres of small industry.

It is becoming apparent that the Mensheviks' tactics are mainly the tactics of the backward towns, where the development of the revolution and the growth of class consciousness are frowned upon.

It is becoming apparent that the Bolsheviks' tactics are mainly the tactics of the advanced towns, the industrial centres, where the intensification of the revolution and the development of class consciousness are the main focus of attention. . . .

At one time Russian Social-Democracy consisted of a handful of members. At that time it bore the character of a movement of

intellectuals and was unable to influence the proletarian struggle. Party policy was then directed by one or two individuals—the voice of the proletarian membership of the party was drowned. . . . The situation is entirely different today. Today we have a magnificent party—the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, which has as many as 200,000 members in its ranks, which is influencing the proletarian struggle, is rallying around itself the revolutionary democracy of the whole of Russia, and is a terror to “the powers that be.” And this magnificent party is all the more magnificent and splendid for the reason that its helm is in the hands of the general membership and not of one or two “enlightened individuals.” That was most clearly revealed during the Duma elections, when the general membership rejected the proposal of the “authoritative” Plekhanov and refused to have a “common platform” with the Cadets. True, the Menshevik comrades insist on calling our party a party of intellectuals, but that is probably because the majority in the party is not Menshevik. But if the German Social-Democratic Party, which with a proletariat numbering 18,000,000 has a membership of only 400,000, has the right to call itself a proletarian party, then the Russian Social-Democratic Party, which with a proletariat numbering 9,000,000 has a membership of 200,000, also has the right to regard itself as a proletarian party. . . .

Thus, the Russian Social-Democratic Party is magnificent also because it is a genuine proletarian party, which is marching towards the future along its own road, and is critical of the whispered advice of its old “leaders”

In this respect the recent conferences in St. Petersburg and Moscow are instructive.

At both conferences the workers set the keynote; at both conference workers comprised nine-tenths of the delegates. Both conferences rejected the obsolete and inappropriate "directives" of the "old leaders" like Plekhanov. Both conferences loudly proclaimed the necessity of Bolshevism. And thus, Moscow and St. Petersburg expressed their lack of confidence in the Menshevik tactics and recognised the necessity of the hegemony of the proletariat in the present revolution.

St. Petersburg and Moscow speak for the entire class-conscious proletariat. Moscow and St. Petersburg are leading all the other towns. From Moscow and St. Petersburg came the directives during the January and October actions; they led the movement during the glorious December days. There can be no doubt that they will give the signal for the impending revolutionary onslaught.

And St. Petersburg and Moscow adhere to the tactics of Bolshevism. The tactics of Bolshevism alone are proletarian tactics—that is what the workers of these cities say to the proletariat of Russia. . . .

*Dro (Time)*, No. 25, April 8, 1907

Notes

1. The Fifth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. was held in London from April 30 to May 19, 1907. On all the main questions the congress adopted Bolshevik resolutions. J . V. Stalin was present at the

congress as the delegate from the Tiflis organisation. He summed up the proceedings of the congress in his article "The London Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (Notes of a Delegate)," (see pp. 47-80 of this volume).

2. The Bund—The General Jewish Workers' Union of Poland, Lithuania and Russia—was formed in October 1897 (see J. V. Stalin, Works, Vol. 1, p. 394, Note 7).

3. Spilka—the Ukrainian Social-Democratic League, which stood close to the Mensheviks, was formed at the end of 1904 as a result of a break-away from the petty-bourgeois nationalist Revolutionary Ukrainian Party (RUP). Ceased to exist during the Stolypin reaction.

Stalin,

**Muddle...**

April 10, 1907, Works, Vol. 2,

The "publicists" of Lakhvari are still unable to define their tactics. In their first issue they wrote: We are supporting only the "progressive steps" of the Cadets, but not the Cadets themselves. Commenting on this we said that it was amusing sophistry, since the Mensheviks voted for the Cadet candidates to the Duma and not only for their "steps"; they helped to get into the Duma Cadets as such and not only their "steps," and they helped to elect a Cadet as such as President of the Duma and not only his "steps"—and this clearly confirms the fact that the Mensheviks supported the Cadets. This is so obvious and the Mensheviks have talked so much about supporting the Cadets, that denial of the fact has only raised a laugh. . . .

Now, having "pondered" over the matter a little, they are talking differently: true, "during the elections we supported the Cadets" (see Lakhvari, No. 3), but this was only during the elections; in the Duma we are supporting not the Cadets but only their "steps"; you, they say, "do not distinguish between tactics in the Duma and tactics during elections." In the first place, "tactics" which safeguard you from doing stupid things only in the Duma but prompt you to do stupid things during elections are very funny tactics. Secondly, is it not true that the Mensheviks helped to elect a Cadet as President of the Duma? Under what category of tactics should we place helping to elect a Cadet as President—"tactics in the Duma" or tactics outside



the Duma? We think that Golovin was elected President of the Duma in the Duma, and not president of the street in the street.

Clearly, the Mensheviks pursued the same tactics in the Duma as they pursued outside the Duma. These are the tactics of supporting the Cadets. If they deny it now, it is because they have fallen victims to muddle.

Supporting the Cadets does not mean creating a reputation for the Cadets; if it does, then you are creating a reputation for the Socialist-Revolutionaries by supporting them—says Lakhvari. What comical fellows those "Lakhvarists" are! Apparently, it does not occur to them that any support that Social-Democracy lends a party creates a reputation for that party! That is why they have been so lavish in their promises of every kind of "support."... Yes, dear comrades, by supporting the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Social-Democracy creates a reputation for them in the eyes of the people, and this is exactly why such support is permissible only in exceptional cases, and as a means of defeating the Cadets. Supporting the Socialist-Revolutionaries is by no means ideal, it is an inevitable evil, resorted to in order to curb the Cadets. You, however, supported the very Cadets who are betraying the workers and peasants; the Socialist-Revolutionaries are superior to them because they side with the revolution....

"The Cadets, for example, demanded universal suffrage. It turns out that this demand is a great evil, because it is a Cadet demand" (ibid.).

Well, aren't they comical? You see, it turns out that universal suffrage is a "Cadet demand"! The Tiflis Men-sheviks, it turns

out, do not know that universal suffrage is not a Cadet demand, but the demand of revolutionary democracy, which Social-Democracy advocates more consistently than anyone else! No, comrades, if you cannot even understand that the Cadets are not revolutionary democrats; if you cannot even understand that the fight against them in order to strengthen the hegemony of the proletariat is the question of the day for us; if you cannot even distinguish between what you said yesterday and what you are saying today — then you had better put your pens aside, get yourselves out of the muddle you are in, and only after that launch into "criticism." . . .

By the holy Duma, that would be better!

Dro (Time), No. 26, April 10, 1907

## **The years of reaction (1907–10).**

Lenin,

**A caricature of Bolshevism,**

April 4 (17), 1909

Collected Works, Vol. 15, pp. 383-94.

We have already given a general appraisal of "otzovism" and "ultimatumism" in *Proletary*, No. 42.[\*] Concerning the resolution of the St. Petersburg otzovists (reprinted in this issue) which served as their platform during the election of delegates to the December Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. (and unfortunately was not communicated to *Proletary* till after the conference) we have to repeat much of what was said there.

This resolution simply teems with fallacious, un-Marxian arguments. Practically every point in it is evidence of the immaturity of its authors' ideas or of their oblivion of the ABC of Social-Democracy.

Point 1: "The first stage of the revolution is concluded. . . ." What does that mean? That a stage in social and economic development is concluded? Probably not. The authors have in mind the end of the stage of direct revolutionary struggle of the masses. We must assume that the otzovists mean that, if we are not to impute to them something totally absurd. If that is the case, then they admit that present conditions are unfavourable for the direct revolutionary struggle of the masses. But although compelled by the force of circumstances to admit this, the otzovists are unable to reason out the conclusions that follow, and cannot, therefore, get their arguments to hang together.

"Russia . . . is moving towards a new revolutionary upswing". . . . Quite right! She is only moving towards an upswing, i.e., there is no upswing yet -- that is what this means, both in logic and in grammar! It appears, however, that this still non-existing upswing is "characterised by a sharp conflict", etc. The result is utter nonsense. The otzovists are incapable of characterising the present. They "characterise" the future, which we are "moving towards", in order to cover up failure to understand the present. For instance, the "pauperised town petty bourgeoisie" jump into the picture from God knows where, and the reference to them is not backed by even an attempt at an analysis. Why the future upswing should be "characterised" by a sharp conflict of pauperised petty bourgeois is not evident at all. Nor does there appear to be any reason why the pauperised town petty bourgeoisie should be brought in just at this moment. Lumpen-proletarians are sometimes distinguished for their sharp conflicts, and sometimes for their amazing instability and inability to fight. The otzovists' ideas are utterly confused, and we are not surprised that at the conference of the R.S.D.L.P. only two Bundists voted with the two otzovists for the insertion of the reference to the "pauperised town petty bourgeoisie". Our opinion that otzovism is opportunism turned inside out has been magnificently borne out.

With whom will the sharp conflict take place? "With the ruling bloc of the big bourgeoisie and feudal landlords." And not with the autocracy? The otzovists cannot distinguish absolutism, which is manoeuvring between these two classes, from the direct rule of the two classes; with the absurd result

that the struggle against the autocracy drops out of the picture entirely.

"Secret work is going on to organise the forces. . . ." The work of learning the lessons of experience, of digesting new lessons, of accumulating strength may be, and often is, performed in secret; but the organisation of forces cannot be performed in secret even when all work is driven underground. In 1901-03 the organisation of forces proceeded illegally, but not secretly. The otzovists are merely repeating scraps of parrot-phrases and garbling them in the process.

Point 2: "The solution of this conflict, in view of the strongly developed class antagonisms in Russia, will assume the form of a revolution". . . . Class antagonisms in Russia are less strongly developed than in Europe, which is not faced with the task of fighting autocracy. The otzovists fail to see that in trying to broaden their views they are coming closer to their antipodes, the opportunists.

. . . of a revolution which will lead to an armed uprising. . . ."

The otzovists have not yet told us anything distinctly about the object of the struggle, or about the present stage of development of the autocracy; but they make haste to tell us about the means of struggle in order to proclaim themselves "revolutionaries". This is childish, dear comrades, for you are showing us once again that you have learnt by heart scraps of good phrases, without understanding what they mean. The attitude of the revolutionary Social-Democrats towards insurrection was different in 1897, 1901, and in 1905. It was only after January 9, 1905 that they made it a key issue -- although Russia, in 1897

and in 1901, was undoubtedly "moving towards upswing", towards a "sharp conflict" and towards "revolution". It is not enough to learn slogans by heart; one must also learn to judge the opportune moment to issue them. To advocate one of the means of struggle at a time when the "upswing" has not begun and "revolution", in the most strict and direct sense of the term, is still a matter of the future (and the otzovists speak of it in the future : "will assume the form of a revolution") means only to make oneself into a caricature of a revolutionary Social-Democrat. The resolution adopted by the conference speaks of a developing revolutionary crisis and of the aim of the struggle (conquest of power by the revolutionary classes); more than this cannot and should not be said at the present time.

How the mysterious "municipal reforms" got here, and represented as "radical reforms" at that, God only knows. Apparently the otzovists themselves do not know what this means.

Point 3: "In view of this, Social-Democracy as a consistently revolutionary party must put non-parliamentary action in the forefront." . . .

And yet there are people (the ultimatists) who are so shortsighted that our disagreements with the otzovists seem to them differences only about practical matters, disagreements over the ways and means of applying a common line of tactics! In the summer of 1907, the disagreement over boycotting the Third Duma might have been regarded merely as a disagreement over methods, and the mistake of the boycottists merely as a mistake in choice of methods in applying tactics with which all

Bolsheviks were agreed. Today, in 1909, it is ridiculous even to suggest such a thing. The mistake of the otzovists and ultimatumists has developed into a deviation from the principles of Marxism. Just think: "in view of this", i.e., in view of the fact that we are "moving towards" an upswing, and that the conflict "will assume the form of a revolution", "in view of this" let non-parliamentary action be put in the forefront! Why, comrades, this is merely a jumble of words to cover up a monstrous confusion of ideas! Before you have even said a word about the Duma in your resolution, you have already concocted the conclusion: "in view of this" . . . "non-parliamentary action"! In view of the fact that we do not understand the importance of the Duma and the tasks of the Party at a time when an upswing is maturing, we proclaim that struggle must be outside the Duma -- that is the nonsense that the otzovists' case amounts to. They have repeated, without understanding them, scraps of arguments which the Bolsheviks advanced at a time when non-parliamentary action was not merely being proclaimed, but carried on by the masses ; and repeated them at a time when they themselves consider "the first stage of the revolution concluded", i.e., that for the time being the conditions for direct mass action are absent.

They have learned by heart the sound proposition that work in the Duma must be subordinated to the interests and direction of the working-class movement outside the Duma, and repeat scraps of what they have learned irrelevantly, and in a garbled, scarcely recognisable form.

Instead of emphasising the necessity of continuing -- in addition to work in the Duma -- to devote maximum effort to persistent, prolonged and painstaking organisation and agitation among the masses outside the Duma -- the otzovists, in company with the Socialist-Revolutionaries, raise a "revolutionary" yelp about "non-parliamentary action", making an onslaught, and so forth.

"Direct action is impossible at the present time," say the otzovists at the end of the resolution (Point 1), although at the beginning of it they proclaimed a non-parliamentary struggle. If this is not a caricature of Bolshevism, what is?

And work to carry the revolution through to complete victory". . . . First, the scrap of an idea about the means of struggle, then its object! . . . "and for this purpose to organise the proletariat and the broad masses of the peasantry". . . . At a time like the present, when the first and foremost task is to strengthen and rebuild the semi-destroyed Party organisations, this is a mere phrase, comrades!

Point 4 is one of the gems of "otzovism". "The Party may employ only such forms of organisational and agitational action as do not obscure or weaken the revolutionary struggle". . . .

This, according to the "practical" ultimatists, is the "practical" way of stating the issue! In 1909 the otzovists are compelled to search for theoretical justification and the quest inevitably bogs them down. "Only such forms of action as do not obscure . . ." -- this is a broad hint at the work of the Social-Democrats in the Duma and at their utilisation of semi-legal and legal organisations. It appears, then, that there are some "forms of action" which obscure and others which do not. In



order to save people who are unable to think the trouble of using their brains, let us draw up a list of "forms of action" and cross out those which "obscure" -- now that will be real revolutionary tactics!

Take legal literature, for instance, dear comrades. Does this "form of organisational and agitational action" obscure, or does it not? Of course, it does, under the Stolypin regime. Then it must be eliminated according to the otzovists, who do not know how to distinguish the conditions in which revolutionary Social-Democrats may resort to the most varied forms of action, and therefore talk nonsense. "The Party must pay special attention to the utilisation and reinforcement of existing organisations and the formation of new illegal, semi-legal and, where possible, legal organisations that could serve as its strongholds," declares the resolution of the conference, proposed and carried by the Bolsheviki. This resolution is as remote from otzovism as heaven is from earth. "Only such forms as do not obscure" -- is just a hollow phrase: a mere "yelp", and not a revolutionary utterance. The formation of illegal Party "workers' committees" to utilise "semi-legal and, where possible, legal organisations" -- these are the tactics of revolutionary Social-Democrats who take into account what "forms of organisational and agitational action" are prescribed by the present situation, and who are able to display methods of genuine Social-Democratic activity in the most diverse "forms".

"Down with legal Social-Democratic literature" is a hollow phrase, impracticable and therefore only to the advantage of the

opportunists -- who are perfectly well aware that it is impracticable. It is difficult to draw a line between Social-Democrats who are ready to answer to the Party for their legal writings and non-Party literary hacks; but it is possible, and it provides a real line of activity for those who want to work with the Party. "Down with the legal Duma group, down with legal organisations" -- these are hollow phrases which are only to the advantage of the opportunists who would be glad to rid themselves of Party control. To keep on exercising this control, "utilising" legal organisations, rectifying every mistake and tactical blunder committed by Social-Democrats -- this is Party work, which we and all those who wish would to-carry out the decisions of the conference will continue to do.

The end of Point 4: "strenuously opposing all deals between the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and the autocracy."

Ugh! The otzovists will insist on inappropriately repeating scraps of ideas drawn from Bolshevik literature. Really, comrades, you must try to make out what's what! In the period of the First and Second Dumas, the government was still groping its way towards such deals, while the Cadets were recommending deals to the people as slogans of "struggle" (slogans which misled even the Menshevik Social-Democrats). At that time a resolute struggle against any deals was really the slogan of the day, the task of the moment, the exposure of fraud. Today tsarism has found the way to conclude the deal, and has already done so, with those classes which the otzovists themselves refer to as a "bloc"; and moreover no one is deceived by the deal which has been concluded in the Third Duma. To

make the task of "strenuously opposing all deals " the pivot of our agitation today means making oneself a caricature of Bolshevism.

Point 5: "Our Duma cannot be regarded as a parliament working in an environment of political liberty, and with a measure of freedom for the class struggle of the proletariat, but is merely a deal between tsarism and the big bourgeoisie"

. . . . This contains two mistakes. It is wrong to say "not a parliament but a deal", for quite a number of the world's parliaments are nothing more than a deal between the bourgeoisie (at various stages of development) and various survivals of medievalism. We had to, and did, fight to prevent Russia's first parliament from being a Black-Hundred and Octobrist parliament, but once it became such in spite of our efforts -- and history obliged us to pass through this stage -- it is childish to try to exorcise this unpleasant reality with exclamations and declamations. Secondly: according to the authors of the resolution, if there is a "measure of freedom" then it is a "parliament"; if not, it is a "fraud". This is a vulgar-democratic view, worthy of a Cadet but not of a Marxist. Under the Third Duma there is much less freedom than there was under the Second; but the Third Duma is a less fictitious parliament, because it more truly reflects the actual relation between the state authority and the present ruling classes. As long as power is in the hands of the tsar and the feudalist landlords, there can be no other parliament in bourgeois Russia. It might befit Cadets to try to brush this bare truth under the carpet, but not Social-Democrats.

Point 6, by way of an exception, is correct. But this is precisely an exception which proves the reverse rule, because . . . because on this point the otzovists are expounding, not their own ideas, but the ideas of the anti-otzovists who carried the resolutions at the conference.

Conclusions. Point (a) "The Duma being . . . a deal . . . and a weapon of the counter-revolution". . . . Quite right! . . . "only serves to bolster up the autocracy". . . . This "only" is wrong. The autocracy has staved off its downfall by organising such a Duma in time: but it has not been strengthened thereby, rather on the contrary, advanced in its decay. The Duma, as a "screen", is more effective than many an "exposure", because for the first time, on a thousand and one issues, it reveals tsarism's dependence on the counter-revolutionary sections of society; it is for the first time demonstrating in grand how close is the alliance between Romanov and Purishkevich, between tsarism and the "Union of the Russian People", between the autocracy and the Dubrovins, the Iliodors and the Polovnyovs.

That the Duma sanctions the crimes of tsarism is beyond doubt; but it is the sanction of particular classes, on behalf of particular class interests, and it is the duty of the Social-Democrats precisely to use the Duma rostrum to reveal these instructive truths of the class struggle.

"The eight months' proceedings of the Third Duma have shown that the Social-Democrats cannot make use of it."

Here is the very essence of otzovism, the error of which our "ultimatumists" are only covering up, confusing the issue by their ridiculous equivocation -- that since we have spent so

much energy on creating a Duma group, we must not recall it lightly!

There is a straightforward question, and evasions won't do: have these eight months' proceedings proved that it is possible to make use of the rostrum of the Duma, or not? The otzovists' reply is wrong. In spite of the immense difficulties involved in Party guidance of the Duma group, it has beyond question proved the possibility of making use of the Duma as a platform. To be daunted by difficulties and mistakes is timidity; it is intellectual "yelping", whereas what we want is patient, consistent and persistent proletarian effort. Other socialist parties in Europe encountered even greater difficulties at the beginning of their parliamentary activity, and made many more mistakes, but they did not shirk their duty. They succeeded in overcoming the difficulties and in correcting their mistakes.

(b) "Our Duma group . . . persistently pursuing opportunist tactics, could not and cannot be a staunch and consistent representative of the revolutionary proletariat."

The grandest truths can be vulgarised, otzovist comrades, the noblest aims can be reduced to mere phrase-mongering -- and that is what you are doing. You have degraded the fight against opportunism into mere phrase-mongering and are thereby only playing into the hands of the opportunists. Our Duma group has made and is making mistakes, but by its very work it has proved that it "could and can" staunchly and consistently represent the proletariat -- could and can, when we, the Party, guide it, help it, appoint our best men to lead it, draw up directives, and draft speeches, and explain the harmful and

fatal effects of taking advice from the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia who, not only in Russia but all over the world, always gain easy access to all kinds of institutions on the parliamentary fringe.

Have the courage to admit, comrades, that we have as yet done far too little to provide this real guidance of the work of the Duma group, to help it with deeds. Have the courage to admit that we can do ten times as much in this direction, if we succeed in strengthening our organisations, consolidating our Party, bringing it closer to the masses, creating Party media exercising a constant influence on large sections of the proletarians. That is what we are working for, that is what everybody must work for who wants to fight opportunism in deeds and not in words.

The otzovists have reduced the struggle against opportunism in the Duma group to a mere phrase. They have learned words by rote without understanding the difference between anarchist and Social-Democratic criticism of opportunism. Take the anarchists. They all pounce on every mistake every Social-Democratic member of parliament makes. They all shout that even Bebel once made a speech in an almost patriotic spirit, once took up a wrong stand on the agrarian programme, and so on and so forth. True, even Bebel made opportunist mistakes in his parliamentary career. But what does this prove? The anarchists say that it proves that all the workers' M.P.s should be recalled. The anarchists' rail at the Social-Democratic members of parliament and refuse to have anything to do with them, refuse to do anything to develop a proletarian party, a proletarian policy and proletarian members of parliament. And

in practice the anarchists' phrase-mongering converts them into the truest accomplices of opportunism, into the reverse side of opportunism.

Social-Democrats draw quite a different conclusion from their mistakes -- the conclusion that even Bebel could not become Bebel without prolonged Party work in training up real Social-Democratic representatives. They need not tell us, "We have no Bebels in our group." Bebels are not born. They have to be made. Bebels don't spring fully formed like Minerva from the head of Jupiter but are created by the Party and the working class. Those who say we have no Bebels don't know the history of the German Party: they don't know that there was a time, under the Anti-Socialist Law, when August Bebel made opportunist blunders and that the Party corrected him, the Party guided Bebel.

(c) "The continued presence of the Social-Democratic group in the Duma . . . can only do harm to the interests of the proletariat . . . lower the dignity and influence of the Social-Democrats."

To show how "quantity passes into quality" in these preposterous exaggerations, and how anarchist phrases grow out of them (irrespective of whether our otzovist comrades desire it or not), we need only refer to Belousov's speech during the 1909 budget debate. If such speeches are considered as "harmful", and not as proof that the rostrum of the Duma can and must be utilised, then our disagreement ceases to be a mere difference of opinion about the character of a speech, and becomes a disagreement concerning the fundamental principles of Social-Democratic tactics.

(I) "Launch a wide campaign . . . for the slogan: 'Down with the Third Duma'" . . . .

We have already said in *Proletary*, No. 39, that this slogan, which for a time appealed to some anti-otzovist workers, is wrong.\*\* It is either a Cadet slogan, calling for franchise reform under the autocracy, or a repetition of words learned by rote from the period when liberal Dumas were a screen for counter-revolutionary tsarism, designed to prevent the people from seeing clearly who their real enemy was.

(II) "Recall . . . the Duma group; this will emphasise both . . . the character of the Duma and the revolutionary tactics of the Social-Democrats."

This is a paraphrase of the proposition advanced by the Moscow otzovists, that the recall of the Duma group will emphasise that the revolution is not dead and buried. Such a conclusion -- we repeat the words of *Proletary*, No. 39, "emphasises" only the burial of those Social-Democrats who are capable of arguing in this way. They bury themselves thereby as Social-Democrats; they lose all feeling for genuine proletarian revolutionary work; and for that reason, they are so painfully contorting themselves to "emphasise" their revolutionary phrases.

(III) "Devote all efforts to organisation and preparation . . . for open . . . struggle [and therefore renounce open agitation from the rostrum of the Duma!] . . . and to propaganda", etc., etc.



The otzovists have forgotten that it is unseemly for Social-Democrats to refuse to conduct propaganda from the rostrum of the Duma.

At this point they give us the argument repeated by some ultimatumists, that "there is no sense in wasting energy on hopeless work in the Duma, let us use all our forces more productively". This is not reasoning, but sophistry, which -- again irrespective of whether the authors desire it or not -- leads to anarchist conclusions. For in all countries the anarchists, pointing to the mistakes committed by Social-Democratic members of parliament, argue that it is "a waste of time to bother with bourgeois parliamentarism" and call for the concentration of "all these forces" on organising "direct action". But this leads to disorganisation and to the shouting of "slogans" which are futile because they are isolated, instead of conducting work in every field on the widest possible scale. It only seems to the otzovists and ultimatumists that their argument is new and applies only to the Third Duma. But they are wrong. It is a common argument heard all over Europe, and it is not a Social-Democratic argument.

Thus, otzovism and ultimatumism are a caricature of Bolshevism. What gave rise to this caricature? Of course, the fallacies of Bolshevism as a whole, the Menshevik hastens to declare. Such a conclusion, undoubtedly, is very "profitable" for the Mensheviks. Unfortunately for them, however, objective facts do not corroborate, but refute it. The objective facts are that in the development not only of Bolshevism, but of Russian

Marxism in general, there was a period when Marxism was caricatured, and that Russian

Marxism grew strong and developed in struggle with these growing pains, pains which accompanied the expansion of its sphere of influence. Russian Marxism was born at the beginning of the eighties of the last century in the works of a group of political emigrants (the Emancipation of Labour group).

But Marxism did not become a trend of Russian social thought and a constituent part of the working-class movement in Russia until the middle of the nineties of the last century when a "wave" of Marxian literature and of a Social-Democratic working-class movement arose in Russia. And what happened? This wave carried with it a caricature of Marxism in the shape of Struivism on the one hand and Rabocheye Dyelo-ism and Economism on the other. Marxism grew and matured because it did not conceal the disagreements in its ranks, did not play the diplomat (as the Mensheviks do with Maslov, Cherevanin, Kuskova, Prokopovich, Valentinov, Yermansky and Co.), but waged a victorious campaign against the caricature, which had been engendered by the deplorable conditions of Russian life and the turning point in the historical development of socialism in Russia. And Bolshevism will grow up and become strong, making no attempt to conceal the incipient distortion of its principles by a caricature engendered by the deplorable conditions of Russian life and the turning-point in the counter-revolutionary period, but openly explaining to the masses into

what a bog the otzovists and ultimatunists would lead the Duma group and the Party.

## **The years of revival (1910–14)**

Lenin,

### **The Slogans and Organisation of Social-Democratic Work Inside and Outside the Duma,**

December 8, 1911.

Collected Works, Volume 17, pages 331-341.

The question put by the Social-Democratic group in the Third Duma concerning the dastardly frame-up staged by the secret police that led to the criminal proceedings being instituted against the Social-Democrat members of the Second Duma,[3] apparently marks a certain turn in our entire Party activity, as well as in the position of democracy in general and in the mood of the working masses.

It is probably the first time that such a resolute protest, revolutionary in tone and content, against the “masters of June Third” has been heard from the rostrum of the Third Duma, a protest supported by the entire opposition, including the extremely moderate, liberal-monarchist, Vekhi variety of “His Majesty’s Opposition”, i.e., the Cadet Party, and including even the Progressists. It is probably the first time since the period of gloom set in (i.e., since 1908), that the country sees, feels, and is tangibly aware that in connection with the revolutionary protest voiced by the deputies of the revolutionary proletariat in the reactionary Duma, the masses of workers are stirring, that there is a rising spirit of unrest in the working-class districts of the capital, that workers are holding meetings (meetings again!) at which revolutionary speeches are delivered by Social-

Democrats (the meetings at the Putilov Works, the Cable Works, and other plants), and that there is talk and rumour of a political mass strike (see report from St. Petersburg in the Octobrist Golos Moskvyy of November 19).

To be sure, revolutionary speeches were made by Social-Democrat deputies in the Third Duma on more than one occasion in the past too. On more than one occasion our comrades of the Social-Democratic group in the Third Duma did their duty splendidly and from the platform of the reactionary and servile Purishkevich "parliament" they spoke plainly, clearly and sharply of the bankruptcy of the monarchy, of a republic, of a second revolution. These services rendered by the Social-Democrat members of the Third Duma must be emphasised all the more strongly, the more often we hear the contemptible opportunist talk of the sham Social-Democrats of Golos Sotsial-Demokrata or Dyelo Zhizni who frown upon such speeches.

But never before has there been such a combination of political symptoms indicating a turn—the, entire opposition backing the Social-Democrats; the liberal-monarchist, "loyal", "responsible", and cowardly Rech stating that the situation is fraught with conflict; the masses showing unrest in connection with the question in the Duma; and the censored press reporting the existence of "alarming sentiments" in the rural districts. Following as it does upon the "Muromtsev" and "Tolstoi" demonstrations of last year, the strikes in 1910 and 1911, and last year's students' "affair", the present instance undoubtedly serves to confirm us in our conviction that the first

period of the Russian counter-revolution—the period of absolute stagnation, of dead calm, hangings and suicides, of the orgy of reaction and the orgy of renegacy of every brand, particularly the liberal brand—that this period has come to an end. The second period in the history of the counter-revolution has set in: the state of utter dejection and often of “savage” fright is waning; among the broadest and most varied sections of the population there is a noticeably growing political consciousness—or, if not consciousness exactly, at least a feeling that “things cannot go on as before”, and that a “change” is required, is necessary, is inevitable; and we see the beginning of an inclination, half instinctive, often still undefined, to lend support to protests and struggle.

It would, naturally, be imprudent to exaggerate the significance of these symptoms and to imagine that the revival is already under way. That is not yet so. The features that characterise the counter-revolution at present are not the same as those distinguishing its first period; but the counter revolution still reigns supreme and imagines itself to be invincible. To quote the December 1908 resolution of the R.S.D.L.P., the “protracted task of training, educating, and organising” the proletariat is still, as before, on the order of the day. However, the fact that a turn has set in compels us to pay particular attention to the attitude of the Social-Democratic Party to other parties, and to the immediate tasks of the working-class movement.

“His Majesty’s Opposition”, including the Cadets and the Progressists, appeared to recognise for a moment the leading role of the Social-Democrats and, following the lead of the

workers' deputies, walked out of the Duma of landowners and Octobrists, the Duma founded by the Black-Hundred and pogrom-making monarchy of Nicholas Romanov; they walked out and stayed away during the base trickery of the majority who were afraid that the story of the frame-up would be made public.

What does this mean? Have the Cadets ceased to be a counter-revolutionary party, or have they never been one, as is asserted by the opportunist Social-Democrats? Ought we to make it our task to "support" the Cadets and to think of some slogan calling for a "general national opposition"?

The enemies of revolutionary Social-Democracy have from time immemorial, it may be said, resorted to the method of reducing its views to an absurdity and have, for the convenience of their polemics, drawn a caricature of Marxism. Thus, in the second half of the nineties of the last century, when Social-Democracy was just springing up in Russia as a mass movement, the Narodniks drew a caricature of Marxism which they labelled "strike-ism". And, such was the irony of history that there were Marxists whom that caricature fitted. They were the Economists. It was possible to save the honour and good name of Social-Democracy only by a ruthless struggle against Economism. And after the Revolution of 1905, when Bolshevism, as the adaptation of revolutionary Marxism to the particular conditions of the epoch, scored a great victory in the working-class movement, a victory which now even its enemies concede, our adversaries drew a caricature of Bolshevism, which they labelled "boycottism", "combatism", etc. And,

again, such was the irony of history that there were Bolsheviks whom that caricature fitted. They were the Vperyod group.

These lessons of history should serve as a warning against attempts to distort the views of revolutionary Social-Democrats concerning the attitude towards the Constitutional-Democrats (see, for instance, Vperyod, No. 2). The Cadets are unquestionably a counter-revolutionary party. Only absolutely ignorant or unscrupulous persons can deny this; and it is the bounden duty of Social-Democrats to make this fact known far and wide, including the rostrum of the Duma. But the Cadets are a party of counter-revolutionary liberals, and their liberal nature, as has been emphasised in the resolution on non-proletarian parties adopted at the London Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (in 1907), makes it our duty to "take advantage" of the peculiar situation and the particular conflicts or cases of friction arising from this situation, to take advantage, for instance, of their sham democracy to advocate true, consistent, and selfless democracy.

Since counter-revolutionary liberalism has sprung up in the country, the forces of democracy in general, and of proletarian democracy in particular, must do everything to separate themselves from it; not for a moment must they forget the dividing line between it and them. But it does not in the least follow from this that it is permissible to confuse counter-revolutionary liberalism with, say, counter revolutionary feudalism, or that it is permissible to ignore the conflicts between them, to hold aloof from these conflicts or brush them aside. Counter-revolutionary liberalism, for the very reason



that it is counter-revolutionary, will never be able to assume the role of leader in a victorious revolution; but, for the very reason that it is liberalism, it will inevitably keep coming into "conflict" with the Crown, with feudalism, with non-liberal bourgeoisie, and by its behaviour it will sometimes indirectly reflect the "Left", democratic sentiments of the country, or the beginning of a revival, etc.

Let us recall the history of France. At the time of the revolution, bourgeois liberalism had already shown its counter-revolutionary nature—this subject is dealt with, for instance, in Cunow's fine book on revolutionary newspaper literature in France, Yet, not only after the great bourgeois revolution, but even after the revolution of 1848, when the counter-revolutionary nature of the liberals had brought matters to such a pass that workers were being shot down by republicans—in 1868–70, the last years of the Second Empire—these liberals by their opposition expressed the change of sentiment in the country and the beginning of the democratic, revolutionary, republican revival.

If the Cadets are now playing at "eyes left", as the Octobrists taunt them, that is one of the symptoms and one of the results of the country moving "leftward"; it shows that revolutionary democracy is stirring in the womb of its mother, preparing to come into God's world again. The womb of Russia under the rule of the Purishkeviches and Romanovs is such that it must give birth to revolutionary democracy!

What is the practical conclusion to be drawn from this? The conclusion is that we must watch the growth of this new

revolutionary democracy with the greatest attention. Just because it is new, because it is coming into the world after 1905 and after the counter-revolution, and not before it, it is sure to grow in a new way; and in order to be able properly to approach this “new”, to be able to influence it and help it grow successfully, we must not confine ourselves to the old methods, but must search for new methods as well—we must mingle with the crowds, feel the pulse of real life, and sometimes make our way not only into the thick of the crowd, but also into the liberal salon.

Mr. Burtsev’s sheet *L’Avenir*, for instance, is very reminiscent of a liberal salon. There the stupid, liberal, Octobrist-Cadet slogan calling for “a revision of the Statutes of June 3” is defended in a liberal manner; there they prattle eagerly about stool-pigeons, police, agents provocateurs, Burtsev, bombs. Nevertheless, when Mr. Martov was in a hurry to get into that salon, he might have been accused only of tactless haste, but not of a fundamental falsehood, if ... if he had not behaved there like a liberal. We may justify, and sometimes even praise, a Social-Democrat who makes his appearance in a liberal salon as long as he behaves like a Social-Democrat, But in the liberal salon Mr. Martov came out with the liberal balderdash about “solidarity in the struggle for the very freedom of elections and election propaganda”, which is supposed to be maintained “for the period of the elections”!! (*L’Avenir*, No. 5).

A new democracy is growing up—under new conditions, and in a new way. We must learn to approach it properly—that is beyond doubt. We must not approach it for the purpose of

lipping like liberals, but in order to uphold and advocate the slogans of true democracy. Social-Democrats must advocate threeslogans to the new democracy, slogans which are alone worthy of our great cause and which alone correspond to the real conditions for the attainment of freedom in Russia. These slogans are: a republic; the eight-hour day; and the confiscation of all landed estates.

This is the one correct nation-wide programme of struggle for a free Russia. Anyone who doubts this programme is not yet a democrat. Anyone who denies this programme while calling himself a democrat, has understood all too well how necessary it is for him to hoodwink the people in order to achieve his anti-democratic (i.e., counter-revolutionary) aims.

Why is the struggle for the eight-hour working day a natural condition for the attainment of freedom in Russia? Because experience has shown that freedom cannot be achieved without a selfless struggle on the part of the proletariat, and such a struggle is inseparably bound up with the struggle to improve the workers' conditions. The eight-hour day is an example of such improvements and is the banner of struggle for them.

Why is the struggle for the confiscation of all landed estates a natural condition for the attainment of freedom in Russia? Because, without radical measures to help the millions of peasants who have been reduced by the Purishkeviches, Romanovs, and Markovs to unheard of ruin, suffering, and death from starvation, all talk of democracy and of "people's freedom" is absurd and utterly hypocritical. And unless the landed estates are confiscated for the benefit of the peasants,

there can be no question of any serious measures to help the muzhik, there can be no question of any serious determination to put an end to muzhik Russia, i.e., to feudal Russia, and to build up a Russia of free tillers of the soil, a democratic bourgeois Russia.

Why is the struggle for a republic a natural condition for the attainment of freedom in Russia? Because experience, the great and unforgettable experience of one of the greatest decades in the history of Russia—the first decade of the twentieth century—has shown clearly, conclusively, and incontestably that our monarchy is incompatible with even the most elementary guarantees of political freedom. The result of Russia's historical development and centuries of tsardom is that at the beginning of the twentieth century there is no other monarchy in Russia, nor can there be any other, than a Black-Hundred and pogrom-making monarchy. With social conditions and class relations what they are, all the Russian monarchy can do is to organise gangs of murderers to shoot our liberal and democratic deputies from behind or set fire to buildings in which meetings are held by democrats. The only answer the Russian monarchy can give to the demonstrations of the people demanding freedom is to let loose gangs of men who seize hold of Jewish children by their legs and smash their heads against stones, who rape Jewish and Georgian women and rip open the bellies of old men.

The liberal innocent's prattle about the example of a constitutional monarchy like that of England. But if in a civilised country like England, a country which has never

known anything like the Mongolian yoke or the tyranny of a bureaucracy, or a military clique riding roughshod over it, if it was necessary in that country to chop off the head of one crowned robber in order to impress upon the kings that they must be "constitutional" monarchs, in a country like Russia we should have to chop off the heads of at least a hundred Romanovs in order to wean their successors from the habit of organising Black-Hundred murders and anti-Jewish pogroms.

If Social-Democracy has learned anything at all from the first Russian revolution, it must insist that in all our speeches and leaflets we discard the slogan "Down with the autocracy", which has proved to be vague and worthless, and that we advance only the slogan: "Down with the tsarist monarchy, long live a republic".

And let no one try to tell us that the slogan calling for a republic does not apply to the present stage of the political development of the workers and peasants. About ten or twelve years ago there were not only some Narodniks who would not dare even to think of the slogan, "Down with the autocracy", but even certain Social-Democrats, the so-called Economists, opposed that slogan as being inopportune. Yet by 1903–04 the slogan, "Down with the autocracy", had become a "household word"! There cannot be even a shadow of doubt that systematic and persistent republican propaganda is now bound to find very fertile soil in Russia; for there can be no doubt that the broadest masses, particularly the peasant masses, are thinking grim, profound thoughts about the meaning of the dispersal of two Dumas and the connection between the tsarist government and

the landowner-ridden Third Duma, between the tsarist government and the ruin of the countryside by the Markovs. Nobody today can tell how quickly the seed of republican propaganda will sprout—but that is beside the point; the main thing is that the sowing should be done properly, really democratically.

since we are discussing the question of the slogans for the forthcoming elections to the Fourth Duma and those for all our work outside the Duma, we cannot refrain from mentioning a very important and very incorrect speech made by the Social-Democrat Kuznetsov in the Third Duma. On October 17, 1911, the sixth anniversary of the first victory of the Russian revolution, Kuznetsov spoke in the debate on the workers' Insurance Bill. It must be said in fairness to him, that, in general, he spoke very well. He vigorously championed the interests of the proletariat and made no bones about telling the truth directly, not only to the majority of the reactionary Duma, but to the Cadets as well. But, while fully granting this service rendered by Kuznetsov, we must likewise make no bones about pointing out the mistake he committed.

"I think," said Kuznetsov, "that the workers who have followed attentively the general debate on these questions, as well as the debate on individual clauses of the Bill under discussion, will come to the conclusion that their immediate slogan at present must be: 'Down with the June Third Duma, long live universal suffrage!' Why? Because, I say, the interests of the working class can be properly taken care of only if and when that class will, through universal suffrage, send into the legislative body a

sufficient number of its deputies; they alone will be able to provide a proper solution to the problem of insurance for the working class.”

It was here that Kuznetsov came a cropper in a way he probably never suspected, but which we foretold long ago—he came a cropper because the mistakes of the liquidators coincide with those of the otzovists.

While launching, from the rostrum of the Duma, a slogan inspired by the liquidationist magazines *Nasha Zarya* and *Dyelo Zhizni*, Kuznetsov did not notice that the first (and most essential) part of this slogan (“Down with the Third Duma”) fully reproduces the slogan which the otzovists openly advanced three years ago, and which since then only *Vperyod*, that is to say, the cowardly otzovists, have defended stealthily and covertly.

Three years ago, *Proletary*, No. 38, of November 1 (14), 1908, wrote the following in regard to this slogan advanced at the time by the otzovists:

“Under what conditions could a slogan like ‘down with the Duma’ acquire meaning? Let us assume that we are faced with a liberal, reform-seeking, compromising Duma in a period of the sharpest revolutionary crisis, which had developed to the point of direct civil war. It is quite possible that at such a moment our slogan might be ‘down with the Duma’, i.e., down with peaceable negotiations with the tsar, down with the deceptive institution of ‘peace’, let’s call for a direct attack. Now let us assume, on the contrary, that we are faced with an arch-reactionary Duma, elected under an obsolete electoral law, and

the absence of any acutely revolutionary crisis in the country. In that case the slogan 'down with the Duma' might become the slogan of a struggle for electoral reform. We see nothing of either of these contingencies at the present time."

The supplement to *Proletary*, No. 44 (of April 4, 1909) printed the resolution of the St. Petersburg otzovists which demanded outright that "Widespread agitation should be started among the masses in favour of the slogan 'Down with the Third Duma'". In the same issue *Proletary* came out against this resolution and pointed out: "This slogan, which for a time appealed to some anti-otzovist workers, is wrong. It is either a Cadet slogan, calling for franchise reform under the autocracy [it so happens that, although this was written at the beginning of 1909, it is a perfectly fitting argument against the way Kuznetsov presents the question at the end of 1911!], or a repetition of words learned by rote during the period when the liberal Dumas were a screen for counter-revolutionary tsarism designed to prevent the people from seeing clearly who their real enemy was."

Hence the nature of Kuznetsov's mistake is clear. His generalised slogan is the Cadet slogan for an electoral reform, which is absolutely meaningless if all the other charms of the Romanov monarchy—the Council of State, the omnipotence of bureaucrats, the Black-Hundred pogrom organisations of the tsar's clique, etc., are left intact. What Kuznetsov should have said, assuming that the question is approached in the same way as he approached it, and assuming that nothing is changed in the general tone of his speech, is approximately the following:



“The workers’ Insurance Bill provides the very example which again proves to the workers that neither the immediate interests of their class nor the rights and needs of the people as a whole can be defended without such changes as the introduction of universal suffrage, full freedom of association, of the press, etc. Is it not obvious, however, that it is useless to expect the realisation of such changes so long as the present political system of Russia remains intact, so long as any decisions of any Duma can be over ruled, and so long as even a single non-elective govern mental institution is left in the state?”

We know perfectly well that Social-Democrat deputies succeeded—and that is to their credit—in making even much plainer and clearer republican statements from the rostrum of the Third Duma. The members of the Duma have an opportunity to conduct republican propaganda legally from the floor of the Duma, and it is their duty to avail themselves of this opportunity. Our example of how Kuznetsov’s speech could be corrected is merely intended to illustrate how he could have avoided the mistake, while preserving the general tone of the speech, and pointing to and emphasising the tremendous importance of such unquestionably indispensable changes as the introduction of universal suffrage, freedom of association, etc.

Wherever a Social-Democrat makes a political speech, it is his duty always to speak of a republic. But one must know how to speak of a republic. One cannot speak about it in the same terms when addressing a meeting in a factory and one in a Cossack village, when speaking at a meeting of students or in a peasant

cottage, when it is dealt with from the rostrum of the Third Duma or in the columns of a publication issued abroad. The art of any propagandist and agitator consists in his ability to find the best means of influencing any given audience, by presenting a definite truth, in such a way as to make it most convincing, most easy to digest, most graphic, and most strongly impressive.

Never for a moment must we forget the main thing: a new democracy is awakening to a new life and a new struggle in Russia. It is the duty of class-conscious workers, the vanguard of the Russian revolution and leaders of the popular masses in the struggle for freedom, to explain the tasks of consistent democracy: a republic, the eight-hour day, and the confiscation of all landed estates.

Lenin,

**From the Camp of the Stolypin "Labour" Party,**

December 8 (21), 1911

Collected Works, Volume 17, pages 354-359

From the very beginning, from his assessment of the revolution and the role of all the classes involved, and proceeding with remarkable consistency to the end, to the scheme for a legal workers' (?) party, in all his arguments, R-kov substitutes liberalism for Marxism.

What is the real task facing Russia? The complete replacement of semi-feudal economy by "civilised capitalism".

That is not Marxism, however, but Struveism or liberalism, for a Marxist distinguishes between classes with their Octobrist, Cadet, Trudovik, or proletarian ideas as to what constitutes "civilised" capitalism.

What is the crux of the problem of appraising of the revolution? R-kov condemns the whining and renegacy of those who shout that the revolution has "failed" and against them puts forward ... the great professorial maxim that during periods of "reaction" too, new social forces are maturing. It is evident that R-kov's answer disguises the essence of the matter to the advantage of the counter-revolutionary liberals who fully acknowledge the maxim newly-discovered by R-kov. The essence of the question is: which of the classes that took part in the revolution showed that they were capable of waging a direct, mass revolutionary struggle, which classes betrayed the revolution and directly or indirectly joined the counter-

revolution? R-kov concealed this essence and was thus able to ignore the difference between revolutionary democracy and the liberal-monarchist “progressive” opposition.

As regards the role of the landlord class, R-kov managed without further ado to say something absurd. Not so long ago, he says, the representatives of that class “were” real serf-owners; now “a small handful are still grouped around Messrs. Purishkevich and Markov the Second and are helplessly [U spluttering the venom of despair”. The majority of the landed nobility, he goes on to say, “are gradually and steadily being converted into an agricultural bourgeoisie”.

In actual fact, as everybody knows, the Markovs and the Purishkeviches have full power in the Duma, still more in the Council of State, and even more in the tsar’s Black-Hundred clique, and yet more in the administration of Russia. It is precisely “their power and their revenue” (resolution of the December 1908 conference) that are guaranteed by a step in this kind of transformation of tsarism into a bourgeois monarchy. The conversion of serf economy into bourgeois economy by no means does away immediately with the political power of these Black-Hundred-type landowners. This is obvious from the viewpoint of elementary Marxism, and it also follows from the experience, say, of Prussia after sixty years of “conversion” (since 1848). According to R-kov there is no absolutism and no monarchy in Russia! R-kov applies a liberal school method: the benign elimination (on paper) of social extremes serves as “proof” that a “compromise is inevitable”.

Present-day agrarian policy, according to R-kov, indicates an “imminent and inevitable [!] compromise” —between whom? —“between the different groups of the bourgeoisie”. But we ask our “Marxist”, what social force will compel the Purishkeviches, who wield all the power, to agree to a compromise? R-kov does not answer this question. But since he goes on to refer to the process of the consolidation of the big commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, and “the impending domination of the moderately progressive” bourgeoisie, there is only one conclusion to be drawn—R-kov expects that the moderately progressive bourgeoisie will peacefully take over power from the Purishkeviches and Romanovs.

Incredible as this is, it is a fact. It is precisely this most puerile of liberal utopias that forms the basis of R-kov’s conception, although he boasts that “there is not a grain of utopia” in what he says. There is no actual difference between N. R-kov and the extreme liquidators, all of whom—from Larin to Cherevanin, Dan, and Martov—set forth, in slightly different forms and phrases, the very same fundamental idea of a peaceful assumption of power by the bourgeoisie (with, at most, pressure exerted from “below”).

But in real life not in a liberal utopia, we see the domination of Purishkevichism moderated by the grumbling of the Guchkovs and Milyukovs. The “moderately progressive” Octobrists and Cadets, far from undermining this domination, are perpetuating it. The contradiction between this domination and the unquestionably advancing bourgeois development of Russia is becoming ever sharper (and not weaker, as the

theorists of “inevitable compromise” think). The motive force in the solution of this contradiction can only be the masses, i.e., the proletariat with the peasantry following its lead.

This former Bolshevik, who has now become a liquidator, dismisses these masses so readily, that it is as if the Stolypin gallows and the torrent of filth let loose by Vekhi had eliminated them, not only from the arena of open politics, not only from the pages of liberal publications, but also from real life. The peasantry, says our liberal in his “analysis”, are weak at the elections; and as for the Working class, he provisionally leaves it “out of consideration”!!

R-kov undertook to prove that a revolution (“upheaval”) in Russia, though possible, is not essential. Once the working class and the peasantry are “left out of consideration”, even if only provisionally, if only “for the time being”, if only because of their “weakness at the elections”, a revolution is not, of course, possible, to say nothing of its being essential. But liberal benevolence cannot conjure away either the unrestricted power of Purishkevich and Romanov, or the revolutionary resistance which is growing stronger both among the maturing proletariat and the starving and tormented peasantry. The trouble with R-kov is that he has abandoned the Marxist line, the line followed by revolutionary Social-Democrats, who always, under all circumstances and in every possible form, in speeches at mass meetings, from the rostrum of the Third Duma, at meetings of Soviets of Workers’ Deputies, or in the most peaceable and legally functioning workers’ associations, insist that this resistance must be given support, that it must be strengthened,

developed, and properly directed toward the achievement of complete victory. In all his arguments N. R-kov has substituted for this line that of the liberal who refuses to see the force that has been driven underground, who refuses to see anything but the Purishkeviches who are being “converted” into “civilised Junkers”, or the “moderately progressive” Milyukovs.

That is the specific kind of blindness which is characteristic of the whole of Nasha Zarya and of the whole Stolypin labour party. Closely connected with this conception—one due to the blindness caused by liberal blinkers—is the extraordinarily strong emphasis on the legalisation of the workers’ party. Since “a compromise is inevitable”, there is no point in fighting the inevitable, and all that remains for the working class to do is to follow the example of the other classes of the fully established bourgeois system and feather for itself a humble little philistine nest in a nook of this system. That is the real meaning of the legalists’ propaganda, no matter how much Martov, given that role by the Potresovs, Yuri Chatskys, Larins, Dans, and others, may hide it behind “revolutionary” phraseology.

This real meaning of a legal “association for the protection of the interests of the working class” is very clearly revealed in R-kov’s article. It is obvious that the “powers that be” will never permit such an association, even if it is dominated by the Prokopoviches. It is obvious that they will never agree to let it be “put into effect”. Only blind liberals can fail to see this. But an association of intellectuals who, under the guise of socialism, are spreading liberal propaganda among the working masses is something that has already been put into effect. This

“association” consists of the contributors to *Nasha Zarya* and *Dyelo Zhizni*. And it is their “banner”, the ideological banner of liberalism, that R-kov “unfurls” when he asserts that, unless there exists an open organisation the struggle will inevitably (!) assume an anarchist character; that the old slogans have become dead letters; that tactics must not be reduced to a “scuffle”; that the new “association” harbours “no thought [!] of the need for a forcible revolution”, etc. This liberal, renegade propaganda of intellectuals is a reality, whereas the talk of an open working-class association is mere eyewash. An association for the liberal protection of the interests of the working class as understood by the liberals is a reality; *Nasha Zarya* is this “association”, and the “open and broad political organisation” of workers in present-day Russia, is an innocuous, empty, misleading liberal dream.

It is a useful thing to organise legally functioning trade unions, as long as we are aware that under present conditions they cannot become either broad, or “political”, or stable. But it is an empty and harmful occupation to preach liberal concepts of a political workers’ association that exclude any idea of the use of force.

In conclusion, here are two amusing bits. The first: “If anyone,” writes R-kov, “blinded by reactionary frenzy, took it into his head to accuse the members of such an association of striving for violent revolution, the whole burden of such an absurd, unfounded, and juridically flimsy accusation would fall upon the head of the accuser.” We can just visualise the picture of the burden of juridically flimsy accusations falling upon the heads



of Shcheglovitov and Co.—and it is not Rodichev but N. R-kov who crushes them under that “burden”.

The second: “The workers,” writes R-kov, “must assume the task of political hegemony in the struggle for a democratic system.” R-kov is in favour of hegemony after he has deprived it of its entire meaning. “Workers,” says R-kov in effect, “you must not fight against the ‘inevitable’ compromise, but you must call yourselves leaders.” But the very thing a leader has to do is to expose the fiction about a compromise being “inevitable” and to work to organise proletarian and proletarian-peasant resistance to undemocratic bourgeois compromises.

N. R-kov will be as useful in the struggle against liquidationism, as Y. Larin was in the struggle against the false idea of a labour congress. N. R-kov and Y. Larin have had the courage to appear ... naked. R-kov is an honest liquidator. By his fearlessness he will compel people to think about the ideological roots of liquidationism. He will provide ever more corroboration of the correctness of the December 1908 resolutions of the R.S.D.L.P., for he regularly poses (and invariably gives wrong answers to) the very problems which those resolutions analysed and answered correctly. R-kov will help the workers to obtain a particularly clear idea of the wretchedness of those liquidationist diplomats who, like the editors of *Nasha Zarya* (or of *Golos*), twist and turn, piling up reservation upon reservation, and disclaiming responsibility for “certain passages” in R-kov’s article, or for the “detailed exposition” of his plan. As if it were a question of separate

passages, and not of a uniform, integral, and consistent line—  
the line of a liberal labour policy!

Lenin,

**The Fourth Duma Election Campaign and the Tasks of the Revolutionary Social-Democrats,**

May 8, 1912

Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 18, pp. 17-21.

The political strikes and the first demonstrations over the Lena shootings show that the revolutionary movement among the masses of workers in Russia is growing. This thickening of the revolutionary atmosphere casts a vivid light on the tasks of the Party and its role in the election campaign.

The crisis is growing in a new situation. The reactionary Duma, a which provides the landlords with power, the bourgeoisie with an arena for making deals, and the proletariat with a small platform, is a necessary factor in this situation. We need this platform, we need the election campaign, for our revolutionary work among the masses. We need the illegal Party to direct all this work as a whole -- in the Taurida Palace, as well as in Kazanskaya Square, at workers' mass meetings, during strikes, at district meetings of worker Social-Democrats, and at open trade union meetings. Only the hopelessly blind can fail even now to see the utter absurdity and perniciousness for the working class of otzovism and liquidationism, those products of decay and disintegration during the period of the triumph of counter-revolution. The example of the Narodniks has shown us clearly the scandalous zero one gets as the result of adding the liquidationism of the "Trudoviks", as well as of the legally

functioning writers of *Russkoye Bogatstvo* and *Sovremennik*, to the otzovism of the Socialist-Revolutionary "party".

Let us now sum up the facts brought to light during the pre-election mobilisation of political forces. Three camps stand out clearly: (1) The Rights -- from Purishkevich to Guchkov -- are pro-government. The Black-Hundred landlord and the conservative merchant are heart and soul for the government. (2) The liberal bourgeois -- the "Progressists" and the Cadets, along with groups of various non-Russians -- are against the government and against the revolution. The counter-revolutionary nature of the liberals is one of the main features of the present historical juncture. Whoever does not see this counter-revolutionary nature of the "cultured" bourgeoisie has forgotten everything and learned nothing, and takes the name of democrat, to say nothing of socialist, in vain. As it happens, the Trudoviks and "our" liquidators see poorly and understand things poorly! (3) The democratic camp, in which only the revolutionary Social-Democrats, the anti-liquidationists, united and organised, have firmly and clearly unfurled their own banner, the banner of revolution. The Trudoviks and our liquidators are vacillating between the liberals and the democrats, between legal opposition and revolution.

The class roots which brought about the division between the first two camps are clear. But the liberals have succeeded in leading astray many people, from Vodovozov to Dan, as to the class roots which divided the second camp from the third. The liberal "strategy", naïvely blurted out by Blank in *Zaprosy Zhizni*, is very simple: the Cadets are the centre of the

opposition, the thill-horse; the outrunners (the "flanks") are the Progressists on the right, and the Trudoviks and the liquidators on the left. It is on this "troika" that the Milyukovs, in their role of "responsible opposition", hope to "ride" to triumph.

The hegemony of the liberals in the Russian emancipation movement has always meant, and will always mean, defeat for this movement. The liberals manoeuvre between the monarchy of the Purishkeviches and the revolution of the workers and peasants, betraying the latter at every serious juncture. The task of the revolution is to use the liberals' fight against the government and to neutralise their vacillations and treachery.

The policy of the liberals is to scare Purishkevich and Romanov a little with the prospect of revolution, in order to share power with them and jointly suppress the revolution.

And it is the class position of the bourgeoisie that determines this policy. Hence the Cadets' cheap "democracy" and their actual fusion with the most moderate "Progressists" of the type of Yefremov, Lvov, Ryabushinsky and Co.

The tactics of the proletarian Party should be to use the fight between the liberals and the Purishkeviches over the division of power -- without in any way allowing "faith" in the liberals to take hold among the people -- in order to develop, intensify and reinforce the revolutionary onslaught of the masses, which overthrows the monarchy and entirely wipes out the Purishkeviches and Romanovs. At the elections, its tactics should be to unite the democrats against the Rights and against the Cadets by "using" the liberals' fight against the Rights in cases of a second ballot, in the press and at meetings. Hence the

necessity for a revolutionary platform that even now goes beyond the bounds of "legality". Hence the slogan of a republic -- as against the liberals' "constitutional" slogans, slogans of a "Rasputin- Treshchenkov constitution".[9] Our task is to train an army of champions of the revolution everywhere, always, in all forms of work, in every field of activity, at every turn of events which may be forced on us by a victory of reaction, the treachery of the liberals, the protraction of the crisis, etc.

Look at the Trudoviks. They are Narodnik liquidators' sans phrases. "We are revolutionaries," Mr. Vodovozov "hints", "but -- we can't go against Article 129,[10] he adds. A hundred years after Herzen's birth, the "party" of the peasant millions is unable to publish even a sheet -- even a hectographed one! -- in defiance of Article 129!! While gravitating towards a bloc "first of all" with the Social-Democrats, the Trudoviks are unable to say clearly that the Cadets are counter-revolutionary, to lay the foundations for a republican peasant party. Yet that is exactly how the question stands after the lessons of 1905-07 and 1908-11: either fight for a republic or lick the boots of Purishkevich and grovel under the whips of Markov and Romanov. There is no other choice for the peasants.

Look at the liquidators. No matter how much the Martynovs, Martovs and Co. shift and shuffle, any conscientious and sensible reader will recognise that R-kov summed up their views when he said: "Let there be no illusion. What is in the making is the triumph of a very moderate bourgeois progressivism." The objective meaning of this winged phrase is the following: revolution is an illusion; the real thing is to

support the "Progressists". Surely anyone who does not deliberately close his eyes must see now that it is precisely this that the Dans and Martovs are saying, in slightly different words, when they issue the slogan: "Wrest the Duma [the Fourth Duma, a landlord-ridden Duma!][\*] from the hands of the reactionaries"? Or when they make, again and again, the slip of referring to two camps? Or when they shout, "Do not frustrate" the progressive work of the liberal bourgeois? Or when they fight against a "Left bloc"? Or when, writing in Zhivoye Dyelo, they smugly snap their fingers at "the literature published abroad which nobody reads"? Or when they actually content themselves with a legal platform and legal attempts at organisation? Or when they form "initiating groups" of liquidators, thus breaking with the revolutionary R.S.D.L.P.? Is it not clear that this is also the tune sung by the Levitskys, who are lending philosophical depth to the liberal ideas about the struggle for right, by the Nevedomskys, who have lately "revised" Dobrolyubov's ideas backwards -- from democracy to liberalism -- and by the Smirnovs, who are making eyes at "progressism", and by all the other knights of Nasha Zarya and Zhivoye Dyelo ?

Actually, the democrats and the Social-Democrats, even if they had wanted to, would never have been able to "frustrate" a victory of the "Progressists" among the landlords and bourgeois! All this is nothing but idle talk. This is not where the serious differences lie. Nor is this what constitutes the distinction between a liberal and a Social-Democratic labour policy. To "support" the Progressists on the ground that their

"victories" "bring the cultured bourgeois nearer to power" is a liberal labour policy.

We Social-Democrats regard a "victory" of the Progressists as an indirect expression of a democratic upswing. It is necessary to use the skirmishes between the Progressists and the Rights -- the mere slogan of support for the Progressists is no good. Our job is to promote the democratic upswing, to foster the new revolutionary democracy that is growing in a new way in the new Russia. Unless it succeeds in gathering strength and winning in spite of the liberals, no "triumph" of the Progressists and the Cadets in the elections will bring about any serious change in the actual situation in Russia.

The democratic upswing is an indisputable fact now. It is progressing with greater difficulty, at a slower pace and along a more arduous path than we should like, but it is progressing, nonetheless. It is this that we must "support" and promote by our election work and every other kind of activity. Our task is to organise the revolutionary democrats -- by ruthless criticism of Narodnik liquidationism and Narodnik otzovism to forge a republican peasant party -- but first of all and above all else to clean "our own house" of liquidationism and otzovism, intensify our revolutionary Social-Democratic work among the proletariat and strengthen the illegal Social-Democratic Labour Party. The outcome of the growing revolutionary crisis does not depend on us; it depends on a thousand different causes, on the revolution in Asia and on socialism in Europe. But it does depend on us to conduct consistent and steady work among the



masses in the spirit of Marxism, and only this kind of work is never done in vain.

Lenin,

**Democracy and Narodism in China,**

July 15, 1912.

Collected Works, Vol. 18, pp. 163-69.

The article by Sun Yat-sen, provisional President of the Chinese Republic, which we take from the Brussels socialist newspaper, *Le Peuple*, is of exceptional interest to us Russians.

It is said that the onlooker sees most of the game. And Sun Yat-sen is a most interesting "onlooker", for he appears to be wholly uninformed about Russia despite his European education. And now, quite independently of Russia, of Russian experience and Russian literature, this enlightened spokesman of militant and victorious Chinese democracy, which has won a republic, poses purely Russian questions. A progressive Chinese democrat, he argues exactly like a Russian. His similarity to a Russian Narodnik is so great that it goes as far as a complete identity of fundamental ideas and of many individual expressions.

The onlooker sees most of the game. The platform of the great Chinese democracy -- for that is what Sun Yat-sen's article represents -- impels us, and provides us with a convenient occasion, to examine anew, in the light of recent world events, the relation between democracy and Narodism in modern bourgeois revolutions in Asia. This is one of the most serious questions confronting Russia in the revolutionary epoch which began in 1905. And it confronts not only Russia, but the whole of Asia, as will be seen from the platform of the provisional President of the Chinese Republic, particularly when this

platform is compared with the revolutionary developments in Russia, Turkey, Persia and China. In very many and very essential respects, Russia is undoubtedly an Asian country and, what is more, one of the most benighted, medieval and shamefully backward of Asian countries.

Beginning with its distant and lone forerunner, the nobleman Herzen, and continuing right up to its mass representatives, the members of the Peasant Union of 1905 and the Trudovik deputies to the first three Dumas of 1906-12, Russian bourgeois democracy has had a Narodnik colouring. Bourgeois democracy in China, as we now see, has the same Narodnik colouring. Let us now consider, with Sun Yat-sen as an example, the "social significance" of the ideas generated by the deep-going revolutionary movement of the hundreds of millions who are finally being drawn into the stream of world capitalist civilisation.

Every line of Sun Yat-sen's platform breathes a spirit of militant and sincere democracy. It reveals a thorough understanding of the inadequacy of a "racial" revolution. There is not a trace in it of indifference to political issues, or even of underestimation of political liberty, or of the idea that Chinese "social reform", Chinese constitutional reforms, etc., could be compatible with Chinese autocracy. It stands for complete democracy and the demand for a republic. It squarely poses the question of the condition of the masses, of the mass struggle. It expresses warm sympathy for the toiling and exploited people, faith in their strength and in the justice of their cause.

Before us is the truly great ideology of a truly great people capable not only of lamenting its age-long slavery and dreaming of liberty and equality, but of fighting the age-long oppressors of China.

One is naturally inclined to compare the provisional President of the Republic in benighted, inert, Asiatic China with the presidents of various republics in Europe and America, in countries of advanced culture. The presidents in those republics are all businessmen, agents or puppets of a bourgeoisie rotten to the core and besmirched from head to foot with mud and blood -- not the blood of padishahs and emperors, but the blood of striking workers shot down in the name of progress and civilisation. In those countries the presidents represent the bourgeoisie, which long ago renounced all the ideals of its youth, has thoroughly prostituted itself, sold itself body and soul to the millionaires and multimillionaires, to the feudal lords turned bourgeois, etc.

In China, the Asiatic provisional President of the Republic is a revolutionary democrat, endowed with the nobility and heroism of a class that is rising, not declining, a class that does not dread the future, but believes in it and fights for it selflessly, a class that does not cling to maintenance and restoration of the past in order to safeguard its privileges, but hates the past and knows how to cast off its dead and stifling decay.

Does that mean, then, that the materialist West has hopelessly decayed and that light shines only from the mystic, religious East? No, quite the opposite. It means that the East has definitely taken the Western path, that new hundreds of

millions of people will from now on share in the struggle for the ideals which the West has already worked out for itself. What has decayed is the Western bourgeoisie, which is already confronted by its grave-digger, the proletariat. But in Asia there is still a bourgeoisie capable of championing sincere, militant, consistent democracy, a worthy comrade of France's great men of Enlightenment and great leaders of the close of the eighteenth century.

The chief representative, or the chief social bulwark, of this Asian bourgeoisie that is still capable of supporting a historically progressive cause, is the peasant. And side by side with him there already exists a liberal bourgeoisie whose leaders, men like Yuan Shih-kai, are above all capable of treachery: yesterday they feared the emperor, and cringed before him; then they betrayed him when they saw the strength, and sensed the victory, of the revolutionary democracy; and tomorrow they will betray the democrats to make a deal with some old or new "constitutional" emperor.

The real emancipation of the Chinese people from age-long slavery would be impossible without the great, sincerely democratic enthusiasm which is rousing the working masses and making them capable of miracles, and which is evident from every sentence of Sun Yat-sen's platform.

But the Chinese Narodnik combines this ideology of militant democracy, firstly, with socialist dreams, with hopes of China avoiding the capitalist path, of preventing capitalism, and, secondly, with a plan for, and advocacy of, radical agrarian reform. It is these two last ideological and political trends that

constitute the element which forms Narodism -- Narodism in the specific sense of that term, i.e., as distinct from democracy, as a supplement to democracy. What is the origin and significance of these trends?

Had it not been for the immense spiritual and revolutionary upsurge of the masses, the Chinese democracy would have been unable to overthrow the old order and establish the republic. Such an upsurge presupposes and evokes the most sincere sympathy for the condition of the working masses, and the bitterest hatred for their oppressors and exploiters. And in Europe and America -- from which the progressive Chinese, all the Chinese who have experienced this upsurge, have borrowed their ideas of liberation -- emancipation from the bourgeoisie, i.e., socialism, is the immediate task. This is bound to arouse sympathy for socialism among Chinese democrats and is the source of their subjective socialism.

They are subjectively socialists because they are opposed to oppression and exploitation of the masses. But the objective conditions of China, a backward, agricultural, semi-feudal country numbering nearly 500 million people, place on the order of the day only one specific, historically distinctive form of this oppression and exploitation, namely, feudalism. Feudalism was based on the predominance of agriculture and natural economy. The source of the feudal exploitation of the Chinese peasant was his attachment to the land in some form. The political exponents of this exploitation were the feudal lords, all together and individually, with the emperor as the head of the whole system.

But it appears that out of the subjectively socialist ideas and programmes of the Chinese democrat there emerges in fact a programme for "changing all the juridical foundations" of "immovable property" alone, a programme for the abolition of feudal exploitation alone.

That is the essence of Sun Yat-sen's Narodism, of his progressive, militant, revolutionary programme for bourgeois democratic agrarian reform, and of his quasi-socialist theory.

From the point of view of doctrine, this theory is that of a petty-bourgeois "socialist" reactionary. For the idea that capitalism can be "prevented" in China and that a "social revolution" there will be made easier by the country's backwardness, and so on, is altogether reactionary. And Sun Yat-sen himself, with inimitable, one might say virginal, naïveté, smashes his reactionary Narodnik theory by admitting what reality forces him to admit, namely, that "China is on the eve of a gigantic industrial [i.e., capitalist] development", that in China "trade [i.e., capitalism] will develop to an enormous extent", that "in fifty years we shall have many Shanghais", i.e., huge centres of capitalist wealth and proletarian need and poverty.

But the question arises: does Sun Yat-sen, on the basis of his reactionary economic theory, uphold an actually reactionary agrarian programme? That is the crux of the matter, its most interesting point, and one on which curtailed and emasculated liberal quasi-Marxism is often at a loss.

The fact of the matter is that he does not. The dialectics of the social relations in China reveals itself precisely in the fact that, while sincerely sympathising with socialism in Europe, the

Chinese democrats have transformed it into a reactionary theory, and on the basis of this reactionary theory of "preventing" capitalism are championing a purely capitalist, a maximum capitalist, agrarian programme!

Indeed, what does the "economic revolution", of which Sun Yat-sen talks so pompously and obscurely at the beginning of his article, amount to?

It amounts to the transfer of rent to the state, i.e., land nationalisation, by some sort of single tax along Henry George lines. There is absolutely nothing else that is real in the "economic revolution" proposed and advocated by Sun Yat-sen.

The difference between the value of land in some remote peasant area and in Shanghai is the difference in the rate of rent. The value of land is capitalised rent. To make the "enhanced value" of land the "property of the people" means transferring the rent, i.e., land ownership, to the state, or, in other words, nationalising the land.

Is such a reform possible within the framework of capitalism? It is not only possible, but it represents the purest, most consistent, and ideally perfect capitalism. Marx pointed this out in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, he proved it in detail in Volume III of *Capital*, and developed it with particular clarity in his controversy with Rodbertus in *Theories of Surplus Value*.

Land nationalisation makes it possible to abolish absolute rent, leaving only differential rent. According to Marx's theory, land nationalisation means a maximum elimination of medieval monopolies and medieval relations in agriculture, maximum



freedom in buying and selling land, and maximum facilities for agriculture to adapt itself to the market. The irony of history is that Narodism, under the guise of "combating capitalism" in agriculture, champions an agrarian programme that, if fully carried out, would mean the most rapid development of capitalism in agriculture.

What economic necessity is behind the spread of the most progressive bourgeois-democratic agrarian programmes in one of the most backward peasant countries of Asia? It is the necessity of destroying feudalism in all its forms and manifestations.

The more China lagged behind Europe and Japan, the more it was threatened with fragmentation and national disintegration. It could be "renovated" only by the heroism of the revolutionary masses, a heroism capable of creating a Chinese republic in the sphere of politics, and of ensuring, through land nationalisation, the most rapid capitalist progress in the sphere of agriculture.

Whether and to what extent this will succeed is another question. In their bourgeois revolutions, various countries achieved various degrees of political and agrarian democracy, and in the most diverse combinations. The decisive factors will be the international situation and the alignment of the social forces in China. The emperor will certainly try to unite the feudal lords, the bureaucracy and the clergy in an attempt at restoration. Yuan Shih-kai, who represents a bourgeoisie that has only just changed from liberal monarchist to liberal-republican (for how long?), will pursue a policy of

manoeuvring between monarchy and revolution. The revolutionary bourgeois democracy, represented by Sun Yat-sen, is correct in seeking ways and means of "renovating" China through maximum development of the initiative, determination and boldness of the peasant masses in the matter of political and agrarian reforms.

Lastly, the Chinese proletariat will increase as the number of Shanghais increases. It will probably form some kind of Chinese Social-Democratic labour party which, while criticising the petty-bourgeois utopias and reactionary views of Sun Yat-sen, will certainly take care to single out, defend and develop the revolutionary-democratic core of his political and agrarian programme.

Lenin,

**Report to the International Socialist Bureau, "Elections to the Fourth Duma",**

November 20, 1912

Le Peuple No. 325, November 20, 1912.

Lenin

Collected Works, Volume 41, pages 267.2-271.1

The coup of June 3 (16), 1907, opened the epoch of counter-revolution in Russia. Everyone knows about the judicial and administrative lawlessness, the persecutions and tortures of those condemned to penal servitude that crowned this triumph of tsarism.

The upper sections of the bourgeoisie, terrified by the revolution, supported the counter-revolutionary gentry. Tsarism was sure that it would find support and assistance among the counter-revolutionary elements of the bourgeoisie and landowners.

The electoral law of June 3 (16), 1907, is a specimen of barefaced rigging. Here are some data characterising it:

The population is divided into "curias": landowners first-and second-category urban dwellers, peasants, Cossacks and workers. Electors, elected separately by curias (sometimes not directly, but through representatives), are grouped by the government into gubernia electoral assemblies, and the latter elect the deputies to the Duma.

The law distributes the electors in such a way that in the electoral assemblies of 28 gubernias (out of 50) only the landowners are assured of a majority in advance, and in the rest—the electors of the first urban curia (big capitalists).

Here is the overall picture: 200,000 gentry have 2,594 electors in the electoral assemblies of 53 gubernias, that is, 49.4 per cent of the total number of electors; 500,000 or so capitalists of the first urban curia have 788 electors (15 per cent); almost 8 million townfolk of the second urban curia have 590 electors (11.2 per cent); nearly 70 million peasants and Cossacks have 1,168 electors (22.2 per cent); and nearly 12 million workers—112 electors (2.1 per cent).

No wonder this electoral law has produced a “black” counter-revolutionary Duma—a real “Chambre introuvable”.{2} What is surprising is that not only bourgeois liberals, but even Social-Democrats have managed to get their representatives into such a Duma.

In the workers’ curia, all electors are Social-Democrats. The ultra-reactionary gentry, with a majority in the gubernia electoral assemblies, have been forced to let in the Social-Democrats (in six gubernias, the law stipulates the election of one deputy from the workers; in other gubernias, the Social-Democrats obtain mandates through agreements with the liberals).

The Third Duma was dominated by the Octobrist Party—a party of the reactionary gentry and big capitalists subservient to tsarism. But even these “slaves” failed to satisfy the Nicholas

II camarilla, this black band of brigands organising pogroms and attempts on the life of opposition deputies.

The government, which rigged the elections to get the Octobrists into the Third Duma, has now falsified the elections to get the more “loyal” parties—the “Nationalists” and “extreme Rightists”—into the Fourth Duma.

The pressure has been unprecedented. The priests have been ordered to take massive part in the elections and get the Rightists in; the arrests of the opposition candidates, the fines imposed on the press, the closure of newspapers, the dropping of suspects from the electoral rolls—all that was applied with such cynicism that even the Rightists and even the gentry were impelled to protest.

As a result, we have an even “blacker” and even more Rightist Duma, but it is the Octobrists that today turn out to be the defeated party. The liberal opposition and revolutionary democracy (Social-Democratic workers and peasant bourgeois democrats) have almost managed to retain the status quo.

The latest data on 438 (out of 442) deputies up for election to the Fourth Duma warrant the following comparison:

Third Duma	Fourth Duma
<i>Democracy</i>	

Social-Democrats . . .	13	14	
			25
Trudoviks . . .	14	11	
<i>Liberals</i>			
Cadets . . . . .	52	61	
Progressists . . . . .	36	33	
Poles	18	14	
Moslems	9	5	113
<i>Rightists</i>			
Octobrists	131	79	
Nationalists	91	74	
Extreme Rightists	46	120	293
Non-party	27	7	
Total	437	438	

Let us add a few words to explain the names and groupings of the parties:

Social-Democrats: the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. Trudoviks: peasant democrats, i.e., revolutionary bourgeois democrats, whose programme includes the expropriation of the gentry. Cadets: the Constitutional-Democratic Party, actually a counter-revolutionary, liberal bourgeois party. Progressists: the same liberals, but slightly more moderate. Poles and Moslems—the same thing, but on national lines. Altogether the opposition consists of 25 democrats and 113 liberals, or 138 deputies (142 in the Third Duma).

Government parties: the Octobrists speak of the constitution rarely and under their breath; the Nationalists never speak of the constitution. The Rightists openly favour a return to autocracy and oppose the constitution. Not only the Octobrists, but even a section of the Nationalists have been impelled towards the opposition by the election rigging.

As for the Social-Democrats, the following have been elected by this time:

Six deputies from the workers' curia are Social-Democrats: Badayev from St. Petersburg; Malinovsky from Moscow; Samoilov from Vladimir; Shagov from Kostroma; Muranov from Kharkov; and Petrovsky from Yekaterinoslav. All six are workers. Then Social-Democrats have also been returned in three gubernias through agreement between democrats (socialists and Trudoviks) and liberals against the Rightists. Returned in this manner were: Khaustov from Ufa; Buryanov from Taurida Gubernia; Tulyakov from the Don Region. Then three Social-Democrats were returned from the Caucasus:

Chkheidze, Chkhenkeli and Skobelev, the latter being elected by the Russian population of the Caucasus.

Two Social-Democrats were returned from Siberia: Rusanov and, from the Amur Region, Ryslev.

Let us add, too, that the election of one Social-Democrat from Irkutsk Gubernia (Siberia) was virtually assured (11 electors out of 20 were Social-Democrats). However, the governor has declared the election of six Social-Democrats in the city of Irkutsk invalid. The elections have not yet been held.

It is also necessary to add that in Warsaw, as a result of a bloc between the Bund and the P.P.S., Jagiello, a member of the Polish Socialist = Party,<sup>{4}</sup> was elected deputy.

All these data are preliminary. The full composition of all the groups of the Fourth Duma, including the Social-Democratic group, will become known after the Duma opens on November 15 (28).

Cracow, November 11, 1912



Lenin,

**The Struggle of Parties in China,**

April 28 (May 11), 1913

Collected Works, Volume 41, pages 281.2-283.1.

The Chinese people have succeeded in overthrowing the old medieval system and the government supporting it. A republic has been established in China, and the first parliament of that great Asian country, which had long gladdened the hearts of the reactionaries of all nationalities by its immobility and stagnation—the first Chinese Parliament has been elected, convened and has been sitting for several weeks.

In the Lower of the two chambers of the Chinese Parliament, a small majority belongs to the supporters of Sun Yat-sen, the Kuomintang Party, the “Nationalists”—to express this party’s essence in the context of Russian conditions, it should be called a radical-Narodnik republican party; a party of democracy. In the Upper Chamber it has a more considerable majority.

This party is opposed by smaller moderate or conservative parties with all sorts of names like “Radicals”, and so on. Actually, all these parties are parties of reactionaries, namely, bureaucrats, landowners and reactionary bourgeoisie. They all gravitate to the Chinese Cadet Y\ 'uan Shih-k'ai, the provisional President of the Republic, who has been acting more and more like a dictator. As a Cadet he has been running true to form: yesterday he was a monarchist; now that revolutionary democracy has won out, he is a republican; tomorrow he

intends to be the head of state, again a monarchist state, that is, to betray the Republic.

Sun Yat-sen's party is based on the south of China, which is the most advanced, the most developed industrially and commercially, and where the influence of Europe has been greatest.

Yuan Shih-k'ai's parties are based on the backward north of China.

The early clashes have so far ended in a victory for Yuan Shih-k'ai: he has united all the "moderate" (i.e., reactionary) parties, split off a section of the "Nationalists", got his man to fill the post of President of the Lower Chamber of Parliament, and contrary to the Will of Parliament, secured a loan from "Europe", i.e., Europe's swindling billionaires. The terms of the loan are hard, downright usurious, with the salt gabelle as security. The loan will put China in pawn to the most reactionary and plunderous European bourgeoisie, which is prepared to stamp out the freedom of any nation once profits are involved. The European capitalists will reap tremendous profits on this loan of almost 250 million rubles.

This turns out to be an alliance between reactionary fear of the European proletariat on the part of the European bourgeoisie and the reactionary classes and sections of China.

For Sun Yat-sen's party the struggle against this alliance is a very hard one.

What is this party's weakness? It lies in the fact that it has not yet been able sufficiently to involve broad masses of the

Chinese people in the revolution. The proletariat in China is still very weak—there is therefore no leading class capable of waging a resolute and conscious struggle to carry the democratic revolution to its end. The peasantry, lacking a leader in the person of the proletariat, is terribly downtrodden, passive, ignorant and indifferent to politics. Despite the revolutionary overthrow of the old and thoroughly corrupt monarchy, despite the victory of the republic, China has no universal suffrage! The elections to Parliament had a qualification: only those who had property valued at about 500 rubles were entitled to vote! This also shows how little of the really broad popular mass has yet been drawn into active support of the Chinese Republic. But without such massive support, without an organised and steadfast leading class, the Republic cannot be stable.

Still, despite its leader Sun Yat-sen's major shortcomings (pensiveness and indecision, which are due to his lack of proletarian support), revolutionary democracy in China has done a great deal to awaken the people and to win freedom and consistently democratic institutions. By drawing ever broader masses of the Chinese peasantry into the movement and into politics, Sun Yat-sen's party is becoming (to the extent to which this process is taking place) a great factor of progress in Asia and of mankind's progress. Whatever defeats it may suffer from political rogues, adventurers and dictators, who rely on the country's reactionary forces, this party's efforts will not have been in vain.

Lenin,

**The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination,**

October 16 (29), 1915

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 21

Like most programmes or tactical resolutions of the Social-Democratic parties, the Zimmerwald Manifesto proclaims the “right of nations to self-determination”. In Nos. 252 and 253 of *Berner Tagwacht*, Parabellum has called “illusory” “the struggle for the non-existent right to self-determination”, and has contraposed to it “the **proletariat’s revolutionary mass struggle against capitalism**”, while at the same time assuring us that “we are against annexations” (an assurance is repeated five times in Parabellum’s article), and against all violence against nations.

The arguments advanced by Parabellum in support of **his position boil down to an assertion that today all national problems**, like those of Alsace-Lorraine, Armenia, etc., **are problems of imperialism**; that capital has outgrown the framework of national states; that it is impossible to turn the clock of history back to the obsolete ideal of national states, etc.

Let us see whether Parabellum’s reasoning is correct.

First of all, it is Parabellum who is looking backward, not forward, when, in opposing working-class acceptance “of the ideal of the national state”, he looks towards Britain, France, Italy, Germany, i. e., countries where the movement for national

liberation is a thing of the past, and not towards the East, towards Asia, Africa, and the colonies, where this movement is a thing of the present and the future. Mention of India, China, Persia, and Egypt will be sufficient.

Furthermore, imperialism means that capital has outgrown the framework of national states; it means that national oppression has been extended and heightened on a new historical foundation. Hence, it follows that, despite Parabellum, we must link the revolutionary struggle for socialism with a revolutionary programme on the national question.

From what Parabellum says, it appears that, in the name of the socialist revolution, he scornfully rejects a consistently revolutionary programme in the sphere of democracy. He is wrong to do so. The proletariat cannot be victorious except through democracy, i.e., by giving full effect to democracy and by linking with each step of its struggle democratic demands formulated in the most resolute terms. It is absurd to contrapose the socialist revolution and the revolutionary struggle against capitalism to a single problem of democracy, in this case, the national question. **We must combine the revolutionary struggle against capitalism with a revolutionary programme and tactics on all democratic demands: a republic, a militia, the popular election of officials, equal rights for women, the self-determination of nations, etc.** While capitalism exists, these demands—all of them—can only be accomplished as an exception, and even then, in an incomplete and distorted form. Basing ourselves on the democracy already achieved, and exposing its incompleteness

under capitalism, we demand the overthrow of capitalism, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, as a necessary basis both for the abolition of the poverty of the masses and for the complete and all-round institution of all democratic reforms. **Some of these reforms will be started before the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, others in the course of that overthrow, and still others after it.** The social revolution is not a single battle, but a period covering a series of battles over all sorts of problems of economic and democratic reform, which are consummated only by the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It is for the sake of this final aim that we must formulate every one of our democratic demands in a consistently revolutionary way. It is quite conceivable that the workers of some particular country will overthrow the bourgeoisie before even a single fundamental democratic reform has been fully achieved. It is, however, quite inconceivable that the proletariat, as a historical class, will be able to defeat the bourgeoisie, unless it is prepared for that by being educated in the spirit of the most consistent and resolutely revolutionary democracy.

**Imperialism means the progressively mounting oppression of the nations of the world by a handful of Great Powers;** it means a period of wars between the latter to extend and consolidate the oppression of nations; it means a period in which the masses of the people are deceived by hypocritical social-patriots, i.e., individuals who, under the pretext of the "freedom of nations", "the right of nations to self-determination", and "defence of the fatherland", justify and defend the oppression of the majority of the world's nations by the Great Powers.

That is why the focal point in the Social-Democratic programme must be that **division of nations into oppressor and oppressed which forms the essence of imperialism** and is deceitfully evaded by the social-chauvinists and Kautsky. This division is not significant from the angle of bourgeois pacifism or the philistine Utopia of peaceful competition among independent nations under capitalism, but it is **most significant from the angle of the revolutionary struggle against imperialism**. It is from this division that **our definition of the "right of nations to self-determination" must follow**, a definition that is consistently democratic, revolutionary, and **in accord with the general task of the immediate struggle for socialism**. It is for that right, and in a struggle to achieve sincere recognition for it, that the Social-Democrats of the oppressor nations must demand that the oppressed nations should have the right of secession, **for otherwise recognition of equal rights for nations and of international working-class solidarity would in fact be merely empty phrase-mongering, sheer hypocrisy**. On the other hand, the Social-Democrats of the oppressed nations must attach prime **significance to the unity and the merging of the workers of the oppressed nations with those of the oppressor nations; otherwise these Social-Democrats will involuntarily become the allies of their own national bourgeoisie**, which always betrays the interests of the people and of democracy, and is always ready, in its turn, to annex territory and oppress other nations.

Extract

Lenin

**Reply to P. Kievsky (Y. Pyatakov)**

August-September 1916

Proletarskaya Revolutsia No. 7 (90), 1929

Collected Works, Volume 23, pages 22-27.

Like every crisis in the life of individuals or in the history of nations, war oppresses and breaks some, steels and enlightens others.

The truth of that is making itself felt in Social-Democratic thinking on the war and in connection with the war. It is one thing to give serious thought to the causes and significance of an imperialist war that grows out of highly developed capitalism, Social-Democratic tactics in connection with such a war, the causes of the crisis within the Social-Democratic movement, and so on. But it is quite another to allow the war to oppress your thinking, to stop thinking and analysing under the weight of the terrible impressions and tormenting consequences or features of the war.

One such form of oppression or repression of human thinking caused by the war is the contemptuous attitude of imperialist Economism towards democracy. P. Kievsky does not notice that running like a red thread through all his arguments is this war-inspired oppression, this fear, this refusal to analyse. What point is there in discussing defence of the fatherland when we are in the midst of such a terrible holocaust? What point is there in discussing nations' rights when outright strangulation is everywhere the rule? Self-determination and "independence"



of nations—but look what they have done to “independent” Greece! What is the use of talking and thinking of “rights”, when rights are everywhere being trampled upon in the interests of the militarists! What sense is there in talking and thinking of a republic, when there is absolutely no difference whatsoever between the most democratic republics and the most reactionary monarchies, when the war has obliterated every trace of difference!

Kievsky is very angry when told that he has given way to fear, to the extent of rejecting democracy in general. He is angry and objects: I am not against democracy, only against one democratic demand, which I consider “bad”. But though Kievsky is offended, and though he “assures” us (and himself as well, perhaps) that he is not at all “against” democracy, his arguments—or, more correctly, the endless errors in his arguments—prove the very opposite.

Defence of the fatherland is a lie in an imperialist war, but not in a democratic and revolutionary war. All talk of “rights” seems absurd during a war, because every war replaces rights by direct and outright violence. But that should not lead us to forget that history has known in the past (and very likely will know, must know, in the future) wars (democratic and revolutionary wars) which, while replacing every kind of “right”, every kind of democracy, by violence during the war, nevertheless, in their social content and implications, served the cause of democracy, and consequently socialism. The example of Greece, it would seem, “refutes” all national self-determination. But if you stop to think, analyse and weigh

matters, and do not allow yourself to be deafened by the sound of words or frightened and oppressed by the nightmarish impressions of the war, then this example is no more serious or convincing than ridiculing the republican system because the “democratic” republics, the most democratic—not only France, but also the United States, Portugal and Switzerland—have already introduced or are introducing, in the course of this war, exactly the same kind of militarist arbitrariness that exists in Russia.

That imperialist war obliterates the difference between republic and monarchy is a fact. But to therefore reject the republic, or even be contemptuous towards it, is to allow oneself to be frightened by the war, and one’s thinking to be oppressed by its horrors. That is the mentality of many supporters of the “disarmament” slogan (Roland-Hoist, the younger element in Switzerland, the Scandinavian “Lefts” and others). What, they imply, is the use of discussing revolutionary utilisation of the army or a militia when there is no difference in this war between a republican militia and a monarchist standing army, and when militarism is everywhere doing its horrible work?

That is all one trend of thought, one and the same theoretical and practical political error Kievsky unwittingly makes at every step. He thinks he is arguing only against self-determination, he wants to argue only against self-determination, [sic] but the result—against his will and conscience, and that is the curious thing!—is that he has adduced not a single argument which could not be just as well applied to democracy in general!

The real source of all his curious logical errors and confusion—and this applies to not only self-determination, but also to defence of the fatherland, divorce, “rights” in general—lies in the oppression of his thinking by the war, which makes him completely distort the Marxist position on democracy.

Imperialism is highly developed capitalism; imperialism is progressive; imperialism is the negation of democracy—“hence”, democracy is “unattainable” under capitalism. Imperialist war is a flagrant violation of all democracy, whether in backward monarchies or progressive republics—“hence”, there is no point in talking of “rights” (i. e., democracy!). The “only” thing that can be “opposed” to imperialist war is socialism; socialism alone is “the way out”; “hence”, to advance democratic slogans in our minimum programme, i.e., under capitalism, is a deception or an illusion, befuddlement or postponement, etc., of the slogan of socialist revolution.

Though Kievsky does not realise it, that is the real source of all his mishaps. That is his basic logical error which, precisely because it is basic and is not realised by the author, “explodes” at every step like a punctured bicycle tire. It “bursts out” now on the question of defending the fatherland, now on the question of divorce, now in the phrase about “rights”, in this remarkable phrase (remarkable for its utter contempt for “rights” and its utter failure to understand the issue): we shall discuss not rights, but the destruction of age-old slavery!

To say that is to show a lack of understanding of the relationship between capitalism and democracy, between socialism and democracy.

Capitalism in general, and imperialism in particular, turn democracy into an illusion—though at the same time capitalism engenders democratic aspirations in the masses, creates democratic institutions, aggravates the antagonism between imperialism’s denial of democracy and the mass striving for democracy. Capitalism and imperialism can be overthrown only by economic revolution. They cannot be overthrown by democratic transformations, even the most “ideal”. But a proletariat not schooled in the struggle for democracy is incapable of performing an economic revolution. Capitalism cannot be vanquished without taking over the banks, without repealing private ownership of the means of production. These revolutionary measures, however, cannot be implemented without organising the entire people for democratic administration of the means of production captured from the bourgeoisie, without enlisting the entire mass of the working people, the proletarians, semi-proletarians and small peasants, for the democratic organisation of their ranks, their forces, their participation in state affairs. Imperialist war may be said to be a triple negation of democracy (a. every war replaces “rights” by violence; b. imperialism as such is the negation of democracy; c. imperialist war fully equates the republic with the monarchy), but the awakening and growth of socialist revolt against imperialism are indissolubly linked with the growth of democratic resistance and unrest. Socialism leads to the withering away of every state, consequently also of every democracy, but socialism can be implemented only through the dictatorship of the proletariat, which combines violence against the bourgeoisie, i.e., the minority of the population, with full

development of democracy, i.e., the genuinely equal and genuinely universal participation of the entire mass of the population in all state affairs and in all the complex problems of abolishing capitalism.

It is in these “contradictions” that Kievsky, having for gotten the Marxist teaching on democracy, got himself confused. Figuratively speaking, the war has so oppressed his thinking that he uses the agitational slogan “break out of imperialism” to replace all thinking, just as the cry “get out of the colonies” is used to replace analysis of what, properly speaking, is the meaning—economically and politically—of the civilised nations “getting out of the colonies”.

The Marxist solution of the problem of democracy is for the proletariat to utilise all democratic institutions and aspirations in its class struggle against the bourgeoisie in order to prepare for its overthrow and assure its own victory. Such utilisation is no easy task. To the Economists, Tolstoyans, etc., it often seems an unpardonable concession to “bourgeois” and opportunist views, just as to Kievsky defence of national self-determination “in the epoch of finance capital” seems an unpardonable concession to bourgeois views. Marxism teaches us that to “fight opportunism” by renouncing utilisation of the democratic institutions created and distorted by the bourgeoisie of the given, capitalist, society is to completely surrender to opportunism!

The slogan of civil war for socialism indicates the quickest way out of the imperialist war and links our struggle against the war with our struggle against opportunism. It is the only slogan that

correctly takes into account both war-time peculiarities—the war is dragging out and threatening to grow into a whole “epoch” of war—and the general character of our activities as distinct from opportunism with its pacifism, legalism and adaptation to one’s “own” bourgeoisie. In addition, civil war against the bourgeoisie is a democratically organised and democratically conducted war of the propertyless mass against the propertied minority. But civil war, like every other, must inevitably replace rights by violence. However, violence in the name of the interests and rights of the majority is of a different nature: it tramples on the “rights” of the exploiters, the bourgeoisie, it is unachievable without democratic organisation of the army and the “rear”. Civil war forcibly expropriates, immediately and first of all, the banks, factories, railways, the big estates, etc. But in order to expropriate all this, we shall have to introduce election of all officials and officers by the people, completely merge the army conducting the war against the bourgeoisie with the mass of the population, completely democratise administration of the food supply, the production and distribution of food, etc. The object of civil war is to seize the banks, factories, etc., destroy all possibility of resistance by the bourgeoisie, destroy its armed forces. But that aim cannot be achieved either in its purely military, or economic, or political aspects, unless we, during the war, simultaneously introduce and extend democracy among our armed forces and in our “rear”. We tell the masses now (and they instinctively feel that we are right): “They are deceiving you in making you fight for imperialist capitalism in a war disguised by the great slogans of democracy. You must, you shall wage a genuinely

democratic war against the bourgeoisie for the achievement of genuine democracy and socialism." The present war unites and "merges" nations into coalitions by means of violence and financial dependence. In our civil war against the bourgeoisie, we shall unite and merge the nations not by the force of the ruble, not by the force of the truncheon, not by violence, but by voluntary agreement and solidarity of the working people against the exploiters. For the bourgeoisie the proclamation of equal rights for all nations has become a deception. For us it will be the truth that will facilitate and accelerate the winning over of all nations. Without effectively organised democratic relations between nations—and, consequently, without freedom of secession—civil war of the workers and working people generally of all nations against the bourgeoisie is impossible.

Through utilisation of bourgeois democracy to socialist and consistently democratic organisation of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and against opportunism. There is no other path. There is no other way out. Marxism, just as life itself, knows no other way out. We must direct free secession and free merging of nations along that path, not fight shy of them, not fear that this will "defile" the "purity" of our economic aims.

## **The second revolution in Russia (February to October 1917)**

Lenin,

### **A Regrettable Deviation from the Principles of Democracy,**

May 10 (23), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 385-387

Today's Izvestia carries a report of the meeting of the Soldiers' Section of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. This meeting, among other things,

"considered the question of whether soldiers could perform the duties of militiamen. The Executive Committee proposed to the meeting a resolution to the following effect:

"In view of the fact that soldiers must perform their direct duty, the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies declared against the soldiers' participation in the militia, and proposes that all soldiers serving in the militia be immediately returned to their units.'

"After a brief debate, the resolution was passed with an amendment permitting soldiers discharged from active service as well as wounded soldiers to perform militia duties."

It is to be regretted that the exact texts of the resolution and the amendment have not been published. More regrettable still is the fact that the Executive Committee proposed and the meeting adopted a resolution which is a complete abandonment of the fundamental principles of democracy.



There is hardly a democratic party in Russia that does not include in its programme a demand for the universal arming of the people as a substitute for the standing army. There is hardly a Socialist-Revolutionary or a Menshevik Social-Democrat who would dare oppose such a demand. The trouble is that it has become a "custom" "nowadays", under the cover of high-sounding phrases about 'revolutionary democracy', to accept democratic (the more so socialist) programmes "in principle" but reject them in practice.

To oppose the participation of soldiers in the militia on the ground that "soldiers must perform their direct duty" is to forget completely the principles of democracy and involuntarily, unconsciously, perhaps, to adopt the idea of a standing army. The soldier is a professional; his direct duty is not social service at all—such is the point of view of those who are for a standing army. It is not a democratic point of view. It is the point of view of the Napoleons. It is the point of view of old supporters of the old regime and the capitalists, who dream of an easy transition backward, from a republic to a constitutional monarchy.

A democrat is opposed to such a view on principle. Soldiers' participation in the militia amounts to breaking down the wall that separates the army from the people. It amounts to breaking with the accursed "barrack" past where a special group of citizens, detached from and opposed to the people, were trained, "knocked into shape" and drilled for the "direct task" of following only a military profession. Soldiers' participation in the militia is a cardinal issue involving the re-education of

the "soldiers" into militiamen citizens, the re-education of the population into public-spirited armed citizens. Democracy will remain an idle deceitful phrase, or merely a half-measure, unless the entire people is given a chance immediately and unqualifiedly to learn how to handle arms. Without the systematic, regular, and widespread participation of the soldiers in the militia this will be impossible.

The objection may be raised that soldiers should not be deflected from their direct duties. No one said they should. To make a point of this is as ridiculous as saying that a physician engaged at the bedside of a patient who is dangerously ill has no right to leave that bedside in order to go and hand in his voting-paper, or that a worker engaged in production, which admittedly must not be interrupted, has no right to go away to exercise his political rights until he is relieved by another worker. Such arguments would simply be frivolous and even unscrupulous.

Participation in the militia is one of the cardinal and basic principles of democracy, one of the most important guarantees of freedom. (We might add, parenthetically, that there is no better way of enhancing the purely military strength and capacity of the army than by substituting the universal arming of the people for the standing army, and by using the soldiers to instruct the people; this method has always been used and always will be used in every truly revolutionary war.) The immediate, unqualified, universal organisation of a people's militia and the widest participation of soldiers in that militia are in the vital interests of the workers, peasants, and soldiers, that

is to say, the vast majority of the population, a majority that is not interested in safeguarding the profits of the landowners and the capitalists.

Lenin,

**Petrograd City R.S.D.L.P.(B.) Conference,**

April 14, 1917

Collected Works, Volume 41, pages 400.2-402.1.

#### NEWSPAPER REPORT

The old traditional formulas (dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry) no longer meet the changed conditions. **A revolutionary-democratic dictatorship has been established but not in the form we envisaged:** it is interlocked with the dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie. The imperialist war has confused everything, turning the rabid opponents of the revolution—the Anglo-French capitalists—into supporters of the revolution for victory (the same applies to the lop army command and counter revolutionary bourgeoisie).

It is this unique historical concurrence of circumstances that has **brought about a dual dictatorship:** the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of revolutionary democracy. In organizational terms, the people have never managed to keep abreast of the bourgeoisie; in Russia **the people have set up their own organised power without having achieved political independence.** Hence, the dual power, the unconsciously trusting attitude on the part of the petty-bourgeois majority of the soldier masses and a section of the workers to the Provisional Government, and **the voluntary submission of revolutionary democracy to the bourgeois dictatorship.** The specific feature of the present situation is that lack of political awareness on the part of the masses is

preventing the establishment of a stable and conscious majority on the side of the proletarian policy (all other political trends have gone over entirely to the petty-bourgeois position). **The revolutionary democracy is an assembly of the most diverse elements** (in terms of class status and interests, which is not the same thing at all!). **Their stratification:** in the countryside—the well-to-do peasants, who have been strengthened by the November 9 law, and the poor, one-horse and horseless peasants, and in the towns—**the sections close to the working class and the petty proprietors;** the separation of the proletarians and the semi proletarians from the petty bourgeoisie is inevitable, but the consolidation of the propertied elements in the revolutionary bloc may well advance to a point where it will prevail over the organisation of the masses rallying round the proletarian slogans. **It is quite possible, therefore, that power will remain in the hands of the bourgeoisie,** and that there will be no transfer of power to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The conclusion: we are not faced with the task of overthrowing the Provisional Government—it rests on the confidence of the petty-bourgeois and a section of the workers' masses—but with that of painstaking explanation of the class tasks and organisation.

Pravda No. 40, May 8 (April 25), 1917

SPEECH IN MOVING A RESOLUTION ON THE WAR APRIL 22 (MAY 5)

The resolution on the war was drafted in the committee, but the final version is yet to be worked out. I think that in its final wording the resolution will be put before the general Party

conference, and I now move that it be read out in its present form.

The resolution consists of three parts: 1) objective causes of the war, 2) revolutionary defencism, and 3) how to end the war.

Lenin,

**Stealing a March on the Workers,**

May 6 (19), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 367-369

Vremya, which deserves serious attention.

The public is informed that "in accordance with an agreement between the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and the Union of Engineers, as authorised by the Provisional Government", there has been organised in Petrograd a "Central Committee for restoring and maintaining normal work in the industrial enterprises".

"The main task of the Central Committee," the announcement reads, "is to work out and co-ordinate all measures aimed at restoring and maintaining normal work in the industrial enterprises and to organise regular and active public control over all industrial enterprises."

**The words "public control" were italicised in the announcement.**

**They remind one of the Senate and other bureaucratic committees of the good old tsarist days.** No sooner had some knave of a tsar's minister, governor, marshal of the nobility, etc., been caught red-handed at some thievery, no sooner had some institution directly or indirectly connected with the tsar's government conspicuously disgraced itself through out Russia or throughout Europe, than a high commission of "personages"

notable and super-notable, high-ranking and super-ranking, rich and super-rich was appointed to “appease public opinion”.

And these personages usually managed to “appease” public opinion with conspicuous success. The more high-sounding the phrases about our wise tsar salving “the popular conscience” the more effectively did these men kill the idea of any “public control”.

So it was, so it will be, one feels like saying as one reads the pompously worded announcement about the new Central Committee.

**The capitalists have decided to steal a march on the workers.**

There is a growing consciousness among the workers that a proletarian control over factories and syndicates is necessary. The master minds of the business world from among ministerial and near-ministerial circles have had a “brain wave”—to forestall events and take the Soviet in tow. This should not be difficult, they thought, so long as the Narodniks and Mensheviks are still in control there. We’ll fix up “public control”, they said to themselves. It will look so Important, so statesmanlike, so ministerial, so solid. And it will kill all possible real control, all proletarian control so effectively, so quietly. A brilliant idea! The “popular conscience” will be completely “salved”.

How is this new Central Committee to be composed?

Why, on democratic lines, of course. **Are we not all “revolutionary democrats”?** If anyone thinks that democracy requires 20 representatives from 200,000 workers and one



representative from 10,000 engineers, capitalists, etc., that would be an “anarchist” delusion. No, true democracy consists in imitating the way in which “revolutionary democracy” has composed its **“new” government**, where **the workers and peasants are “represented” by six Mensheviks and Narodniks while eight Cadets and Octobrists represent the landowners and the capitalists**. Do not the latest statistical surveys now being completed by the new Ministry of Labour by arrangement with the old Ministry of Industry prove that the majority of Russia’s population belongs to the class of land owners and capitalists?

Here, if you please, is a complete list of “representatives” of the organisations that have been included in the new Central Committee by agreement between “revolutionary democracy” and the government.

The Central Committee is composed of representatives from the following organisations: (1) The Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies; (2) The Provisional Committee of the Duma; (3) The All-Russia Union of Zemstvos; (4) The All-Russia Union of Cities; (5) The Petrograd Municipal Administration; (6) The Union of Engineers; (7) The Soviet of Officers’ Deputies; (8) The Council of Congresses of Representatives of Industry and Commerce; (9) The Petrograd Society of Factory Owners; (10) The Central War Industries Committee; (11) The Central Committee of Zemstvo and City Unions for Army Supply; (12) The Committee of Technical War Aid; (13) The Free-Economic Society.

And that’s all?

Yes, that's all.

Is that not sufficient for salving the popular conscience?

Yes, but what if some big bank or syndicate of capitalists is represented five or ten times through its shareholders in these ten or twelve institutions?

Oh, why quibble about "details", when the main thing is to secure "a regular and active public control"!

Lenin,

**War and Revolution, A Lecture Delivered**

May 14 (27), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 398-421

The question of war and revolution has been dealt with so often lately in the press and at every public meeting that probably many of you are not only familiar with many aspects of the question but have come to find them tedious. I have not yet had a single opportunity to address or even attend any Party or for that matter any public meetings in this district, and therefore I run the risk, perhaps, of repetition or of not dealing in sufficient detail with those aspects of the question that interest you most.

It seems to me that the most important thing that is usually overlooked in the question of the war, a key issue to which insufficient attention is paid and over which there is so much dispute useless, hopeless, idle dispute, I should say is the question of the class character of the war: what caused that war, what classes are waging it, and what historical and historico-economic conditions gave rise to it. As far as I have been able to follow the way the question of the war is dealt with at public and Party meetings, I have come to the conclusion that the reason why there is so much misunderstanding on the subject is because, all too often, when dealing with the question of the war, we speak in entirely different languages.

From the point of view of Marxism, that is, of modern scientific socialism, the main issue in any discussion by socialists on how to assess the war and what attitude to adopt towards it is this:

what is the war being waged for, and what classes staged and directed it. We Marxists do not belong to that category of people who are unqualified opponents of all war. We say: our aim is to achieve a socialist system of society, which, by eliminating the division of mankind into classes, by eliminating all exploitation of man by man and nation by nation, will inevitably eliminate the very possibility of war. But in the war to win that socialist system of society we are bound to encounter conditions under which the class struggle within each given nation may come up against a war between the different nations, a war conditioned by this very class struggle. Therefore, we cannot rule out the possibility of revolutionary wars, i.e., wars arising from the class struggle, wars waged by revolutionary classes, wars which are of direct and immediate revolutionary significance. Still less can we rule this out when we remember that though the history of European revolutions during the last century, in the course of 125–135 years, say, gave us wars which were mostly reactionary, it also gave us revolutionary wars, such as the war of the French revolutionary masses against a united monarchist, backward, feudal and semi-feudal Europe. No deception of the masses is more widespread today in Western Europe, and latterly here in Russia, too, than that which is practised by citing the example of revolutionary wars. There are wars and wars. We must be clear as to what historical conditions have given rise to the war, what classes are waging it, and for what ends. Unless we grasp this, all our talk about the war will necessarily be utterly futile, engendering more heat than light. That is why I take the liberty, seeing that you have

chosen war and revolution as the subject of today's talk, to deal with this aspect of the matter at greater length.

We all know the dictum of Clausewitz, one of the most famous writers on the philosophy and history of war, which says: "War is a continuation of policy by other means." This dictum comes from a writer [See Clausewitz, *On War*, Vol. 1] who reviewed the history of wars and drew philosophic lessons from it shortly after the period of the Napoleonic wars. This writer, whose basic views are now undoubtedly familiar to every thinking person, nearly eighty years ago challenged the ignorant man-in-the-street conception of war as being a thing apart from the policies of the governments and classes concerned, as being a simple attack that disturbs the peace, and is then followed by restoration of the peace thus disturbed, as much as to say: "They had a fight, then they made up!" This is a grossly ignorant view, one that was repudiated scores of years ago and is repudiated by any more or less careful analysis of any historical epoch of wars.

War is a continuation of policy by other means. All wars are inseparable from the political systems that engender them. The policy which a given state, a given class within that state, pursued for a long time before the war is inevitably continued by that same class during the war, the form of action alone being changed.

War is a continuation of policy by other means. When the French revolutionary townspeople and revolutionary peasants overthrew the monarchy at the close of the eighteenth century by revolutionary means and established a democratic republic

when they made short work of their monarch, and short work of their landowners, too, in a revolutionary fashion that policy of the revolutionary class was bound to shake all the rest of autocratic, tsarist, imperial, and semi-feudal Europe to its foundations. And the inevitable continuation of this policy of the victorious revolutionary class in France was the wars in which all the monarchist nations of Europe, forming their famous coalition, lined up against revolutionary France in a counter-revolutionary war. Just as within the country the revolutionary people of France had then, for the first time, displayed revolutionary energy on a scale it had never shown for centuries, so in the war at the close of the eighteenth century it revealed a similar gigantic revolutionary creativeness when it remodeled its whole system of strategy, broke with all the old rules and traditions of warfare, replaced the old troops with a new revolutionary people's army, and created new methods of warfare. This example, to my mind, is noteworthy in that it clearly demonstrates to us things which the bourgeois journalists are now always forgetting when they pander to the philistine prejudices and ignorance of the backward masses who do not understand this intimate economic and historical connection between every kind of war and the preceding policy of every country, every class that ruled before the war and achieved its ends by so-called "peaceful" means. So-called, because the brute force required to ensure "peaceful" rule in the colonies, for example, can hardly be called peaceful.

Peace reigned in Europe, but this was because domination over hundreds of millions of people in the colonies by the European nations was sustained only through constant, incessant,

interminable wars, which we Europeans do not regard as wars at all, since all too often they resembled, not wars, but brutal massacres, the wholesale slaughter of unarmed peoples. The thing is that if we want to know what the present war is about, we must first of all make a general survey of the policies of the European powers as a whole. We must not take this or that example, this or that particular case, which can easily be wrenched out of the context of social phenomena and which is worthless, because an opposite example can just as easily be cited. We must take the whole policy of the entire system of European states in their economic and political interrelations if we are to understand how the present war steadily and inevitably grew out of this system.

We are constantly witnessing attempts, especially on the part of the capitalist press whether monarchist or republican to read into the present war an historical meaning which it does not possess. For example, no device is more frequently resorted to in the French Republic than that of presenting this war on France's part as a continuation and counterpart of the wars of the Great French Revolution of 1792. No device for hoodwinking the French masses, the French workers and the workers of all countries is more widespread than that of applying to our epoch the "jargon" of that other epoch and some of its watchwords, or the attempt to present matters as though now, too, republican France is defending her liberty against the monarchy. One "minor" fact overlooked is that then, in 1792, war was waged in France by a revolutionary class, which had carried out an unparalleled revolution and displayed unmatched heroism in utterly destroying the French

monarchy and rising against a united monarchist Europe with the sole and single aim of carrying on its revolutionary struggle.

The war in France was a continuation of the policy of the revolutionary class which had carried out the revolution, won the republic, settled accounts with the French capitalists and landowners with unprecedented vigour, and was waging a revolutionary war against a united monarchist Europe in continuation of that policy.

What we have at present is primarily two leagues, two groups of capitalist powers. We have before us all the world's greatest capitalist powers Britain, France, America, and Germany who for decades have doggedly pursued a policy of incessant economic rivalry aimed at achieving world supremacy, subjugating the small nations, and making threefold and tenfold profits on banking capital, which has caught the whole world in the net of its influence. That is what Britain's and Germany's policies really amount to. I stress this fact. This fact can never be emphasised strongly enough, because if we forget this, we shall never understand what this war is about, and we shall then be easy game for any bourgeois publicist who tries to foist lying phrases on us.

The real policies of the two groups of capitalist giants Britain and Germany, who, with their respective allies, have taken the field against each other policies which they were pursuing for decades before the war, should be studied and grasped in their entirety. If we did not do this, we should not only be neglecting an essential requirement of scientific socialism and of all social science in general, but we should be unable to understand



anything whatever about the present war. We should be putting ourselves in the power of Milyukov, that deceiver, who is stirring up chauvinism and hatred of one nation for another by methods which are applied everywhere without exception, methods which Clausewitz wrote about eighty years ago when he ridiculed the very view some people are holding today, namely, that the nations lived in peace and then they started fighting. As if this were true! How can a war be accounted for without considering its bearing on the preceding policy of the given state, of the given system of states, the given classes? I repeat: this is a basic point which is constantly overlooked. Failure to understand it makes nine-tenths of all war discussions mere wrangling, so much verbiage. We say: if you have not studied the policies of both belligerent groups over a period of decades so as to avoid accidental factors and the quoting of random examples if you have not shown what bearing this war has on preceding policies, then you don't understand what this war is all about.

These policies show us just one thing continuous economic rivalry between the world's two greatest giants, capitalist economies. On the one hand we have Britain, a country which owns the greater part of the globe, a country which ranks first in wealth, which has created this wealth not so much by the labour of its workers as by the exploitation of innumerable colonies, by the vast power of its banks which have developed at the head of all the others into an insignificantly small group of some four or five super-banks handling billions of rubles, and handling them in such a way that it can be said without exaggeration that there is not a patch of land in the world today

on which this capital has not laid its heavy hand, not a patch of land which British capital has not enmeshed by a thousand threads. This capital grew to such dimensions by the turn of the century that its activities extended far beyond the borders of individual states and formed a group of giant banks possessed of fabulous wealth. Having begotten this tiny group of banks, it has caught the whole world in the net of its billions. This is the sum and substance of Britain's economic policy and of the economic policy of France, of which even French writers, some of them contributors to *L'Humanité*, a paper now controlled by ex-socialists (in fact, no less a man than Lysis, the well-known financial writer), stated several years before the war: "France is a financial monarchy, France is a financial oligarchy, France is the world's money-lender."

On the other hand, opposed to this, mainly Anglo-French group, we have another group of capitalists, an even more rapacious, even more predatory one, a group who came to the capitalist banqueting table when all the seats were occupied, but who introduced into the struggle new methods for developing capitalist production, improved techniques, and superior organisation, which turned the old capitalism, the capitalism of the free-competition age, into the capitalism of giant trusts, syndicates, and cartels. This group introduced the beginnings of state-controlled capitalist production, combining the colossal power of capitalism with the colossal power of the state into a single mechanism and bringing tens of millions of people within the single organisation of state capitalism. Here is economic history, here is diplomatic history, covering several decades, from which no one can get away. It is the one and only

guide-post to a proper solution of the problem of war; it leads you to the conclusion that the present war, too, is the outcome of the policies of the classes who have come to grips in it, of the two supreme giants, who, long before the war, had caught the whole world, all countries, in the net of financial exploitation and economically divided the globe up among themselves. They were bound to clash, because a redivision of this supremacy, from the point of view of capitalism, had become inevitable.

The old division was based on the fact that Britain, in the course of several centuries, had ruined her former competitors. A former competitor was Holland, which had dominated the whole world. Another was France, which had fought for supremacy for nearly a hundred years. After a series of protracted wars Britain was able, by virtue of her economic power, her merchant capital, to establish her unchallenged sway over the world. In 1871 a new predator appeared, a new capitalist power arose, which developed at an incomparably faster pace than Britain. That is a basic fact. You will not find a book on economic history that does not acknowledge this indisputable fact the fact of Germany's faster development. This rapid development of capitalism in Germany was the development of a young strong predator, who appeared in the concert of European powers and said: "You ruined Holland, you defeated France, you have helped yourself to half the world now be good enough to let us have our fair share." What does "a fair share" mean? How is it to be determined in the capitalist world, in the world of banks? There power is determined by the number of banks, there power is determined in the way

described by a mouthpiece of the American multimillionaires, which declared with typically American frankness and typically American cynicism: "The war in Europe is being waged for world domination. To dominate the world two things are needed: dollars and banks. We have the dollars; we shall make the banks and we shall dominate the world." This statement was made by a leading newspaper of the American multimillionaires. I must say, there is a thousand times more truth in this cynical statement of a blustering American multimillionaire than in thousands of articles by bourgeois liars who try to make out that this war is being waged for national interests, on national issues, and utter similar glaringly patent lies which dismiss history completely and take an isolated example like the case of the German beast of prey who attacked Belgium. The case is undoubtedly a real one. This group of predators did attack Belgium with brutal ferocity, but it did the same thing the other group did yesterday by other means and is doing today to other nations.

When we argue about annexations and this bears on the question I have been trying briefly to explain to you as the history of the economic and diplomatic relations which led up to the present war when we argue about annexations we always forget that these, generally, are what the war is being waged for; it is for the carve-up of conquered territories, or, to put it more popularly, for the division of the plundered spoils by the two robber gangs. When we argue about annexations, we constantly meet with methods which, scientifically speaking, do not stand up to criticism, and which, as methods of public journalism, are deliberate humbug. Ask a Russian chauvinist or

social-chauvinist what annexation by Germany means, and he will give you an excellent explanation, because he understands that perfectly well. But he will never answer a request for a general definition of annexation that will fit them all Germany, Britain, and Russia. He will never do that! And when Rech (to pass from theory to practice) sneered at Pravda, saying, "These Pravdists consider Kurland a case of annexation! How can you talk to such people!" and we answered: "Please give us such a definition of annexation as would apply to the Germans, the English, and the Russians, and we add that either you evade this issue or we shall expose you on the spot" —Rech kept silent. We maintain that no newspaper, either of the chauvinists in general, who simply say that the fatherland must be defended, or of the social-chauvinists, has ever given a definition of annexation that would fit both Germany and Russia, that would be applicable to any side. It cannot do this for the simple reason that this war is the continuation of a policy of annexations, that is, a policy of conquest, of capitalist robbery on the part of both groups involved in the war. Obviously, the question of which of these two robbers was the first to draw the knife is of small account to us. Take the history of the naval and military expenditures of these two groups over a period of decades, take the history of the little wars they waged before the big war "little" because few Europeans died in those wars, whereas hundreds of thousands of people belonging to the nations they were subjugating died in them, nations which from their point of view could not be regarded as nations at all (you couldn't very well call those Asians and Africans nations!); the wars waged against these nations were wars against

unarmed people, who were simply shot down, machine-gunned. Can you call them wars? Strictly speaking, they were not wars at all, and you could forget about them. That is their attitude to this downright deception of the masses.

The present war is a continuation of the policy of conquest, of the shooting down of whole nationalities, of unbelievable atrocities committed by the Germans and the British in Africa, and by the British and the Russians in Persia which of them committed most it is difficult to say. It was for this reason that the German capitalists looked upon them as their enemies. Ah, they said, you are strong because you are rich? But we are stronger, therefore we have the same "sacred" right to plunder. That is what the real history of British and German finance capital in the course of several decades preceding the war amounts to. That is what the history of Russo-German, Russo-British, and German-British relations amounts to. There you have the clue to an understanding of what the war is about. That is why the story that is current about the cause of the war is sheer duplicity and humbug. Forgetting the history of finance capital, the history of how this war had been brewing over the issue of redivision, they present the matter like this: two nations were living at peace, then one attacked the other, and the other fought back. All science, all banks are forgotten, and the peoples are told to take up arms, and so are the peasants, who know nothing about politics. All they have to do is to fight back! The logical thing, following this line of argument, would be to close down all newspapers, burn all books and ban all mention of annexations in the newspapers. In this way such a view of annexations could be justified. They can't tell the truth about

annexations because the whole history of Russia, Britain, and Germany has been one of continuous, ruthless and sanguinary war over annexations. Ruthless wars were waged in Persia and Africa by the Liberals, who flogged political offenders in India for daring to put forward demands which were being fought for here in Russia. The French colonial troops oppressed peoples too. There you have the pre-history, the real history of unprecedented plunder! Such is the policy of these classes, of which the present war is a continuation. That is why, on the question of annexations, they cannot give the reply that we give, when we say that any nation joined to another one, not by the voluntary choice of its majority but by a decision of a king or government, is an annexed nation. To renounce annexation is to give each nation the right to form a separate state or to live in union with whomsoever it chooses. An answer like that is perfectly clear to every worker who is at all class-conscious.

In every resolution, of which dozens are passed, and published even in such a paper as *Zemlya i Volya*, you will find the answer, poorly expressed: We don't want a war for supremacy over other nations, we are fighting for our freedom. That is what all the workers and peasants say, that is how they express the view of the workingman, his understanding of the war. They imply by this that if the war were in the interests of the working people against the exploiters, they would be for such a war. So, would we, and there is not a revolutionary party that could be against it. Where they go wrong, these movers of numerous resolutions, is when they believe that the war is being waged by them. We soldiers, we workers, we peasants are fighting for our freedom. I shall never forget the question

one of them asked me after a meeting. "Why do you speak against the capitalists all the time?" he said. "I'm not a capitalist, am I? We're workers, we are defending our freedom." You're wrong, you are fighting because you are obeying your capitalist government; it's the governments, not the peoples, who are carrying on this war. I am not surprised at a worker or peasant, who doesn't know his politics, who has not had the good or bad fortune of being initiated into the secrets of diplomacy or the picture of this finance plunder (this oppression of Persia by Russia and Britain, say) I am not surprised at him forgetting this history and saying naïvely: Who cares about the capitalists, when it's me who's fighting! He doesn't understand the connection between the war and the government, he doesn't understand that the war is being waged by the government, and that he is just a tool in the hands of that government. He can call himself a revolutionary people and write eloquent resolutions to Russians this means a lot, because this has come into their lives only recently. There has recently appeared a "revolutionary" declaration by the Provisional Government. This doesn't mean anything. Other nations, more experienced than we are in the capitalist art of hoodwinking the masses by penning "revolutionary" manifestos, have long since broken all the world's records in this respect. If you take the parliamentary history of the French Republic since it became a republic supporting tsarism, you will find dozens of examples during the decades of this history when manifestos full of the most eloquent phrases served to mask a policy of the most outrageous colonial and financial plunder. The whole history of the Third Republic in France is a history of this plunder. Such



are the origins of the present war. It is not due to malice on the part of capitalists or the mistaken policy of some monarch. To think so would be incorrect. No, this war is an inevitable outgrowth of super capitalism, especially banking capital, which resulted in some four banks in Berlin and five or six in London dominating the whole world, appropriating the world's funds, reinforcing their financial policy by armed force, and finally clashing in a savage armed conflict because they had come to the end of their free tether in the matter of conquests. One or the other side had to relinquish its colonies. Such questions are not settled voluntarily in this world of capitalists. This issue could only be settled by war. That is why it is absurd to blame one or another crowned brigand. They are all the same, these crowned brigands. That is why it is equally absurd to blame the capitalists of one or another country. All they are to blame for is for having introduced such a system. But this has been done in full keeping with the law, which is safeguarded by all the forces of a civilised state. "I am fully within my rights; I am a buyer of shares. All the law courts, all the police, the whole standing army and all the navies in the world are safeguarding my sacred right to these shares." Who's to blame for banks being set up which handle hundreds of millions of rubles, for these banks casting their nets of plunder over the whole world, and for their being locked in mortal combat? Find the culprit if you can! The blame lies with half a century of capitalist development, and the only way out of this is by the overthrow of the rule of the capitalists and by a workers' revolution. That is the answer our Party has arrived at from an analysis of the war, and that is why we say: the very simple

question of annexations has been so muddled up and the spokesmen of the bourgeois parties have uttered so many lies that they are able to make out that Kurland is not annexation by Russia. They have shared Kurland and Poland between them, those three crowned brigands. They have been doing this for a hundred years, carving up the living flesh. And the Russian brigand snatched most because he was then the strongest. And now that the young beast of prey, Germany, who was then a party to the carve-up, has grown into a strong capitalist power, she demands a redivision. You want things to stay as they were? she says. You think you are stronger? Let's try conclusions!

That is what the war boils down to. Of course, the challenge "let's try conclusions" is merely an expression of the decade-long policy of plunder, the policy of the big banks. That is why no one but we can tell this truth about annexations, a simple truth that every worker and peasant will understand. That is why the question of treaties, such a simple question, is deliberately and disgracefully confused by the whole press. You say that we have a revolutionary government, that there are ministers in that government who are well-nigh socialists Narodniks and Mensheviks. But when they make declarations about peace without annexations, on condition that this term is not defined (because it means taking away German annexations and keeping our own), then we say: Of what value are your "revolutionary" cabinet, your declarations, your statements that you are not out for a war of conquest, if at the same time you tell the army to take the offensive? Don't you know that we have treaties, that these treaties were concluded by Nicholas the

Bloody in the most predatory fashion? You don't know it? It is pardonable for the workers or peasants not to know that. They did not plunder, they read no clever books. But when educated Cadets preach this sort of stuff, they know perfectly well what these treaties are about. Although they are "secret" treaties, the whole diplomatic press in all countries talks about them, saying: "You'll get the Straits, you'll get Armenia, you'll get Galicia, you'll get Alsace-Lorraine, you'll get Trieste, and we'll make a final carve-up of Persia." And the German capitalist says: "I'll seize Egypt, I'll subjugate the European nations unless you return my colonies to me with interest." Shares are things that can't do without interest. That is why the question of treaties, itself a clear, simple question, has touched off such a torrent of barefaced outrageous lies as those that are now pouring from the pages of all the capitalist newspapers.

Take today's paper *Dyen*. *Vodovozov*, a man absolutely innocent of Bolshevism, but who is an honest democrat, states in it: I am opposed to secret treaties; let me say this about the treaty with Rumania. There is a secret treaty with Rumania, and it says that Rumania will receive a number of foreign peoples if she fights on the side of the Allies. The treaties which the other Allies have are all the same. They wouldn't have started to subjugate nations if they had not had these treaties. To know their contents, you do not have to burrow in special journals. It is sufficient to recollect the basic facts of economic and diplomatic history. For decades Austria has been after the Balkans with an eye to subjugation. And if they have clashed it is because they couldn't help clashing. That is why, when the masses demand that these treaties should be published, a

demand that is growing more insistent every day, ex-Minister Milyukov and the present Minister Tereshchenko (one in a government without socialist ministers, the other in a government with a number of near-socialist ministers) declare that publication of the treaties would mean a break with the Allies.

Obviously, you can't publish the treaties because you are all participants in the same gang of robbers. We agree with Milyukov and Tereshchenko that the treaties cannot be published. Two different conclusions can be drawn from this. If we agree with Milyukov and Tereshchenko that the treaties cannot be published what follows from this? If the treaties cannot be published, then we've got to help the capitalist ministers continue the war. The other conclusion is this: since the capitalists cannot publish the treaties themselves, then the capitalists have got to be overthrown. Which of these two conclusions you consider to be correct, I leave it to you to decide, but be sure to consider the consequences? If we reason the way the Narodnik and Menshevik ministers' reason, we come to this: once the government says that the treaties cannot be published, then we must issue a new manifesto. Paper is not so dear yet that we cannot write new manifestos. We shall write a new manifesto and start an offensive. What for? With what aims? Who is to set these aims? The soldiers are called upon to carry out the predatory treaties with Rumania and France. Send Vodovozov's article to the front and then complain that this is all the Bolsheviks' doing, the Bolsheviks must have invented this treaty-with-Rumania business. In that case you would not only have to make life a hell for Pravda, but even kick

Vodovozov out for having studied history. You would have to make a bonfire of all Milyukov's books terribly dangerous books those. Just open any book by the leader of the party of "people's freedom", by this ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs. They are good books. What do they say? They say that Russia has "a right" to the Straits, to Armenia, to Galicia, to Eastern Prussia. He has carved them all up, and even appends a map. Not only the Bolsheviks and Vodovozov will have to be sent to Siberia for writing such revolutionary articles, but Milyukov's books will have to be burnt too, because if you collected simple quotations from these books today and sent them to the front, no inflammatory leaflet would have such an inflammatory effect as this would have.

It remains for me now, according to the brief plan of this talk I have sketched for myself, to touch on the question of "revolutionary defencism". I believe, after what I have had the honour of reporting to you, that I may now be allowed to touch only briefly on this question.

By "revolutionary defencism" we mean vindication of the war on the plea that, after all, we have made the revolution, after all, we are a revolutionary people, a revolutionary democracy. But what answer do we give to that? What revolution did we make? We overthrew Nicholas. The revolution was not so very difficult compared with one that would have overthrown the whole class of landowners and capitalists. Who did the revolution put in power? The landowners and capitalists the very same classes who have long been in power in Europe. Revolutions like this occurred there a hundred years ago. The

Tereshchenkos, Milyukovs, and Konovalovs have been in power there for a long time, and it doesn't matter a bit whether they have a civil list to pay their tsars or whether they do without this luxury. A bank remains a bank, whether capital is invested in concessions by the hundred or not; profits remain profits, be it in a republic or in a monarchy. If any savage country dares to disobey our civilised Capital, which sets up such splendid banks in the colonies, in Africa and Persia if any savage nation should disobey our civilised bank, we send troops out who restore culture, order, and civilisation, as Lyakhov did in Persia,[7] and the French "republican" troops did in Africa, where they exterminated peoples with equal ferocity. What difference does it make? We have here the same "revolutionary defencism", displayed only by the unenlightened masses, who see no connection between war and the government, who do not know that this policy is sanctioned by treaties. The treaties have remained, the banks have remained, the concessions have remained. In Russia the best men of their class are in the government, but the nature of the war has not changed a bit because of this. The new "revolutionary defencism" uses the great concept of revolution merely as a cloak to cover up the dirty and bloody war waged for the sake of dirty and outrageous treaties.

The Russian revolution has not altered the war, but it has created organisations which exist in no other country and were seldom found in revolutions in the West. Most of the revolutions were confined to the emergence of governments of our Tereshchenko and Konovalov type, while the country remained passive and disorganised. The Russian revolution has

gone further than that. In this we have the germ of hope that it may overcome the war. Besides the government of "near-socialist" ministers, the government of imperialist war, the government of offensive, a government tied up with Anglo-French capital besides this government and independent of it we have all over Russia a network of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies. Here is a revolution which has not said its last word yet. Here is a revolution which Western Europe, under similar conditions, has not known. Here are organisations of those classes which really have no need for annexations, which have not put millions in the banks, and which are probably not interested in whether the Russian Colonel Lyakhov and the British Liberal ambassador divided Persia properly or not. Here is the pledge of this revolution being carried further, i.e., that the classes which have no interest in annexations, and despite the fact that they put too much trust in the capitalist government, despite the appalling muddle and appalling deception contained in the very concept "revolutionary defencism", despite the fact that they support the war loan, support the government of imperialist war despite all this have succeeded in creating organisations in which the mass of the oppressed classes are represented. These are the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, which, in very many local areas in Russia, have gone much further than the Petrograd Soviet in their revolutionary work. It is only natural, because in Petrograd we have the central authority of the capitalists.

And when Skobelev in his speech yesterday said: "We'll take all the profits, we'll take 100 per cent," he was just letting

himself go with ministerial élan. If you take today's Rech you will see what the response is to this passage in Skobelev's speech. They write there: "Why, this means starvation, death! One hundred per cent means all!" Minister Skobelev goes farther than the most extreme Bolshevik. It's slandering the Bolsheviks to say that they are the extreme Left. Minister Skobelev is much more "Left". They called me all the ugly names they could think of, saying that I wanted to take their last shirt from the capitalists. At any rate, it was Shulgin who said: "Let them take our last shirt!" Imagine a Bolshevik going up to Citizen Shulgin and wanting to take his shirt from him. He could just as well and with greater justification accuse Minister Skobelev of this. We never went as far as that. We never suggested taking 100 per cent of profits. Nevertheless, it is a valuable promise. If you take the resolution of our Party you will see that we propose there, only in a more closely reasoned form, exactly what I have been proposing. Control must be established over the banks, followed by a fair tax on incomes.[2] And nothing more! Skobelev suggests taking a hundred kopeks in the ruble. We proposed and propose nothing of the sort. Skobelev doesn't really mean it, and if he does, he would not be able to do it for the simple reason that to promise such things while making friends with Tereshchenko and Konovalov is somewhat ludicrous. You could take 80 or 90 per cent of a millionaire's income, but not arm in arm with such ministers. If the Soviets had the power, they would really take it, but not all of it they have no need to. They would take the bulk of the income. No other state authority could do that. Minister Skobelev may have the best of intentions. I have known those



parties for several decades I have been in the revolutionary movement for thirty years. I am the last person, therefore, to question their good intentions. But that is not the point. It is not a question of good intentions. Good intentions pave the road to hell. All the government offices are full of papers signed by our ministers, but nothing has changed as a result of it. If you want to introduce control, start it! Our programme is such that in reading Skobelev's speech we can say: we do not demand more. We are much more moderate than Minister Skobelev. He proposes both control and 100 per cent. We don't want to take 100 per cent, but we say: "Until you start doing things, we don't believe you!" Here lies the difference between us: we don't believe words and promises and don't advise others to believe them. The lessons of parliamentary republics teach us not to believe in paper utterances. If you want control, you've got to start it. One day is enough to have a law on such control issued. The employees' council at every bank, the workers' council at every factory, and all the parties receive the right of control. But you can't do that, we shall be told. This is a commercial secret; this is sacred private property. Well, just as you like, make your choice. If you want to safeguard all those ledgers and accounts, all the transactions of the trusts, then don't chatter about control, about the country going to ruin.

In Germany the situation is still worse. In Russia you can get grain but in Germany you can't. You can do a lot in Russia through organisation, but you can do nothing more in Germany. There is no more grain left, and the whole nation is faced with disaster. People today write that Russia is on the brink of ruin. If that is so, then it is a crime to safeguard "sacred"

private property. Therefore, what do the words about control mean? Surely you haven't forgotten that Nicholas Romanov, too, wrote a good deal about control. You will find him repeating a thousand times the words "state control", "public control", "appointment of senators". In the two months following the revolution the industrialists have robbed the whole of Russia. Capitalists have made staggering profits; every financial report tells you that. And when the workers, two months after the revolution, had the "audacity" to say they wanted to live like human beings, the whole capitalist press throughout the country set up a howl. Every number of *Rech* is a wild howl about the workers wanting to rob the country, but all we promise is merely control over the capitalists. Can't we have less promises and more deeds? If what you want is bureaucratic control, control through the same organs as before, our Party declares its profound conviction that you cannot be given support in this, even if there were a dozen Narodnik and Menshevik ministers in your government instead of half a dozen. Control can only be exercised by the people. You must arrange control by bank employees' councils, engineers' councils, and workers' councils, and start that control right away, tomorrow. Every official should be made responsible, on pain of criminal persecution, for any wrong information he may give in any of these institutions. It is a matter of life and death to the country. We want to know how much grain there is, how much raw material, how many work hands there are and where they are to be placed.

This brings me to the last question that of how to end the war. The ridiculous view is ascribed to us that we are out for a

separate peace. The German robber capitalists are making peace overtures, saying: "We'll give you a piece of Turkey and Armenia if you give us ore-bearing lands". That is what the diplomats are talking about in every neutral city! Everybody knows it. Only it is veiled with conventional diplomatic phrases. That's what diplomats are for to speak in diplomatic language. What nonsense it is to allege that we are for ending the war by a separate peace! To end the war which is being waged by the capitalists of all the wealthiest powers, a war stemming from the decade-long history of economic development, by one-sided withdrawal from military operations is such a stupid idea that it would be absurd even to refute it. The fact that we specially drew up a resolution to refute it is because we wanted to explain things to the broad masses before whom we were being slandered. It is not a matter that can be seriously discussed. The war which the capitalists of all countries are waging cannot be ended without a workers' revolution against these capitalists. So long as control remains a mere phrase instead of deed, so long as the government of the capitalists has not been replaced by a government of the revolutionary proletariat, the government is doomed merely to reiterate: We are heading for disaster, disaster, disaster. Socialists are now being jailed in "free" Britain for saying what I am saying. In Germany Liebknecht has been imprisoned for saying what I am saying, and in Austria Friedrich Adler is in jail for saying the same thing with the help of a revolver (he may have been executed by now). The sympathy of the mass of workers in all countries is with these socialists and not with those who have sided with their capitalists. The workers'

revolution is mounting throughout the world. In other countries it is a more difficult matter, of course. They have no half-wits there like Nicholas and Rasputin. There the best men of their class are at the head of the government. They lack conditions there for a revolution against autocracy. They have there a government of the capitalist class. The most talented representatives of that class have been governing there for a long time. That is why the revolution there, though it has not come yet, is bound to come, no matter how many revolutionaries, men like Friedrich Adler and Karl Liebknecht, may die in the attempt. The future belongs to them, and the workers of all countries follow their lead. The workers in all countries are bound to win.

On the question of America entering the war I shall say this. People argue that America is a democracy, America has the White House. I say: slavery was abolished there half a century ago. The anti-slave war ended in 1865. Since then multimillionaires have mushroomed. They have the whole of America in their financial grip. They are making ready to subdue Mexico and will inevitably come to war with Japan over a carve-up of the Pacific. This war has been brewing for several decades. All literature speaks about it. America's real aim in entering the war is to prepare for this future war with Japan. The American people do enjoy considerable freedom and it is difficult to conceive them standing for compulsory military service, for the setting up of an army pursuing any aims of conquest a struggle with Japan, for instance. The Americans have the example of Europe to show them what this leads to. The American capitalists have stepped into this war in order to

have an excuse, behind a smoke-screen of lofty ideals championing the rights of small nations, for building up a strong standing army.

The peasants refuse to give up their grain for money and demand implements, boots, and clothes. There is a great measure of profound truth in this decision. Indeed, the country has reached a stage of ruin when it now faces the same situation, although to a less intensive degree, that other countries have long been facing, a situation in which money has lost its value. The rule of capitalism is being so strongly undermined by the whole course of events that the peasants, for instance, refuse to accept money. They say: "What do we want money for?" And they are right. The rule of capitalism is being undermined not because somebody is out to seize power. "Seizure" of power would be senseless. It would be impossible to put an end to the rule of capitalism if the whole course of economic development in the capitalist countries did not lead up to it. The war has speeded up this process, and this has made capitalism impossible. No power could destroy capitalism if it were not sapped and undermined by history.

And now we see this clearly demonstrated. The peasant expresses what everybody sees that the power of money has been undermined. The only way out is for the Soviets to agree to give implements, boots, and clothes in exchange for grain. This is what we are coming to, this is the answer that life dictates. Without this, tens of millions of people will go hungry, without clothes and boots. Tens of millions of people are facing disaster and death; safeguarding the interests of the capitalists

is the last thing that should bother us. The only way out is for all power to be transferred to the Soviets, which represent the majority of the population. Possibly mistakes may be made in the process. No one claims that such a difficult task can be disposed of offhand. We do not say anything of the sort. We are told that we want the power to be in the hands of the Soviets, but they don't want it. We say that life's experience will suggest this solution to them, and the whole nation will see that there is no other way out. We do not want a "seizure" of power, because the entire experience of past revolutions teaches us that the only stable power is the one that has the backing of the majority of the population. "Seizure" of power, therefore, would be adventurism, and our Party will not have it. If the government will be a government of the majority, it may perhaps embark on a policy that will prove, at first, to be erroneous, but there is no other way out. We shall then have a peaceful policy shift within the same organisations. No other organisations can be invented. That is why we say that no other solution of the question is conceivable.

How can the war be ended? If the Soviet were to assume power and the Germans continued the war what would we do then? Anyone interested in the views of our Party could have read in Pravda the other day an exact quotation of what we said abroad as far back as 1915, namely, that if the revolutionary class in Russia, the working class, comes to power, it will have to offer peace. And if our terms are rejected by the German capitalists or by the capitalists of any other country, then that class will stand wholly for war. We are not suggesting that the war be ended at one blow. We do not promise that. We preach no such

impossible and impracticable thing as that the war can be ended by the will of one side alone. Such promises are easy to give but impossible to fulfill. There is no easy way out of this terrible war. It has been going on for three years. You will go on fighting for ten years unless you accept the idea of a difficult and painful revolution. There is no other way out. We say: The war which the capitalist governments have started can only be ended by a workers' revolution. Those interested in the socialist movement should read the Basle Manifesto of 1912 adopted unanimously by all the socialist parties of the world, a manifesto that was published in our newspaper Pravda, a manifesto that can be published now in none of the belligerent countries, neither in "free" Britain nor in republican France, because it said the truth about war before the war. It said that there would be war between Britain and Germany as a result of capitalist competition. It said that so much powder had accumulated that the guns would start shooting of their own accord. It told us what the war would be fought for and said that the war would lead to a proletarian revolution. Therefore, we tell those socialists who signed this Manifesto and then went over to the side of their capitalist governments that they have betrayed socialism. There has been a split among the socialists all over the world. Some are in ministerial cabinets, others in prison. All over the world some socialists are preaching a war build-up, while others, like Eugene Debs, the American Bebel, who enjoys immense popularity among the American workers, say: "I'd rather be shot than give a cent towards the war. I'm willing to fight only the proletariat's war against the capitalists all over the world." That is how the socialists have split throughout the

world. The world's social-patriots think they are defending their country. They are mistaken they are defending the interests of one band of capitalists against another. We preach proletarian revolution the only true cause, for which scores of people have gone to the scaffold, and hundreds and thousands have been thrown into prison. These imprisoned socialists are a minority, but the working class is for them, the whole course of economic development is for them. All this tells us that there is no other way out. The only way to end this war is by a workers' revolution in several countries. In the meantime, we should make preparations for that revolution, we should assist it. For all its hatred of war and desire for peace, the Russian people could do nothing against the war, so long as it was being waged by the tsar, except work for a revolution against the tsar and for the tsar's overthrow. And that is what happened. History proved this to you yesterday and will prove it to you tomorrow. We said long ago that the mounting Russian revolution must be assisted. We said that at the end of 1914. Our Duma deputies were deported to Siberia for this, and we were told: "You are giving no answer. You talk about revolution when the strikes are off, when the deputies are doing hard labour, and when you haven't a single newspaper!" And we were accused of evading an answer. We heard those accusations for a number of years. We answered: You can be indignant about it, but so long as the tsar has not been overthrown, we can do nothing against the war. And our prediction was justified. It is not fully justified yet, but it has already begun to receive justification. The revolution is beginning to change the war on Russia's part. The capitalists are still continuing the war, and we say: Until there



is a workers' revolution in several countries the war cannot be stopped, because the people who want that war are still in power. We are told: "In a number of countries everything seems to be asleep. In Germany all the socialists to a man are for the war, and Liebknecht is the only one against it." To this I say: This only one, Liebknecht, represents the working class. The hopes of all are in him alone, in his supporters, in the German proletariat. You don't believe this? Carry on with the war then! There is no other way. If you don't believe in Liebknecht, if you don't believe in the workers' revolution, a revolution that is coming to a head if you don't believe this then believe the capitalists!

**Nothing but a workers' revolution in several countries can defeat this war.** The war is not a game, it is an appalling thing taking toll of millions of lives, and it is not to be ended easily.

The soldiers at the front cannot tear the front away from the rest of the state and settle things their own way. The soldiers at the front are a part of the country. **So long as the country is at war the front will suffer along with the rest.** Nothing can be done about it. The war has been brought about by the ruling classes and only a revolution of the working class can end it. Whether you will get a speedy peace or not depends on how the revolution will develop. Whatever sentimental things may be said, however much we may be told: Let us end the war immediately this cannot be done without the development of the revolution. When power passes to the Soviets the capitalists will come out against us. Japan, France, Britain the governments of all countries will be against us. The capitalists

will be against, but the workers will be for us. That will be the end of the war which the capitalists started. **There you have the answer to the question of how to end the war.**

Lenin,

**A Strong Revolutionary Government,**

May 19 (6), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 360-361

**We are for a strong revolutionary government.** Whatever the capitalists and their flunkeys may shout about us to the contrary, their lies will remain lies.

The thing is **not to let phrases obscure one's consciousness**, disorient one's mind. When people speak about "revolution", "the revolutionary people", "revolutionary democracy", and so on, **nine times out of ten this is a lie or self-deception.** The question is—**what class is making this revolution?** A revolution against whom?

**Against tsarism?** In that sense most of Russia's landowners and capitalists today are revolutionaries. When the revolution is an accomplished fact, even reactionaries come into line with it. There is no deception of the masses at present more frequent, more detestable, and more harmful than that which lauds the revolution against tsarism.

**Against the landowners?** In this sense most of the peasants, even most of the well-to-do peasants, that is, probably nine-tenths of the population in Russia, are revolutionaries. Very likely, some of the capitalists, too, are prepared to become revolutionaries on the grounds that the landowners cannot be saved anyway, so let us better side with the revolution and try to make things safe for capitalism.

**Against the capitalists?** Now that is the real issue. **That is the crux of the matter**, because without a revolution against the capitalists, all that prattle about “peace without annexations” and the speedy termination of the war by such a peace is either naïveté and ignorance, or stupidity and deception. But for the war, Russia could have gone on living for years and decades without a revolution against the capitalists. The war has made that objectively impossible. The alternatives are either utter ruin or a revolution against the capitalists. That is how the question stands. That is how the very trend of events poses it.

Instinctively, emotionally, and by attraction, the bulk of Russia’s population, namely, the proletarians and semi proletarians, i.e., the workers and poor peasants, are **in sympathy with a revolution against the capitalists**. So far, however, there is no clear consciousness of this, and, as a result, no determination. To develop these is our chief task.

The leaders of the petty bourgeoisie—the intellectuals, the prosperous peasants, the present parties of the Narodniks (the S.R.s included) and the Mensheviks—are **not at present in favour of a revolution against the capitalists** and some of them are **even opposed to it**, greatly to the detriment of the people’s cause. The coalition cabinet is the kind of “experiment” that is going to help the people as a whole to quickly discard the illusion of petty-bourgeois conciliation with the capitalists.

The conclusion is obvious: **only assumption of power by the proletariat, backed by the semi-proletarians, can give the country a really strong and really revolutionary government**. It will be really strong because it will be

supported by a solid and class-conscious majority of the people. It will be strong because it will not, of necessity, have to be based on a precarious “agreement” between capitalists and small proprietors, between millionaires and petty bourgeoisie, between the Konovalovs-Shingaryovs and the Chernovs-Tseretelis.

It will be a truly revolutionary government, the only one capable of showing the people that at a time when untold suffering is inflicted upon the masses it will not be awed and deterred by capitalist profits. It will be a truly revolutionary government because it alone will be capable of evoking and sustaining the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses and increasing it tenfold, provided the masses, every day and every hour, see and feel that the government believes in the people, is not afraid of them, that it helps the poor to improve their lot right now, that it makes the rich bear an equal share of the heavy burden of the people’s suffering.

**We are for a strong revolutionary government.**

We are for a strong revolutionary government because it is the only possible and the only reliable government.

Lenin,

**The Petty-Bourgeois Stand on the Question of Economic Disorganization,**

May 31 (June 13), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 562-564

Novaya Zhizn today publishes a resolution introduced by Comrade Avilov at a meeting of shop committees. Unfortunately, this resolution must be regarded as an example of a petty--bourgeois attitude that is neither Marxist nor socialist. Because this resolution accentuates in sharp focus all the weaknesses peculiar to the Menshevik and Narodnik Soviet resolutions, it is typical and worthy of attention.

The resolution begins with an excellent general statement, with a splendid indictment of the capitalists: "The present economic debacle ... is a result of the war and the predatory anarchic rule of the capitalists and the government." Correct! That capital is oppressive, that it is a predator, that it is the original source of anarchy—in this the petty bourgeois is ready to agree with the proletariat. But there the similarity ends. The proletarian regards capitalist economy as a robber economy, and therefore wages a class struggle against it, shapes his whole policy on unconditional distrust of the capitalist class, and in dealing with the question of the state his first concern is to distinguish which class the "state" serves, whose class interests it stands for. The petty bourgeois, at times, gets "furious" with capital, but as soon as the fit of anger is over he goes back to his old faith in

the capitalists, to the hopes placed in the "state"..., of the capitalists!

The same thing has happened with Comrade Avilov.

After a splendid, strongly worded, formidable introduction accusing the capitalists and even the government of the capitalists of running a "robber" economy, Comrade Avilov, throughout his resolution, in all its concrete substance and all its practical proposals, forgets the class stand point, and, like the Mensheviks and Narodniks, lapses into bombast about the "state" in general, about "revolutionary democracy" in the abstract.

Workers! Predatory capital is creating anarchy and economic chaos, and the government of the capitalists, too, is ruling by anarchy. **Salvation lies in control on the part of "the state with the co-operation of revolutionary democracy"**. This is the substance of Avilov's resolution.

What are you talking about, Comrade Avilov! How can a Marxist forget that the state is an organ of class rule? Is it not ridiculous to appeal to a capitalist state to take action against "predatory capitalists"?

**How can a Marxist forget** that in the history of all countries the capitalists, too, **have often been "revolutionary democrats"**, as in England in 1649, in France in 1789, in 1830, 1848, and 1870, and in Russia in February 1917?

Can you have forgotten that the **revolutionary democracy of the capitalists, of the petty bourgeoisie and of the proletariat must be distinguished one from the other?** Does not the whole

history of all the revolutions I have just mentioned show a distinction of classes within “revolutionary democracy”?

To continue in Russia to speak of “revolutionary democracy” in general after the experience of February, March, April and May 1917 is to deceive the people knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or unconsciously. The “moment” of general fusion of classes against tsarism has come and gone. The very first agreement between the first “Provisional Committee” of the Duma and the Soviet marked the end of the class fusion and the beginning of the class struggle.

The April crisis (April 20), followed by that of May 6, then May 27–29 (the elections), etc., etc., have brought about a definite cleavage of classes in the Russian revolution within the Russian “revolutionary democracy”. To ignore this is to sink to the helpless level of the petty bourgeois.

To appeal now to the “state” and to “revolutionary democracy” on the matter of predatory capitalism of all questions, is to drag the working class backward. In effect it means preaching complete stoppage of the revolution. For our “state” today, after April, after May, is a state of “predator” capitalists, who, in the persons of Chernov, Tsereteli and Co., have tamed a fairly considerable portion of “revolutionary (petty-bourgeois) democracy”.

This state is hindering the revolution everywhere, in all fields of home and foreign policy.

To hand over to this state the job of fighting the capitalist “predators” is like throwing the pike into the river.



Lenin,

**First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers'  
Deputies,**

June 3–24 (June 6–July 7), 1917

Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 15-42

SPEECH ON THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE  
PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

JUNE 4 (17)

Comrades, in the brief time at my disposal, I can dwell -- and I think this best -- only on the main questions of principle raised by the Executive Committee rapporteur and by subsequent speakers.

The first and fundamental issue before us was: what is this assembly we are attending, what are these Soviets now gathered at the All-Russia Congress, and what is this revolutionary democracy that people here speak so much about to conceal their utter misunderstanding and complete repudiation of it? To talk about revolutionary democracy at the All-Russia Congress of Soviets and obscure this institution's character, its class composition and its role in the revolution -- not to say a word about this and yet lay claim to the title of democrats really is peculiar. They map out a programme to us for a bourgeois parliamentary republic, the sort of programme that has existed all over Western Europe; they map out a programme to us for reforms which are now recognised by all bourgeois governments, including our own, and yet they talk to us about revolutionary democracy. Whom are they talking

to? To the Soviets. But I ask you, is there a country in Europe, a bourgeois, democratic, republican country, where anything like these Soviets exists? You have to admit there isn't. Nowhere is there, nor can there be, a similar institution because you must have one or the other: either a bourgeois government with "plans" for reforms like those just mapped out to us and proposed dozens of times in every country but remaining on paper, or the institution to which they are now referring, the new type of "government" created by the revolution, examples of which can be found only at a time of greatest revolutionary upsurge, as in France, 1792 and 1871, or in Russia, 1905. The Soviets are an institution which does not exist in any ordinary bourgeois-parliamentary state and cannot exist side by side with a bourgeois government. They are the new, more democratic type of state which we in our Party resolutions call a peasant-proletarian democratic republic, with power belonging solely to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. People are wrong in thinking that this is a theoretical issue. They are wrong in pretending that it can be evaded and in protesting that at present certain institutions exist side by side with the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Yes, they do exist side by side. But this is what breeds countless misunderstandings, conflicts and friction. And this is why the original upswing, the original advance, of the Russian revolution is giving way to stagnation and to those steps backwards which we can now see in our coalition government, in its entire home and foreign policy, in connection with preparations for an imperialist offensive.

One or the other: either the usual bourgeois government, in which case the peasants', workers', soldiers' and other Soviets are useless and will either be broken up by the generals, the counter-revolutionary generals, who keep a hold on the armed forces and pay no heed to Minister Kerensky's fancy speeches, or they will die an inglorious death. They have no other choice. They can neither retreat nor stand still. They can exist only by advancing. This is a type of state not invented by the Russians but advanced by the revolution because the revolution can win in no other way. Within the All-Russia Congress, friction and the struggle of parties for power are inevitable. But this will be the elimination of possible mistakes and illusions through the political experience of the masses themselves (commotion), and not through the reports of Ministers who refer to what they said yesterday, what they will write tomorrow and what they will promise the day after tomorrow. This, comrades, is ridiculous from the point of view of the institution created by the Russian revolution and now faced with the question: to be or not to be? The Soviets cannot continue to exist as they do now. Grown people, workers and peasants, are made to meet, adopt resolutions and listen to reports that cannot be subjected to any documentary verification! This kind of institution is a transition to a republic which will establish a stable power without a police and a standing army, not in words alone but in action, a power which cannot yet exist in Western Europe and without which the Russian revolution cannot win in the sense of victory over the landowners and over imperialism.

Without this power there can be no question of our gaining such a victory by ourselves. And the deeper we go into the

programme recommended to us here, and into the facts with which we are confronted, the more glaringly the fundamental contradiction stands out. We are told by the rapporteur and by other speakers that the first Provisional Government was a bad one! But when the Bolsheviks, those wretched Bolsheviks, said, "No support for and no confidence in this government", how often we were accused of "anarchism"! Now everybody says that the previous government was a bad one. But how does the coalition government with its near socialist Ministers differ from the previous one? Haven't we had enough talk about programmes and drafts? Haven't we had enough of them? Isn't it time to get down to business? A month has passed since May 6 when the coalition government was formed. Look at the facts, look at the ruin prevailing in Russia and other countries involved in the imperialist war. What is the reason for the ruin? The predatory nature of the capitalists. There's your real anarchy. And this is admitted in statements published, not in our newspaper, not in any Bolshevik newspaper -- Heaven forbid! -- but in the ministerial Rabochaya Gazeta,[4] which has reported that industrial coal prices were raised by the "revolutionary" government!! The coalition government hasn't changed a thing in this respect. We are asked whether socialism can be introduced in Russia, and whether, generally speaking, radical changes can be made at once. That is all empty talk comrades. The doctrine of Marx and Engels, as they always explained, says: "Our doctrine is not a dogma, but a guide to action." [5] Nowhere in the world is there pure capitalism developing into pure socialism, nor can there be in war-time. But there is something in between, something new and

unprecedented, because hundreds of millions of people who have been involved in the criminal war among the capitalists are losing their lives. It is not a question of promising reforms - - that is mere talk. It is a question of taking the step we now need.

If you want to talk of "revolutionary " democracy, then you must distinguish this concept from reformist democracy under a capitalist Ministry, because it is high time to stop talking about "revolutionary democracy", handing out mutual congratulations on "revolutionary democracy", and get on with a class definition, as we have been taught by Marxism, and by scientific socialism generally. It is being proposed that we should pass to reformist democracy under a capitalist Ministry. That may be all well and good from the standpoint of the usual West-European models. A number of countries, however, are today on the brink of destruction, and we can clearly see the practical measures said to be too complicated to carry out easily, and in need of special elaboration, according to the previous speaker, the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs. He said there was no political party in Russia expressing its readiness to assume full power. I reply: "Yes, there is. No party can refuse this, and our Party certainly doesn't. It is ready to take over full power at any moment." (Applause and laughter.) You can laugh as much as you please, but if the Minister confronts us with this question side by side with a party of the Right, he will receive a suitable reply. No party can refuse this. And at a time when liberty still prevails, when threats of arrest and exile to Siberia -- threats from the counter-revolutionaries with whom our near socialist Ministers are sharing government -- are still

no more than threats, every party says: give us your confidence and we shall give you our programme.

This programme was given by our conference on April 29. Unfortunately, it is being ignored and not taken as a guide. It seems to need a popular exposition. I shall try to give the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs a popular exposition of our resolution and our programme. With regard to the economic crisis, our programme is immediately -- it need not be put off -- to demand the publication of all the fabulous profits -- running as high as 500 and 800 per cent -- which the capitalists are making on war supplies, and not as capitalists in the open market under "pure" capitalism. This is where workers' control really is necessary and possible. This is a measure which, if you call yourselves "revolutionary" democrats, you should carry out in the name of the Congress, a measure which can be carried out overnight. It is not socialism. It is opening the people's eyes to the real anarchy and the real playing with imperialism, the playing with the property of the people, with the hundreds of thousands of lives that tomorrow will be lost because we continue to throttle Greece. Make the profits of the capitalists public, arrest fifty or a hundred of the biggest millionaires. Just keep them in custody for a few weeks, if only in the same privileged conditions in which Nicholas Romanov is being held, for the simple purpose of making them reveal the hidden springs, the fraudulent practices, the filth and greed which even under the new government are costing our country thousands and millions every day. That is the chief cause of anarchy and ruin. That is why we say that everything remains as of old, that the coalition government hasn't changed a thing and has only

added a heap of declarations, of pompous statements. However sincere people may be, however sincerely they may wish the working people well, things have not changed -- the same class remains in power. The policy they are pursuing is not a democratic policy.

You talk to us about "democratisation of the central and local power". Don't you know that these words are a novelty only in Russia, and that elsewhere dozens of near-socialist Ministers have given their countries similar promises? What are they worth when we are faced by the real, concrete fact that while the population elects the authorities locally, the elementary principles of democracy are violated by the centre claiming the right to appoint or confirm the local authorities? The capitalists continue to plunder the people's property. The imperialist war continues. And yet we are promised reforms, reforms and more reforms, which cannot be accomplished at all under these circumstances, because the war crushes and determines everything. Why do you disagree with those who say the war is not being waged over capitalist profits? What is the criterion? It is, first of all, which class is in power, which class continues to be the master, which class continues to make hundreds of thousands of millions from banking and financial operations. It is the same capitalist class and the war therefore continues to be imperialist. Neither the first Provisional Government nor the government with the near-socialist Ministers has changed anything. The secret treaties remain secret. Russia is fighting for the Straits, fighting to continue Lyakhov's policy in Persia, and so on.

I know you don't want this, that most of you don't want it, and that the Ministers don't want it, because no one can want it, for it means the slaughter of hundreds of millions of people. But take the offensive which the Milyukovs and Maklakovs are now talking about so much. They know full well what that means. They know it is linked with the question of power, with the question of revolution. We are told we must distinguish between political and strategic issues. It is ridiculous to raise this question at all. The Cadets perfectly understand that the point at issue is a political one.

It is slander to say the revolutionary struggle for peace that has begun from below might lead to a separate peace treaty. The first step we should take if we had power would be to arrest the biggest capitalists and cut all the threads of their intrigues. Without this, all talk about peace without annexations and indemnities is utterly meaningless. Our second step would be to declare to all people over the head of their governments that we regard all capitalists as robbers -- Tereshchenko, who is not a bit better than Milyukov, just a little less stupid, the French capitalists, the British capitalists, and all the rest.

Your own Izvestia has got into a muddle and proposes to keep the status quo instead of peace without annexations and indemnities. Our idea of peace "without annexations" is different. Even the Peasant Congress comes nearer the truth when it speaks of a "federal" republic, thereby expressing the idea that the Russian republic does not want to oppress any nation, either in the new or in the old way, and does not want to force any nation, either Finland or the Ukraine, with both of



whom the War Minister is trying so hard to find fault and with whom impermissible and intolerable conflicts are being created. We want a single and undivided republic of Russia with a firm government. But a firm government can be secured only by the voluntary agreement of all people concerned. "Revolutionary democracy" are big words, but they are being applied to a government that by its petty fault-finding is complicating the problem of the Ukraine and Finland, which do not even want to secede. They only say, "Don't postpone the application of the elementary principles of democracy until the Constituent Assembly!"

A peace treaty without annexations and indemnities cannot be concluded until you have renounced your own annexations. It is ridiculous, a comedy, every worker in Europe is laughing at us, saying: You talk very eloquently and call on the people to overthrow the bankers, but you send your own bankers into the Ministry. Arrest them, expose their tricks, get to know the hidden springs! But that you don't do although you have powerful organisations which cannot be resisted. You have gone through 1905 and 1917. You know that revolution is not made to order, that revolutions in other countries were made by the hard and bloody method of insurrection, and in Russia there is no group, no class, that would resist the power of the Soviets. In Russia, this revolution can, by way of exception, be a peaceful one. Were this revolution to propose peace to all peoples today or tomorrow, by breaking with all the capitalist classes, both France and Germany, their people, that is, would accept very soon, because these countries are perishing, because

Germany's position is hopeless, because she cannot save herself, and because France -- (Chairman : "Your time is up.")

I shall finish in half a minute. (Commotion; requests from the audience that the speaker continue; protests and applause.)

(Chairman: "I inform the Congress that the Steering Committee proposes the speaker's time be extended. Any objections? The majority are in favour of an extension.")

I stopped at the point that if the revolutionary democrats in Russia were democrats in fact and not merely in words, they would further the revolution and not compromise with the capitalists, not talk about peace without annexations and indemnities but abolish annexations by Russia, and declare in so many words that they consider all annexations criminal and predatory. It would then be possible to avert the imperialist offensive which is threatening death to thousands and millions of people over the partitioning of Persia and the Balkans. The way to peace would then be open, not an easy way -- we do not say it is easy -- and one which does not preclude a truly revolutionary war.

We do not put this question as Bazarov does in today's *Novaya Zhizn*. All we say is that Russia has been placed in such a position that at the end of the imperialist war her tasks are easier than might have been expected. And her geographical position is such that any power would have a hard job on its hands if it risked using capital and its predatory interests and risked rising against the Russian working class and the semi-proletariat associated with it, i.e., the poor peasants. Germany is on the brink of defeat, and since the war was joined by the

United States, which wants to swallow up Mexico and which tomorrow will probably start fighting Japan, Germany's position has become hopeless, and she will be destroyed. France, who suffers more than the others because of her geographical position and whose state of exhaustion is reaching the limit -- this country, while not starving as much as Germany, has lost infinitely more people than Germany. Now if the first step were to restrict the profits of the Russian capitalists and deprive them of all possibility of raking in hundreds of millions in profits, if you were to propose to all nations a peace treaty directed against the capitalists of all countries and openly declare that you will not enter into any negotiations or relations with the German capitalists and with those who abet them directly or indirectly or are involved with them, and that you refuse to speak with the French and British capitalists, then you would be acting to condemn them in the eyes of the workers. You would not regard it as a victory that a passport has been issued to MacDonald, a man who has never waged a revolutionary struggle against capital and who is being allowed to come because he has never expressed the ideas, principles, practice or experience of the revolutionary struggle against the British capitalists, a struggle for which our Comrade MacLean and hundreds of other British socialists are in prison, and for which our Comrade Liebknecht is confined to a convict prison because he said, "German soldiers, fire on your Kaiser!"

Wouldn't it be more proper to consign the imperialist capitalists to that penal servitude which most of the Provisional Government members in an expressly reconstituted

Third Duma -- I don't know, incidentally, whether it is the Third or the Fourth Duma -- are daily preparing for us and promising us and about which the Ministry of Justice is already drafting new Bills? MacLean and Liebknecht -- those are the names of socialists who are putting the idea of a revolutionary struggle against imperialism into practice. That is what we must say to all governments if we want to fight for peace. We must condemn them before their people. You will then put all the imperialist governments in a difficult position. But now you have complicated your own position by addressing your Peace Manifesto of March 14[13] to the people and saying, "Overthrow your tsars, your kings and your bankers!" while we who possess an organisation unprecedentedly rich in number, experience and material strength, the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, join a bloc with our bankers, institute a coalition, near-socialist government, and draft the kind of reforms that have been drafted in Europe for decades. People there in Europe laugh at this kind of peace struggle. There they will understand it only when the Soviets take power and act in a revolutionary way.

Only one country in the world can at the moment take steps to stop the imperialist war on a class scale, in the face of the capitalists and without a bloody revolution. Only one country can do it, and that country is Russia. And she will remain the only one as long as the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies exists. The Soviet cannot exist long side by side with the ordinary type of Provisional Government and will remain what it is only until the offensive is taken. The offensive will be a turning-point in the whole policy of the Russian revolution,

that is, it will be a transition from waiting, from paving the way for peace by means of a revolutionary uprising from below, to the resumption of the war. The path that opened up was transition from fraternisation on one front to fraternisation on every front, from spontaneous fraternisation, such as the exchange of a crust of bread with a hungry German worker for a penknife -- which is punishable by penal servitude -- to conscious fraternisation.

When we take power into our own hands, we shall curb the capitalists, and then the war will not be the kind of war that is being waged now, because the nature of a war is determined by what class wages it, not by what is written on paper. You can write on paper anything you like. But as long as the capitalist class has a majority in the government the war will remain an imperialist war no matter what you write, no matter how eloquent you are, no matter how many near-socialist Ministers you have. Everyone knows that, and everyone can see it. And the cases of Albania, Greece and Persia have shown this so clearly and graphically that I am surprised everyone is attacking our written declaration about the offensive, and no one says a word about specific cases! It is easy to promise Bills, but specific measures are being postponed time and again. It is easy to write a declaration about peace without annexations, but the Albanian, Greek and Persian events took place after the coalition Ministry was formed. After all, it was Dyelo Naroda, not an organ of our Party, but a government organ, a ministerial organ, which said that it is Russian democracy that is being subjected to this humiliation, and that Greece is being strangled. And this very same Milyukov, whom you imagine to

be heaven knows who, although he is just an ordinary member of his party -- Tereshchenko in no way differs from him -- wrote that the pressure exerted on Greece came from Allied diplomats. The war remains an imperialist war, and however much you may desire peace, however sincere your sympathy for the working people and your desire for peace -- I am fully convinced that by and large it must be sincere -- you are powerless, because the war can only be ended by taking the revolution further. When the revolution began in Russia, a revolutionary struggle for peace from below also began. If you were to take power into your hands, if power were to pass to the revolutionary organisations to be used for combating the Russian capitalists, then the working people of some countries would believe you and you could propose peace. Then our peace would be ensured at least from two sides, by the two nations who are being bled white and whose cause is hopeless -- Germany and France. And if circumstances then obliged us to wage a revolutionary war -- no one knows, and we do not rule out the possibility -- we should say: "We are not pacifists, we do not renounce war when the revolutionary class is in power and has actually deprived the capitalists of the opportunity to influence things in any way, to exacerbate the economic dislocation which enables them to make hundreds of millions." The revolutionary government would explain to absolutely every nation that every nation must be free, and that just as the German nation must not fight to retain Alsace and Lorraine, so the French nation must not fight for its colonies. For, while France is fighting for her colonies, Russia has Khiva and Bokhara, which are also something like colonies. Then the

division of colonies will begin. And how are they to be divided? On what basis? According to strength. But strength has changed. The capitalists are in a situation where their only way out is war. When you take over revolutionary power, you will have a revolutionary way of securing peace, namely, by addressing a revolutionary appeal to all nations and explaining your tactics by your own example. Then the way to peace secured by revolutionary means will be open to you, and you will most probably be able to avert the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. Then you may be certain that the German and French people will declare in your favour. As for the British, American and Japanese capitalists, even if they wanted a war against the revolutionary working class -- whose strength will grow tenfold once the capitalists have been curbed and put down and control has passed into the hands of the working class -- even if the American, British and Japanese capitalists wanted a war, the chances would be a hundred to one against them being able to wage it. For peace to be ensured, you will only have to declare that you are not pacifists, that you will defend your republic, your workers', proletarian democracy, against the German, French and other capitalists.

That is why we attached such fundamental importance to our declaration about the offensive. The time has come for a radical turn in the whole history of the Russian revolution. When the Russian revolution began it was assisted by the imperialist bourgeoisie of Britain who imagined Russia to be something like China or India. Yet, side by side with a government in which the landowners and capitalists now have a majority, the Soviets arose, a representative institution unparalleled and

unprecedented anywhere in the world in strength, an institution which you are killing by taking part in a coalition Ministry of the bourgeoisie. In reality,

the Russian revolution has made the revolutionary struggle from below against the capitalist governments welcome everywhere, in all countries, with three times as much sympathy as before. The question is one of advance or retreat. No one can stand still during a revolution. That is why the offensive is a turn in the Russian revolution, in the political and economic rather than the strategic sense. An offensive now means the continuation of the imperialist slaughter and the death of more hundreds of thousands, of millions of people -- objectively, irrespective of the will or awareness of this or that Minister, with the aim of strangling Persia and other weak nations. Power transferred to the revolutionary proletariat, supported by the poor peasants, means a transition to revolutionary struggle for peace in the surest and most painless forms ever known to mankind, a transition to a state of affairs under which the power and victory of the revolutionary workers will be ensured in Russia and throughout the world. (Applause from part of the audience.)



Lenin,

**Speech Made at the First Petrograd Conference of Shop Committees**

May 31 (June 13), 1917, June 16 (3), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 556-557

Comrade Avilov's resolution shows a complete disregard for the class stand. B. V. Avilov would seem to have made up his mind in this resolution to collect together and concentrate all the faults common to all the resolutions of the petty-bourgeois parties.

Avilov's resolution starts with the postulate, by now indisputable to any socialist, that capitalism's robber economy has reduced Russia to complete economic and industrial ruin, but then goes on to propose the hazy formula of control of industry by "the state authorities" with the co-operation of the broad democratic mass.

Everybody nowadays is having a good deal to say about control. Even people who used to scream "murder" at the very mention of the word "control" now admit that control is necessary.

By using the term "control" in the abstract, however, they want to reduce the idea of control to naught.

The coalition government, which "socialists" have now joined, has done nothing yet in the way of putting this control into effect, and therefore it is quite understandable that the shop

committees are demanding real workers' control, and not control on paper.

In dealing with the idea of control and the question of when and by whom this control is to be affected, one must not for a single moment forget the class character of the modern state, which is merely an organisation of class rule. A similar class analysis should be applied to the concept "revolutionary democracy", and this analysis should be based on the actual balance of social forces.

Avilov's resolution starts with a promise to give everything, but ends, in effect, with a proposition to leave everything as it was. There is not a shadow of revolutionism in the whole resolution.

In revolutionary times of all times it is necessary accurately to analyse the question as to the very essence of the state, as to whose interests it shall protect, and as to how it should be constructed in order effectively to protect the interests of the working people. In Avilov's resolution this has not been dealt with at all.

Why is it that our new coalition government, which "socialists" have now joined, has not carried out control in the course of three months, and, what is more, in the conflict between the colliery owners and the workers of Southern Russia, the government has openly sided with the capitalists?

For control over industry to be effectively carried out it must be a workers' control with a workers' majority in all the leading bodies, and the management must give an account of its actions to all the authoritative workers' organisations.

Comrades, workers, see that you get real control, not fictitious control, and reject in the most resolute manner all resolutions and proposals for establishing such a fictitious control existing only on paper.

Lenin,

**The Political Situation (Four Theses),**

July 10 (23), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 41, pages 440.2-443.1

1. The counter-revolution has become organised and consolidated and has actually taken state power into its hands.

The complete organisation and consolidation of the counter-revolution consists in a combination of its three main forces, a combination excellently conceived and already put into practice: (1) The Constitutional-Democratic Party, i.e., the real leader of the organised bourgeoisie, has, by withdrawing from the Cabinet, confronted it with an ultimatum, thus clearing the way for the Cabinet's overthrow by the counter-revolution; (2) The General Staff and the military leaders, with the deliberate or semi-deliberate assistance of Kerensky, whom even the most prominent Socialist-Revolutionaries now call a Cavaignac, have seized actual state power and have proceeded to shoot down revolutionary units at the front, disarm the revolutionary troops and workers in Petrograd and Moscow, suppress unrest in Nizhny Novgorod, arrest Bolsheviki and ban their papers, not only without trial, but even without a government order. At present, basic state power in Russia is virtually a military dictatorship. This fact is still obscured by a number of institutions that are revolutionary in words but powerless in deeds. Yet it is so obvious and fundamental a fact that, without understanding it, one can not understand anything about the political situation. (3) The Black-Hundred-monarchist and

bourgeois press, which has switched from hounding Bolsheviks to hounding the Soviets, the “incendiary” Chernov, etc., has indicated with the utmost clarity that the true meaning of the policy of military dictatorship, which now reigns supreme and is supported by the Cadets and monarchists, is preparation for disbanding the Soviets. Many of the leaders of the S.R.s and Mensheviks, i.e., the present majority in the Soviets, have admitted and expressed this during the past few days, but true to their petty-bourgeois nature, they shrug off this formidable reality with meaningless high-sounding phrases.

2. The leaders of the Soviets and of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, headed by Tsereteli and Chernov, have completely betrayed the cause of the revolution by putting it in the hands of the counter-revolutionaries and by turning themselves, their parties and the Soviets into mere fig-leaves of the counter-revolution.

Proof of this is that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have betrayed the Bolsheviks and have tacitly agreed to close down their papers without daring to tell the people plainly and openly that they are doing so and why. By sanctioning the disarming of the workers and the revolutionary regiments, they have deprived themselves of all real power. They have turned into the most loud-mouthed ranters who help the reaction to “divert” the people’s attention until it is finally ready to disband the Soviets. It is impossible to understand anything at all about the present political situation without realising this complete and final bankruptcy of the S.R.s and Mensheviks and the present majority in the Soviets and without

realising that their "Directory" and other masquerades are an absolute sham.

3. All hopes for a peaceful development of the Russian revolution have vanished for good. This is the objective situation: either complete victory for the military dictatorship, or victory for the workers' armed uprising; the latter victory is only possible when it coincides with a deep mass upheaval, against the government and the bourgeoisie caused by economic disruption and the prolongation of the war.

The slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" was a slogan for peaceful development of the revolution, which was possible in April, May, June, and up to July 5-9, i.e., up to the time when actual power passed into the hands of the military dictatorship. This slogan is no longer correct, for it does not take into account that power has changed hands and that the revolution has in fact been completely betrayed by the S.R.s and Mensheviks. Reckless actions, revolts, partial resistance, or hopeless hit-and-run attempts to oppose reaction will not help. What will help is a clear understanding of the situation, endurance and determination of the workers' vanguard, preparation of forces for the armed uprising, for the victory of which conditions at present are extremely difficult, but still possible if the facts and trends mentioned in the thesis coincide. Let us have no constitutional or republican illusions of any kind, no more illusions about a peaceful path, no sporadic actions, no yielding now to provocation from the Black Hundreds and Cossacks. Let us muster our forces, reorganise them and resolutely prepare for the armed uprising, if the course of the crisis permits it on a

really mass, country-wide scale. The transfer of land to the peasants is impossible at present without an armed uprising, since the counter-revolutionaries, having taken power, have completely united with the landowners as a class.

The aim of the insurrection can only be to transfer power to the proletariat, supported by the poor peasants, with a view to putting our Party programme into effect.

4. The party of the working class, without abandoning legal activity but never for a moment overrating it, must c o m b i n e legal with illegal work, as it did in 1912–14.

Don't let a single hour of legal work slip by. But don't cherish any constitutional or "peaceful" illusions. Form illegal organisations or cells everywhere and at once for the publication of leaflets, etc. Reorganise immediately, consistently, resolutely, all along the line.

Act as we did in 1912–14, when we could speak about overthrowing tsarism by a revolution and an armed uprising, without at the same time losing our legal base in the Duma, the insurance societies, the trade unions, etc.

Stalin,

**Outcome of the Moscow Conference,**

August 17, 1917, Works, Vol. 3, pp. 231-33

The Moscow Conference is over.

Now, after the "sharp clash between the two opposite camps," after the "bloody battle" between the Milyukovs and Tseretelis, now that the "engagement" has ended and the wounded have been gathered up, it is permissible to ask: How did the "battle" of Moscow end? Who won and who lost?

The Cadets are rubbing their hands with satisfaction. "The Party of Popular Freedom," they say, "can pride itself on the fact that its slogans . . . have been recognized. . . as the national slogans" (Rech).

The defencists are also pleased, for they talk of "the triumph of the democracy" (read: the defencists!) and assert that "the democracy emerges from the Moscow Conference strengthened" (Izvestia).

"Bolshevism must be destroyed," said Milyukov at the conference amid the loud applause of the representatives of the "virile forces."

That is what we are doing, replied Tsereteli, for "we have already passed an emergency law" against Bolshevism. Moreover, "the revolution (read: counter-revolution!) is not yet experienced in the struggle against the Left danger." Give us time to acquire experience. And the Cadets agree that it is better to destroy Bolshevism gradually than at one stroke, and not



directly, not by their own hand, but by the hand of others, the hand of these same "socialist" defencists.

"The Committees and Soviets must be abolished," said General Kaledin amid the applause of the representatives of the "virile forces."

True, replied Tsereteli, but it is too early yet, for "this scaffolding must not be removed before the edifice of the free revolution (read: counter-revolution!) is completed." Give us time to "complete" it, and the Soviets and Committees will be removed.

And the Cadets agree that it is better to degrade the Committees and Soviets to the role of simple adjuncts of the imperialist machine than to destroy them out of hand.

The result is "universal jubilation" and "satisfaction."

It is not for nothing that the newspapers say that there is now "greater unity between the socialist Ministers and Cadet Ministers than before the conference" (Novaya Zhizn ).

Who has won, you ask?

The capitalists have won, for at the conference the government pledged itself "not to tolerate interference of the workers (control!) in the management of the factories."

The landlords have won, for at the conference the government pledged itself "not to introduce any radical reforms in the sphere of the land question."

The counter-revolutionary generals have won, for the Moscow Conference approved the death penalty.

Who has won, you ask?

The counter-revolution has won, for it has organized itself on a country-wide scale and rallied the support of all the "virile forces" of the country, such as Ryabushinsky and Milyukov, Tsereteli and Dan, Alexeyev and Kaledin.

The counter-revolution has won, for the so-called "revolutionary democracy" has been placed at its disposal as a convenient shield against the anger of the people.

The counter-revolutionaries are now not alone. The whole "revolutionary democracy" is working for them. Now they have at their disposal the "public opinion" of the "land of Russia," which the defencist gentry will "assiduously" mould.

Coronation of counter-revolution -- that is the outcome of the Moscow Conference.

The defencists, who are now prating about the "triumph of the democracy," do not even suspect that they have simply been hired as flunkeys of the triumphant counter-revolutionaries.

That, and that alone, is the political implication of the "honest coalition" which Mr. Tsereteli urged "imploringly" and to which Milyukov and his friends have no objection.

A "coalition" of the defencists and the "virile forces" of the imperialist bourgeoisie against the revolutionary proletariat and the poor peasants -- that is the upshot of the Moscow Conference.

Whether this counter-revolutionary "coalition" will suffice the defencists for long, the near future will show.

Stalin,

**The Conspiracy Continues,**

August 28, 1917

Works, Vol. 3

Who Are They?

Yesterday we wrote that the Cadets were the moving spirit of the counter-revolution. We affirmed this on the basis not only of "rumours" but of generally known facts—the resignation of the Cadets from the government at the critical moments of the "surrender" of Tarnopol in July and of the Kornilov conspiracy in August. For it could not have been fortuitous that both in July and in August the Cadets were in one camp with the traitors at the front and the most rabid counter-revolutionaries in the rear against the Russian people.

Today, *Izvestia* and the defencists, those inveterate compromisers with the Cadets, unreservedly confirm what we said about the Cadets yesterday.

"Lvov did not conceal," write the defencists, "that this (a military dictatorship) is desired not only by General Kornilov, but also by a certain group of public men who at the present moment are at General Headquarters" (*Izvestia*).

And so :

It is a fact that **General Headquarters are the headquarters of the counter-revolution.**

It is a fact that the general staff of the counter-revolution consists of "certain public men."

Who are these "public men"? Let us see:

"It has been established beyond a doubt that a number of public men who have very close ideological and personal connections with representatives of the Cadet Party are implicated in the plot" (Izvestia).

And so:

It is a fact that Messieurs the defencists, who only yesterday were embracing the "virile forces" of the country in the person of "representatives of the Cadet Party," are today compelled to rank them as plotters against the revolution.

It is a fact that the plot has been organized and is being directed by "representatives of the Cadet Party."

Our Party was right when it asserted that the first condition for the victory of the revolution was a rupture with the Cadets.

What Are They Counting on?

Yesterday we wrote that the Kornilov party is the sworn enemy of the Russian revolution; that, after having surrendered Riga, Kornilov would not hesitate to surrender Petrograd in order to ensure the victory of the counter-revolution.

Today Izvestia unreservedly confirms our statement

Chief of Staff General Lukomsky, who is the actual soul of the revolt, states that "in the event of the Provisional Government rejecting General Kornilov's demand, internecine warfare at the front may lead to a breach in the front and the appearance of the enemy in places where we least expect him."

This sounds, does it not, very much like a threat to surrender Petrograd, say?

And here is an even more explicit statement:

"Evidently, in his effort to secure the success of the conspiracy, General Lukomsky will not shrink from downright treason. His threat that the rejection of General Kornilov's demand may lead to civil war at the front, to the opening of the front to the enemy, and the disgrace of a separate peace can only be regarded as signifying his firm determination to come to an arrangement with the Germans in order to secure the success of the conspiracy."

Do you hear this?—"**an arrangement with the Germans,**" "**opening of the front,**" a "**separate peace.**" . . .

There you have the real "traitors" and "treasonmongers"—the Cadets, who "are implicated in the plot," and who are lending their presence at General Headquarters to hide the threat of an "opening of the front" and an "arrangement with the Germans."

For months on end these "front-opening" heroes have been reviling our Party, **accusing it of "treason" and talking about "German gold."** For months on end the yellow hirelings of the banks, Novoye Vremya and Birzhovka, Rech and Russkaya Volya, have been playing up these vile allegations. And what do we find? Even the defencists are now obliged to admit that the treachery—at the front—is the work of the commanders and their ideological inspirers.

Let the workers and soldiers remember this!

Let them know that the provocative howls of the bourgeois press about the "treachery" of the soldiers and the Bolsheviks were only a camouflage for the actual treachery of the generals and the "public men" of the Cadet Party.

Let them know that when the bourgeois press raises a howl about the "treachery" of the soldiers, it is a sure sign that the moving spirits behind that press have already planned treachery and are trying to throw the blame on the soldiers.

Let the workers and soldiers know this and draw the proper conclusions.

Do you want to know what they are counting on?

They are counting on "opening the front" and an "arrangement with the Germans," hoping to capture the war-weary soldiers with the idea of a separate peace and **then march them against the revolution.**

The workers and soldiers will realize that these traitors at General Headquarters must be shown no mercy.

The Conspiracy Continues...

Events are moving quickly. Facts and rumours come thick and fast. There are rumours, as yet unconfirmed, that Kornilov is negotiating with the Germans. There is definite talk of a skirmish between Kornilov regiments and revolutionary soldiers near Petrograd. Kornilov has issued a "manifesto" proclaiming himself dictator, the enemy and gravedigger of the conquests of the Russian revolution.

And the Provisional Government, instead of meeting the enemy as an enemy, prefers to confer with General Alexeyev and keeps on negotiating with Kornilov, keeps on pleading with the conspirators who are openly betraying Russia.

And the **so-called "revolutionary democracy" is preparing for another "special conference** on the lines of the Moscow Conference, to be attended by representatives of all the virile forces of the country" (see Izvestia).

And at the same time the Cadets, who only yesterday were howling about a "Bolshevik plot," are today disconcerted by the exposure of the Kornilov plot and are appealing for "common sense" and "harmony" (see Rech).

Evidently, they want to "arrange" another compromise with those "virile forces" who, while howling about a Bolshevik plot, are themselves conspiring against the revolution and the Russian people.

But the compromisers are reckoning without their host; for the real host in the country, **the workers and soldiers, want no conferences with enemies of the revolution.** The information coming in from the districts and regiments uniformly shows that the workers are mustering their forces, that the soldiers are standing ready to arms. The workers, apparently, prefer to talk with the enemy as an enemy.

Nor could it be otherwise: you don't confer with enemies, you fight them.

The conspiracy continues. Prepare to resist it!

Rabochy No. 5, 2nd, special edition, August 28, 1917

Stalin,

**The Second Wave,**

September 9, 1917, Works, Vol. 3

The first wave of the Russian revolution began as a struggle against tsarism. The workers and soldiers were at that time the main forces of the revolution. But they were not the only forces. Besides them, bourgeois liberals (Cadets) and the British and French capitalists were also "active," the former having turned their backs on tsarism because of its inability to drive a road to Constantinople, and the latter having betrayed it because of tsarism's desire for a separate peace with Germany.

There thus arose something in the nature of a concealed coalition, under whose pressure tsarism was compelled to quit the stage. On the day following the fall of tsarism, the secret coalition became an open one, having assumed the form of a definite agreement between the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet, between the Cadets and the "revolutionary democracy."

But these forces pursued entirely different aims. Whereas the Cadets and the British and French capitalists merely wanted to make a little revolution in order to exploit the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses for the purposes of a big imperialist war, the workers and soldiers, on the contrary, were striving for the complete break-up of the old regime and the full triumph of a great revolution, in order, by overthrowing the landlords and curbing the imperialist bourgeoisie, to secure the cessation of the war and ensure a just peace.



This fundamental contradiction underlay the further development of the revolution. It also predetermined the instability of the coalition with the Cadets.

All the so-called crises of power, including the most recent, the one in August, were manifestations of this contradiction.

And if in the course of these crises success always proved to be with the imperialist bourgeoisie, and if after the "solution" of each crisis the workers and soldiers proved to have been deceived, and the coalition was preserved in one form or another, that was not only because of the high degree of organization and the financial power of the imperialist bourgeoisie, but also because—the vacillating upper sections of the petty bourgeoisie and their parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks — which still had the following of the broad mass of the petty bourgeoisie in our generally petty-bourgeois country—on each occasion took their stand "on the other side of the barricades" and decided the struggle for power in favour of the Cadets.

The coalition with the Cadets attained its greatest strength in the July days, when the members of the coalition formed a united battle front and turned their weapons against the "Bolshevik" workers and soldiers.

In this respect the Moscow Conference was merely an echo of the July days. The non-admission of the Bolsheviks to the conference was to have been a necessary surety for the cementing of the "honest coalition" with the "virile forces" of the country, inasmuch as the isolation of the Bolsheviks was

regarded as an essential condition for the stability of the coalition with the Cadets.

Such was the situation down to the Kornilov revolt.

Kornilov's action changed the picture.

It was already clear at the Moscow Conference that the alliance with the Cadets was threatening to become an alliance with the Kornilovs and Kaledins against . . . not only the Bolsheviks, but the entire Russian revolution, against the very existence of the gains of the revolution. The boycott of the Moscow Conference and the protest strike of the Moscow workers, which unmasked the counter-revolutionary conclave and thwarted the plans of the conspirators, was not only a warning in this respect; it was also a call to be prepared. We know that the call was not a voice crying in the wilderness, that a number of cities responded immediately with protest strikes. . . .

That was an ominous portent.

The Kornilov revolt only opened the floodgates for the accumulated revolutionary indignation; it only released the temporarily shackled revolution, spurred it on and impelled it forward.

And here, in the fire of battle against the counter-revolutionary forces, in which words and promises are tested by actual deeds in the direct struggle, it became revealed who really were the friends and who the enemies of the revolution, who really were the allies and who the betrayers of the workers, peasants and soldiers.

The Provisional Government, so painstakingly stitched together from heterogeneous materials, burst at the seams at the very first breath of the Kornilov revolt.

It is "sad," but true: the coalition looks like a force when it is a matter of talking about "saving the revolution," but turns out to be a squib when it is a matter of really saving the revolution from mortal danger.

The Cadets resigned from the government and openly demonstrated their solidarity with the Kornilovites. The imperialists of all shades and degrees, the bankers and manufacturers, the factory owners and profiteers, the landlords and generals, the pen pirates of *Novoye Vremya* and the cowardly provocateurs of *Birzhovka* were all, with the Cadet Party at their head and in alliance with the British and French imperialist cliques, found to be in one camp with the counter-revolutionaries—against the revolution and its conquests.

It became manifest that alliance with the Cadets meant alliance with the landlords against the peasants, with the capitalists against the workers, with the generals against the soldiers.

It became manifest that whoever compromised with Milyukov compromised with Kornilov and must come out against the revolution, for Milyukov and Kornilov "are one."

A vague inkling of this truth was the underlying reason for the new mass revolutionary movement, for the second wave of the Russian revolution.

And if the first wave ended with the triumph of the coalition with the Cadets (the Moscow Conference!), the second began

with the collapse of this coalition, with open war against the Cadets.

In the struggle against the counter-revolution of the generals and Cadets the almost defunct Soviets and Committees in the rear and at the front are coming to life again and growing in strength.

In the struggle against the counter-revolution of the generals and Cadets new revolutionary Committees of workers and soldiers, sailors and peasants, railwaymen and post and telegraph employees are coming into being.

In the fires of this struggle new local organs of power are arising in Moscow and the Caucasus, in Petrograd and the Urals, in Odessa and Kharkov.

The reason is not the new resolutions passed by Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who have undoubtedly moved towards the Left in these past few days— although this, of course, is of no little importance.

Nor is the reason the "victory of Bolshevism," with the spectre of which the bourgeois press is browbeating the scared philistines of Dyen and Volya Naroda.

The reason is that in the struggle against the Cadets, and in spite of them, a new power is arising, which has defeated the forces of counter-revolution in open battle.

The reason is that, passing from the defensive to the offensive, this new power is inevitably encroaching upon the vital interests of the landlords and capitalists, and is thereby rallying around itself the worker and peasant masses.

The reason is that, acting in this way, this "unrecognized" power is compelled by force of circumstances to raise the question of its "legalization," while the "official" power, which has betrayed a manifest kinship with the counter-revolutionary conspirators, turns out to have no firm ground under its feet.

And the reason, lastly, is that in the face of this new wave of revolution, which is rapidly spreading to new cities and regions, the Kerensky government, which yesterday was still afraid to give decisive battle to the Kornilov counter-revolution, is today uniting with Kornilov and the Kornilovites in the rear and at the front, and at the same time "ordering" the dissolution of the centres of revolution, the "unauthorized" workers', soldiers' and peasants' Committees.

And the more thoroughly Kerensky links himself with the Kornilovs and Kaledins, the wider grows the rift between the people and the government, the more probable becomes a rupture between the Soviets and the Provisional Government.

It is these facts, and not the resolutions of individual parties, that pronounce the death sentence on the old compromising slogans.

We are by no means inclined to overrate the extent of the rupture with the Cadets. We know that that rupture is still only a formal one. But for a start, even such a rupture is a big step forward. It is to be presumed that the Cadets themselves will do the rest. They are already boycotting the Democratic Conference. The representatives of trade and industry, whom the cunning strategists of the Central Executive Committee wanted to "entice into their net," are following in the footsteps

of the Cadets. It is to be presumed that they will go further and continue to close down mills and factories, refuse credits to the organs of "the democracy" and deliberately aggravate the economic disruption and food scarcity. And "the democracy," in its efforts to overcome the economic disruption and food scarcity, will inevitably be drawn into a resolute struggle with the bourgeoisie and will widen its rupture with the Cadets. . . .

Seen in this perspective and in this connection, the Democratic Conference convened for September 12 is particularly symptomatic. What its outcome will be, whether it will "take" power, whether Kerensky will "yield" all these are questions which cannot be answered yet. The initiators of the conference may possibly try to find some cunning "compromise" formula. But that, of course, is of no significance. Fundamental questions of revolution, the question of power in particular, are not settled at conferences. But one thing is certain, and that is that the conference will be a summing up of the events of the past few days, will provide a computation of forces, will disclose the difference between the first, already receded, wave and the second, advancing wave of the Russian revolution.

And we shall learn that:

Then, at the time of the first wave, the fight was against tsarism and its survivals. Now, at the time of the second wave, the fight is against the landlords and capitalists.

Then — an alliance with the Cadets. Now—a rupture with them.

Then — the isolation of the Bolsheviks. Now — the isolation of the Cadets.

Then — an alliance-with British and French capital, and war. Now — a ripening rupture with it, and peace, a just and general peace.

That, and that alone, will be the course of the second wave of the revolution, no matter what the Democratic Conference may decide.

Rabochy Put , No. 6, September 9, 1917

Lenin,

**Marxism and Insurrection, A Letter to the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.),**

September 13, 1917

Collected Works, Vol. 26, pp. 22-27.

A LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P. (B.)

One of the most vicious and probably most widespread distortions of Marxism resorted to by the dominant "socialist" parties is the opportunist lie that preparation for insurrection, and generally the treatment of insurrection as an art, is "Blanquism".

Bernstein, the leader of opportunism, has already earned himself unfortunate fame by accusing Marxism of Blanquism, and when our present-day opportunists cry Blanquism they do not improve on or "enrich" the meagre "ideas" of Bernstein one little bit.

Marxists are accused of Blanquism for treating insurrection as an art! Can there be a more flagrant perversion of the truth, when not a single Marxist will deny that it was Marx who expressed himself on this score in the most definite, precise and categorical manner, referring to insurrection specifically as an art, saying that it must be treated as an art, that you must win the first success and then proceed from success to success, never ceasing the offensive against the' enemy, taking advantage of his confusion, etc., etc.?



To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a revolutionary upsurge of the people. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon that turning-point in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the vacillations in the ranks of the enemy and in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution are strongest. That is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish Marxism from Blanquism.

Once these conditions exist, however, to refuse to treat insurrection as an art is a betrayal of Marxism and a betrayal of the revolution.

To show that it is precisely the present moment that the Party must recognise as the one in which the entire course of events has objectively placed insurrection on the order of the day and that insurrection must be treated as an art, it will perhaps be best to use the method of comparison, and to draw a parallel between July 3-4 and the September days.

On July 3-4 it could have been argued, without violating the truth, that the correct thing to do was to take power, for our enemies would in any case have accused us of insurrection and ruthlessly treated us as rebels. However, to have decided on this account in favour of taking power at that time would have been wrong, because the objective conditions for the victory of the insurrection did not exist.

(1) We still lacked the support of the class which is the vanguard of the revolution.

We still did not have a majority among the workers and soldiers of Petrograd and Moscow. Now we have a majority in both Soviets. It was created solely by the history of July and August, by the experience of the "ruthless treatment" meted out to the Bolsheviks, and by the experience of the Kornilov revolt.

(2) There was no country-wide revolutionary upsurge at that time. There is now, after the Kornilov revolt; the situation in the provinces and assumption of power by the Soviets in many localities prove this.

(3) At that time there was no vacillation on any serious political scale among our enemies and among the irresolute petty bourgeoisie. Now the vacillation is enormous. Our main enemy, Allied and world imperialism (for world imperialism is headed by the "Allies"), has begun to waver between a war to a victorious finish and a separate peace directed against Russia. Our petty-bourgeois democrats, having clearly lost their majority among the people, have begun to vacillate enormously, and have rejected a bloc, i.e., a coalition, with the Cadets.

(4) Therefore, an insurrection on July 3-4 would have been a mistake; we could not have retained power either physically or politically. We could not have retained it physically even though Petrograd was at times in our hands, because at that time our workers and soldiers would not have fought and died for Petrograd. There was not at the time that "savageness", or fierce hatred both of the Kerenskys and of the Tseretelis and

Chernovs. Our people had still not been tempered by the experience of the persecution of the Bolsheviki in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviki participated.

We could not have retained power politically on July 3-4 because, before the Kornilov revolt, the army and the provinces could and would have marched against Petrograd.

Now the picture is entirely different.

We have the following of the majority of a class, the vanguard of the revolution, the vanguard of the people, which is capable of carrying the masses with it.

We have the following of the majority of the people, because Chernov's resignation, while by no means the only symptom, is the most striking and obvious symptom that the peasants will not receive land from the Socialist-Revolutionaries' bloc (or from the Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves). And that is the chief reason for the popular character of the revolution.

We are in the advantageous position of a party that knows for certain which way to go at a time when imperialism as a whole and the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary bloc as a whole are vacillating in an incredible fashion.

Our victory is assured, for the people are close to desperation, and we are showing the entire people a sure way out; we demonstrated to the entire people during the "Kornilov days" the value of our leadership, and then proposed to the politicians of the bloc a compromise, which they rejected, although there is no let-up in their vacillations.

It would be a great mistake to think that our offer of a compromise had not yet been rejected, and that the Democratic Conference may still accept it. The compromise was proposed by a party to parties; it could not have been proposed in any other way. It was rejected by parties. The Democratic Conference is a conference, and nothing more. One thing must not be forgotten, namely, that the majority of the revolutionary people, the poor, embittered peasants, are not represented in it. It is a conference of a minority of the people -- this obvious truth must not be forgotten. It would be a big mistake, sheer parliamentary cretinism on our part, if we were to regard the Democratic Conference as a parliament; for even if it were to proclaim itself a permanent and sovereign parliament of the revolution, it would nevertheless decide nothing. The power of decision lies outside it in the working-class quarters of Petrograd and Moscow.

All the objective conditions exist for a successful insurrection. We have the exceptional advantage of a situation in which only our victory in the insurrection can put an end to that most painful thing on earth, vacillation, which has worn the people out; in which only our victory in the insurrection will give the peasants land immediately; a situation in which only our victory in the insurrection can foil the game of a separate peace directed against the revolution -- foil it by publicly proposing a fuller, juster and earlier peace, a peace that will benefit the revolution.

Finally, our Party alone can, by a victorious insurrection, save Petrograd; for if our proposal for peace is rejected, if we do not

secure even an armistice, then we shall become "defencists", we shall place ourselves at the head of the war parties, we shall be the war party par excellence, and we shall conduct the war in a truly revolutionary manner. We shall take away all the bread and boots from the capitalists. We shall leave them only crusts and dress them in bast shoes. We shall send all the bread and footwear to the front.

And then we shall save Petrograd.

The resources, both material and spiritual, for a truly revolutionary war in Russia are still immense; the chances are a hundred to one that the Germans will grant us at least an armistice. And to secure an armistice now would in itself mean to win the whole world.

Having recognised the absolute necessity for an insurrection of the workers of Petrograd and Moscow in order to save the revolution and to save Russia from a "separate" partition by the imperialists of both groups, we must first adapt our political tactics at the Conference to the conditions of the growing insurrection; secondly, we must show that it is not only in words that we accept Marx's idea that insurrection must be treated as an art.

At the Conference we must immediately cement the Bolshevik group, without striving after numbers, and without fearing to leave the waverers in the waverers' camp. They are more useful to the cause of the revolution there than in the camp of the resolute and devoted fighters.

We must draw up a brief declaration from the Bolsheviks, emphasising in no uncertain manner the irrelevance of long speeches and of "speeches" in general, the necessity for immediate action to save the revolution, the absolute necessity for a complete break with the bourgeoisie, for the removal of the present government, in its entirety, for a complete rupture with the Anglo-French imperialists, who are preparing a "separate" partition of Russia, and for the immediate transfer of all power to revolutionary democrats, headed by the revolutionary proletariat.

Our declaration must give the briefest and most trenchant formulation of this conclusion in connection with the programme proposals of peace for the peoples, land for the peasants, confiscation of scandalous profits, and a check on the scandalous sabotage of production by the capitalists.

The briefer and more trenchant the declaration, the better. Only two other highly important points must be clearly indicated in it, namely, that the people are worn out by the vacillations, that they are fed up with the irresolution of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks; and that we are definitely breaking with these parties because they have betrayed the revolution.

And another thing. By immediately proposing a peace without annexations, by immediately breaking with the Allied imperialists and with all imperialists, either we shall at once obtain an armistice, or the entire revolutionary proletariat will rally to the defence of the country, and a really just, really

revolutionary war will then be waged by revolutionary democrats under the leadership of the proletariat.

Having read this declaration, and having appealed for decisions and not talk, for action and not resolution-writing, we must dispatch our entire group to the factories and the barracks. Their place is there, the pulse of life is there, there is the source of salvation for our revolution, and there is the motive force of the Democratic Conference.

There, in ardent and impassioned speeches, we must explain our programme and put the alternative: either the Conference adopts it in its entirety, or else insurrection. There is no middle course. Delay is impossible. The revolution is dying.

By putting the question in this way, by concentrating our entire group in the factories and barracks, we shall be able to determine the right moment to start the insurrection.

In order to treat insurrection in a Marxist way, i.e., as an art, we must at the same time, without losing a single moment, organise a headquarters of the insurgent detachments, distribute our forces, move the reliable regiments to the most important points, surround the Alexandrinsky Theatre, occupy the Peter and Paul Fortress, arrest the General Staff and the government, and move against the officer cadets and the Savage Division those detachments which would rather die than allow the enemy to approach the strategic points of the city. We must mobilise the armed workers and call them to fight the last desperate fight occupy the telegraph and the telephone exchange at once move our insurrection headquarters to the central telephone exchange and connect it by telephone with all

the factories, all the regiments, all the points of armed fighting, etc.

Of course, this is all by way of example, only to illustrate the fact that at the present moment it is impossible to remain loyal to Marxism, to remain loyal to the revolution unless insurrection is treated as an art.



Lenin,

**Heroes of Fraud and the Mistakes of the Bolsheviks,**

September 22, 1917

Collected Works, Vol. 26, pp. 43-51.

The so-called Democratic Conference is over. Thank God, one more farce is behind us and still we are advancing, provided fate has no more than a certain number of farces in store for our revolution.

In order correctly to judge the political results of the Conference, we must attempt to ascertain its precise class significance as indicated by objective facts.

Further break-up of the government parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks; their obvious loss of the majority among the revolutionary democrats; one more step towards linking up Mr. Kerensky and Messrs. Tsereteli, Chernov and Co. and exposing the Bonapartism they share -- such is the class significance of the Conference.

In the Soviets, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have lost their majority. They therefore have had to resort to a fraud -- they have violated their pledge to call a new congress of the Soviets in three months. They have evaded reporting back to those who elected the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets; and they have rigged the "Democratic" Conference. The Bolsheviks spoke of this fraud prior to the Conference, and the results fully confirmed their correctness. The Lieberdants[28] and the Tseretelis, Chernovs and Co. saw that their majority in the Soviets was dwindling, therefore they resorted to a fraud.

Arguments like that which says that co-operatives and also "properly" elected city and Zemstvo representatives "are already of great significance among the democratic organisations", are so flimsy that it is nothing but crass hypocrisy to advance them seriously. First of all, the Central Executive Committee was elected by the Soviets, and its refusal to deliver a report and relinquish office to the Soviets, is a Bonapartist fraud. Secondly, the Soviets represent revolutionary democracy insofar as they are joined by those who wish to fight in a revolutionary way. Their doors are not closed to members of the co-operatives and city dwellers. Those same Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks ran the Soviets.

Those who remained only in the co-operatives, who confined themselves only to municipal (city and Zemstvo) work, voluntarily separated themselves from the ranks of revolutionary democracy, thereby attaching themselves to a democracy that was either reactionary or neutral. Everybody knows that co-operative and municipal work is done not only by revolutionaries, but also by reactionaries; everybody knows that people are elected to co-operatives and municipalities primarily for work that is not of general political scope and importance.

The aim of the Lieberdants, Tsereteli, Chernov and Co. when they rigged the Conference was to bring up reserves secretly from among the adherents of Yedinstvo and "non-partisan" reactionaries. That was the fraud they perpetrated. That was their Bonapartism, which allies them with the Bonapartist Kerensky. They robbed democracy while hypocritically

keeping up democratic appearances -- this is the essence of the matter.

Nicholas II stole, figuratively, large sums from democracy. He convened representative institutions but gave the landowners a hundredfold greater representation than the peasants. The Lieberdants, Tseretelis, and Chernovs steal petty sums from democracy; they convoke a Democratic Conference where both workers and peasants point with full justice to the curtailment of their representation, to lack of proportionality, to discrimination in favour of members of the co-operatives and municipal councils closest to the bourgeoisie (and reactionary democracy).

The Lieberdants, Tseretelis and Chernovs have parted ways with the masses of poor workers and peasants. They saved themselves by the fraud that keeps their Kerensky going.

The demarcation of classes is progressing. A protest is growing in the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, a direct split is maturing because the "leaders" have betrayed the interests of the majority of the population. The leaders are relying on the support of a minority, in defiance of the principles of democracy. Fraud is inevitable as far as they are concerned.

Kerensky is revealing himself more and more as a Bonapartist. He was considered a Socialist-Revolutionary. Now we know that he is not merely a "March" Socialist-Revolutionary who ran over to them from the Trudoviks "for advertising purposes". He is an adherent of Breshko-Breshkovskaya, the Socialist-Revolutionary Mrs. Plekhanov, or Mrs. Potresov in their Dyen.

The so-called Right wing of the so-called socialist parties, the Plekhanovs, Breshkovskayas, Potresovs, is where Kerensky belongs; this wing, however, does not differ substantially from the Cadets in anything.

The Cadets have good reason to praise Kerensky. He pursues their policies and confers with them and with Rodzyanko behind the back of the people; he has been exposed by Chernov and others as conniving with Savinkov, a friend of Kornilov's. Kerensky is a Kornilovite ; by sheer accident he has had a quarrel with Kornilov himself, but he remains in the most intimate alliance with other Kornilovites. This is a fact, proved by the revelations about Savinkov, by Dyelo Naroda and by the continuation of the political game, Kerensky's "ministerial leapfrog" with the Kornilovites disguised under the name of the "commercial and industrial class".

Secret pacts with the Kornilov gang, secret hobnobbing (through Tereshchenko and Co.) with the imperialist "Allies"; secret obstruction and sabotage of the Constituent Assembly; secret deception of the peasants by way of service to Rodzyanko, i.e., the landowners (by doubling the price of bread) -- this is what Kerensky is really doing. This is his class policy. This is his Bonapartism.

To conceal this from the Conference, the Lieberdants, Tseretelis and Chernovs had to resort to a fraud.

The Bolshevik participation in this hideous fraud, in this farce, had the same justification as their participation in the Third Duma[29]; even in a "pigsty" we must uphold our line, even

from a "pigsty" we must send out material exposing the enemy for the instruction of the people.

The difference, however, is this, that the Third Duma was convened when the revolution was obviously ebbing, while at present there is an obvious upsurge of a new revolution; of the scope and the pace of this upsurge, however, we unfortunately know very little.

The most characteristic episode of the Conference was, in my opinion, Zarudny's speech. He tells us that as soon as Kerensky "as much as hinted" at reorganising the government, all the ministers began to hand in their resignations. "The following day," continues the naïve, childish naïve (a good thing if he is only naïve), Zarudny, "the following day, notwithstanding our resignation, we were called, we were consulted, and finally we were prevailed upon to stay."

"General laughter in the hall," remarks at this point the official *Izvestia*.

Gay folk, those participants in the Bonapartist deception of the people by the republicans. We are all revolutionary democrats -- no joking!

"From the very beginning," says Zarudny, "we heard two things; we were to strive to make the army capable of fighting, and to hasten peace on a democratic basis. Well, as far as peace is concerned, I do not know whether, during the six weeks I have been a member of the Provisional Government, the Provisional Government has done anything about it. I did not notice it. (Applause and a voice from the audience: "It did

nothing", Izvestia remarks.) When I, as a member of the Provisional Government, inquired about it, I received no reply. . . ."

Thus, speaks Zarudny, according to the report of the official Izvestia. And the Conference listen in silence, tolerate such things, do not stop the orator, do not interrupt the session, do not jump to their feet and chase out Kerensky and the government! How could they? These "revolutionary democrats" are for Kerensky to a man!

Very well, gentlemen, but then, wherein does the term "revolutionary democrat" differ from the terms "lackey" and "scoundrel"?

It is natural that these lackeys are capable of roaring with laughter when "their" Minister, noted for his rare naïveté or rare stupidity, tells them how Kerensky keeps removing and replacing ministers (in order to come to terms with the Kornilov gang behind the hack of the people and "in full privacy"). It is not surprising that the lackeys keep silent when "their" Minister, who seems to have taken general phrases about peace seriously without seeing their hypocrisy, admits that he did not even receive a reply to his question about real steps towards peace. Such is the fate of lackeys, to allow themselves to be fooled by the government. But what has this to do with revolution, what has it to do with democracy?

Would it be surprising if revolutionary soldiers and workers were to get the idea that it would be good if the ceiling of the Alexandrinsky Theatre were to fall and crush all that gang of pitiful scoundrels who can sit there in silence when it is being

demonstrated to them that Kerensky and Co. are fooling them with their talk about peace, who can roar with laughter when they are told as clearly as can be by their own ministers that ministerial leapfrog is a farce (concealing Kerensky's dealings with the Kornilovites). God save us from our friends, we can cope with our enemies ourselves! God save us from these claimants to revolutionary democratic leadership, we can cope with the Kerenskys, Cadets and Kornilovites ourselves!

And now I come to the errors of the Bolsheviks. To have confined themselves to ironic applause and exclamations at such a moment was an error.

The people are weary of vacillations and delays. Dissatisfaction is obviously growing. A new revolution is approaching. The reactionary democrats, the Lieberdants, Tseretelis and others, wish only to distract the attention of the people with their farce of a "conference", keep them busy with it, cut the Bolsheviks off from the masses, and provide the Bolshevik delegates with the unworthy occupation of sitting and listening to the Zarudnys! And the Zarudnys are not the least sincere of them!

The Bolsheviks should have walked out of the meeting in protest and not allowed themselves to be caught by the conference trap set to divert the people's attention from serious questions. The Bolsheviks should have left two or three of their 136 delegates for "liaison work", that is, to report by telephone the moment the idiotic babbling came to an end and the voting began. They should not have allowed themselves to be kept busy with obvious nonsense for the obvious purpose of

deceiving the people with the obvious aim of extinguishing the growing revolution by wasting time on trivial matters.

Ninety-nine per cent of the Bolshevik delegation ought to have gone to the factories and barracks; that was the proper place for delegates who had come from all ends of Russia and who, after Zarudny's speech, could see the full depth of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik rottenness. There, closer to the masses, at hundreds and thousands of meetings and talks, they ought to have discussed the lessons of this farcical conference whose obvious purpose was only to give a respite to the Kornilovite Kerensky and make it easier for him to try new variations of the "ministerial leapfrog" game.

The Bolsheviks, it turned out, had a wrong attitude to parliamentarism in moments of revolutionary (and not constitutional) crises, an incorrect attitude to the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks.

How it happened can be understood -- history made a very sharp turn at the time of the Kornilov revolt. The Party failed to keep pace with the incredibly fast tempo of history at this turning-point. The Party allowed itself to be diverted, for the time being, into the trap of a despicable talking-shop.

They should have left one hundredth of their forces for that talking-shop and devoted ninety-nine hundredths to the masses.

If the turn taken by history called for a compromise with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks (personally I believe it did) the Bolsheviks should have proposed it clearly, openly



and speedily, so that they could immediately turn to account the possible and probable refusal of the Bonapartist Kerensky's friends to agree to a compromise with them.

The refusal was already indicated by articles in *Dyelo Naroda* and *Rabochaya Gazeta* on the eve of the Conference. The masses should have been told as officially, openly and clearly as possible, they should have been told without the loss of a minute, that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had rejected our offer of a compromise -- Down with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks! The Conference could have afforded "to laugh" at the naïveté of Zarudny to the accompaniment of this slogan in the factories and barracks!

The atmosphere of a certain enthusiasm for the Conference and the situation surrounding it seems to have been built up from various sides. Comrade Zinoviev made a mistake in writing about the Commune so ambiguously (ambiguously, to say the least) that it appeared that the Commune, although victorious in Petrograd, might be defeated as in France in 1871. This is absolutely untrue. If the Commune were victorious in Petrograd it would be victorious throughout Russia. It was a mistake on his part to write that the Bolsheviks did right in proposing a proportional composition for the Presidium of the Petrograd Soviet. The revolutionary proletariat would never do anything worthwhile in the Soviet as long as the Tseretelis were allowed proportional participation; to let them in meant depriving ourselves of the opportunity to work, it meant the ruin of Soviet work. Comrade Kamenev was wrong in delivering the first speech at the Conference in a purely

"constitutional" spirit when he raised the foolish question of confidence or non-confidence in the government. If, at such a meeting, it was not possible to tell the truth about the Kornilovite Kerensky that had already been told both in Rabochy Put and the Moscow Sotsial-Demokrat, why not refer to those papers and make it well known to the masses that the Conference did not want to listen to the truth about the Kornilovite Kerensky?

It was a mistake on the part of the Petrograd workers' delegations to send speakers to such a conference after Zarudny had spoken and the situation had been made clear. Why cast pearls before Kerensky's friends? Why divert the attention of proletarian forces to a farcical conference? Why did those delegations not go quite peacefully and legally to the barracks and the more backward factories? That would have been a million times more useful, essential, serious and to the point than the journey to the Alexandrinsky Theatre and chats with co-operators who sympathise with Yedinstvo and Kerensky.

Ten soldiers or ten workers from a backward factory who have become politically enlightened are worth a thousand times more than a hundred delegates hand-picked from various delegations by the Lieberdans. Parliamentarism should be used, especially in revolutionary times, not to waste valuable time over representatives of what is rotten, but to use the example of what is rotten to teach the masses.

Why should those same proletarian delegations not "use" the Conference to publish, say, two posters explaining that the Conference is a farce and to display them in barracks and

factories? One of the posters could depict Zarudny in a fool's cap, dancing on the stage and singing the song "Kerensky sacked us, Kerensky took us back". Around him stand Tsereteli, Chernov, Skobelev and a co-operator arm-in-arm with Lieber and Dan, all rolling with laughter. Caption -- They are Happy.

Poster number two. Zarudny again in front of the same audience saying "I asked about peace for six weeks. I got no answer". The audience is silent, their faces express "statesmanlike importance". Tsereteli looks particularly important as he writes in his notebook "What a fool that Zarudny is! The imbecile should be carting dung instead of being a minister. He is an advocate of the coalition and undermines it worse than a hundred Bolsheviks! He was a minister but he never learned to speak like one, he should have said, 'I continuously followed the campaign for peace for six weeks and I am fully convinced of its final success precisely under the coalition government in accordance with the great idea of Stockholm, etc., etc.' Then even Russkaya Volya would have praised Zarudny as the knight of the Russian revolution."

Caption: "Revolutionary-democratic" conference of male prostitutes.

Written before the end of the Conference; change the first phrase to something like "In all essentials the so-called Democratic. . .

Lenin,

### **From Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?**

October 1917

[This forward was written in the pamphlet by N. Lenin, *Can the Bolsheviks Retain state Power? "Soldiers' and Peasants' Library" Series*, St. Petersburg. Published according to the text in the pamphlet.]

On what are all trends agreed, from Rech to Novaya Zhizn inclusively, from the Kornilovite Cadets to the semi-Bolsheviks, all, except the Bolsheviks?

They all agree that the Bolsheviks will either never dare take over full state power alone, or, if they do dare, and do take power, they will not be able to retain it even for the shortest while.

If anybody asserts that the question of the Bolsheviks alone taking over full state power is a totally unfeasible political question, that only a swelled-headed "fanatic" of the worst kind can regard it as feasible, we refute this assertion by quoting the exact statements of the most responsible and most influential political parties and trends of various "hues".

But let me begin with a word or two about the first of the questions mentioned—will the Bolsheviks dare take over full state power alone? I have already had occasion, at the All-Russia Congress of Soviets, to answer this question in the affirmative in no uncertain manner by a remark that I shouted from my seat during one of Tsereteli's ministerial speeches. And I have not met in the press, or heard, any statements by

Bolsheviks to the effect that we ought not to take power alone. I still maintain that a political party—and the party of the advanced class in particular—would have no right to exist, would be unworthy of the name of party, would be a nonentity in any sense, if it refused to take power when opportunity offers. (...)

The Soviets are a new state apparatus which, in the first place, provides an armed force of workers and peasants; and this force is not divorced from the people, as was the old standing army, but is very closely bound up with the people. From the military point of view this force is incomparably more powerful than previous forces; from the revolutionary point of view, it cannot be replaced by anything else. Secondly, this apparatus provides a bond with the people, with the majority of the people, so intimate, so indissoluble, so easily verifiable and renewable, that nothing even remotely like it existed in the previous state apparatus. Thirdly, this apparatus, by virtue of the fact that its personnel is elected and subject to recall at the people's will without any bureaucratic formalities, is far more democratic than any previous apparatus. Fourthly, it provides a close contact with the most varied professions, thereby facilitating the adoption of the most varied and most radical reforms without red tape. Fifthly, it provides an organisational form for the vanguard, i.e., for the most class-conscious, most energetic and most progressive section of the oppressed classes, the workers and peasants, and so constitutes an apparatus by means of which the vanguard of the oppressed classes can elevate, train, educate, and lead the entire vast mass of these classes, which has up to now stood completely outside of

political life and history. Sixthly, it makes it possible to combine the advantages of the parliamentary system with those of immediate and direct democracy, i.e., to vest in the people's elected representatives both legislative and executive functions. Compared with the bourgeois parliamentary system, this is an advance in democracy's development which is of world-wide, historic significance.

In 1905, our Soviets existed only in embryo, so to speak, as they lived altogether only a few weeks. Clearly, under the conditions of that time, their comprehensive development was out of the question. It is still out of the question in the 1917 Revolution, for a few months is an extremely short period and—this is most important—the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders have prostituted the Soviets, have reduced their role to that of a talking shop, of an accomplice in the compromising policy of the leaders. The Soviets have been rotting and decaying alive under the leadership of the Liebers, Dans, Tseretelis and Chernovs. The Soviets will be able to develop properly, to display their potentialities and capabilities to the full only by taking over full state power; for otherwise they have nothing to do, otherwise they are either simply embryos (and to remain an embryo too long is fatal), or playthings. "Dual power" means paralysis for the Soviets.

If the creative enthusiasm of the revolutionary classes had not given rise to the Soviets, the proletarian revolution in Russia would have been a hopeless cause, for the proletariat could certainly not retain power with the old state apparatus, and it is impossible to create a new apparatus immediately. The sad

history of the prostitution of the Soviets by the Tseretelis and Chernovs, the history of the "coalition", is also the history of the liberation of the Soviets from petty-bourgeois illusions, of their passage through the "purgatory" of the practical experience of the utter abomination and filth of all and sundry bourgeois coalitions. Let us hope that this "purgatory" has steeled rather than weakened the Soviets. (...)

We are not utopians. We know that an unskilled labourer or a cook cannot immediately get on with the job of state administration. In this we agree with the Cadets, with Breshkovskaya, and with Tsereteli. We differ, however, from these citizens in that we demand an immediate break with the prejudiced view that only the rich, or officials chosen from rich families, are capable of administering the state, of performing the ordinary, everyday work of administration. We demand that training in the work of state administration be conducted by class-conscious workers and soldiers and that this training be begun at once, i.e., that a beginning be made at once in training all the working people, all the poor, for this work.

We know that the Cadets are also willing to teach the people democracy. Cadet ladies are willing to deliver lectures to domestic servants on equal rights for women in accordance with the best English and French sources. And also, at the very next concert-meeting, before an audience of thousands, an exchange of kisses will be arranged on the platform: the Cadet lady lecturer will kiss Breshkovskaya, Breshkovskaya will kiss ex-Minister Tsereteli, and the grateful people will therefore receive an object-lesson in republican equality, liberty and fraternity. . . .

Yes, we agree that the Cadets, Breshkovskaya and Tsereteli are in their own way devoted to democracy and are propagating it among the people. But what is to be done if our conception of democracy is somewhat different from theirs?

In our opinion, to ease the incredible burdens and miseries of the war and also to heal the terrible wounds the war has inflicted on the people, revolutionary democracy is needed, revolutionary measures of the kind described in the example of the distribution of housing accommodation in the interests of the poor. Exactly the same procedure must be adopted in both town and country for the distribution of provisions, clothing, footwear, etc., in respect of the land in the rural districts, and so forth. For the administration of the state in this spirit we can at once set in motion a state apparatus consisting of ten if not twenty million people, an apparatus such as no capitalist state has ever known. We alone can create such an apparatus, for we are sure of the fullest and devoted sympathy of the vast majority of the population. We alone can create such an apparatus, because we have class-conscious workers disciplined by long capitalist "schooling" (it was not for nothing that we went to learn in the school of capitalism), workers who are capable of forming a workers' militia and of gradually expanding it (beginning to expand it at once) into a militia embracing the whole people. The class-conscious workers must lead, but for the work of administration they can enlist the vast mass of the working and oppressed people.

It goes without saying that this new apparatus is bound to make mistakes in taking its first steps. But did not the peasants make



mistakes when they emerged from serfdom and began to manage their own affairs? Is there any way other than practice by which the people can learn to govern themselves and to avoid mistakes? Is there any way other than by proceeding immediately to genuine self-government by the people? The chief thing now is to abandon the prejudiced bourgeois-intellectualist view that only special officials, who by their very social position are entirely dependent upon capital, can administer the state. The chief thing is to put an end to the state of affairs in which bourgeois officials and "socialist" ministers are trying to govern in the old way, but are incapable of doing so and, after seven months, are faced with a peasant revolt in a peasant country! The chief thing is to imbue the oppressed and the working people with confidence in their own strength, to prove to them in practice that they can and must themselves ensure the proper, most strictly regulated and organised distribution of bread, all kinds of food, milk, clothing, housing, etc., in the interests of the poor. Unless this is done, Russia cannot be saved from collapse and ruin. The conscientious, bold, universal move to hand over administrative work to proletarians and semi-proletarians, will, however, rouse such unprecedented revolutionary enthusiasm among the people, will so multiply the people's forces in combating distress, that much that seemed impossible to our narrow, old, bureaucratic forces will become possible for the millions, who will begin to work for themselves and not for the capitalists, the gentry, the bureaucrats, and not out of fear of punishment.

Lenin,

**The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It,**

October 1917

Collected Works, Vol. 25, pp. 323-69.

1- From "COMPLETE GOVERNMENT INACTIVITY"

The need for the regulation of economic life was already recognised under tsarism, and certain institutions were set up for the purpose. But under tsarism economic chaos steadily grew and reached monstrous proportions. It was at once recognised that it was the task of the republican, revolutionary government to adopt effective and resolute measures to put an end to the economic chaos. When the "coalition" government was formed with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries participating, it promised and undertook, in its most solemn public declaration of May 6, to introduce state control and regulation. The Tseretelis and Chernovs, like all the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary leaders, vowed and swore that not only were they responsible for the government, but that the "authorized bodies of revolutionary democracy" under their control actually kept an eye on the work of the government and verified its activities.

2- From "Nationalization of Banks"

The following objection might be raised: why do such advanced states as Germany and the U.S.A. "regulate economic life" so magnificently without even thinking of nationalizing the banks?

Because, we reply, both these states are not merely capitalist, but also imperialist states, although one of them is a monarchy and the other a republic. As such, they carry out the reforms they need by reactionary-bureaucratic methods, whereas we are speaking here of revolutionary-democratic methods.

This "little difference" is of major importance. In most cases it is "not the custom" to think of it. The term "revolutionary democracy" has become with us (especially among the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks) almost a conventional phrase, like the expression "thank God", which is also used by people who are not so ignorant as to believe in God; or like the expression "honourable citizen", which is sometimes used even in addressing staff members of Dyen or Yedinstvo, although nearly everybody guesses that these newspapers have been founded and are maintained by the capitalists in the interests of the capitalists, and that there is therefore very little "honourable" about the pseudo-socialists contributing to these newspapers.

If we do not employ the phrase "revolutionary democracy" as a stereotyped ceremonial phrase, as a conventional epithet, but reflect on its meaning, we find that to be a democrat means reckoning in reality with the interests of the majority of the people and not the minority, and that to be a revolutionary means destroying everything harmful and obsolete in the most resolute and ruthless manner.

Neither in America nor in Germany, as far as we know, is any claim laid by either the government or the ruling classes to the name "revolutionary democrats", to which our Socialist-

Revolutionaries and Mensheviks lay claim (and which they prostitute).

In Germany there are only four very large private banks of national importance. In America there are only two. It is easier, more convenient, more profitable for the financial magnates of those banks to unite privately, surreptitiously, in a reactionary and not a revolutionary way, in a bureaucratic and not a democratic way, bribing government officials (this is the general rule both in America and in Germany ), and preserving the private character of the banks in order to preserve secrecy of operations, to milk the state of millions upon millions in "super-profits", and to make financial frauds possible.

### 3- From ABOLITION OF COMMERCIAL SECRECY

Unless commercial secrecy is abolished, either control over production and distribution will remain an empty promise, only needed by the Cadets to fool the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to fool the working classes, or control can be exercised only by reactionary-bureaucratic methods and means. Although this is obvious to every unprejudiced person, and although Pravda persistently demanded the abolition of commercial secrecy\* (and was suppressed largely for this reason by the Kerensky government which is subservient to capital), neither our republican government nor the "authorised bodies of revolutionary democracy" have even thought of this first step to real control.

This is the very key to all control. Here we have the most sensitive spot of capital, which is robbing the people and

sabotaging production. And this is exactly why the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are afraid to do anything about it...

The revolutionary democrats, were they real revolutionaries and democrats, would immediately pass a law abolishing commercial secrecy, compelling contractors and merchants to render accounts public, forbidding them to abandon their field of activity without the permission of the authorities, imposing the penalty of confiscation of property and shooting\* for concealment and for deceiving the people, organising verification and control from below, democratically, by the people themselves, by unions of workers and other employees, consumers, etc.

Our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks fully deserve to be called scared democrats, for on this question they repeat what is said by all the scared philistines, namely, that the capitalists will "run away" if "too severe" measures are adopted, that "we" shall be unable to get along without the capitalists, that the British and French millionaires, who are, of course, "supporting" us, will most likely be "offended" in their turn, and so on. It might be thought that the Bolsheviki were proposing something unknown to history, something that has never been tried before, something "utopian", while, as a matter of fact, even 125 years ago, in France, people who were real "revolutionary democrats", who were really convinced of the just and defensive character of the war they were waging, who really had popular support and were sincerely convinced of this, were able to establish revolutionary control over the rich

and to achieve results which earned the admiration of the world. And in the century and a quarter that have since elapsed, the development of capitalism, which resulted in the creation of banks, syndicates, railways and so forth, has greatly facilitated and simplified the adoption of measures of really democratic control by the workers and peasants over the exploiters, the landowners and capitalists.

In point of fact, the whole question of control boils down to who controls whom, i.e., which class is in control and which is being controlled. In our country, in republican Russia, with the help of the "authorized bodies" of supposedly revolutionary democracy, it is the landowners and capitalists who are still recognised to be, and still are, the controllers. The inevitable result is the capitalist robbery that arouses universal indignation among the people, and the economic chaos that is being artificially kept up by the capitalists. We must resolutely and irrevocably, not fearing to break with the old, not fearing boldly to build the new, pass to control over the landowners and capitalists by the workers and peasants. And this is what our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks fear worse than the plague.

#### 4- From FINANCIAL COLLAPSE AND MEASURES TO COMBAT IT

The workers and peasants, organised in unions, by nationalising the banks, making the use of cheques legally compulsory for all rich persons, abolishing commercial secrecy, imposing confiscation of property as a penalty for concealment of incomes, etc., might with extreme ease make control both

effective and universal -- control, that is, over the rich, and such control as would secure the return of paper money from those who have it, from those who conceal it, to the treasury, which issues it.

This requires a revolutionary dictatorship of the democracy, headed by the revolutionary proletariat; that is, it requires that the democracy should become revolutionary in fact. That is the crux of the matter. But that is just what is not wanted by our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who are deceiving the people by displaying the flag of "revolutionary democracy" while they are in fact supporting the reactionary-bureaucratic policy of the bourgeoisie, who, as always, are guided by the rule: "Après nous le déluge " -- after us the deluge!

We usually do not even notice how thoroughly we are permeated by anti-democratic habits and prejudices regarding the "sanctity" of bourgeois property. When an engineer or banker publishes the income and expenditure of a worker, information about his wages and the productivity of his labour, this is regarded as absolutely legitimate and fair. Nobody thinks of seeing it as an intrusion into the "private life" of the worker, as "spying or informing" on the part of the engineer. Bourgeois society regards the labour and earnings of a wage-worker as its open book, any bourgeois being entitled to peer into it at any moment, and at any moment to expose the "luxurious living" of the worker, his supposed "laziness", etc.

Well, and what about reverse control? What if the unions of employees, clerks and domestic servants were invited by a democratic state to verify the income and expenditure of

capitalists, to publish information on the subject and to assist the government in combating concealment of incomes?

What a furious howl against "spying" and "informing" would be raised by the bourgeoisie! When "masters" control servants, or when capitalists control workers, this is considered to be in the nature of things; the private life of the working and exploited people is not considered inviolable. The bourgeoisie are entitled to call to account any "wage slave" and at any time to make public his income and expenditure. But if the oppressed attempt to control the oppressor, to show up his income and expenditure, to expose his luxurious living even in war-time, when his luxurious living is directly responsible for armies at the front starving and perishing -- oh, no, the bourgeoisie will not tolerate "spying" and "informing"!

It all boils down to the same thing: the rule of the bourgeoisie is irreconcilable with truly revolutionary true democracy. **We cannot be revolutionary democrats in the twentieth century and in a capitalist country if we fear to advance towards socialism.**

5- From CAN WE GO FORWARD IF WE FEAR TO ADVANCE TOWARDS SOCIALISM?

What has been said so far may easily arouse the following objection on the part of a reader who has been brought up on the current opportunist ideas of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Most measures described here,

he may say, are already in effect socialist and not democratic measures!



This current objection, one that is usually raised (in one form or another) in the bourgeois, Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik press, is a reactionary defence of backward capitalism, a defence decked out in a Struvean garb. It seems to say that we are not ripe for socialism, that it is too early to "introduce" socialism, that our revolution is a bourgeois revolution and therefore we must be the menials of the bourgeoisie (although the great bourgeois revolutionaries in France 125 years ago made their revolution a great revolution by exercising terror against all oppressors, landowners and capitalists alike!).

The pseudo-Marxist lackeys of the bourgeoisie, who have been joined by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and who argue in this way, do not understand (as an examination of the theoretical basis of their opinion shows) what imperialism is, what capitalist monopoly is, what the state is, and what revolutionary democracy is. For anyone who understands this is bound to admit that there can be no advance except towards socialism.

Everybody talks about imperialism. But imperialism is merely monopoly capitalism.

That capitalism in Russia has also become monopoly capitalism is sufficiently attested by the examples of the Prodigol, the Prodamet, the Sugar Syndicate, etc. This Sugar Syndicate is an object-lesson in the way monopoly capitalism develops into state-monopoly capitalism.

And what is the state? It is an organisation of the ruling class -- in Germany, for instance, of the Junkers and capitalists. And

therefore, what the German Plekhanovs (Scheidemann, Lensch, and others) call "war-time socialism" is in fact war-time state-monopoly capitalism, or, to put it more simply and clearly, war-time penal servitude for the workers and war-time protection for capitalist profits.

Now try to substitute for the Junker-capitalist state, for the landowner-capitalist state, a revolutionary-democratic state, i.e., a state which in a revolutionary way abolishes all privileges and does not fear to introduce the fullest democracy in a revolutionary way. You will find that, given a really revolutionary-democratic state, state-monopoly capitalism inevitably and unavoidably implies a step, and more than one step, towards socialism!

For if a huge capitalist undertaking becomes a monopoly, it means that it serves the whole nation. If it has become a state monopoly, it means that the state (i.e., the armed organisation of the population, the workers and peasants above all, provided there is revolutionary democracy) directs the whole undertaking. In whose interest?

Either in the interest of the landowners and capitalists, in which case we have not a revolutionary-democratic, but a reactionary-bureaucratic state, an imperialist republic.

Or in the interest of revolutionary democracy -- and then it is a step towards socialism.

For socialism is merely the next step forward from state-capitalist monopoly. Or, in other words, socialism is merely state-capitalist monopoly which is made to serve the interests

of the whole people and has to that extent ceased to be capitalist monopoly.

There is no middle course here. The objective process of development is such that it is impossible to advance from monopolies (and the war has magnified their number, role and importance tenfold) without advancing towards socialism.

Either we have to be revolutionary democrats in fact, in which case we must not fear to take steps towards socialism. Or we fear to take steps towards socialism, condemn them in the Plekhanov, Dan or Chernov way, by arguing that our revolution is a bourgeois revolution, that socialism cannot be "introduced", etc., in which case we inevitably sink to the level of Kerensky, Milyukov and Kornilov, i.e., we in a reactionary-bureaucratic way suppress the "revolutionary-democratic" aspirations of the workers and peasants.

There is no middle course.

#### 6- From THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ECONOMIC CHAOS -- AND THE WAR

Reference is constantly being made to the heroic patriotism and the miracles of military valour performed by the French in 1792-93. But the material, historical economic conditions which alone made such miracles possible are forgotten. The suppression of obsolete feudalism in a really revolutionary way, and the introduction throughout the country of a superior mode of production and free peasant land tenure, effected, moreover, with truly revolutionary democratic speed, determination, energy and devotion -- such were the material,

economic conditions which with "miraculous" speed saved France by regenerating and renovating her economic foundation.

The example of France shows one thing, and one thing only, namely, that to render Russia capable of self-defence, to obtain in Russia, too, "miracles" of mass heroism, all that is obsolete must be swept away with "Jacobin" ruthlessness and Russia renovated and regenerated economically. And in the twentieth century this cannot be done merely by sweeping tsarism away (France did not confine herself to this 125 years ago). It cannot be done even by the mere revolutionary abolition of the landed estates (we have not even done that, for the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have betrayed the peasants), by the mere transfer of the land to the peasants. For we are living in the twentieth century, and mastery over the land without mastery over the banks cannot regenerate and renovate the life of the people.

The material, industrial renovation of France at the end of the eighteenth century was associated with a political and spiritual renovation, with the dictatorship of revolutionary democrats and the revolutionary proletariat (from which the democrats had not dissociated themselves and with which they were still almost fused), and with a ruthless war declared on everything reactionary. The whole people, and especially the masses, i.e., the oppressed classes, were swept up by boundless revolutionary enthusiasm; everybody considered the war a just war of defence, as it actually was. Revolutionary France was defending herself against reactionary monarchist Europe. It

was not in 1792-93, but many years later, after the victory of reaction within the country, that the counter-revolutionary dictatorship of Napoleon turned France's wars from defensive wars into wars of conquest.

And what about Russia? We continue to wage an imperialist war in the interests of the capitalists, in alliance with the imperialists and in accordance with the secret treaties the tsar concluded with the capitalists of Britain and other countries, promising the Russian capitalists in these treaties the spoliation of foreign lands, of Constantinople, Lvov, Armenia, etc.

## 7 - THE REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATS AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PROLETARIAT

To be really revolutionary, the democrats of Russia today must march in very close alliance with the proletariat, supporting it in its struggle as the only thoroughly revolutionary class.

Such is the conclusion prompted by an analysis of the means of combating an impending catastrophe of unparalleled dimensions.

The war has created such an immense crisis, has so strained the material and moral forces of the people, has dealt such blows at the entire modern social organisation that humanity must now choose between perishing or entrusting its fate to the most revolutionary class for the swiftest and most radical transition to a superior mode of production.

Owing to a number of historical causes -- the greater backwardness of Russia, the unusual hardships brought upon

her by the war, the utter rottenness of tsarism and the extreme tenacity of the traditions of 1905 -- the revolution broke out in Russia earlier than in other countries. The revolution has resulted in Russia catching up with the advanced countries in a few months, as far as her political system is concerned.

But that is not enough. The war is inexorable; it puts the alternative with ruthless severity: either perish or overtake and outstrip the advanced countries economically as well.

That is possible, for we have before us the experience of a large number of advanced countries, the fruits of their technology and culture. We are receiving moral support from the war protest that is growing in Europe, from the atmosphere of the mounting world-wide workers' revolution. We are being inspired and encouraged by a revolutionary-democratic freedom which is extremely rare in time of imperialist war.

Perish or forge full steam ahead. That is the alternative put by history.

And the attitude of the proletariat to the peasants in such a situation confirms the old Bolshevik concept, correspondingly modifying it, that the peasants must be wrested from the influence of the bourgeoisie. That is the sole guarantee of salvation for the revolution.

And the peasants are the most numerous sections of the entire petty-bourgeois mass.

Our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have assumed the reactionary function of keeping the peasants under the

influence of the bourgeoisie and leading them to a coalition with the bourgeoisie, and not with the proletariat.

The masses are learning rapidly from the experience of the revolution. And the reactionary policy of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks is meeting with failure: they have been beaten in the Soviets of both Petrograd and Moscow. A "Left" opposition is growing in both petty-bourgeois-democratic parties. On September 10, 1917, a city conference of the Socialist-Revolutionaries held in Petrograd gave a two-thirds majority to the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who incline towards an alliance with the proletariat and reject an alliance (coalition) with the bourgeoisie.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks repeat a favourite bourgeois comparison -- bourgeoisie and democracy. But, in essence, such a comparison is as meaningless as comparing pounds with yards.

There is such a thing as a democratic bourgeoisie, and there is such a thing as bourgeois democracy; one would have to be completely ignorant of both history and political economy to deny this.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks needed a false comparison to conceal the indisputable fact that between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat stand the petty bourgeoisie. By virtue of their economic class status, the latter inevitably vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are trying to draw the petty bourgeoisie into an alliance with the

bourgeoisie. That is the whole meaning of their "coalition", of the coalition cabinet, and of the whole policy of Kerensky, a typical semi-Cadet. In the six months of the revolution this policy has suffered a complete fiasco.

The Cadets are full of malicious glee. The revolution, they say, has suffered a fiasco; the revolution has been unable to cope either with the war or with economic dislocation.

That is not true. It is the Cadets, and the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who have suffered a fiasco, for this alliance has ruled Russia for six months, only to increase economic dislocation and confuse and aggravate the military situation.

The more complete the fiasco of the alliance of the bourgeoisie and the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, the sooner the people will learn their lesson and the more easily they will find the correct way out, namely, the alliance of the peasant poor, i.e., the majority of the peasants, and the proletariat.

September 10-14, 1917



Lenin,

**Revolutionary Phrase Making,**

February 21, 1918

Collected Works, Volume 27, 1972, pp 19- 29

When I said at a Party meeting that the revolutionary phrase about a revolutionary war might ruin our revolution, I was reproached for the sharpness of my polemics. There are, however, moments, when a question must be raised sharply and things given their proper names, the danger being that otherwise irreparable harm may be done to the Party and the revolution.

Revolutionary phrase-making, more often than not, is a disease from which revolutionary parties suffer at times when they constitute, directly or indirectly, a combination, alliance or intermingling of proletarian and petty-bourgeois elements, and when the course of revolutionary events is marked by big, rapid zigzags. By revolutionary phrase making we mean the repetition of revolutionary slogans irrespective of objective circumstances at a given turn invents, in the given state of affairs obtaining at the time. The slogans are superb, alluring, intoxicating, but there are no grounds for them; such is the nature of the revolutionary phrase.

Let us examine the groups of arguments, the most important of them at least, in favor of a revolutionary war in Russian today, in January and February 1918, and the comparison of this slogan with objective reality will tell us whether the definition I give is correct.

1

Our press has always spoken of the need to prepare for a revolutionary war in the event of the victory of socialism in one country with capitalism still in existence in the neighboring countries. That is indisputable.

The question is-how have those preparations actually been made since our October Revolution?

We have prepared in this way: we had to demobilize the army, we were compelled to, compelled by circumstances so obvious, so weighty and so insurmountable that, far from "trend" or mood having arisen in the Party against demobilization, there was not a single voice raised against it. Anyone who wants to give some thought to the class causes of such an unusual phenomenon as the causes of by the Soviet Socialist Republic before the war with neighboring imperialist state is finished will without great difficulty discover these causes in the social composition of a backward country with a small-peasant economy, reduced to extreme economic ruin after three years of war. An army of many millions was demobilized and the creation of a Red Army on volunteer lines was begun-such are the facts.

Compare these facts with the talk of a revolutionary war in January and February 1918, and the nature of the revolutionary phrase will be clear to you.

If this "championing" of a revolutionary war by, say, the Petrograd and Moscow organizations had not been an empty phrase we should have had other facts between October and

January; we should have seen a determined struggle on their part against their part there has been nothing of the sort.

We should have seen the Petrograds and Muscovites sending tens of thousands of agitators and soldiers to the front and should have received daily reports from thereabout their struggle against the front out the successes of their struggle, about the halting of demobilization.

There here has been nothing of the sort.

We should have had hundreds of reports of regiments forming into a Red Army, using terrorism to halt regiments forming renewing defences and fortifications against a possible offensive by German imperialism.

There has been nothing of the sort. regiments forming in sinful swing. The old army does not exist. The new army is only just being born.

Anyone who does not want to comfort himself with more words, bombastic declarations and exclamations must see that the "slogan" of revolutionary war in February 1918 is the emptiest of phrases, that it has nothing real, nothing objective behind it. This slogan today contains nothing but sentiment, wishes, indignation and resentment. A slogan with such a content is called a revolutionary phrase.

Matters as they stand with our own Party and Soviet power as a whole, matters as they stand with the Bolsheviks of Petro grad and Moscow show that so far, we have not succeeded in getting beyond the first steps in forming a volunteer Red Army. To hide from this unpleasant fact-and fact it is-behind a screen of words

and at the same time not only do nothing to halt not only but even raise no objection to it, is to be intoxicated with the sound of words.

A typical substantiation of what has been said is, for instance, the fact that in the Central Committee of our Party the majority of the most prominent opponents of a separate peace voted against a revolutionary war, voted against it both in January and in February. What does that mean? It means that everybody who is not afraid to look truth in the face recognizes the impossibility of a recognizers.

In such cases the truth is evaded by putting forward, or attempting to put forward, arguments. Let us examine them.

2

Argument No. 1. In 1792 France suffered economic ruin to no less an extent, but a revolutionary war cured everything, was an inspiration to everyone, gave rise to enthusiasm and carried everything before it. Only those who don't believe in the revolution, only opportunists could oppose a revolutionary war in our, more profound revolution.

Let us compare this reason, or this argument, with the facts. It is a fact that at the end of the eighteenth century the economic basis of the new, higher mode of production was first created, and then, as a result, as a superstructure, the powerful revolutionary army appeared. France abandoned feudalism before other countries, swept it away in the course of a few years of victorious revolution, and led a people who were not fatigued from any war, who had won land and freedom, who

had been made stronger by the elimination of feudalism, led them to war against a number of economically and politically backward peoples.

Compare this to contemporary number ofn. Incredible fatigue from war. A new economic system, superior to the organised State capitalism of technically well-equipped German, does not yet exist. It is only being founded. Our peasant have only a law on the socialization of the land, but not one single year of free (from the landowner and from the tormentor war) work. Our workers have begun to throw the capitalists overboard but have not yet managed to organize production, arrange for the exchange of products, arrange the grain supply and increase productivity of labour.

This is what we advanced towards, this is the road we took, but it is obvious that the new and higher economic system does not yet exist.

Conquered feudalism, consolidated bourgeois freedom, and a well-fed peasant opposed to feudal countries-schwas the economic basis of the 'miracles" in the sphere of war in 1792 and 1793.

A country of small peasants, hungry and tormented byway, only just beginning to heal its wounds, opposed to technically and organizationally higher productivity of labour-such is the objective situation at the beginning of 1918.

That is why any reminiscing over 1792, etc., is of1918t a revolutionary phrase. People repeat slogans, words, war cries, but are afraid to analyse objective reality.

Argument No. 2. Germany "cannot attack", her growing revolution will not allow it.

The Germans "cannot attack" was an argument repeated millions of times in January and at the beginning of February 1918 by opponents of a separate peace. The more cautious of them said that there was a 25 to 33 per cent probability (approximately, of course) of the Germans being unable to attack.

The facts refuted these calculations. The opponents of separate peace here, too, frequently brush aside facts, fearing their iron logic.

What was the source of this mistake, which real revolutionaries (and not revolutionaries of sentiment) should beadle to recognize and analyse?

Was it because we, in general, manoeuvred and agitated in connection with the peace negotiations? It was not. We had to manoeuvre and agitate. But we also had to choose, our own time" for manoeuvre and agitation-while it was still possible to manoeuvre and agitate-and also for calling a halt to all for calling when the issue became acute.

The source of the mistake was that our relations of revolutionary co-operation with the German revolutionary workers were turned into an empty phrase. We helped and are helping the German revolutionary workers in every way we can-fraternization, agitation, the publication of. secret treaties, etc. That was help in deeds, real help.

But the declaration of some of our comrades—"the Germans cannot attack"-was an empty phrase. We have only just been through a revolution in our own country. We all know very well why it was easier for a revolution to starting of than in Europe. We saw that we could not check the offensive of Russian imperialism in June 1917, although our revolution had not only begun, had not only overthrown the monarchy, but had set up Soviets everywhere. We saw, we knew, we explained to the workers-wars are conducted by governments. To stop a bourgeois war, it is necessary to overthrow the bourgeois government.

The declaration "the Germans cannot attack" was, therefore, tantamount to declaring "we know that the German Government will be overthrown within the next few weeks". Actually, we did not, and could not, know this, and for this reason the declaration was an empty phrase.

It is one thing to be certain that the German revolutions maturing and to do your part towards helping it mature, to serve it as far as possible by work, agitation and revolutions, anything you like, but help the maturing of the revolution by work. That is what revolutionary proletarian internationalism means.

It is another thing to declare, directly or indirectly, openly or covertly, that the German revolution is already mature (although it obviously is not) and to base your tactics on it. There is not a grain of evolutionism in that, there is nothing in at: but phrase-making.

Such is the source of the error contained in the “proud”, “striking”, “spectacular”, “resounding” declaration “the Germans cannot attack”.

4

The assertion that “we are helping the German revolution by resisting German imperialism and are thus bringing nearer Liebknecht’s victory over Wilhelm” is nothing but variation of the same high-sounding nonsense.

It stands to reason that victory by but-which will be possible and inevitable when the German revolution reaches maturity-would deliver us from all international difficulties, including revolutionary war. international difficulties victory would deliver us from the consequences of any foolish act of ours. But surely that does not justify foolish acts?

Does any sort of “resistance” to German imperialism help the German revolution? Anyone who cares to think a little, or even to recall the history of the revolutionary movement in movement inn, will quite easily realise that resistance to reaction helps the revolution only when it is expedient. During a half century of the revolutionary movement in half century in we have experienced many cases of resistance to reaction that were not expedient. We Marxists have always been proud that we determined the expediency of any form of struggle by a precise calculation of the mass forces and class relationships. We have said that an insurrection is not always expedient; unless the prerequisites exist among the masses it is a gamble; we have often condemned the most heroic forms of resistance by individuals as in expedient and harmful from the point of



view of the revolution. In 1907, on the basis of bitter experience we rejected resistance to participation in the third Duma as the third, etc., etc.

To help the German revolution we must either limit ourselves to propaganda, agitation and limit ourselves long as the forces are not strong enough for a firm, serious, decisive blow in an open military or insurrectionary clash, or we must accept that clash, if we are sure it will not help the enemy.

It is clear to everyone (except those intoxicated with empty phrases) that to undertake a serious insurrectionary or military clash knowing that we have no forces, knowing that we have no army, is a gamble that will not help the German workers but will make their struggle more difficult and make matters easier for their enemy and for our enemy.

5

There is yet another argument that is so childishly ridiculous that I should never have believed it possible if I hadn't heard it with my own ears.

"Back in October, didn't the opportunists say that we had no forces, no troops, no machine-guns and no equipment, but these things all appeared during the struggle, when the struggle of class against class began. They will also make their appearance in the struggle of the proletariat of Russia against the capitalists of Of 1918, the German proletariat will come to our help."

As matters stood in October, we had made a precise calculation of the mass forces. We not only thought, we knew with certainty, from the experience of the mass elections title

Soviets, that the overwhelming majority of the workers and soldiers had already come over to our side in September and in early October. We knew, even if only from the voting at the Democratic Conference that the coalition had also lost the support of the peasantry-and that meant that our cause had already won.

The following were the objective conditions for the October insurrectionary struggle:

(1) there was no longer any bludgeon over the heads of the soldiers-it was abolished in February 1917 (Germany has not yet reached "her" February);

(2) the soldiers, like the workers, had already had enough of the coalition and had finished their conscious, planned, heartfelt withdrawal from it.

This, and this alone, determined the correctness of the slogan "for an insurrection" in October, (the slogan would have been incorrect in July, when we did not advance it).

The mistake of the opportunists of October[4] was not their "concern" for objective conditions (only children could think it was) but their incorrect appraisal of facts-they got hold of trivialities and did not see the main thing, that the Soviets had come over from conciliation to us.

To compare an armed clash with Germany (that has not yet experienced "her" February or her "July", to say nothing of October), with a Germany that has a monarchist, bourgeois-imperialist government-to compare that with the October insurrectionary struggle against the enemies of the Soviets, the

Soviets that had been maturing since February 1917 and had reached maturity in September and October, is such childishness that it is only a subject for ridicule. Such is the absurdity to which people are led by empty phrases!

6

Here is another sort of argument. "But Germany will strangle us economically with a separate peace treaty, she will take away coal and grain and will enslave us."

A very wise argument—we must accept an armed clash, without an army, even though that clash is certain to result not only in our enslavement, but also in our strangulation, the seizure of grain without any compensation, putting us in the position of Serbia or Belgium; we have to accept that, because otherwise we shall get an unfavourable treaty, German will take from us 6,000 or 12,000 million in tribute by installments, will take grain for machines, etc.

O heroes of the revolutionary phrase! In renouncing the enslavement" to the imperialists they modestly pass over insolence the fact that it is necessary to defeat imperialism to be completely delivered from enslavement.

We are accepting an unfavourable treaty and a separate peace knowing that today we are not yet ready for a revolutionary war, that we have to bide our time (as we did when we tolerated Kerensky's bondage, tolerated the bondage of our own bourgeoisie from July to October), we must wait until we are stronger. Therefore, if there is a chance of obtaining the most unfavourable separate peace, we absolutely must accept it in

the interests of the socialist revolution, which is still weak (since the maturing revolution in Germany has not yet come to our help, to the help of the Russians). Only if a separate peace is absolutely impossible shall we have to fight immediately-not because it will be correct tactics, but because we shall have no choice. If it proves impossible there will be no occasion for a dispute over tactics. There will be nothing but the inevitability of the most furious resistance. But as long as we have a choice, we must choose a separate peace and an extremely unfavourable treaty, because that will still be a hundred times better than the position of Belgium.

Month by month we are growing stronger, although we are today still weak. Month by month the international socialist revolution is maturing in Europe, although it is not yet fully mature. Therefore ... therefore, "revolutionaries" (God save us from them) argue that we must accept battle when German imperialism is obviously stronger than we are but is weakening month by month (because of the slow but certain maturing of the revolution in Germany).

The "revolutionaries" of sentiment argue magnificently, they argue superbly!

7

The last argument, the most specious and most widespread, is that "this obscene peace is a disgrace, it is betrayal of Latvia, Poland, Courland and Lithuania".

Is it any wonder that the Russian bourgeoisie (and their hangers-on, the Novy Luch, Dyelo Naroda and Novaya Zhizn

gang) are the most zealous in elaborating this allegedly internationalist argument?

No, it is no wonder, for this argument is a trap into which the bourgeoisie are deliberately dragging the Russian Bolsheviks, and into which some of them are falling unwittingly, because of their love of phrases.

Let us examine the argument from the standpoint of theory; which should be put first, the right of nations to self-determination, or socialism?

Socialism should.

Is it permissible, because of a contravention of the right of nations to self-determination, to allow the Soviet Socialist Republic to be devoured, to expose it to the blows of imperialism at a time when imperialism is obviously stronger and the Soviet Republic obviously weaker?

No, it is not permissible—that is bourgeois and not socialist politics.

Further, would peace on the condition that Poland, Lithuania and Courland are returned “to us” be less disgraceful, be any less an annexationist peace?

From the point of view of the Russian bourgeois, it would.

From the point of view of the socialist-internationalist, it would not.

Because if German imperialism set Poland free (which at one time some bourgeois in Germany desired), it would squeeze Serbia, Belgium, etc., all the more.

When the Russian bourgeoisie wail against the “obscene” peace, they are correctly expressing their class interests.

But when some Bolsheviks (suffering from the phrase disease) repeat that argument, it is simply very sad.

Examine the facts relating to the behaviour of the Anglo-French bourgeoisie. They are doing everything they can to drag us into the war against Germany now, they are offering us millions of blessings, boots, potatoes, shells, locomotives (on credit ... that is not “enslavement”, don’t fear that! It is “only” credit!). They want us to fight against Germany now.

It is obvious why they should want this; they want it because, in the first place, we should engage part of the German forces. And secondly, because Soviet power might collapse most easily from an untimely armed clash with German imperialism.

The Anglo-French bourgeoisie are setting a trap for us: please be kind enough to go and fight now, our gain will be magnificent. The Germans will plunder you, will “dowell” in the East, will agree to cheaper terms in the West, and furthermore, Soviet power will be swept away .... Please do fight, Bolshevik “allies”, we shall help you!

And the “Left” (God save us from them) Bolsheviks” are walking into the trap by reciting the most revolutionary phrases ....

Oh yes, one of the manifestations of the traces of the petty-bourgeois spirit is surrender to revolutionary phrases. This is an old story that is perennially new ....

In the summer of 1907, our Party also experienced an attack of the revolutionary phrase that was, in some respects, analogous.

St. Petersburg and Moscow, nearly all the Bolsheviks were in favour of boycotting the Third Duma; they were guided by "sentiment" instead of an objective analysis and walked into a trap.

The disease has recurred.

The times are more difficult. The issue is a million times more important. To fall ill at such a time is to risk ruining the revolution.

We must fight against the revolutionary phrase, we have to fight it, we absolutely must fight it, so that at some future time people will not say of us the bitter truth that "a revolutionary phrase about revolutionary war ruined the revolution".

Lenin,

**Moscow Party Workers' Meeting,**

November 27, 1918

Collected Works, Vol. 28, pp. 201-24.

REPORT ON THE ATTITUDE OF THE PROLETARIAT TO  
PETTY-BOURGEOIS DEMOCRATS

Comrades, I should like to talk about the tasks facing our Party and the Soviet government in connection with the policy of the proletariat towards the petty-bourgeois democrats. Recent events have undoubtedly brought this question to the fore because the vast changes in the international situation -- such as the annulment of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the revolution in Germany, the collapse of German imperialism and the disintegration of British and American imperialism -- were bound to undermine a number of bourgeois-democratic tenets underlying the theory of the petty-bourgeois democrats. Russia's military position and the onslaught of the British, French and American imperialists were bound to bring some of the petty-bourgeois democrats more or less over to our side. What I should like to talk about this evening are the changes we must make in our tactics and the new tasks before us.

Let me begin with certain fundamental theoretical propositions. There can be no doubt that the chief social group which gives the petty-bourgeois democrats an economic basis is, in Russia, the middle peasants. Undoubtedly the socialist revolution and the transition from capitalism to socialism are bound to assume special forms in a country where the peasant population is



numerically large. I should therefore like first to remind you of the main tenets of Marxism with regard to the proletariat's attitude to the middle peasants. I shall do so by reading some of Engels's statements in his article "The Peasant Question in France and Germany". This article, published in pamphlet form, was written in 1894 or 1895, when the agrarian programme of the socialist party, its attitude towards the peasants, became a practical issue in connection with the discussion of the programme of the German Social-Democratic Party at its Breslau Congress. This is what Engels had to say about the attitude of the proletariat:

"What, then, is our attitude towards the small peasantry?

"To begin with, the French programme is absolutely correct in stating: that we foresee the inevitable doom of the small peasant but that it is not our mission to hasten it by any interference on our part.

"Secondly, it is just as evident that when we are in possession of state power, we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (regardless of whether with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in the case of the big landowners. Our task relative to the small peasant consists, in the first place, in effecting a transition of his private enterprise and private possession to co-operative ones, not forcibly but by dint of example and the proffer of social assistance for this purpose."

Engels says further:

"Neither now nor at any time in the future can we promise the small-holding peasants to preserve their individual property and individual enterprise against the overwhelming power of capitalist production. We can only promise them that we shall not interfere in their property relations by force, against their will."

And the last statement I would like to quote is the argument about the rich peasants, the big peasants, the kulaks as we call them in Russia, peasants who employ hired labour. Unless these peasants realise the inevitability of the doom of their present mode of production and draw the necessary conclusions, Marxists cannot do anything for them. Our duty is only to facilitate their transition, too, to the new mode of production.

These are the tenets which I wanted to quote to you, and which are no doubt known to every Communist. It follows that when the workers come to power, they cannot have the same task in countries where large-scale capitalism predominates and in countries where backward, small, middle and big peasants predominate. Thus, we were interpreting Marxism quite correctly when we said it was our duty to wage war on the landowners, the exploiters.

For the middle peasant we say: no force under any circumstances. For the big peasant we say: our aim is to bring him under the control of the grain monopoly and fight him when he violates the monopoly and conceals grain. I expounded these principles the other day at a meeting of several hundred delegates from Poor Peasants' Committees

who had come to Moscow at the time the Sixth Congress was being held.[\*] In our Party literature, as in our propaganda and agitation, we have always stressed the distinction between our attitude to the big bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. But although we are all in agreement as to theory, not all of us by a long shot have drawn the correct political conclusions or drawn them rapidly enough. I deliberately began in a roundabout way, so to speak, to show you what economic concepts about class relations must guide us if our policy towards the petty-bourgeois democrats is to be based on a firm foundation.

There can be no doubt that this small-peasant class (by middle peasant we mean one who does not sell his labour power) in Russia, at any rate, constitutes the chief economic class which is the source of the broad diversity of political trends among the petty-bourgeois democrats. Here in Russia these trends are associated mostly with the Menshevik and S.R. parties. The history of socialism in Russia shows a long struggle between the Bolsheviks and these parties, while West-European socialists have always regarded this struggle as one within socialism, that is, as a split in the Russian socialist movement. Incidentally, this view is often expressed even by sound Social-Democrats.

Only today I was handed a letter from Friedrich Adler, a man who is well known for his revolutionary activity in Austria. His letter, which was written at the end of October and received today, contains only one request: to release the Mensheviks from prison. He could find nothing more sensible to write about at a moment like this. True, he makes the reservation that he is

not well informed about our movement, and so on. But still this is typical. This silly mistake by West-European socialists comes from them looking backwards instead of forwards, and not realising that neither the Mensheviks nor the S.R.s, who preach socialism, can be classed as socialists. All through the 1917 revolution the Mensheviks and S.R.s did nothing but vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; they could never stick to a correct stand, as though to deliberately illustrate Marx's words that the petty bourgeoisie are incapable of taking an independent stand in decisive battles.

As soon as they began to form the Soviets, the workers instinctively took up a firm class stand by the very act of establishing them. The Mensheviks and S.R.s, on the other hand, vacillated all the time. And when in the spring and summer of 1917 their own friends labelled them semi-Bolsheviks, this was a true description, not merely a witticism. On every single issue they would say "yes" one day and "no" the next, whether it was the question of the Soviets, the revolutionary movement in the countryside, the direct seizure of land, fraternisation at the front, or whether to support imperialism. They would help on the one hand, and hinder on the other, all the time displaying their spinelessness and helplessness. Yet their propaganda among the people for the Soviets, which they always referred to as revolutionary democracy and contrasted with what they called the propertied elements, was only a cunning political device on their part, and the masses whom they addressed were carried away by this propaganda. Thus, the Menshevik preaching was partly of service to us too.

This is a very complex question with a wealth of history behind it. I need only dwell on it briefly. This policy of the Mensheviks and S.R.s before our very eyes is conclusive proof of our assertion that it is wrong to regard them as socialists. If they had at any time been socialists, it was only in their phraseology and reminiscences; in fact, they are nothing but Russian petty bourgeois.

I began with the attitude Marxists should adopt towards the middle peasant, or, in other words, towards the petty bourgeois parties. We are now coming to a stage when our slogans of the previous period of the revolution must be changed to take proper account of the present turn of events. You know that in October and November these people wavered.

The Bolshevik Party stood firm then and rightly so. We said we should have to destroy the enemies of the proletariat and were facing a battle on the fundamental issues of war or peace, of bourgeois representation, and of Soviet government. In all these questions we only had our own forces to rely on, and we were absolutely right when we refused to compromise with the petty-bourgeois democrats.

The subsequent course of events confronted us with the question of peace and the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty. You know that the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty repelled the petty bourgeoisie from us.

The petty-bourgeois democrats sharply recoiled from us as a consequence of these two circumstances: our foreign policy, which led to the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, on the one hand, and our ruthless struggle against democratic

illusions on the part of a section of the petty-bourgeois democrats, our ruthless struggle for the Soviet government, on the other. You know that after the Brest-Litovsk Peace, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries began to waver, some taking to open warfare, and others splitting up, and still splitting up to this day. But the fact remains. Of course, we cannot doubt for one minute or one little bit that our policy was absolutely right. To start proving that now would be to reiterate the fundamentals, because the German revolution has proved more than anything else that our views were correct.

What we were reproached for most after the Brest-Litovsk Peace, and what we heard most often from the less enlightened workers, was that our hopes of a German revolution were in vain and were not being fulfilled. The German revolution has refuted all these reproaches and has proved we were right in our view that it had to come and that we had to fight German imperialism by propaganda and by undermining it from within as well as by a national war. Events have justified us so fully that no further proof is needed. The very same applies to the Constituent Assembly; vacillations on this score were inevitable, and events have proved the correctness of our views so fully that all the revolutions now starting up in the West are taking place under the slogan of Soviet government and are setting up Soviet government. Soviets are the distinguishing feature of the revolution everywhere. They have spread from Austria and Germany to Holland and Switzerland, countries with the oldest democratic culture, which call themselves Western Europe even in relation to Germany. In these countries the demand for Soviet government is being raised. That means

that the historical collapse of bourgeois democracy was an absolute historical necessity, not an invention of the Bolsheviks. In Switzerland and Holland, the political struggle took place hundreds of years ago, and it is not for the sake of the Bolsheviks' beautiful eyes that the demand for Soviet government is being raised there now. That means we gauged the situation rightly. Events have borne out the correctness of our tactics so well that it is not worth dwelling on the subject any further. Only we must realise that this is a serious matter, one affecting the most deep-seated prejudices of the petty-bourgeois democrats. Look at the overall history of the bourgeois revolution and parliamentary development in all the West-European countries, and you will find that a similar prejudice prevailed among the old Social-Democrats of the forties in all countries. These views persisted longest of all in France. All this is only natural.

When it comes to parliamentarism, the petty bourgeoisie are the most patriotic, more patriotic than the proletariat or the big bourgeoisie. The latter are more international. The petty bourgeoisie are less mobile, are not connected to the same extent with other nations and are not drawn into the orbit of world trade. It was therefore impossible to expect anything else than that the petty bourgeoisie should be most up in arms over the question of parliamentarism. And this proved to be the case in Russia too. An important factor was that our revolution had to fight against patriotism. At the time of the Brest-Litovsk Peace we had to go against patriotism. We said that if you are a socialist you must sacrifice all your patriotic feelings to the

international revolution, which is inevitable, and although it is not here yet you must believe in it if you are an internationalist.

And, naturally, with this sort of talk, we could only hope to win over the advanced workers. It was only natural that the majority of the petty bourgeoisie should not see eye to eye with us. We could scarcely have expected them to. How could the petty bourgeoisie have been expected to accept our point of view? We had to exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat in its harshest form. It took us several months to live through the period of illusions. But if you examine the history of the West-European countries, you will find they did not get over this illusion even in decades. Take the history of Holland, France, Britain, etc. We had to disperse the petty-bourgeois illusion that the people are an integral whole and that the popular will can be expressed other than in class struggle.

We were absolutely right in rejecting all compromise over this. If we had made any concessions to petty-bourgeois illusions, to illusions about the Constituent Assembly, we would have ruined the whole cause of the proletarian revolution in Russia. We would have sacrificed to narrow national interests the interests of the world revolution, which turned out to be proceeding along the Bolshevik course, because it was purely proletarian instead of national. The result of these conditions was that the Menshevik and S.R. petty-bourgeois people recoiled from us. They crossed the barricades and landed in the camp of our enemies. When the Dutov revolt broke out, we saw clearly enough that the political forces that had been fighting us



were in the camp of Dutov, Krasnov and Skoropadsky. The proletariat and poor peasants stood on our side.

You know that during the Czech attack, when it was at the height of its success, kulak revolts broke out all over Russia. It was only the close ties formed between the urban workers and the peasants that consolidated our rule. It was only the proletariat, with the help of the poor peasants, that held off all our enemies. The overwhelming majority of both the Mensheviks and the S.R.s sided with the Czechs, the Dutov and Krasnov gangs. This state of affairs forced us to make a ruthless struggle and use terrorist methods of warfare. No matter how much people may have condemned this terrorism from different points of view -- and we were condemned by all the vacillating Social-Democrats -- we knew perfectly well it was necessitated by the acute Civil War. It was necessary because all the petty-bourgeois democrats had turned against us. They used all kinds of methods against us -- civil war, bribery and sabotage. It was these conditions that necessitated the terror. Therefore, we should not repent or renounce it. Only we must clearly appreciate the conditions of our proletarian revolution that gave rise to these acute forms of struggle. These special conditions were that we had to go against patriotism, that we had to replace the Constituent Assembly with the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!"

The change in international politics was inevitably followed by a change in the position of the petty-bourgeois democrats. A change of heart is now occurring in their camp. In the Menshevik appeal we find a call to renounce alliance with the

propertied classes, a call to go and fight British and American imperialism addressed by the Mensheviks to their friends, people from among the petty-bourgeois democrats who had concluded an alliance with the Dutov men, the Czechs and the British. It is now clear to everybody that, except for British and American imperialism, there is no force that can put up any sort of stand against the Bolshevik power. Similar vacillations are going on among the S.R.s and the intellectuals, who most of all share the prejudices of the petty-bourgeois democrats and were swayed by patriotic sentiments. The same sort of thing is going on among them too.

Our Party's job now is to be guided by class relations when choosing tactics, and to be perfectly clear whether this is just chance, spinelessness, groundless vacillation, or, on the contrary, a process with deep social roots. The answer is quite obvious if we examine this question as a whole from the standpoint of theoretically established relations between the proletariat and the middle peasants, and from the standpoint of the history of our revolution. This change of front is not due to chance or something personal. It involves millions and millions of people whose status in Russia is either that of middle peasants or something equivalent. The change of front involves all the petty-bourgeois democrats, who opposed us with a bitterness amounting almost to fury because we had to break down all their patriotic sentiments. But history has veered round to bring patriotism back towards us now. It is evident that the Bolsheviks cannot be overthrown except by foreign bayonets. Up till now the petty bourgeoisie had cherished the illusion that the British, French and Americans stood for real

democracy. But now that illusion is being completely dispelled by the peace terms that are being imposed on Austria and Germany. The British are behaving as if they had made a special point of proving the correctness of the Bolshevik views on international imperialism.

Hence voices are being raised in the parties that fought us as in the Plekhanovite camp, for instance, saying: "We were mistaken, we thought that German imperialism was our chief enemy and that the Western countries -- France, Britain and America -- would bring us a democratic system." Yet now it appears that the peace terms these Western countries offer are a hundred times more humiliating, rapacious and predatory than our peace terms at Brest-Litovsk. It appears that the British and Americans are acting as the hang men of Russian freedom, as gendarmes, playing the part of the Russian butcher Nicholas I, and are doing it no less effectively than the kings who played the hangmen in throttling the Hungarian revolution. This part is now being played by Wilson's agents. They are crushing the revolution in Austria, they are playing the gendarme, they are issuing an ultimatum to Switzerland: "You'll get no bread from us if you don't join the fight against the Bolshevik Government." They tell Holland: "Don't you dare allow Soviet ambassadors into your country, or we'll blockade you." Theirs is a simple weapon -- the noose of famine. That is what they are using to strangle the peoples.

The history of recent times, of the war and post-war period, has developed with extraordinary speed, and it goes to show that British and French imperialism is just as infamous as German

imperialism. Don't forget that even in America, where we have the freest and most democratic of all republics, that does not prevent its imperialists from behaving just as brutally. Internationalists are not only lynched, they are dragged into the street by the mob, stripped naked, tarred and burned.

Events are exposing the imperialists most effectively, and posing the alternative: either a Soviet government, or the complete suppression of the revolution by British and French bayonets. There is no longer any question of an agreement with Kerensky. As you know, they have thrown him away like a squeezed lemon. They joined forces with Dutov and Krasnov. Now the petty bourgeoisie have got over that phase. Patriotism is now pushing them to us -- that is how things have turned out, that is how history has compelled them to act. And we must all draw a lesson from this great experience of all world history. The bourgeoisie cannot be defended, the Constituent Assembly cannot be defended, because it in fact played into the hands of the Dutovs and Krasnovs. It seems funny that they should have been for the Constituent Assembly, but that happened because the bourgeoisie were still on top when it was being convened. The Constituent Assembly turned out to be an organ of the bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie turned out to be on the side of the imperialists, whose policy was directed against the Bolsheviks. The bourgeoisie were prepared to go to any lengths, to resort to the vilest means to throttle the Soviet government, to sell Russia to anybody, only to destroy the power of the Soviets.

That is the policy that led to civil war and made the petty-bourgeois democrats change round. Of course, there is always bound to be vacillation among them. When the Czechs gained their first victories, the petty-bourgeois intellectuals tried to spread rumors that the Czechs were bound to win. Telegrams from Moscow were issued declaring that the city was surrounded and about to fall. And we know perfectly well that if the British and French gain even the slightest success, the petty-bourgeois intellectuals will be the first to lose their heads, give way to panic and spread all sorts of rumors about enemy gains. But the revolution showed that revolts against imperialism are inevitable. And now our "Allies" have proved to be the chief enemies of Russian freedom and independence.

Russia cannot and will not be independent unless Soviet power is consolidated. That is why this turnabout has occurred. So, we must now define our tactics. It would be a great mistake to think of mechanically applying slogans of our revolutionary struggle from the time when there could be no reconciliation between us, when the petty bourgeoisie were against us, and when our firm stand demanded resort to terror. Today, this would not be standing firm but sheer stupidity, a failure to understand Marxist tactics. When we were obliged to sign the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, this step seemed, from the narrow patriotic point of view to be a betrayal of Russia; but from the point of view of world revolution it was a correct strategical step, which was of the greatest help to the world revolution. The world revolution has broken out just now, when Soviet power has become an institution of the whole people.

Although the petty-bourgeois democrats are still wavering, their illusions have been dispelled. And we must of course take this state of affairs into account, as we must all the other conditions. Formerly we looked at things differently, because the petty bourgeois sided with the Czechs, and we had to use force. After all, war is war, and when at war you have to fight. But now that these people are beginning to swing over to us, we must not turn away from them simply because the slogan in our leaflets and newspapers used to be different. When we find them half turning towards us, we must rewrite our leaflets, because the petty-bourgeois democrats' attitude towards us has changed. We must say: "Come along, we are not afraid of you; if you think the only way we know how to act is by force, you are mistaken; we might reach agreement." Everyone steeped in the traditions of bourgeois prejudice, all the co-operators, all sections of working people particularly connected with the bourgeoisie, might come over to us.

Take the intellectuals. They lived a bourgeois life; they were accustomed to certain comforts. When they swung towards the Czechs, our slogan was ruthless struggle -- terror. Now that there is this change of heart among the petty-bourgeois masses, our slogan must be one of agreement, of establishing good-neighbourly relations. When we come across a declaration from a group of petty-bourgeois democrats to the effect that they want to be neutral towards the Soviet government, we must say: neutrality and good neighbourly relations are old-fashioned rubbish and absolutely useless from the point of view of communism.

They are just old-fashioned rubbish and nothing else, but we must consider this rubbish from the practical standpoint. That has always been our view, and we never had hopes that these petty-bourgeois people would become Communists. But practical propositions must be considered.

We said of the dictatorship of the proletariat that the proletariat must dominate over all other classes. We cannot obliterate the distinctions between classes until complete communism. Classes will remain until we have got rid of the exploiters -- the big bourgeoisie and the landowners, whom we are ruthlessly expropriating. But we cannot say the same thing of the middle and small peasants. While relentlessly suppressing the bourgeoisie and the landowners, we must win over the petty-bourgeois democrats. And when they say they want to be neutral and live on good-neighbourly terms with us, we shall reply: "That's just what we want. We never expected you to become Communists."

We continue to stand for the ruthless expropriation of the landowners and capitalists. Here we are ruthless, and we cannot agree to any conciliation or compromise. But we realise that no decrees can convert small-scale into large-scale production, that we must gradually, keeping in step with events, win conviction for the inevitability of socialism. These people will never become socialists by conviction, honest to goodness socialists. They will become socialists when they see there is no other way. Now they can see that Europe has been so thoroughly shattered and imperialism has reached such a state that no bourgeois democracy can save the situation, that

only a Soviet system can do so. That is why this neutrality, this good-neighbourly attitude of the petty-bourgeois democrats is to be welcomed rather than feared. That is why, if we look at the matter as the representatives of a class which is exercising dictatorship, we must say that we never counted on anything more from the petty-bourgeois democrats. That is quite sufficient as far as we are concerned. You maintain good-neighbourly relations with us, and we shall keep state power. After your declaration in regard to the "Allies" we are quite willing to legalise you, Menshevik gentlemen. Our Party Central Committee will do that. But we shall not forget there are still "activists" in your party, and for them our methods of struggle will remain the same; for they are friends of the Czechs and until the Czechs are driven out of Russia, you are our enemies too. We reserve state power for ourselves, and for ourselves alone. To those who adopt an attitude of neutrality towards us we shall act as a class which holds political power and keeps the sharp edge of its weapon for the landowners and capitalists, and which says to the petty-bourgeois democrats: if it suits you better to side with the Czechs and Krasnov, well, we have shown you we can fight, and we shall carry on fighting. But if you prefer to learn from the Bolshevik example, we shall come some way to meet you, knowing that without a series of agreements, which we shall try out, examine and compare, the country cannot get to socialism.

This is the path we took from the very beginning, for example, by passing the socialisation of the land law and turning it gradually into the means that enabled us to unite the poor peasants around us and turn them against the kulaks. Only as



the proletarian movement succeeds in the countryside shall we systematically pass to collective common ownership of land and to socialised farming. This could only be done with the backing of a purely proletarian movement in the countryside, and in this respect a great deal still remains to be done. There can be no doubt that only practical experience, only realities will show us how to act properly.

To reach agreement with the middle peasants is one thing, with the petty-bourgeois elements another, and with the co-operators yet another. There will be some modification of our task in relation to the associations which have preserved petty-bourgeois traditions and habits. It will be even further modified in relation to the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. They vacillate, but we need them, too, for our socialist revolution. We know socialism can only be built from elements of large-scale capitalist culture, and the intellectuals are one of these elements. We had to be ruthless with them, but it was not communism that compelled us to do so, it was events, which repelled from us all "democrats" and everyone enamoured of bourgeois democracy. Now we have the chance to utilise the intellectuals for socialism, intellectuals who are not socialist, who will never be communist, but whom objective events and relations are now inducing to adopt a neutral and good-neighbourly attitude towards us. We shall never rely on the intellectuals; we shall only rely on the vanguard of the proletariat that leads all workers and poor peasants. The Communist Party can rely on no other support. It is one thing, however, to rely on the class which embodies the dictatorship, and another to dominate over other classes.

You may remember what Engels said even of the peasants who employ hired labour: Most likely we shall not have to expropriate all of them.[85] We are expropriating as a general rule, and we have no kulaks in the Soviets. We are crushing them. We suppress them physically when they worm their way into the Soviets and from there try to choke the poor peasants. You see how the domination of one class is exercised here. Only the proletariat may dominate. But this is applied in one way to the small peasant, in another to the middle peasant, in another to the landowner, and in yet another to the petty bourgeois. The whole point is for us to understand this change of attitude brought about by international conditions, to understand that it is inevitable that slogans we were accustomed to during the past six months of the revolution's history should be modified as far as the petty bourgeois democrats are concerned. We must say that we reserve the power for the same class. In relation to the petty-bourgeois democrats our slogan was one of agreement, but we were forced to resort to terror. If you co-operators and intellectuals really agree to live in good-neighbourly relations with us, then work a bit and do the jobs we give you. If you don't, you will be lawbreakers and our enemies, and we shall fight you. But if you maintain good-neighbourly relations and perform these tasks, that will be more than enough for us. Our support is secure. We've always known you were weak and flabby. But we don't deny we need you, for you are the only educated group.

Things would not be so bad if we did not have to build socialism with people inherited from capitalism. But that is the whole trouble with socialist construction -- we have to build

socialism with people who have been thoroughly spoiled by capitalism. That is the whole trouble with the transition -- it is associated with a dictatorship which can be exercised only by one class -- the proletariat. That is why we say the proletariat will set the pace since it has been schooled and moulded into a fighting force capable of smashing the bourgeoisie. Between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat stand innumerable transitional groups, and our policy to them must now be put on the lines which were envisaged by our theory, and which we are now in a position to follow in practice. We shall have to settle a number of problems and make a number of agreements and technical assignments which we, as the ruling proletarian power, must know how to set. We must know how to set the middle peasant one assignment -- to assist in commodity exchange and in exposing the kulak -- and the co-operators another -- they have the apparatus for distributing products on a mass scale and we must take over that apparatus. And the intellectuals must be set quite a different assignment. They cannot continue their sabotage, and they are now in a very good-neighbourly mood towards us. We must make use of these intellectuals, set them definite tasks and keep an eye on them and check their work; we must treat them as Marx said when speaking of office workers under the Paris Commune: "Every other employer knows how to choose assistants and accountants for his business, and, if they for once make a mistake to redress it promptly. If they prove to be unfit for the job, he replaces them with other, efficient assistants and accountants."

We are building our state out of the elements left over by capitalism. We cannot build it if we do not utilise such a

heritage of capitalist culture as the intellectuals. Now we can afford to treat the petty bourgeoisie as good neighbours who are under the strict control of the state. The class-conscious proletariat's job now is to appreciate that its domination does not mean carrying out all the tasks itself. Whoever thinks that has not the slightest inkling of socialist construction and has learnt nothing from a year of revolution and dictatorship. People like that had better go to school and learn something. But whoever has learnt something in this period will say to himself: "These intellectuals are the people I am now going to use in construction. For I have a strong enough support among the peasants." And we must remember that we can only work out the form

of construction that will lead to socialism in that struggle, and in a number of agreements and trial agreements between the proletariat and the petty-bourgeois democrats.

Remember that Engels said we must act by force of example. No form will be final until complete communism has been achieved. We never claimed to know the exact road. But we are inevitably moving towards communism. In times like every week is worth more than decades of tranquility. The six months that have elapsed since the Brest-Litovsk Peace have shown a swing away from us. The West-European revolution -- a revolution which is following our example -- should strengthen us. We must take account of the changes taking place, we must take account of every element, and must have no illusions, for we know that the waverers will remain waverers until the world socialist revolution is completely triumphant. That may

not be so soon, although the course of the German revolution leads us to hope that it may be sooner than many anticipate. The German revolution is developing in the same way as ours, but at a faster pace. In any case, our job now is to wage a desperate struggle against British and American imperialism. Just because it feels that Bolshevism has become a world force, it is trying to throttle us as fast as possible in the hope of dealing first with the Russian Bolsheviks, and then with its own.

We must make use of the waverers whom the atrocities of imperialism are driving towards us. And we shall do so. You know full well that in time of war no aid, even indirect, can be scorned. In war even the position of the wavering classes is of immense significance. The fiercer the war, the more we need to gain influence over the waverers who are coming over to us. So the tactics we have been pursuing for six months must be modified to suit the new tasks with regard to the various groups of petty-bourgeois democrats.

If I have succeeded in directing the attention of Party workers to this problem and in inducing them to seek a correct solution by systematic experiment, I may consider my task accomplished.

Lenin,

## **Should We Participate in Bourgeois Parliaments?**

1920

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### *“Left-Wing” Communism: an Infantile Disorder*

It is with the utmost contempt—and the utmost levity—that the German “Left” Communists reply to this question in the negative. Their arguments? In the passage quoted above we read:

“. . . All reversion to parliamentary forms of struggle, which have become historically and politically obsolete, must be emphatically rejected. . . .”

This is said with ridiculous pretentiousness and is patently wrong. “Reversion” to parliamentarianism, forsooth! Perhaps there is already a Soviet republic in Germany? It does not look like it! How, then, can one speak of “reversion”? Is this not an empty phrase?

Parliamentarianism has become “historically obsolete”. That is true in the propaganda sense. However, everybody knows that this is still a far cry from overcoming it in practice. Capitalism could have been declared—and with full justice—to be “historically obsolete” many decades ago, but that does not at all remove the need for a very long and very persistent struggle on the basis of capitalism. Parliamentarianism is “historically obsolete” from the standpoint of world history, i.e., the era of bourgeois parliamentarianism is over, and the era of the

proletarian dictatorship has begun. That is incontestable. But world history is counted in decades. Ten or twenty years earlier or later makes no difference when measured with the yardstick of world history; from the standpoint of world history it is a trifle that cannot be considered even approximately. But for that very reason, it is a glaring theoretical error to apply the yardstick of world history to practical politics.

Is parliamentarianism "politically obsolete"? That is quite a different matter. If that were true, the position of the "Lefts" would be a strong one. But it has to be proved by a most searching analysis, and the "Lefts" do not even know how to approach the matter. In the "Theses on Parliamentarianism", published in the Bulletin of the Provisional Bureau in Amsterdam of the Communist International No. 1, February 1920, and obviously expressing the Dutch-Left or Left-Dutch strivings, the analysis, as we shall see, is also hopelessly poor.

In the first place, contrary to the opinion of such outstanding political leaders as Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, the German "Lefts", as we know, considered parliamentarianism "politically obsolete" even in January 1919. We know that the "Lefts" were mistaken. This fact alone utterly destroys, at a single stroke, the proposition that parliamentarianism is "politically obsolete". It is for the "Lefts" to prove why their error, indisputable at that time, is no longer an error. They do not and cannot produce even a shred of proof. A political party's attitude towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it fulfils in practice its obligations towards its class and

the working people. Frankly acknowledging a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, analysing the conditions that have led up to it, and thrashing out the means of its rectification—that is the hallmark of a serious party; that is how it should perform its duties, and how it should educate and train its class, and then the masses. By failing to fulfil this duty and give the utmost attention and consideration to the study of their patent error, the “Lefts” in Germany (and in Holland) have proved that they are not a party of a class, but a circle, not a party of the masses, but a group of intellectualists and of a few workers who ape the worst features of intellectualism.

Second, in the same pamphlet of the Frankfurt group of “Lefts”, which we have already cited in detail, we read:

“. . . The millions of workers who still follow the policy of the Centre [the Catholic ‘Centre’ Party] are counter-revolutionary. The rural proletarians provide the legions of counter-revolutionary troops.” (Page 3 of the pamphlet.)

Everything goes to show that this statement is far too sweeping and exaggerated. But the basic fact set forth here is incontrovertible, and its acknowledgment by the “Lefts” is particularly clear evidence of their mistake. How can one say that “parliamentarianism is politically obsolete”, when “millions” and “legions” of proletarians are not only still in favour of parliamentarianism in general but are downright “counter-revolutionary”!? It is obvious that parliamentarianism in Germany is not yet politically obsolete. It is obvious that the “Lefts” in Germany have mistaken their desire, their politico-ideological attitude, for objective reality. That is a most



dangerous mistake for revolutionaries to make. In Russia—where, over a particularly long period and in particularly varied forms, the most brutal and savage yoke of tsarism produced revolutionaries of diverse shades, revolutionaries who displayed amazing devotion, enthusiasm, heroism and will power—in Russia we have observed this mistake of the revolutionaries at very close quarters; we have studied it very attentively and have a first-hand knowledge of it; that is why we can also see it especially clearly in others. Parliamentarianism is of course “politically obsolete” to the Communists in Germany; but—and that is the whole point—we must not regard what is obsolete to us as something obsolete to a class, to the masses. Here again we find that the “Lefts” do not know how to reason, do not know how to act as the party of a class, as the party of the masses. You must not sink to the level of the masses, to the level of the backward strata of the class. That is incontestable. You must tell them the bitter truth. You are in duty bound to call their bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices what they are—prejudices. But at the sametime you must soberly follow the actual state of the class-consciousness and preparedness of the entire class (not only of its communist vanguard), and of all the working people (not only of their advanced elements).

Even if only a fairly large minority of the industrial workers, and not “millions” and “legions”, follow the lead of the Catholic clergy—and a similar minority of rural workers follow the landowners and kulaks (Grossbauern)—it undoubtedly signifies that parliamentarianism in Germany has not yet politically outlived itself, that participation in parliamentary

elections and in the struggle on the parliamentary rostrum is obligatory on the party of the revolutionary proletariat specifically for the purpose of educating the backward strata of its own class, and for the purpose of awakening and enlightening the undeveloped, downtrodden and ignorant rural masses. Whilst you lack the strength to do away with bourgeois parliaments and every other type of reactionary institution, you must work within them because it is there that you will still find workers who are duped by the priests and stultified by the conditions of rural life; otherwise you risk turning into nothing but windbags.

Third, the "Left" Communists have a great deal to say in praise of us Bolsheviks. One sometimes feels like telling them to praise us less and to try to get a better knowledge of the Bolsheviks' tactics. We took part in the elections to the Constituent Assembly, the Russian bourgeois parliament in September–November 1917. Were our tactics correct or not? If not, then this should be clearly stated and proved, for it is necessary in evolving the correct tactics for international communism. If they were correct, then certain conclusions must be drawn. Of course, there can be no question of placing conditions in Russia on a par with conditions in Western Europe. But as regards the particular question of the meaning of the concept that "parliamentarianism has become politically obsolete", due account should be taken of our experience, for unless concrete experience is taken into account such concepts very easily turn into empty phrases. In September–November 1917, did we, the Russian Bolsheviks, not have more right than any Western Communists to consider that parliamentarianism was

politically obsolete in Russia? Of course we did, for the point is not whether bourgeois parliaments have existed for a long time or a short time, but how far the masses of the working people are prepared (ideologically, politically and practically) to accept the Soviet system and to dissolve the bourgeois-democratic parliament (or allow it to be dissolved). It is an absolutely incontestable and fully established historical fact that, in September–November 1917, the urban working class and the soldiers and peasants of Russia were, because of a number of special conditions, exceptionally well prepared to accept the Soviet system and to disband the most democratic of bourgeois parliaments. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks did not boycott the Constituent Assembly, but took part in the elections both before and after the proletariat conquered political power. That these elections yielded exceedingly valuable (and to the proletariat, highly useful) political results has, I make bold to hope, been proved by me in the above-mentioned article, which analyses in detail the returns of the elections to the Constituent Assembly in Russia.

The conclusion which follows from this is absolutely incontrovertible: it has been proved that, far from causing harm to the revolutionary proletariat, participation in a bourgeois-democratic parliament, even a few weeks before the victory of a Soviet republic and even after such a victory, actually helps that proletariat to prove to the backward masses why such parliaments deserve to be done away with; it facilitates their successful dissolution, and helps to make bourgeois parliamentarianism “politically obsolete”. To ignore this experience, while at the same time claiming affiliation to the

Communist International, which must work out its tactics internationally (not as narrow or exclusively national tactics, but as international tactics), means committing a gross error and actually abandoning internationalism in deed, while recognising it in word.

Now let us examine the “Dutch-Left” arguments in favour of non-participation in parliaments. The following is the text of Thesis No. 4, the most important of the above-mentioned “Dutch” theses:

“When the capitalist system of production has broken down, and society is in a state of revolution, parliamentary action gradually loses importance as compared with the action of the masses themselves. When, in these conditions, parliament becomes the centre and organ of the counter-revolution, whilst, on the other hand, the labouring class builds up the instruments of its power in the Soviets, it may even prove necessary to abstain from all and any participation in parliamentary action.”

The first sentence is obviously wrong, since action by the masses, a big strike, for instance, is more important than parliamentary activity at all times, and not only during a revolution or in a revolutionary situation. This obviously untenable and historically and politically incorrect argument merely shows very clearly that the authors completely ignore both the general European experience (the French experience before the revolutions of 1848 and 1870; the German experience of 1878–90, etc.) and the Russian experience (see above) of the importance of combining legal and illegal struggle. This question is of immense importance both in general and in

particular, because in all civilised and advanced countries the time is rapidly approaching when such a combination will more and more become—and has already partly become—mandatory on the party of the revolutionary proletariat, inasmuch as civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is maturing and is imminent, and because of savage persecution of the Communists by republican governments and bourgeois governments generally, which resort to any violation of legality (the example of America is edifying enough), etc. The Dutch, and the Lefts in general, have utterly failed to understand this highly important question.

The second sentence is, in the first place, historically wrong. We Bolsheviks participated in the most counterrevolutionary parliaments, and experience has shown that this participation was not only useful but indispensable to the party of the revolutionary proletariat, after the first bourgeois revolution in Russia (1905), so as to pave the way for the second bourgeois revolution (February 1917), and then for the socialist revolution (October 1917). In the second place, this sentence is amazingly illogical. If a parliament becomes an organ and a “centre” (in reality it never has been and never can be a “centre”, but that is by the way) of counter-revolution, while the workers are building up the instruments of their power in the form of the Soviets, then it follows that the workers must prepare—ideologically, politically and technically—for the struggle of the Soviets against parliament, for the dispersal of parliament by the Soviets. But it does not at all follow that this dispersal is hindered, or is not facilitated, by the presence of a Soviet opposition within the counter-revolutionary parliament. In the

course of our victorious struggle against Denikin and Kolchak, we never found that the existence of a Soviet and proletarian opposition in their camp was immaterial to our victories. We know perfectly well that the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly on January 5, 1918 was not hampered but was actually facilitated by the fact that, within the counter-revolutionary Constituent Assembly, which was about to be dispersed, there was a consistent Bolshevik, as well as an inconsistent, Left Socialist-Revolutionary Soviet opposition. The authors of the theses are engaged in muddled thinking; they have forgotten the experience of many, if not all, revolutions, which shows the great usefulness, during a revolution, of a combination of mass action outside a reactionary parliament with an opposition sympathetic to (or, better still, directly supporting) the revolution within it. The Dutch, and the "Lefts" in general, argue in this respect like doctrinaires of the revolution, who have never taken part in a real revolution, have never given thought to the history of revolutions, or have naïvely mistaken subjective "rejection" of a reactionary institution for its actual destruction by the combined operation of a number of objective factors. The surest way of discrediting and damaging a new political (and not only political) idea is to reduce it to absurdity on the plea of defending it. For any truth, if "overdone" (as Dietzgen Senior put it), if exaggerated, or if carried beyond the limits of its actual applicability, can be reduced to an absurdity, and is even bound to become an absurdity under these conditions. That is just the kind of disservice the Dutch and German Lefts are rendering to the new truth of the Soviet form of government being superior

to bourgeois-democratic parliaments. Of course, anyone would be in error who voiced the outmoded viewpoint or in general considered it impermissible, in all and any circumstances, to reject participation in bourgeois parliaments. I cannot attempt here to formulate the conditions under which a boycott is useful, since the object of this pamphlet is far more modest, namely, to study Russian experience in connection with certain topical questions of international communist tactics. Russian experience has provided us with one successful and correct instance (1905), and another that was incorrect (1906), of the use of a boycott by the Bolsheviks. Analysing the first case, we see that we succeeded in preventing a reactionary government from convening a reactionary parliament in a situation in which extra-parliamentary revolutionary mass action (strikes in particular) was developing at great speed, when not a single section of the proletariat and the peasantry could support the reactionary government in any way, and when the revolutionary proletariat was gaining influence over the backward masses through the strike struggle and through the agrarian movement. It is quite obvious that this experience is not applicable to present-day European conditions. It is likewise quite obvious—and the foregoing arguments bear this out—that the advocacy, even if with reservations, by the Dutch and the other “Lefts” of refusal to participate in parliaments is fundamentally wrong and detrimental to the cause of the revolutionary proletariat.

In Western Europe and America, parliament has become most odious to the revolutionary vanguard of the working class. That cannot be denied. It can readily be understood, for it is difficult

to imagine anything more infamous, vile or treacherous than the behaviour of the vast majority of socialist and Social-Democratic parliamentary deputies during and after the war. It would, however, be not only unreasonable but actually criminal to yield to this mood when deciding how this generally recognised evil should be fought. In many countries of Western Europe, the revolutionary mood, we might say, is at present a “novelty”, or a “rarity”, which has all too long been vainly and impatiently awaited; perhaps that is why people so easily yield to that mood. Certainly, without a revolutionary mood among the masses, and without conditions facilitating the growth of this mood, revolutionary tactics will never develop into action. In Russia, however, lengthy, painful and sanguinary experience has taught us the truth that revolutionary tactics cannot be built on a revolutionary mood alone. Tactics must be based on a sober and strictly objective appraisal of all the class forces in a particular state (and of the states that surround it, and of all states the world over) as well as of the experience of revolutionary movements. It is very easy to show one’s “revolutionary” temper merely by hurling abuse at parliamentary opportunism, or merely by repudiating participation in parliaments; its very ease, however, cannot turn this into a solution of a difficult, a very difficult, problem. It is far more difficult to create a really revolutionary parliamentary group in a European parliament than it was in Russia. That stands to reason. But it is only a particular expression of the general truth that it was easy for Russia, in the specific and historically unique situation of 1917, to start the socialist revolution, but it will be more difficult for Russia than for the



European countries to continue the revolution and bring it to its consummation. I had occasion to point this out already at the beginning of 1918, and our experience of the past two years has entirely confirmed the correctness of this view. Certain specific conditions, viz., (1) the possibility of linking up the Soviet revolution with the ending, as a consequence of this revolution, of the imperialist war, which had exhausted the workers and peasants to an incredible degree; (2) the possibility of taking temporary advantage of the mortal conflict between the world's two most powerful groups of imperialist robbers, who were unable to unite against their Soviet enemy; (3) the possibility of enduring a comparatively lengthy civil war, partly owing to the enormous size of the country and to the poor means of communication; (4) the existence of such a profound bourgeois-democratic revolutionary movement among the peasantry that the party of the proletariat was able to adopt the revolutionary demands of the peasant party (the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, the majority of whose members were definitely hostile to Bolshevism) and realize them at once, thanks to the conquest of political power by the proletariat—all these specific conditions do not at present exist in Western Europe, and a repetition of such or similar conditions will not occur so easily. Incidentally, apart from a number of other causes, that is why it is more difficult for Western Europe to start a socialist revolution than it was for us. To attempt to "circumvent" this difficulty by "skipping" the arduous job of utilising reactionary parliaments for revolutionary purposes is absolutely childish. You want to create a new society, yet you fear the difficulties involved in forming a good parliamentary group made up of convinced,

devoted and heroic Communists, in a reactionary parliament! Is that not childish? If Karl Liebknecht in Germany and Z. Höglund in Sweden were able, even without mass support from below, to set examples of the truly revolutionary utilization of reactionary parliaments, why should a rapidly growing revolutionary mass party, in the midst of the post-war disillusionment and embitterment of the masses, be unable to forge a communist group in the worst of parliaments? It is because, in Western Europe, the backward masses of the workers and—to an even greater degree—of the small peasants are much more imbued with bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices than they were in Russia because of that, it is only from within such institutions as bourgeois parliaments that Communists can (and must) wage a long and persistent struggle, undaunted by any difficulties, to expose, dispel and overcome these prejudices.

The German “Lefts” complain of bad “leaders” in their party, give way to despair, and even arrive at a ridiculous “negation” of “leaders”. But in conditions in which it is often necessary to hide “leaders” underground, the evolution of good “leaders”, reliable, tested and authoritative, is a very difficult matter; these difficulties cannot be successfully overcome without combining legal and illegal work, and without testing the “leaders”, among other ways, in parliaments. Criticism—the most keen, ruthless and uncompromising criticism—should be directed, not against parliamentarianism or parliamentary activities, but against those leaders who are unable—and still more against those who are unwilling—to utilize parliamentary elections and the parliamentary rostrum in a revolutionary and

communist manner. Only such criticism—combined, of course, with the dismissal of incapable leaders and their replacement by capable ones—will constitute useful and fruitful revolutionary work that will simultaneously train the “leaders” to be worthy of the working class and of all working people, and train the masses to be able properly to understand the political situation and the often very complicated and intricate tasks that spring from that situation.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS - COMPILED WRITINGS**

“ A provisional revolutionary government is an organ of insurrection a provisional revolutionary government “emerging from a victorious popular insurrection”: both logic and historical experience show that it is possible to have provisional revolutionary governments as organs of insurrection which are far from victorious, or which are not completely victorious.”

” a provisional revolutionary government does not only “emerge” from an uprising, but also directs it”