

# **The Bolsheviks in the Tsarist Duma**

**By A. Badayev**

*(Former Deputy of the Fourth State Duma)*

With an Article by Lenin on the Work and  
Trial of the Bolshevik Group in the Duma,  
and an Introduction by Em. Yaroslavsky

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## A REMARKABLE BOOK

The author of this book is a former working man, a metal worker, a fighter in the old Bolshevik Guard. In 1912 he was elected by the Leningrad, then St. Petersburg, workers to the State Duma. He has written a book which in his extreme modesty he calls *Reminiscences*. Actually this book is a serious historical document describing the times when the labour movement in Russia, recovering from the setback in 1905, the defeat of the first Russian revolution, stood on the threshold of the imperialist war and was gaining new impetus, heading towards a new upsurge, freeing the country from the chains in which it was put by reaction.

Comrade Badayev took part in the Party conferences at Cracow and Poronino, where Lenin lived at the time and which was also the seat of the so-called Foreign Centre of the Bolshevik Party. Early in the war he was arrested, together with the other Bolshevik deputies, and after standing trial was exiled to the remote Turuchansk district of Siberia.

Every working man, whether Russian or not, should read this book. He will learn from its pages how the Bolshevik Party stubbornly fought for the interests of the proletariat before the war, during the period of deepest reaction, when the Party was outlawed and had to work “underground.” He will learn how our Party fought the Menshevik-Liquidators – those typical petty-bourgeois opportunists and reformists, the advocates of a bourgeois “Labour” Party, and how it gathered strength in its struggle against the “Left” – the so-called *boycottists* and *otzovists* (recallists), who, pretending to conduct a fight from the Left, demanding the boycott of the Duma and the recall of the Social-Democratic deputies, were actually heading for the liquidation of the Party, for its defeat, refusing to make use of the parliamentary tribune for the purposes of revolutionary agitation and mobilisation of the masses, refusing in fact to conduct mass work. He will see how at that time Trotsky acted as the organiser and inspirer of the struggle against the Bolshevik Party, scraping together the opportunist “August bloc,” allegedly “non-fractional” – a bloc of all groups and tendencies opposing Lenin and the Bolsheviks. He will see how our Party, under the most difficult conditions of the tsarist regime, combined illegal work at the factories and workshops with the full utilisation of the tribune of even such a rotten parliament as the tsarist-landlord State Duma for revolutionary agitation among, and the organisation of, the masses.

Young Leninists, too, in Russia and abroad should read this book. They will find in it a clear and vivid description of the living conditions and the struggles of the working class under tsarism, and they will obtain a picture of the position of the workers in a capitalist society. The crucial moments of the working-class struggle in 1913-14 are portrayed as vividly as if projected on a screen. Here they will read of the explosion in the Okhta powder works, where adult married men received a wage of 70-80 kopeks (about 40 cents or 1s. 8d.) for a long working day, where it was necessary to work several years in order to get the maximum day's rate of one ruble, where women and girls received still less, where the arbitrary will of the management reigned supreme, where the workers lost their health and, their energy exhausted, awaited their turn to die from an explosion or from systematic poisoning by noxious substances or gases. They will find a description of mass lock-outs at textile factories and mills, the manufacturers refusing to have anything to do with the trade unions. The workers' deputy, Shagoy, a textile worker himself, spoke in the State Duma about the hard life of the textile workers, who only by working hard for long hours could eke out a pittance, just enough to save themselves from starving. A strike at Lessner's factories is described, where one worker, Jacob Strongin, hanged himself on the staircase as a protest against an accusation of theft. The "Old Lessner" factory went on strike for sixty-eight days; the "New Lessner" for one hundred and two. And this in spite of the most savage persecution on the part of the police, the secret political police and the capitalists. Strikes at the Baltic works and the Obukhov works are recalled. It would be useful for the workers now working at these factories to remember the state of things that prevailed in those days.

Young workers should know the conditions of work that prevailed in capitalist factories in Russia. Only then will they be able to realise how far we have progressed during the years of revolution, in comparison with those days, and what profound and radical changes the revolution has effected.

The activity of the Duma fraction, of our workers' "six," is an example, scarcely ever surpassed, of how much can be done for the cause of the working class by a parliamentary fraction of Bolsheviks, which maintains connections with the masses and which acts according to the directions of its Party, even though that be an underground Party. The Duma tribune was fully utilised for the purpose of radicalising the masses.



Badayev, Petrovsky, Muranov, Shagov, and Samoylov interpellated the government, investigated its activity while touring the provinces to maintain contact with their constituents; they connected the illegal Party centre with the workers. A. E. Badayev told the "diehards" of the State Duma:

"We shall live to see the day when ail the workers of Russia will present their demands; then they will not ask your permission, but will take everything from you and give land and freedom to all." In the name of the workers he challenged the government of the Tsar, the capitalists, and the landlords: "I do not appeal to your sense of pity, gentlemen, when I describe the conditions of the workers at the Obukhov works. Two camps are facing each other; on the one side the united ministers, and on the other the united proletariat, and it is in the name of the latter that I here challenge the ministers."

The "diehards" felt ill at ease; they wanted to provoke the working class to immediate action. Markov of the Black Hundreds dealt with the question of the workers seizing power:

"You are preparing to fight the government itself; you imagine that the proletariat is entitled to shout: 'We are a hundred thousand, we are ten million strong, or whatever the exact figure may be. We shall take everything by force, we shall take the land, we shall take this, that and the other.' But if you can take all by force, why do you chatter here? Go and take it. If there is no force at the back of it, why all this bluster?"

Even in those days the approach of the revolutionary storm was perceptible, but the imminence of that storm which in 1917 swept away the Markovs, the Rodzyankos and the Goremykins was then still unsuspected by them; then Markov, turning to the benches of the Left... put up his hands as if aiming a rifle at them and said, "You are attacking us, but we will have a shot at you first." History has proved that the workers were better shots than the Black Hundreds. And this was due to the fact that the working class conducted the revolutionary struggle under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party.

In Badayev's *Reminiscences* we find most interesting information about the activity of the Party. The election campaign to the State Duma, the leadership of the workers' fraction in the Duma, the Cracow Conference, the Poronino Conference, the organisation of

the labour press, the work of *Pravda*, the participation of Comrades Sverdlov, Stalin, and others in the work of the Bolshevik Duma fraction, the unceasing attention paid by Lenin to the activity of the fraction, the conference in November 1914, and many other aspects of the life of the Party are all described in Badayev's book with great feeling and adequately substantiated by documents.

The same clear account is given of the pre-war days, of the attitude of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks at the outbreak of the imperialist war, the arrest of the Bolshevik fraction, the preliminary investigation and the trial of the fraction. A very vivid portrait is given of the *agent-provocateur* Roman Malinovsky, who was used by the secret police to disrupt and destroy the Party.

The events described in Comrade Badayev's book bring us close up to the imperialist war. Already at that time our Party represented an important international factor. It was the only truly consistent Party of the proletarian revolution in the Second International. It had to fight against the reformist theories and reformist practice which held sway among the leaders of the Second International. It conducted a fight on two fronts, not only amongst the Russian socialists, but also on the international arena, sharply criticising the inconsistent and opportunist mistakes of the *Centrists* and the *Lefts* in the German and other Social-Democratic parties. But at the same time the Bolshevik Party *gave a splendid example of how to apply the tactics of the united front from below*. And in this respect Comrade Badayev's book will assist the workers of other countries in finding the path to the establishment of that united front over the heads of treacherous leaders, as we, the Russian Bolsheviks, were able to find that path during the revolution of 1905, during the period of 1912-14 and during the period of the proletarian revolution.

In July 1914, on the eve of the war, the Black Hundred newspaper *Russkoe Znamya* (Russian Banner) demanded that Comrade Badayev be sent to the gallows; an article in that paper even bore the title *Badayev to the Gallows*. The newspaper prophesied that, at some future date, Badayev would "present a bill to the reactionaries and set the whole of Russia aflame." The prophecy came true. The work which Badayev carried on on the eve of the war played no small part in helping to bring about the revolution that swept the Black Hundreds away.

It was for this work that Badayev and his comrades in the Duma were arrested, put on trial and sentenced to exile in Siberia. In an article entitled: *What Has the Trial of the Russian Social-*

*Democratic Workers' Fraction Proved?*\* written in 1915, Lenin said that:

“The class-conscious workers of Russia have created a Party and have placed at the front a vanguard which, when the World War is raging and international opportunism is bankrupt the world over, has proven most capable of fulfilling the duty of international revolutionary Social-Democrats.... At a time when nearly all ‘Socialist’ (excuse me for debasing this word!) Deputies of Europe proved to be chauvinists and servants of chauvinists, when the famous ‘Europeanism’ that had charmed our Liberals and Liquidators proved a routine habit of slavish legality, there was a Workers’ Party in Russia whose Deputies neither shone with fine rhetoric, nor had ‘access’ to the bourgeois intellectual drawing-rooms, nor possessed the business-like efficiency of a ‘European’ lawyer and parliamentarian, but excelled in maintaining connections with the working masses, in ardent work among those masses, in carrying out the small, unpretentious, difficult, thankless and unusually dangerous functions of illegal propagandists and organisers.”

Lenin attached great importance to the fact that owing to this trial millions of workers were informed of how we Bolsheviks were opposed to the imperialist war. Quoting the words in the indictment:

“It is necessary to direct the armies not against our brothers, the wage slaves of other countries, but against the reaction of the bourgeois governments and parties of all countries.”

Lenin said:

“These words will spread, thanks to the trial, and they have already spread over Russia as an appeal to proletarian internationalism, to proletarian revolution.”

In this article, however, Lenin criticised the mistakes our comrades committed during the trial in not taking advantage of the open trial to expound Social-Democratic views which, he said, were hos-

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\* Our Party was called Social-Democratic up to 1918. – Ed.

tile not only to tsarism in general but also to social-chauvinism of all shades.\*

Great events have taken place since that time. The appeal to the proletarian revolution led to the victory of October. The land of the proletarian dictatorship has existed for fifteen years. Its strength, its growth, its successes, notwithstanding the great difficulties that have to be overcome and the great sacrifices that have to be made, are beyond doubt.

Let our brothers abroad take their lesson from what we have gone through. Let them know, that whatever sacrifices the proletarian revolution may entail, in the final analysis its path is not only the shortest, but entails less sacrifices and less suffering for the working class than capitalism and war have in store, that it is the only path on which the proletariat will gain not an illusory but a genuine victory, the only path on which the proletariat can break the chains of capitalist slavery, of capitalist exploitation.

EM. YAROSLAVSKY

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\* This article by Lenin is given in full as a commentary to the last chapter of this book. — Ed.

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

My book deals with the revolutionary events of the last years of the existence of tsarism. During the years 1912 to 1914 the revolutionary movement made the greatest advance that occurred in the period between 1905 and the February revolution.

The theme of this book is the activity of the Bolshevik fraction in the Fourth State Duma, as the central feature of the work of our Party. I have tried to show how the activity of the fraction was reflected in the revolutionary struggle of the working class and how, in their turn, various aspects of the labour movement were reflected in the work of the fraction.

Incidentally I have had to dwell briefly on the characteristics of certain political parties, government officials, and public men of tsarist Russia, with whom our fraction was forced to come into contact on a number of questions.

Of the separate centres of the labour movement, most attention is devoted to St. Petersburg. The proletariat of St Petersburg was always in the vanguard of the struggle of the working class; its action was of the greatest importance both for the course of the revolution itself and for its preparation.

In describing the activities of the Central Committee, of the St. Petersburg Committee, and of the other underground organisations of our Party, I have also tried to show how the tsarist government was combating them and what were the special methods adopted by the secret police.

This book is based on my personal recollections. In so far as many events have escaped my memory because of the length of time which has elapsed since they occurred, I have verified and supplemented my statements from various contemporary records.

The following have thus served as material for this book: personal recollections, my own files which I managed to preserve, the files of the police department which are now kept in the archives of the revolution, illegal party publications, the pre-revolutionary *Pravda*, liquidationist and bourgeois newspapers, stenographic reports of the State Duma, accounts of the trial of the fraction and, finally, conversations with a number of comrades who took part in the underground work of that period.

July, 1929



**THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND THE BEGINNING  
OF THE WORK OF THE FOURTH STATE DUMA**





## CHAPTER I

**THE ELECTIONS TO THE FOURTH DUMA**

Why the Social-Democrats took part in the Elections – Electoral Programme of the Bolsheviks – Workers' Suffrage – The Elections in the Large Towns – How the Government Prepared the Elections – The Bolsheviks on *blocs* with other Parties – The Role of *Pravda* in the Election Campaign

The Third State Duma, which was the first Duma to complete the full legal period of five years, was dissolved in the middle of the summer of 1912. It had a majority of nobles and landlords, and proved an obedient tool in the hands of the government. The fractions of the Social-Democrats and the bourgeois democrats (Trudoviks) were small in number and were of course unable to prevent the Duma from passing all the bills submitted to it by the government. The Cadets, the party of the liberal bourgeoisie, although professedly in opposition to the government, were afraid of resolute words and deeds. Under the slogan of "saving the Duma," the Cadets and the Progressives, a group akin to them, were quiet and submissive, allowing the majority on the Right to do as they pleased. The Third Duma gave the government all that it desired, it was a "law-abiding and efficient" people's representation.

In a survey of the five years' work of the Third State Duma, on the day after its dissolution, *Pravda* wrote as follows:

The entire activity of the State Duma was directed towards the preservation of the class interests of its majority. Therefore these five years of an "efficient" Duma did not in any way assist in the solution of a series of urgent questions which are of enormous importance to the country. All attempts made by the Left Parties, by means of interpellations, to shed light on the dark aspects of Russian life and to draw to them the attention of the country were frustrated by the votes of the dominant majority.... A good riddance.

With these words *Pravda* took farewell of the Third Duma, expressing thereby the general attitude of the workers and peasants.

The Fourth Duma was to follow in the footsteps of the Third. The electoral law remained the same, and therefore the majority in the new Duma was bound to be as Black Hundred as before. There was no doubt that the activities of the Fourth Duma would also be

directed against the workers and that its legislation would be of no use either to the workers or the peasantry.

In spite of these considerations the Social-Democratic Party decided to take an active part in the elections as it had done in those for the Second and Third Dumas. The experience of the preceding years had shown the great importance of an election campaign from the standpoint of agitation, and the important role played by Social-Democratic fractions in the Duma. Our fractions, while refusing to take part in the so-called "positive" work of legislation, used the Duma rostrum for revolutionary agitation. The work of the Social-Democratic fractions outside the Duma was still more important; they were becoming the organising centres of Party work in Russia. Therefore our Party decided that active participation in the campaign was necessary.

Thus, while there was no difference of opinion within the ranks of the Social-Democratic Party with regard to participation in the elections, there was a sharp clash between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks over the electoral tactics and over the role of the future Duma fraction.

The problem of the Fourth State Duma was only one of the problems of current Party work, but it reflected all the differences between the two factions of the Russian Social-Democracy. As early as January 1912, six months before the dissolution of the Third Duma, the Prague Conference of the Party framed the programme for the forthcoming election campaign. The Conference recognised that "the task to which all other tasks should be subordinated was socialist propaganda on class lines and the organisation of the working class." The tactical line of the Party at the elections was defined as follows:

...the Party must wage a merciless war against the tsarist autocracy and the parties of landlords and capitalists that support it, persistently exposing at the same time the counter-revolutionary views and false democracy of the bourgeois liberals (with the Cadet party at their head). Special attention should be paid in the election campaign to maintaining the independence of the party of the proletariat from all the non-proletarian parties, to revealing the petty bourgeois nature of the pseudo-socialism of the democratic groups (mainly the Trudoviks, the Narodniks, and the Socialist-Revolutionaries), and to exposing the harm done to the cause of democracy by their vacillations on questions of

mass revolutionary struggle.

The Bolsheviks regarded the election campaign to the State Duma as an opportunity for far-reaching agitation and propaganda and as one of the means of organising the masses. By attempting to secure the election of their own candidates, the Bolsheviks did not transform the campaign into a mere struggle for a few seats in the Duma. The activity of the Duma fraction both within and outside the Duma had great revolutionary importance. But the election campaign itself was of no less importance and throughout its course the revolutionary position of Social-Democracy had to be preserved in all its purity, without being toned down or retouched for any secondary considerations.

What were the arguments of the Menshevik-Liquidators? Their estimate of the coming election campaign to the Fourth Duma proceeded from the assumption that only two camps would fight: the reactionaries and the Black Hundreds on the one hand, and the Liberals on the other (a bloc was expected to be formed of the Cadets, the Progressives, and the Left Octobrists). Proceeding from this estimate, they proclaimed as the slogan for the campaign the necessity of "striving to oust reaction from its position in the Duma," of "wresting the Duma from the hands of reaction," etc. In its essence this position of the Mensheviks meant that the election campaign would be conducted hand in glove with the Liberals.

The divergences between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks were still more strikingly manifested in their respective political platforms advanced during the election campaign. In the resolution of the Prague Conference referred to above, the Bolsheviks defined the political platform to be advocated during the elections as follows:

The principal slogans of our Party at the coming elections should be the following: (1) a democratic republic, (2) an eight-hour day, (3) the confiscation of all landlords' estates. During the whole of our election campaign these demands should be clearly explained on the basis of the experience of the Third Duma and the entire activity of the government in the sphere of both central and local administration. The rest of the Social-Democratic minimum programme, such as universal suffrage, freedom of association, popular election of judges and officials, the substitution of an armed people for a standing army, etc., is to be brought up in our propaganda and linked up with the above three slogans.

These three basic slogans of the Bolshevik Party, afterwards called the "three whales," formulated the fundamental demands of the Russian workers and peasants. The slogan of a "democratic republic" directly raised the question of overthrowing tsarism, even though that tsarism was masked by an emasculated Duma. This slogan exposed the "constitutional illusions," and showed the working class that the reforms passed by the State Duma would not help them in the least, and that there was no possibility of improving their lot under the existing form of government.

The other two "whales" expressed the main economic demands of the workers. The eight-hour day was the chief demand in the economic struggle of the working class. Nearly all the strikes, which were continually increasing in extent, were accompanied by the demand for an eight-hour day. The slogan of the confiscation of the landlords' estates offered a revolutionary solution of the agrarian question and formulated the demands and aspirations of the hundred million Russian peasants.

The rest of the minimum programme was linked up with these three basic demands, i.e. the Bolsheviks emphasised that it could only be achieved after the basic demands of the revolutionary movement had been realised.

What was the Menshevik election programme? It was precisely those secondary demands, advanced by the Bolsheviks only in association with the main revolutionary slogans, that the Mensheviks put forward as independent demands.

The Menshevik platform presented the three basic slogans of the Bolsheviks in a weakened form. Instead of "a democratic republic" they demanded the "sovereignty of the people's representatives"; instead of "the confiscation of the landlords' estates" they asked vaguely for a "revision of the agrarian legislation," etc.

The entire Menshevik platform involved the substitution of slogans and demands adapted to the contingencies of a legal movement for those on which the revolutionary struggle of the working class was proceeding.

The electoral law, passed by the government prior to the elections to the First Duma, was so drafted as to secure a majority for the bourgeoisie and the landlords. The voting was not direct but by a system of stages. Various classes of the population (the landlords, the big property-owners in the towns, the peasants, working men, etc.) had first to elect electors, who in turn elected the deputies from amongst themselves. For the peasants and working men the system

was still more complicated; the workers, for example, first elected delegates, who in their turn elected electors, and only the latter took part in the Gubernia electoral colleges, which elected the deputies. In addition there were a number of property qualifications – for instance in the towns only householders (tenants of apartments) were entitled to vote.

The complicated electoral machinery devised by the government did not, however, yield the results desired by the latter in the elections to the First and Second Dumas. The majority in those Dumas was in opposition to the government, and both Dumas were dissolved before the expiration of their terms of office. After the dissolution of the Second Duma on June 3, 1907, a new electoral law was passed which still further curtailed the suffrage, and excluded large groups of the population. Special attention was paid to the workers, and the number of electors in the workers' curiae was greatly reduced. However, the framers of the new electoral law did not dare to go so far as to prevent the workers from having any representation in the Duma at all. The law provided that in six specified Gubernias (St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kharkov, Kostroma, Vladimir and Yekaterinoslav) the electoral colleges were to elect one deputy from the workers' curiae. But this provision was not extended to the large working class constituencies in the Urals, in Poland, in the Caucasus, etc.

But even this restricted suffrage was not enjoyed by all working men. Only workers who had worked at a given factory for not less than six months were entitled to take part in the election of delegates (the primary stage). On the one hand this provision opened a vast field for corrupt practices, and on the other it made it extremely difficult for the revolutionary parties to select candidates beforehand. A workman could be dismissed on the eve of the election and thus be disqualified from voting; even if he secured work at any other factory, he would not be entitled to vote or be elected because he would not have been employed at this place long enough to qualify.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, it was clear that the elections in the workers' curiae must result in a victory for the radical parties. It was obvious that the workers would not support even the Liberals, let alone the reactionaries.

The case was somewhat different during the elections in the towns, where the electors were divided into two categories: the first embracing the big bourgeoisie, and the second, householders (or occupiers of apartments), among whom there were many thousands

of democratic electors, such as working men, artisans, minor officials, clerks, etc. The fight in the second curiae virtually proceeded between the Cadets and the Social-Democrats.

Here, too, the government resorted to a number of tricks in order artificially to reduce the number of electors. One method was provided by the very system used for compiling the lists of electors. Although the law granted the suffrage to all householders who had reached the age of twenty-five, only those were entered on the lists who paid a special house-tax, i.e., those who occupied the large and expensive apartments. All other would-be electors could have their names entered on the lists only by making a special application to the electoral commission. But the electors who made such application had to pass through so many police obstacles as to make them lose all desire to participate in the elections. First of all, it was necessary to obtain a certificate from the police, who did their best to hamper the issue of such certificates. The electors were made to apply repeatedly in person to the chief officer of the appropriate police station; the certificates which they received were deliberately so worded, as to be later declared void by the election commissions, or the elector was told that he was already too late in making his application, and by the time he found out the truth, and established his rights, the period allowed for such application would actually have elapsed.

Another method of restricting the number of electors was the famous "disqualifications," based on an arbitrary interpretation of the law. Such "disqualifications" were issued by all kinds of authorities, and they were aimed not only against individual persons who were regarded with suspicion by the authorities, but against whole groups of the population. Thus, by one stroke of the pen, 95 per cent. of the Jews living beyond the "pale of settlement" were disfranchised. Each governor acted at his own discretion; each police officer interpreted the electoral law in his own way.

During the elections to the Fourth Duma, the tsarist government repeated the "successful" experiment it performed in the elections to the previous Duma.

Immediately after the dissolution of the Third Duma, a special election apparatus was set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs, for the purpose of drafting amendments and supplements to the electoral law with a view to securing a government majority. In some Gubernias, special curiae for the clergy were formed, while in others the clergy were included in the landlords' curiae. The clergy

generally played a large part in the elections, and there were a great number of deputies wearing the cassock in all the previous Dumas. The army of the clergy was commanded by the Synod, which instructed them not only how to catch the souls of the parishioners, but also how to catch their votes.

In the outlying regions, where the population consisted mainly of non-Russians, among whom anti-government sentiments prevailed, special Russian curiae were set up, i.e., special Russian groups were formed consisting largely of government officials, who were frequently allotted a number of electors far exceeding that fixed for the native population of the region.

Under such a system of elections, Black Hundred candidates could easily secure election in the mixed city curiae, which contained large masses of indifferent and politically unenlightened voters. Accordingly, the tactics the Social-Democratic Party adopted in the city curiae were different from those adopted in the workers' curiae.

The Bolsheviks thought it necessary to put up candidates in all workers' curiae and would not tolerate any agreements with other parties and groups, including the Menshevik-Liquidators. They also considered it necessary to put up candidates in the so-called "second curiae of city electors" (the first curiae consisted of large property owners and democratic candidates had no chance there at all) and in the elections in the villages, because of the great agitational value of the campaign. But in order to safeguard against the possible victory of reactionary candidates, the Bolsheviks permitted agreements respectively with the bourgeois democrats (Trudoviks, etc.) against the Liberals, and with the Liberals against the government parties during the second ballot for the election of electors in the city curiae. The five big towns (St. Petersburg, Moscow, Riga, Odessa and Kiev) had a direct system of elections with second ballot. In these towns the Social-Democrats put up independent lists of candidates, and as there was no danger of Black Hundred candidates being elected no agreements were entered into with the Liberal bourgeoisie. The resolutions of the Prague Party Conference, which established these tactics, emphasised that "election agreements must not involve the adoption of a platform, nor must the agreements bind the Social-Democratic candidates by any political obligations whatsoever, or prevent the Social-Democracy from resolutely criticising the counter-revolutionary nature of the Liberals and the half-heartedness and inconsistency of the bourgeois democrats." Hence, the agreements entered into by the Bolsheviks in the second ballots

were not in the nature of a bloc of political parties.

The main difficulty the Social-Democrats had to contend with in the election campaigns was that our Party was illegal and was subjected to constant and direct attacks from the tsarist police. The election campaign had to be organised from underground, under the daily threat of prosecutions, arrests and exiles.

The Mensheviks were in a somewhat better position, both because they entered the fight with their demands cut down and adapted to the legal possibilities then in existence, and because they possessed more literary forces. The leaders of the Mensheviks – Dan, Potresov, etc. – lived legally in St. Petersburg, and openly contributed to the Press, while the whole of the Bolshevik leadership was either in exile, in prison or in emigration abroad. Still, it must be said that during the elections to the Fourth Duma, the Bolsheviks possessed a powerful weapon which they had not possessed in the previous campaigns. This weapon was provided by the paper *Pravda*, which began to be published a few months before the elections.

The role played by *Pravda* during the elections was enormous. The paper, acting as the mouthpiece of the advanced, revolutionary and class-conscious masses of the workers, at the same time fought against the Liquidators, against the influence of the Liberal bourgeoisie, and the amorphous “non-party” attitude which is so harmful to the labour movement.

Beginning with June 1912, the pages of *Pravda* were filled with articles, notes, correspondence, etc., bearing on the approaching elections. *Pravda* also conducted a great campaign against the absenteeism of the city democratic electors, calling upon them to safeguard their rights and to perform all the formalities required. Every issue of the paper reminded the electors to see to it that their names were not left out of the electoral lists and to make the requisite applications to the electoral commissions. *Pravda* called upon each of its readers to secure not less than three voters from among his comrades at the bench or his neighbours in the house where he lived.

Still greater was the role played by *Pravda* in the preparation for the elections in the workers’ curiae. Whereas in the elections in the city curiae importance attached to election meetings, which, of course, were subject to strong police surveillance, the elections in the workers’ curiae had no such electoral weapon. The law prohibited any workers’ election meetings. Under such conditions the agitation of *Pravda* acquired especially great importance.



## CHAPTER II

**THE ELECTIONS IN ST. PETERSBURG**

The Election Campaign in St. Petersburg – The Elections – The Electoral Congress – The Annulment of the Elections in the Biggest Factories and Mills – Strike and Demonstration against the Annulment of the Elections – The Second Elections – The Acceptance of the Bolshevik Instructions – Election of Deputies

The election of delegates from factories and mills was to take place in the early autumn of 1912; but during the summer months preparation and agitation were already being conducted among the workers of St. Petersburg.

The Central Committee attached exceptional importance to the elections in St. Petersburg and therefore instructed the St. Petersburg organisation to extend its work as widely as possible and to mobilise all the party forces for the election campaign. The St. Petersburg Committee set up a commission to superintend the elections, and the city wards were allocated among its members.

The Bolshevik headquarters for the campaign were the editorial offices of *Pravda*, which became the scene of hard and continuous work. On these premises, meetings were held with the representatives of the districts and of the individual factories and mills. Simultaneously illegal election meetings were organised in the city districts.

Owing to the fact that incessant watch was kept by the police on every "suspicious" worker, we had to resort to all sorts of subterfuges in order to gather together even in small groups. Usually, in order to avoid the attentions of the police, small meetings of not more than ten to twenty people were called. Summer helped us. Under the guise of picnic-parties, groups of workers went to the suburbs, mostly into the forest beyond the Okhta. The forest was the best refuge from police spies, who would not venture beyond the outskirts, for it was easy to escape from them there, and they were afraid of being attacked in some out-of-the-way spot.

At the meetings vehement arguments arose with the Liquidators. Our Party called on the workers to enter the elections on the basic unabridged demands and to elect Bolsheviks only as delegates. The Liquidators talked continually about "unity," the necessity of a united front, the necessity of abandoning factional disputes and, of course, of electing their candidates.

At some places the Socialist-Revolutionaries appeared, and insisted on the boycott of the elections, but their proposals met with

no success among the workers. The chief arguments at all the meetings took place between the Liquidators and the Bolsheviks.

Towards the end of summer, the "forest" meetings started to discuss candidates. To ensure the success of the election campaign, agitation in favour of the prospective candidate should have been immediately commenced among all the workers at the factory or mill concerned. This, however, was impossible; the prospective candidate would certainly have been arrested the moment his name became widely known. The delegate was not safe even after the elections, but a prospective delegate was foredoomed to be trapped by the police. Therefore the names of the prospective candidates were kept secret, and the workers were only informed of them at the last moment before the elections.

Which political parties were presenting candidates at the elections? The Black Hundreds with their "Union of the Russian People," "Union of the Archangel Michael," and similar organisations were afraid even to show their faces at the factories and mills. The parties of the Liberal bourgeoisie also had no chance among the workers. Although the Cadets professed to defend the interests of the workers, the latter understood perfectly well the sort of protection they could expect from the bourgeois parties, led by the bitterest enemies of the proletariat – the industrialists and the merchants.

Although they did not venture to agitate for their own candidates, the Cadets could not withstand the temptation to attempt to hamper the campaign of the Social-Democrats. A few days before the elections they spread rumours that the Social-Democrats were boycotting the Duma. This was an old lie which had been used by the Cadets during previous election campaigns.

On the one hand the parties of the Right and the Liberals were out of the running, and on the other the Duma was boycotted by the Socialist-Revolutionaries; in fact, only the Social-Democratic Party took the field in the fight in the workers' electoral college (*curia*). The struggle was conducted almost exclusively between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks.<sup>1</sup> But at the same time it was possible that some unexpected candidates might be elected as independents, and might subsequently play a part in the selection of electors. Such non-party people usually argued against party candidates, that "one should not be led by the reins of any party," that "it is necessary to elect honest people known to the workers."

The Bolsheviks persistently attacked this position, explained its harmfulness to the working class and pointed out that non-party

people were men without any firm convictions or principles, who might easily wander in the wrong direction. The working class can be genuinely represented only by members of a party which possesses a platform and a programme of its own, and which is controlling its representatives.

The nearer the date of the elections drew, the more intense became the electoral struggle. The precise date of the elections was not known beforehand. This was one of the tricks of the government, which, by fixing the election date suddenly, attempted to take the workers unawares and to decrease the number of voters.

In St. Petersburg, the election of delegates to the workers' electoral college was fixed for Sunday, September 16. Yet the workers only learned of this on Friday, September 14, and at some factories even as late as Saturday. At the Semyanikovsky works the announcement of the elections was posted up during a three days' holiday, i.e., at a time when there were no workers about.

By the date of the elections both the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks had mobilised all their forces. According to the law, the factory administration had to provide premises for the election meeting, but even this legal requirement was not always complied with. At one of the biggest works in St. Petersburg, the Obukhov works, the election could not take place because at the time appointed all the premises were closed. At the Izhorsky works, although an election hall was provided, entrance to it was only allowed for fifteen minutes. After fifteen minutes the door was closed and bolted and the workers who arrived later were prevented from voting. Siemens and Halske, the International Sleeping Car Company, and many other undertakings, especially those outside the city boundaries, acted in an even simpler fashion. The workers of these factories were not entered by the management on the official lists of voters. When the workers learned this and lodged protests with the electoral commission, they were told that it was too late and that the commission could do nothing to restore their rights.

A number of measures were also adopted to ensure that the election meetings proceeded as desired by the authorities. In some places the police arrested the prospective delegates and the most active revolutionary workers. Legally, outsiders, including the works management and the police, had no right to be present at the meetings, but the strong police patrols posted near the works bore witness in the most convincing fashion to the pressure exercised by the police. In order to provide a reason for the annulment of the

elections, the management of some works did not present the lists of workers who were qualified to vote in virtue of their period of employment. At the Putilov works the management started to divide the shops into separate groups at the very moment of the elections, declaring that the repair-shop workers, the carpenters, the painters, etc., had to vote separately.

These few instances – and we could quote many more – show the conditions under which the election of delegates took place at St. Petersburg. The factory administration everywhere actively assisted the government in curtailing the electoral rights of the workers. But all these methods proved futile. Apart from the fact that not a single candidate of the Right was successful, nearly everywhere the workers passed resolutions on the most burning questions agitating the masses at that time: protesting against the non-admission of trade union delegates to the congress of factory inspectors, demanding the immediate convocation of a congress for the election of the social insurance council, dealing with general political questions, etc. Thus the course of the election of the workers' delegates showed that the whole of the St. Petersburg proletariat had taken up a thoroughly revolutionary position.

The election in the car-repair shops of the Nikolaievsky Railway,\* where I was working, took place in a similar fashion to those at other St. Petersburg factories. Our works, where 3,000 men were employed, was known of old as one distinguished by its revolutionary temper. The election meeting was held in the “Yama” (the Hole), one of the workshops big enough to hold some 10,000 people. During the 1905 revolution and subsequently, huge meetings, embracing the whole district, were held on these historic premises. At the election meeting, after a general report on the elections, a discussion followed on the tasks of the election campaign, on the State Duma, on the participation of the workers in the election, etc.

Several months previously, in the middle of the summer, I had learned that the Party organisation had nominated me as a candidate. As the elections drew nearer, the question of candidates began to be hotly debated in the departments and the workshops. All the workers in the factory knew me by my former work, and my candidature therefore met with general support and it was clear that I should be elected by an overwhelming majority. The second candi-

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\* The railway connecting Moscow and St. Petersburg (now Leningrad), now called the “October Railway.” – Ed.

date proposed by the Bolsheviks was Comrade Melnikov. In addition candidates nominated by the Mensheviks and independent candidates were put forward.

The candidatures were vehemently debated and the meeting considered the merits of each candidate individually. Apart from the political platform, the personal characteristics of each candidate were discussed, his activity, his influence at the works, his political steadfastness, etc. The voting was by secret ballot, and when the count was taken it was found that I had been elected by a large majority. Our second candidate, Comrade Melnikov, was also elected, the remaining candidates receiving only two or three votes each.

Of the eighty delegates elected to the St. Petersburg workers' electoral college, the overwhelming majority were Social-Democrats. Many of them had a revolutionary past; they had been persecuted by the police, tried in courts of law, exiled to distant regions. Some of them, however, had not made up their minds about Party differences and were vacillating between the two factions of the Party. Thus it was not clear who would be elected in the second stage of the elections (the selection of electors to the workers' electoral college) which would determine the choice of the future deputy.

Both the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks started an intensive campaign among the delegates, trying to win over the doubtful ones. The campaign for electors was even more impetuous than that for the delegates. Here, too, the Duma election law had placed a number of obstacles in our path. No meetings of the delegates were allowed and all attempts to arrange such meetings under some pretext or other were prevented by the police, who watched carefully to ensure that the workers' delegates should not communicate with one another.

For this reason press campaigns played an enormous part in the second stage of the elections. *Pravda* and *Luch* (The Ray)\* agitated for their respective factions, calling on the delegates to vote for their candidates. Both factions mobilised the entire arsenal of their arguments, and the polemics between these two newspapers were even more bitter than during the election of the delegates.

The principal argument of the Menshevik-Liquidators against the Bolsheviks was the accusation that the latter were breaking the unity of the working class. By this talk of unity the Mensheviks at-

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\* *Luch* represented the views of the Mensheviks and Liquidators. — Ed.

tempted to side-track the discussion of political programmes, for they knew beforehand that they would be beaten on that issue. Whilst evading this discussion in every possible way, they continually cried out for "agreement," "unity" and "personal candidates."

"The only way out of the difficult situation," wrote *Luch*, "is through an agreement between the Social-Democratic factions, or failing that, between the Social-Democratic delegates, for the purpose of united action at the congress of delegates and of electing from the Social-Democratic delegates – irrespective of their tendencies – the most steadfast electors to be chosen on account of their personal qualities."

This was indeed the only way out for the Mensheviks, because under the flag of "the most steadfast, to be chosen on account of their personal qualities," it was possible to elect a man with any political platform, consequently also a Menshevik, even if the Mensheviks were not in a majority among the representatives.

*Pravda*, exposing the Mensheviks, wrote that there was no occasion to be afraid of a struggle within the working class, that such a struggle would not destroy unity but, on the contrary, would strengthen it in the future.

This struggle is inevitable, since the workers have to decide which tactics the Social-Democratic fraction in the Duma should adopt. This struggle – we specially stress this – will not endanger in the slightest the unity of the working class, for the question now is whether this or that delegate be chosen as elector. The workers must and will act unitedly, but precisely for the sake of this unity it is necessary that the workers' deputy should represent the views of the majority and not those of the minority.

The Bolsheviks proposed that the vote should be taken after both political platforms had been discussed at the meeting. This was precisely what the Mensheviks did not want; they were afraid that the discussion would turn out unfavourably for them.

The Bolsheviks considered the contest over the choice of electors as a conflict between political platforms determining the tactics of the future Social-Democratic fraction in the State Duma, whereas the Mensheviks tried to win this fight by advancing the principle of

personal election, i.e., by stressing the personal qualities of individual candidates.

Disputes between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks grew more bitter, not only among the leaders but also among the rank and file, at factories and works and among the delegates themselves.

A week before the selection of electors, an illegal meeting of delegates took place in the forest two or three versts from Porokhovye station. The meeting was attended by about thirty delegates and a few representatives from the Bolshevik St. Petersburg Committee and the Organisation Commission of the Mensheviks. Since many of the prominent members of the Party were present, the issues were presented in their most acute form. The battle was fought out in the open. The Bolsheviks argued that it was necessary to choose as electors comrades who would carry out the programme of the Party and submit to Party directions; the Liquidators insisted on their point, that in order to avoid a split it was necessary to elect individuals irrespective of their platform.

Comrade Lashevich spoke on behalf of the Bolshevik St. Petersburg Committee. With his usual impetuosity he declared: "We shall unmask you, we shall show the workers what lies behind your hypocritical phrases about unity."

After five hours of stormy arguments our resolution secured an absolute majority, having obtained two-thirds of the votes of the delegates present. But to this result the Liquidators refused to submit.

All efforts to reach an agreement failed, each side categorically rejecting the various proposals advanced by the other. While these negotiations to find a common line of action were proceeding, individual delegates attempted the same task and each faction of the Party tried to win their support.

On the day before the electoral college was to assemble, the Menshevik delegates threatened a split if their proposals were not accepted. *Luch* wrote that if no agreement were reached on the question of the choice of electors, the Mensheviks would also nominate their own candidates in the second electoral city curiae of St. Petersburg where the two sections of the Party had put up a joint list of candidates. Of course their threat did not affect our decision in the slightest degree.

The workers' electoral college met on October 5. Throughout the election the authorities continued to adopt methods of obstruction. The date of the meeting was only announced on the evening before, i.e., a few hours before the delegates were to assemble; this

haste was intended to disrupt the electoral college. In addition, a new surprise had been prepared. At the same time as this announcement was made, the delegates from a number of factories and mills were "disqualified." On October 4, the day before the electoral college was to assemble, the workers of twenty-one factories and mills were notified that the elections of their representatives had been declared invalid. Finally, at the assembly of the electoral college itself, the governor "disqualified" the delegates of another eight undertakings in the Schliesselburg district. Some of the largest factories had their delegates disqualified, such as the Putilov works, which had elected nine delegates, and the Nevsky shipbuilding yard, which had sent three.

The Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks nominated their own candidates for the six electors to be chosen by the electoral college. Although our list had been prepared, it was not published before the election day in order to avoid exposing the candidates to the risk of arrest.

The electoral college, which met in the St. Petersburg City Duma building, was scheduled to open at noon, but the majority of the delegates had arrived an hour before time. They became acquainted with one another and tried to discover who would support the Bolsheviks and who the Mensheviks.

The official chairman of the college, appointed by the government, was Demkin, the vice-mayor of St. Petersburg. He was one of the worst of the Black Hundreds, and, zealously performing his police duties, he tried to hamper as much as possible the already restricted elections. In the preliminary proceedings only one hour was allowed for the discussion of the lists of candidates.

Of the fifty delegates, five or six were non-party and the rest Social-Democrats, either Bolsheviks or Mensheviks. This gathering, restricted exclusively to the delegates, was the final stage of the struggle between the two factions. Now the choice had to be made, electors had to be chosen. The discussion was exceptionally violent; each group presented its own list of candidates and its own programme. There was no longer any question of compromise. Speeches were devoted to winning the support of those delegates who, for some reason or other, had not yet decided how to vote.

Despite the opposition of the Mensheviks, we succeeded in raising the question of the election programme. A Menshevik representative spoke first, but when a Bolshevik commenced to reply,



Demkin came into the hall, broke into the discussion, and ordered us to proceed with the ballot.

In the hall a ballot-box was provided for each delegate with his name pasted on it. The voting was by secret ballot and it took more than an hour for the papers to be sorted and the election procedure to be concluded. All those elected were Social- Democrats, four of them from the list published by the *Pravda*.

The atmosphere in which the elections were held and the hasty "disqualification" of the delegates from half of the factories and mills aroused the indignation of the St. Petersburg workers. The government had gone too far. The workers answered with a powerful movement of protest.

The Putilov factory was the first to act. On the day of the elections, October 5, instead of returning to their benches after dinner, the workers assembled in the workshops and declared a strike. The whole factory came out – nearly 14,000 workers. At 3 p.m. several thousand workers left the factory and marched toward the Narvsky gate singing revolutionary songs, but they were dispersed by the police. The movement spread to the Nevsky shipyards, where 6,500 workers organised a meeting and a political demonstration. They were joined by the workers of the Pale and Maxwell mills, the Alexeyev joinery works, etc. On the following day the workers of the Erickson, Lessner, Heisler, Vulcan, Duflon, Phoenix, Cheshire, Lebedev, and other factories struck.

The strike quickly spread all over St. Petersburg. The strike was not restricted to those factories at which the election of delegates had been annulled, but many others were also involved. Meetings and demonstrations were organised. Several factories linked their protests against the persecution of trade unions with those against the nullification of the elections. The strike was completely political; no economic demands whatever were formulated. Within ten days more than 70,000 were involved in the movement. The workers demonstrated very clearly that they would not give up their right to vote and that they realised both what the elections meant and what the work of the future workers' deputies in the Duma would be.

The strike movement continued to grow until the government was convinced that it could not deprive the workers of their right to vote and was forced to announce that new primary elections would be held in the works affected. Many factories and mills which had not participated before in the election of delegates were included in the new list. In consequence the elections of electors had to be an-

nulled and new elections held after additional delegates had been elected. This was a great victory for the working class and particularly for the St. Petersburg proletariat, which had shown such revolutionary class-consciousness.

The supplementary elections of delegates from more than twenty undertakings were fixed for Sunday, October 14. *Pravda* and our Party organisation carried on as strong a propaganda campaign as they had during the first elections. The movement of protest against the workers being deprived of their electoral rights continued while the elections were going on, and the meetings at the factories and mills revealed a growth of revolutionary sentiment and a heightened interest in the election campaign.

For the most part, the same candidates were nominated in the "disqualified" undertakings, but this time they were given instructions which had been worked out by the Bolsheviks. These instructions were adopted almost everywhere and, characteristically enough, even at some factories where Mensheviks had been elected. At the Semyanninkovsky factory, where one Bolshevik and two Mensheviks had been successful, the Mensheviks tried to add an amendment containing a Menshevik slogan on the right of association. This amendment was rejected by an overwhelming majority and the draft of our instructions adopted without modification.

The Bolshevik instructions, which had been signed by thousands of workers, were also adopted at those factories and mills where the first election of delegates was allowed to stand.

As soon as the supplementary delegates had been elected, a date was fixed for the meeting of the electoral college at which six electors had again to be chosen for the workers' electoral college. But this time there was no opportunity before the college met to seek agreement on a joint list of candidates. The discussions between the two factions were as violent as before; both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks holding to their former positions and refusing to make any compromise.

The second electoral college assembled on October 17, attended by almost twice as many delegates as had been present at the first; in all there were more than eighty. The strikes and protest meetings had obviously had some influence on Demkin, the official chairman of the electoral college. This time the discussion lasted for more than four hours. In the discussion of the election platform, all the revolutionary tasks with which the working class was faced were

thrashed out, and the arguments between the Bolsheviks and the Liquidators developed with renewed vigour.

The delegates decided to use this occasion to make a political demonstration and proposed a number of resolutions on current political questions. Resolutions were passed, protesting against the Balkan war (which was then in progress); binding the future deputy to raise the question of retrying the case of the members of the Second Duma who had been exiled; and protesting against the sentences on the Black Sea sailors. The delegates also issued an appeal calling on the voters of the second electoral city-curiae to support the candidates of the Social-Democratic party, as the “only steadfast, revolutionary, and fearless defenders of the people’s interests; as the only fighters against political oppression and for complete freedom and rights of all nationalities,” At the end of the meeting, the St. Petersburg workers’ instructions to their delegates, as proposed by the Bolsheviks, were unanimously adopted. These instructions were drafted by the Central Committee of our Party\* and, as I have already said, were adopted at the meetings held to elect the delegates. The instructions emphasised the importance of using the Duma tribunal for revolutionary propaganda and demanded that both the St. Petersburg deputy and the whole Social-Democratic fraction should fight for the “unabridged” demands of the working class.

The following is the full text of the instructions as passed by the delegates without any additions and amendments:

The demands of the Russian people advanced by the movement of 1905 remain unrealised.

The growth of reaction and the “renovation of the regime” have not only not satisfied these demands, but, on the contrary, have made them still more pressing.

Not only are the workers deprived of the right to strike – there is no guarantee that they will not be discharged for doing so; not only have they no right to organise unions and meetings – there is no guarantee that they will not be arrested for doing so; they have not even the right to elect to the Duma, for they will be “disqualified” or exiled if they do, as the workers from the Putilov works and the Nevsky shipyards were “disqualified” a few days ago.

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\* Actually they were drafted by Com. Stalin. – Ed.

All this is quite apart from the starving tens of millions of peasants, who are left at the mercy of the landlords and the rural police chiefs.

All this points to the necessity of realising the demands of 1905. The state of economic life in Russia, the signs already appearing of the approaching industrial crisis and the growing pauperisation of broad strata of the peasantry make the necessity of realising the objects of 1905 more urgent than ever.

We think, therefore, that Russia is on the eve of mass movements, perhaps more profound than those of 1905. This is testified by the Lena events, by the strikes in protest against the "disqualifications," etc.

As was the case in 1905, the Russian proletariat, the most advanced class of Russian society, will again act as the vanguard of the movement.

The only allies it can have are the long-suffering peasantry, who are vitally interested in the emancipation of Russia from feudalism.

A fight on two fronts – against the feudal order and the Liberal bourgeoisie which is seeking a union with the old powers – such is the form the next actions of the people must assume.

But in order that the working class may honourably discharge its role as the leader of the movement of the people, it must be armed with the consciousness of its interests and with a greater degree of organisation.

The Duma tribune is, under the present conditions, one of the best means for enlightening and organising the broad masses of the proletariat.

It is for this very purpose that we are sending our deputy into the Duma, and we charge him and the whole Social-Democratic fraction of the Fourth Duma to make widely known our demands from the Duma tribune, and not to play at legislation in the State Duma.

We call upon the Social-Democratic fraction of the Fourth Duma, and our deputy in particular, to hold aloft the banner of the working class in the hostile camp of the Black Duma.

We want to hear the voices of the members of the Social-Democratic fraction ring out loudly from the Duma

tribune proclaiming the final goal of the proletariat, proclaiming the full and uncurtailed demands of 1905, proclaiming the Russian working class as the leader of the popular movement and denouncing the Liberal bourgeoisie as the betrayer of the “people’s freedom.”\*

We call upon the Social-Democratic fraction of the Fourth Duma, in its work on the basis of the above slogans, to act in unity and with its ranks closed.

Let it gather its strength from constant contact with the broad masses.

Let it march shoulder to shoulder with the political organisation of the working class of Russia.

In spite of the fact that the Bolshevik instructions were adopted unanimously, two independent lists of candidates – Bolsheviks and Mensheviks – were presented at the election. As in the previous electoral college, voting was by secret ballot. Only five candidates received an absolute majority, Kostyukov and myself for the Bolsheviks, and Gudkov, Petrov, and Sudakov for the Mensheviks. Another ballot was taken on the following day and two Bolsheviks, Ignatyev and Zaitsev, topped the poll. Lots were drawn and Ignatyev was chosen elector.

The second stage of the elections thus resulted in equal representation for the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, each controlling three of the electors. The Party had demanded that all the electors, with the exception of the candidate for deputy endorsed by the Party, should withdraw and submit to the decision of the majority.

Comrade Stalin, summing up the results of the elections in *Pravda*, emphasised the fact that the endorsement of the Bolshevik instructions clearly showed who should be elected to the Duma:

No matter how the Liquidators try to obscure the issue, the will of the delegates was quite clear on the most important point, the question of the instructions. By an overwhelming majority the delegates adopted the instructions of *Pravda* to the deputy.... It is obvious that the instructions differ radically from the Liquidationist platform and that in fact they are completely anti-Liquidationist. The question

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\* An allusion to the name of the party of the Cadets (Constitutional Democrats) which called itself also the “Party of the People’s Freedom.” – Ed.

is: if the Liquidators dare to nominate their own candidate for deputy, what about the instructions which, according to the delegates' decision, are binding on the deputy?

The Liquidators, however, attached little importance to the clearly expressed will of the delegates. They intended to nominate their own candidate regardless of results and were ready to go to any lengths to achieve his election.

The short interval between the selection of electors and the election of the deputy was spent in continual negotiations between the party committees and the electors. We showed that only a Bolshevik should be elected to the Duma since everything pointed to the fact that the majority of the workers supported the Bolsheviks. The preliminary stages of the elections had gone in our favour. In the first electoral college, four of the electors chosen were from our list, while of the other two only one was definitely a Liquidator, as the other had gone over to the Mensheviks after the elections. The second college was also Bolshevik in sympathy as the endorsement of the instructions showed. We insisted that an accidental distribution of votes should not be made the basis for misrepresenting the will of the majority of the St. Petersburg workers.

None of our arguments had the slightest effect on the Liquidators; and they even rejected the suggestion, made by some Bolsheviks, that unity could be achieved by deciding the question by drawing lots. Neither side made any concessions and both went to the provincial electoral college determined to send their own candidate to the Duma.

The college met on October 20. Four deputies were to be elected to represent the St. Petersburg Gubernia: one for the peasants, two for the landlords and houseowners, and the fourth for the workers. The college was composed of sixty-six electors representing these divisions. The Progressives and the Octobrists were in the majority and had concluded an alliance against the Rights and the Nationalists.

Prince Saltykov, the chairman appointed by the government, read the rules and regulations governing the election proceedings, verified the list of electors and proposed that the election of deputies be commenced. First, a deputy was elected from the peasants' electors, of whom four were Progressives and one Right. We agreed to vote for the Progressive candidate on condition that, if elected, he would vote with the Social-Democratic fraction on bills concerning the workers. The candidate they nominated was elected. A Progress-

sive was also successful for the houseowners, while an Octobrist was chosen to represent the landlords.

Then the college proceeded with the election of a deputy to represent the workers. All the workers' electors, both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, went to the ballot. When the votes were counted, I was declared elected, having received thirty-four votes against twenty-nine. The Liquidators received considerably less votes.

Enraged by their failure, the Liquidators at once opened a slanderous campaign about the way the elections had been conducted, trying in this way to explain away their defeat.

## CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC FRACTION OF THE  
FOURTH STATE DUMA

After the Elections – Visits and Letters from Workers – The Composition of the Social-Democratic Fraction – Jagello, the Deputy from Warsaw – The Bolshevik “Six.”

The State Duma opened a month after the elections in St. Petersburg. This month was spent in preparations for the formation of the Social-Democratic fraction, and in other preliminary work connected with the activity of our fraction.

Activity within the Duma was only a small part of the tasks which confronted the workers’ deputies, the predominant part of their work taking place outside of the Duma. Immediately the elections were over, I became absorbed in this and was faced with many new Party and trade union duties, work for *Pravda*, etc.

As it had been decided that I should visit the editorial offices every day, I was in close touch with *Pravda*. At that time *Pravda* was under the direction of Comrade Stalin, who was living “illegally,” and who had also been charged with the conduct of the recent election campaign and with the preparations for the organization of the Duma fraction.

When I met Stalin, he raised the question of the necessity of arranging, even before the Duma opened, a conference between the Central Committee and the workers’ deputies. Such a conference would, of course, have to be held abroad.

At the conference, a plan of action for the Bolshevik section of the Duma fraction was to be worked out and a number of questions connected with our future activity discussed. I entirely endorsed Stalin’s proposal, being of the opinion that it was necessary for the workers’ deputies to establish close contact with the Central Committee from the outset. We did not succeed, however, in convoking the conference before the opening of the Duma. It was decided to postpone it until the first Duma recess, when it would be possible to prepare for it in a more systematic manner.

I met Comrade Stalin frequently both at the editorial offices and elsewhere. Often Stalin would come to my apartment in disguise in order to avoid police spies. During this initial period, Comrade Stalin’s advice was of great help to me and to the other workers’ deputies.



During my daily visits to the Pravda offices, I met the representatives of labour organisations and became acquainted with the moods of the workers. Workers came there from all the city districts and related what had taken place at factories and works, and how the legal and the illegal organisations were functioning. Conversations and meetings with the representatives of the revolutionary workers supplied me with a vast amount of material for my future activity in the Duma.

The workers kept in close touch with their deputies, whom they regarded as the genuine representatives of their interests. As soon as the results of the elections were published in the press, workers of various factories began to apply to me with the most diverse requests and questions. In order to meet delegates from the factories and, at the same time, to be nearer the *Pravda* office, it was necessary for me to live in the centre of the city. After having taken my discharge from the works, I hired an apartment in Shpalernaya Street in the neighbourhood of the State Duma and moved there from my former home beyond Nevskaya Zastava.

The police spies, who had not been inattentive to me even when I was employed at the works, became more assiduous when I was elected delegate; after my being chosen as an elector their numbers increased still further, and now they positively besieged my apartment, watching my every step and following all my visitors.

Every day I received a voluminous correspondence not only from St. Petersburg, but also from other cities, and many workers called to see me. In order that these consultations with the masses should continue, I published in *Pravda* the hours of my "reception" at home. Some of these numerous visitors called on behalf of various organisations, while others came on personal matters.

The conversations and letters touched upon absolutely every aspect of the workers' lives. I was kept informed of the work accomplished and of the persecutions incurred by the trade unions, of strikes, lock-outs, unemployment, and new cases of police oppression. I was asked to intercede on behalf of those arrested, and received many letters from exiles, who requested me to organise financial and other material relief for them. Among those who came on personal matters, some even asked if I could help to find work for them. Very often visitors called in order to talk about the Duma and its work, to express their wishes and to give advice.

It was necessary to answer all the letters promptly and to deal with the requests. In a number of cases I had to initiate petitions and

conduct negotiations with various government institutions. All this took a lot of time and my day was fully occupied even before the Duma opened.

From telegrams and local information we gradually obtained a picture of the election results throughout Russia, and very soon the approximate composition of the Social-Democratic fraction in the future Duma became known. Not all the information, however, was sufficiently precise or reliable. Thus, it was not clear who Mankov, the deputy from Irkutsk, was. The news of the election of a Social-Democratic deputy for the Maritime district in Siberia proved to be erroneous; later on it transpired that the deputy was not a Social-Democrat, but a Trudovik. In general, the setting of the elections was such that no absolute reliance could be placed on the communications of the official telegraphic agency. Very often the telegrams simply stated that a "Left" had been elected, but it was unknown to which Party he belonged.

We only knew which deputies had actually been elected after they had come to St. Petersburg. Being a St. Petersburg deputy, I published an announcement in *Pravda* inviting all Social-Democratic deputies arriving in St. Petersburg to a discussion on the organisation of a fraction. I invited them to obtain my address from the editorial office of the newspaper. This announcement was made for the purpose of putting the deputies in touch with *Pravda* immediately, and thus bringing them under the influence of the Bolshevik organ. Thus the first meeting-place of the Social-Democratic deputies in St. Petersburg was the editorial office of *Pravda*; it was only after they had been there that they went to the State Duma. The Mensheviks, Chkheidze and Skobelev, also visited *Pravda* and tried to establish "friendly" relations with the Bolsheviks.

After the majority of the Social-Democratic deputies had arrived in St. Petersburg, conferences were held to exchange information concerning the instructions and opinions of the various regions from which they came. At first we held our meetings in the Taurida Palace, but subsequently at our own premises. The fraction rented an apartment of four or five rooms at 39 Rozhdestvenskaya. These headquarters were immediately surrounded by the police, who kept continuous watch on the entrance and windows.

As in the Second and Third Dumas, the Social-Democratic fraction in the Fourth Duma began as a united friction, comprising both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. But unlike the preceding cases, a sharp struggle broke out at once between the two groups. The Third Duma

had opened in a period of violent reaction and decline in the revolutionary struggle; the elections to the Fourth Duma, on the other hand, had taken place when the labour movement was on the up-grade. The working class, taking up the revolutionary fight again, was rapidly liberating itself from Liquidationist tendencies. At the elections in the workers' colleges the struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks had flared up with exceptional passion and it was natural that it should be continued in the Social-Democratic fraction. Accordingly from the first meeting a state of intense hostility prevailed between the Bolshevik and Menshevik sections of the fraction.

The first meeting of the fraction was held a short time before the opening of the Duma. Taking advantage of their majority in the fraction the Mensheviks attempted to secure most of the seats in the presidium of the fraction, but we forced them to yield almost half the seats to the Bolshevik section. Chkheidze, a Menshevik, was elected chairman, Malinovsky, a Bolshevik, vice-chairman, and Tulyakov, another Menshevik, treasurer. The two other members of the presidium were the Bolshevik, Petrovsky, and the Menshevik, Skobelev.

There were fourteen deputies in the Social-Democratic fraction, six being Bolsheviks and seven Mensheviks. The last member, the Warsaw deputy, Jagello, supported the Mensheviks. The majority for the Mensheviks, although an insignificant one, seemed at first sight to entitle them to claim that they had the support of the majority of the working class. This claim, however, was far from true. Closer examination of the election results shows that the Bolsheviks were really the leaders of the workers and that the Bolshevik deputies were the only genuine representatives of the working class in the State Duma.

All the elections in the six workers' colleges of the largest industrial areas had resulted in victories for the Bolsheviks. The Menshevik deputies, on the contrary, were elected from non-working-class centres, chiefly the border provinces, where the majority of the population was petit bourgeois. The distribution of workers in the areas concerned shows for whom the working class voted. In the six provinces with workers' electoral colleges there were 1,008,000 workers (in factories and mines), whereas in the eight provinces which returned Mensheviks there were 214,000 workers, or if we include the Baku province, where the workers were disfranchised, 246,000 workers. From these figures it is obvious that, in fact, the

Bolsheviks represented five times as many workers as the Mensheviks. Only an electoral system specially designed to reduce the representation of the working class could bring about such a correlation of forces within the Social-Democratic fraction.

The preponderating influence which the Bolsheviks enjoyed among the masses can also be proved by comparing the numbers of deputies elected by the workers' electoral colleges to the previous State Dumas. In the Second Duma, twelve Mensheviks and eleven Bolsheviks were elected by the workers' colleges; in the Third there was an equal number of each; while in the Fourth Duma, only six deputies were elected, but they were all Bolsheviks. At the time of the Second Duma, which coincided with the London Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, the majority of the Party was definitely Bolshevik; and in the Fourth Duma there could be no doubt that the Bolsheviks had the support of at least three-fourths of the revolutionary workers.

The fact that the composition of the Social-Democratic fraction did not correspond to the Party composition was not accidental. The opportunist character of parliamentary labour parties is common to all bourgeois countries. This is partly due to the electoral system which, under any bourgeois regime, is directed toward limiting the rights of the most progressive, revolutionary workers, and partly to the greater adaptability to and interest in parliamentary activity displayed by the non-proletarian elements of socialist parties – the petty bourgeoisie, the office employees, and above all the intelligentsia.

Whereas the Bolshevik wing of the fraction consisted only of workers who came to the Duma straight from factories and workshops, three of the Menshevik seven were intellectuals; Chkheidze was a journalist, Skobelev an engineer, Chkhenkeli a lawyer. These three were elected in the Caucasus, which had also sent Mensheviks to the previous Dumas. A decisive factor in this Menshevik stability in the Caucasus was the local opposition to the policy of Russification pursued by the tsarist government. The Caucasian elections, in particular, show the extent to which the Mensheviks were dependent on the votes of the petty bourgeoisie. The four Menshevik deputies who were workers were also elected from the border provinces: Buryanov from the Taurida Gubernia (Crimea), Tulyakov from the Don region, Khaustov from the Ufa Gubernia, and Mankov from the Irkutsk Gubernia. The support of voters, politically indifferent, but who upheld a nationalist movement against the imperialist op-

pression of the government, contributed greatly to the success of these deputies.

Mankov's election was actually achieved against the will of the working-class voters. At the Irkutsk provincial electoral meeting, only twelve out of the twenty electors took part. The remaining eight were "disqualified," and no new elections were held to replace them. This electoral trick prevented the Irkutsk workers from electing their candidate and unexpectedly Mankov was successful, although his Liquidationist views had been rejected by the workers. Simultaneously with the arrival of Mankov in St. Petersburg, the fraction received a protest from the Irkutsk workers against his election. At one time there was a question of Mankov's resignation, and an annulment of the Irkutsk elections was demanded. At first even the Mensheviks wavered on the question whether Mankov, with such "testimonials," should be admitted into the Social-Democratic fraction.

The election of the Warsaw deputy, Jagello, who supported the Mensheviks, was still more irregular. Jagello was a member of the Polish Socialist Party in which petty bourgeois, nationalist tendencies were predominant. The Bund\* made an election alliance with this Party against the Social-Democrats. This fact alone revealed the Bund as a secessionist organisation which had transgressed the decisions and directions of the Party, since the Party had categorically refused to admit the Polish Socialist Party into its ranks. The Social-Democrats obtained a majority at the elections, and of the three workers' electors, two, Bronovski and Zalevski, were Social-Democrats. Jagello, the candidate of the *bloc*, was the third, and could only be considered as the candidate of a minority of the workers. The representatives of the Jewish bourgeoisie, since they did not venture to put up a candidate of their own, voted for this representative of the minority to ensure that a Polish nationalist with anti-Semitic tendencies should not be elected. Thus Jagello was elected by a *bloc*, consisting of the Polish Socialist Party, the Bund, and the Jewish bourgeoisie, directed against the majority of the Warsaw workers who had supported the Polish Social-Democratic Party.

In spite of the fact that Jagello declared that he would accept all the decisions of the Social-Democratic fraction, we strongly objected to his being admitted. The Bolsheviks did not wish to appear

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\* The Jewish Social-Democratic League (Menshevik) – Ed.

to sanction the secessionist step taken by the Bund. At most we were willing to accept him as an affiliated member of the fraction just as the Lithuanian Social-Democrats, who at that time were not members of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, had been accepted in the Second Duma.

The Mensheviks, however, received Jagello as an ally who could give them an extra vote in their struggle against the Bolshevik wing of the fraction. They wanted to include him unreservedly as a member of the fraction with the same rights as the other deputies. We protested resolutely against such an utter contempt of Party decisions, and, after a long and stubborn struggle, we forced the Mensheviks to give way. This was one of the first issues on which the two factions fought. Jagello was admitted into the Social-Democratic fraction as a member with limited rights. He exercised a vote on questions of Duma activity and had the right to advise, but not to vote, on questions of the internal life of the Party. Comrade Stalin referred as follows to this decision in an article in *Pravda*:

The decision of the Social-Democratic fraction is an attempt to discover something in the nature of a compromise. Whether the fraction has found the way to peace remains to be seen. In any case it is obvious that the Bund did not obtain a sanction for its secessionist step, though it tried hard to get it.

Subsequent development showed that Stalin's sceptical view on the possibility of a reconciliation between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in the fraction was fully justified. The Bolshevik worker deputies were determined to carry out the will of the workers who had sent them to the Duma and they waged a constant struggle against the Liquidators.

All our Bolshevik "six" were workers who came to the State Duma from the very heart of the working class. Each of us from early childhood had experienced personally all the "charms" of the capitalist regime. For all of us the oppression of the tsarist government and the ruthless exploitation of the working classes by the bourgeoisie and its henchmen were far from being abstract theories – we had experienced them ourselves.

The working class, after enormous difficulties, after many losses and cruel defeats, had obtained the right to send its representatives to the State Duma. By our struggle against the existing regime conducted in the very jaws of the enemy, we had to justify the

enormous losses suffered by the Russian workers. The consciousness of this great and responsible task still further increased the revolutionary energy and strengthened the will of the workers' deputies, when they were fighting both the open enemies of the proletariat and those hidden enemies who attempted to hold back the revolutionary movement.

Four metal workers and two textile workers formed the Bolshevik "six" in the Fourth Duma. Petrovsky, Muranov, Malinovsky, and I were metal workers, Shagov and Samoylov were textile workers. The Bolshevik deputies were elected in the biggest industrial areas of Russia: G. I. Petrovsky was deputy for the Yekaterinoslav Gubernia, M. K. Muranov for Kharkov Gubernia, N. R. Shagov for the Kostroma Gubernia, F. N. Samoylov for the Vladimir Gubernia, R. V. Malinovsky for the Moscow Gubernia, and myself for St. Petersburg.

But in fact the workers' deputies did not represent only those regions which had elected them, for as soon as our election became known, we received letters, declarations, and resolutions from workers of various regions entrusting us with the representation of their interests. I quote as an example a letter which I received in the beginning of November, 1912:

Dear Comrade, you know from the newspapers the sad result of the elections in the Kursk Gubernia. Owing to the electoral law of June 3, the Markovists, the worst enemies of the workers, were elected to the Duma. Thus the vital interests of the proletariat are left undefended. Therefore, we, a group of Kursk delegates, charge you, the chosen representative of the St. Petersburg workers, and the other members of the Social-Democratic fraction in the Fourth Duma, with the defence of the interests of our constituents and we endorse the instructions given to you by the proletariat of St. Petersburg. With fraternal greetings, the delegates of the Kursk Gubernia.

The Dvinsk workers wrote as follows:

Only Black Hundreds were elected from the Vitebsk Gubernia. Not a single representative of the working class was able to enter the Taurida Palace through the barrier erected by the law of June 3. We, the progressive workers of Dvinsk, send to the Social-Democratic fraction as a whole our warm fraternal greetings and request it to assume

the defence of the interests of democracy in the Gubernia of Vitebsk.

Despite the police and the persecution to which anyone corresponding with the Bolshevik deputies was exposed, workers from all corners of Russia sent us their instructions, greetings, and promises of support.

Expressing their desire to keep in touch with the deputies, the workers at the same time invited their deputies to maintain close contact with the proletariat of St. Petersburg, which was ever the advance guard of the revolutionary movement. The following clause was included in the instructions sent to Muranov by the workers of the Kharkov locomotive sheds and by the Social-Democratic city, factory, and railway groups:

In any acute political situation the deputy is bound to consult the workers who elected him to the State Duma and also to establish the closest relations with the St. Petersburg proletariat.

Similar instructions were received by the other workers' deputies. The support of the St. Petersburg workers was of great importance to the Bolshevik deputies. When speaking from the Duma rostrum, the Bolsheviks, accusing and exposing the government, always felt sure that there, outside the walls of the Taurida Palace, they would find support among the St. Petersburg workers, who, by their strikes and demonstrations, rendered the impression made by the Duma speeches many times more effective. Workers from the other regions of Russia quickly followed this lead, but the first onslaught was always carried out by the strong, picked ranks of the St. Petersburg workers.

*Pravda* expressed the spirit of the St. Petersburg workers when it welcomed the beginning of our Duma work in the following terms:

The editors of *Pravda* welcome the Social-Democratic fraction of the Fourth Duma and wish it success in its difficult and responsible duty of steadfastly and consistently defending the interests of the proletariat and of democracy as a whole.

*Pravda* also published the following greeting from a group of St. Petersburg workers:



In the Fourth Duma a few benches, a small sector of the semicircle of the Duma, are occupied by deputies who really represent the people and whose hearts beat in unison with the hearts of the Russian workers and peasants. These are the workers' deputies, the Social-Democratic fraction.

All these messages assured us that we entered the Duma supported, not only by the hundreds of thousands of workers who had taken an active part in the elections, but by the whole of the Russian proletariat. This strong and intimate connection with the masses, which became stronger as time went on, was of immense assistance to us in our extremely complicated and difficult Duma work.

The difficulties of work in the Duma were mitigated in the case of the Mensheviks by the fact that they possessed more people acquainted with such tasks. The Menshevik leader Chkheidze had for five years been the chairman of the Social-Democratic fraction in the Third State Duma. During this period he had gathered considerable experience and had learned how to manoeuvre through the complex maze of Duma rules of procedure. The habit of speaking from the Duma rostrum was also important, as was too the knowledge of special methods by which one could withstand the pressure exercised by the chairman and defeat the attacks of the Black Hundred majority.

So-called experts assisted all Duma fractions in their work. They were partisans and sympathisers of the parties represented in the Duma. With their aid, the necessary material for speeches was collected, bills drafted, interpellations framed, and the texts of speeches discussed and approved. Such experts were of special importance for the Social-Democratic fraction because our Party was illegal.

The work of the Social-Democratic deputies was assisted by Party publicists and journalists as well as by those members who possessed the necessary training (lawyers and economists, etc.). They included both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. The Mensheviks, however, were considerably more numerous because the Bolsheviks, more formidable enemies of the tsarist government, suffered much more from the persecutions of the secret police. The Mensheviks enjoyed a relatively larger degree of legal facilities and a number of their prominent members lived comparatively undisturbed and for long periods in St. Petersburg, engaged on literary and social work. Such Menshevik leaders as Dan, Potresov, and Yezhov, for example, lived legally.

Quite a different state of things prevailed among the Bolsheviks. At various periods, Comrades Stalin, Sverdlov, Kamenev, Olminsky, Molotov, Krestinsky, Krylenko, Quiring, Concordia Samoylova and other leading Party workers took part in the work of the fraction. But they appeared in St. Petersburg illegally and for short periods only, between an escape from exile and a new arrest.

## CHAPTER IV

**THE OPENING OF THE DUMA**

Strike on the Opening Day of the Duma – The Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks on the Strike – The First Sitting of the Fourth Duma – The Social-Democratic Fraction and the Election of the Duma Presidium – The Government Declaration – The Reply of the Social-Democrats – The “omissions” of Malinovsky

A wave of strikes accompanied the beginning of the work of the new State Duma. The working class had fully grasped the importance of the strike weapon and made extensive use of it in the struggles against the tsarist government and the bourgeoisie.

Immediately before the opening of the Duma, which had been fixed for November 15, 1912, a meeting was held in St. Petersburg to protest against the death sentences which had been passed on a number of sailors of the Black Sea fleet. A naval court martial in Sebastopol had condemned seventeen sailors to death and 106 to penal servitude for conspiring to prepare a revolt. In reply, mass strikes were organised, which quickly spread from St. Petersburg to other regions of Russia. Within a week more than 60,000 workers, i.e. about one-fourth of the St. Petersburg workers, took part in one-day strikes. In the whole of Russia about a quarter of a million men participated in this protest strike. At some of the St. Petersburg works demonstrations were organised and the workers marched through the streets carrying red flags and singing revolutionary songs.

The strike movement called forth by the naval court-martial sentence continued until the opening of the Duma and was then transformed into a political strike, timed to coincide with the first sitting of the Duma. This latter strike was declared as a protest against the law of June 3 and the reactionary Duma, and as a demonstration in support of the Social-Democratic deputies. At the same time the strikers protested once more against the death sentence passed on the sailors and against the brutal treatment of political prisoners in the Algachinsky and Kutomarsky prisons.

The strikes and demonstrations were organised by three groups of St. Petersburg Social-Democrats. The proclamation issued three days before the Duma opened bore the following signatures: “The St. Petersburg central Social-Democratic group of trade union organisers,” “A group of Social-Democrats,” “A group of revolutionary Social-Democrats.” Neither the Bolshevik St. Petersburg Com-

mittee nor the Organising Bureau of the Mensheviks had anything to do with the publication of the proclamation or the organisation of the strike. The initiators of the strike did not even notify their appeal to the Party committees or the editors of the two papers (*Pravda* and *Luch*) or our Duma fraction, which had already been in existence for two weeks.

Such guerrilla action by separate groups, taking the initiative into their own hands, was the result of inadequate organisation of the revolutionary movement. But it can also be partly accounted for by the difficulty of establishing relations with the leading Party committees, which were continually persecuted and hunted by the secret police and which therefore had to keep their whereabouts very secret.

These circumstances determined the character of such actions: they all lacked a clearly defined and firm Party line. Their usual slogans were “non-factional spirit” and “unity” and they possessed that vagueness and indefiniteness which was later characteristic of the future *mezhraiontsi*.\*

Both Bolshevik and Menshevik slogans appeared in the proclamation issued by these groups. It called for “the confiscation of landlords’ estates,” “freedom of association,” “genuine representation of the people” and “a struggle for a democratic republic,” etc. It was distributed at the factories three days previous to November 15, and at the same time the organisers of the strike carried on oral agitation among the workers. Thus both our fraction and the St. Petersburg Party centres were confronted with an accomplished fact.

A conference was at once called, attended by the Bolshevik and Menshevik deputies, who by that time had arrived in St. Petersburg, and representatives of the St. Petersburg Committee, the Menshevik Committee, and the editorial boards of both papers, *Pravda* and *Luch*. The Mensheviks were completely opposed to both the strike and the demonstration, which they regarded as a waste of forces, and they considered that it was necessary to check the proposed action. “The strike fever,” “incitement to rioting,” such were the terms applied by the Liquidators to the ever more frequent strikes and the militancy of the working class. We Bolsheviks regarded this

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\* Members of the so-called “Inter-district Organisation of United Social-Democrats,” which originated some time before the war, and embraced some “non-fraction” Social-Democrats. It led a separate existence up to the summer of 1917, when it joined the Party. — Ed.

attitude towards the proposed strike as inadmissible. Although the strike had been prepared in an unorganised way, and not as it should have been prepared, nevertheless, since the appeal to strike had evoked sympathetic response from the workers, we regarded it as wrong to oppose their action.

At the instance of the Menshevik majority, however, a communication was issued in the name of the fraction to the effect that, according to the information of the fraction, the proclamation distributed at the factories "does not emanate from any of the authoritative St. Petersburg Social-Democratic groups."<sup>2</sup>

The Liquidators were not satisfied with this declaration and started in *Luch* a campaign for smashing the strike, contemptibly insinuating that "the appeal to strike is an attempt made by unknown persons to abuse the enthusiasm of the workers," that "this renders its origin very suspicious," etc. However, although they were unable to paralyse or to frustrate the strike altogether, they succeeded in considerably hampering its development.

The behaviour of the Mensheviks aroused violent protests from the groups which had organised the strike. This made the position of the Bolshevik section of the fraction very difficult. But while the unorganised character of the strike, its precipitate and incorrect preparation made it difficult for the Bolshevik deputies to define their attitude, the Liquidators cleverly took advantage of the situation and conducted their anti-strike campaign. It was necessary to clarify the position and to ascertain all the circumstances of the case. The question was first discussed in the St. Petersburg Committee, which then made a report to the fraction, insisting on the necessity of investigating the case jointly with representatives from those groups which had declared the strike. For this purpose the fraction set up a commission in which Skobelev represented the Mensheviks, and I the Bolsheviks. Late at night, on the premises of a printing-shop, we held a meeting with the groups' representatives and with members of the St. Petersburg Committee. All the circumstances concerning the declaration of the strike and the publication of the proclamations were examined (it transpired, in particular, that most of the strike organisers were Bolsheviks). The results of these negotiations were reported to a meeting of the fraction. Finally the conflict was settled and the Mensheviks had to acknowledge that their course of action had been incorrect.

According to the estimate of the secret police, about 30,000 St. Petersburg workers took part in the one-day strike on November 15.

The secret police report to the director of the police department describes the events which took place in the streets of St. Petersburg on that day in the following words:

“From 11 a.m., small groups of workers were noticed moving along the sidewalks in the neighbourhood of the Taurida Palace, and at about 3 p.m. a number of university students and intellectuals appeared at the same place. For a long time the crowd walked round the Taurida gardens, but the police prevented them from gathering together and they gradually dispersed.

“At about 3.30 p.m. a crowd formed of these workers and students appeared in Kirochnaya Street. Singing revolutionary songs, and carrying a red flag, about the size of a handkerchief, bearing the legend “Down with Autocracy,” they came out to Liteyny Prospect and went towards Nevsky Prospect. At the corner of Liteyny Prospect and Basseyayna and Simeonovskaya Streets, the ordinary police dispersed the demonstrators, picked up the flag from the sidewalk where the crowd had gathered and arrested the flag-bearer.

“At 3 p.m., a similar crowd of about 100 people from among those who were near the Taurida Palace walked from the other end of Kirochnaya Street, without any demonstrations, along the Surorov Prospect towards the Nevsky Prospect. At the corner of the Sixth Rozhdestvenskaya Street they were dispersed by the police.

“Then, also at 3 p.m. in Ligovskaya Street near Znamenskaya Square, a small crowd of workers assembled and tried to proceed along the right side of Ligovskaya Street towards the Obvodny canal, but this crowd was soon broken up by the police. About 15 to 20 people, apparently a remnant of this crowd, came up to the candy factory of Bligken and Robinson, which is situated at No. 52 Ligovskaya Street, and forced their way through the gateway, guarded by a watchman, into the courtyard of the factory. They intended to enter the factory in order to induce the workers there to leave work, but a police patrol arrived in time to prevent them realising this intention. Some of the participants in these disorders managed to climb over the hedge and conceal themselves on the railway lines of the

Nikolaievskaya Railway, but seven were arrested and will be prosecuted in accordance with the regulations in force.”

The well-informed secret police, however, somewhat toned down the events in its report. For example, it failed to report that one of the demonstrations was dispersed by the police with drawn swords; that those workers who entered the courtyard of the Bligken and Robinson factory did not get there of their own free will, but were driven there by the police, who attacked them savagely with poles and iron bars; also no information is given of other clashes with the demonstrators.

During the demonstration several people were arrested, including a number of trade union organisers, and the searches and arrests continued even on the eve of the opening of the Duma. The police were particularly anxious to find Bolsheviks and ignored the Mensheviks. After a search, Comrade Baturin (N. Zmayatin) was arrested, but Comrade Molotov, who was specially hunted for by the police, managed to escape.

Thus, the Fourth State Duma opened in an environment typical of the tsarist regime. The workers came to welcome their deputies and the police greeted the workers with the usual crop of searches, arrests and beatings-up.

While the police in the streets of St. Petersburg were demonstrating to the workers the Russian constitution “in actual practice,” the Duma was solemnly and ceremoniously opened within the walls of the Taurida Palace. After a number of prayers had been recited, the aged tsarist Secretary of State, Golubev, read the “all-highest ukase,” greeted by a loud hurrah from the people’s representatives. In order to remind the opposition that, even if it was admitted to the Duma, it must be silent and offer no obstruction, Golubev refused to allow the Social-Democrats and the Trudoviks to speak and explain their reasons for refusing to take part in the election of a chairman. The first sitting was wound up by the speech of the chairman-elect, M. K. Rodzyanko, who, in a stentorian voice, swore that “the Duma was steadfastly and firmly devoted to its crowned head.” The Fourth State Duma had begun its work.

The 442 deputies in the Duma were divided among the following parties: 65 Rights, 120 Nationalists and moderate Rights, 98 Octobrists, 48 Progressives, 59 Cadets, 21 National Groups (Poles, White Russians, Mohammedans), 10 Trudoviks, 14 Social-Democrats and 7 Independents. The electoral system, established by the law of June 3, had naturally given a majority to the landlords

and nobles, bitter enemies of the working class and the peasantry. The Black Hundred Duma, though it was divided into various parties and groups, was in reality a reliable bulwark of tsarism. While Purishkevich, Markov and other "diehards" expressed their devotion to the existing regime by loud hurrahs, Milyukov, not to mention the Octobrists, only covered up that devotion by liberal phrases. The Octobrist-Cadet opposition was a sham; at the least scolding by tsarist ministers they immediately forgot their grandiloquent words and revealed their counter-revolutionary character.

The Cadets displayed their true sympathies at the opening sitting by voting for the Octobrist, Rodzyanko, as chairman of the Duma. Rodzyanko, gentleman-in-waiting at the Imperial Court and a big landowner in the Yekaterinoslav Gubernia, possessed a stentorian voice, was very tall and had a commanding presence. Moreover, the new chairman had other qualities; he had gained the reputation of being a faithful servant of the tsar and had proved his mettle in the preceding Duma, where he had dealt very efficiently with the deputies of the Left, whom he gagged and persecuted in every way.

While supporting the candidature of Rodzyanko, the Cadets tried to persuade the Trudoviks and our Social-Democratic fraction to participate in the election of the chairman. The Trudoviks wavered at first and their leader, Dzyubinsky, even opened negotiations on this matter. Finally, however, they overcame the vacillations and waverings so typical of the representatives of the lower middle-class and refused to take part in the election of the Duma Presidium.

For our fraction, the question of taking part in the election of the Duma Presidium was perfectly clear. We categorically rejected the offer of the Cadets. It was absolutely immaterial to us who was the chairman of the Duma. Participation in the election of the chairman would have meant assuming a certain degree of responsibility for the work of the Duma majority, which, as was perfectly well known, was hostile to the working class. The principle underlying our attitude towards Duma work was emphasised by our fraction in a declaration handed in at the opening of the Duma which, as I stated above, the Secretary of State, Golubev, would not allow us to read. This declaration ran as follows:

The chairman has always to carry out the will and desire of the State Duma. It is obvious, therefore, that whoever takes part in the election of the chairman, thereby as-



sumes responsibility for the activity of the Duma. For this reason, the Social-Democratic fraction in the preceding Duma abstained during the election of the chairman, refusing to be associated with the Third Duma, the Duma of the *coup d'état*, the Duma of the master classes, the Duma called upon to struggle against all the essential interests of the people. We know that the chairman of such a Duma would systematically attack members of the Social-Democratic fraction, whenever the latter spoke from the Duma rostrum in defence of the interests of the masses. We can boldly assert that the Social-Democratic fraction emerged victorious from that struggle; in spite of all efforts their voice was not silenced but was heard by the workers. We are sure that we shall be equally successful in the Fourth Duma, whether the chairman be elected from the moderate Khvostovists or the rabid Markovists, from the once moderate and now less moderate Right of the Gololobovists or from the former supporters of Gutchkov.\* Despite all combinations and schemes, we shall say what we intend and shall not forget for a moment that the place we occupy has been obtained at the price of the blood of the people. We shall maintain here freedom of speech in spite of the recent judicial decision of the Senate rendering members liable to prosecution for speeches delivered in the Duma. We shall not allow our rights to express our views freely to be curtailed, although the Duma majority consists of the nominees of the Sablers, Makarovs, etc.†

You are welcome to choose a chairman acceptable to the majority p we shall use the rostrum in the interests of the people.

By our refusal to participate in the election of the chairman we demonstrated, on the first day of the Fourth Duma, that there could be no question of "parliamentary" work for us, that the working class only used the Duma for the greater consolidation and strength-

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\* Khvostov, Markov and Gololobov were Rights and Nationalists. Gutchkov was the leader of the Octobrists.

† V. K. Sabler was the chief procurator of the Synod and head of the State ecclesiastical department. A. A. Makarov was Minister of the Interior.

ening of the revolutionary struggle in the country. A similar attitude determined the nature of our relations with the Duma majority. No joint work, but a sustained struggle against the Rights, the Octobrists and the Cadets, and their exposure in the eyes of the workers; this was the task of the workers' deputies in the Duma of landlords and nobles.

Despite their failure on the question of the chairman, within the next few days the Cadets made another attempt to draw the Social-Democratic fraction into some agreement. They invited our fraction to a joint meeting of the "united opposition" to discuss certain bills which were being drafted by the Cadet fraction. In reply to this invitation the Social-Democratic fraction passed a resolution stating that they would undertake no joint work with the Cadets, that the Cadets were essentially counter-revolutionary and that no friendly relations were possible between them and the party of the working class. During the election campaign, our fraction declared, the Social-Democrats fought the party of the liberal bourgeoisie and the same policy would be followed in the Duma itself. *Pravda* commented on this resolution as follows: "We welcome this decision of the Social-Democratic fraction; it is the only correct one and reflects the will of Social-Democrats outside the Duma."

The only fraction with which the Social Democrats maintained more or less close relations was that of the Trudoviks.<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding its "Left" tendencies, this group was very unstable and vacillated from the Social-Democrats on the one side to the Cadets and Progressives on the other. Precisely for this reason we thought it necessary to establish closer relations with the Trudoviks in order to win them over from the Cadets and bring them more under our own influence. We arranged joint meetings with them for the purpose of discussing various aspects of Duma work, and sometimes we visited their fraction meetings and invited them to attend ours.

The government declaration of policy read in the Duma a few days after its opening, presented all the Duma fractions with an opportunity to declare their policies. The debate which follows the announcement of the government's policy is considered most important in all parliaments. These are the "great days" of parliamentary life, when the parties do not deal with individual bills, but formulate their criticism or approval of the government's policy as a whole. On the basis of their statements in this debate on general policy, the electorate can judge the entire activities of the parlia-

mentary parties. Consequently the contributions of the various parties to these debates are carefully prepared beforehand.

The government declaration in the Fourth Duma was read by Kokovtsev, the president of the Council of Ministers, on December 5, 1912. The ministerial box was full. The parade was completed by the full attendance of the Duma presidium, big crowds in the public boxes and galleries and the presence of foreign ambassadors with their suites, etc.

Kokovtsev started by praising the Third Duma which, in five years, had passed 2,500 laws of various kinds. This praiseworthy behaviour of the preceding Duma was held up as an example to the Fourth Duma, from which the government obviously expected a similar aptitude for the legislative farce. Then the president of the Council of Ministers proceeded to enumerate the reforms by which the government proposed to render the country happy and prosperous. In all spheres of administration the government promised to carry out "important measures of reorganisation": strengthening and improving the police administration, as a contribution towards the improvement of local government; fewer passport formalities, and the introduction of a stricter law concerning the press in the sphere of guaranteeing the "inviolability of the person"; assistance and material support for the church parish-schools and more careful school inspection, as far as popular education was concerned, etc. Kokovtsev concluded his speech by appealing to the Duma to discuss bills submitted to it "without party prejudice, all agreeing to work in harmony for the welfare of the fatherland, equally dear to us all." Translated into plain language this meant that the Duma was invited to accept all the proposals of the tsarist government and not to hinder it in any way.

The debate on the government's declaration began on December 7 and continued throughout several sittings. Our reply was read on the first day.

The Social-Democratic fraction had spent a great deal of time in framing its statement, having begun on this work as soon as the fraction was formed, before the Duma opened. It was a very important and responsible task because the statement had to explain the fundamental demands of the working class and to expound the programme of the vanguard of the workers – the Social-Democratic Party. It was quite natural that during the discussion of the draft reply, clashes should occur between the Menshevik and Bolshevik sections of the fraction. The fraction acted in the name of the Party

as a whole, but the contradictions in the programmes of the two sections were very acute. Under such conditions the framing of a united declaration of the fraction presented enormous difficulties and led to intense struggles between our Bolshevik group and the Menshevik deputies.

During the discussion the Bolshevik section of the fraction held firmly to the decisions of the Prague Conference which had defined the three "unabridged" demands of the working class (an eight-hour day, confiscation of landlords' estates, and a democratic republic). The Mensheviks, on the other hand, stood on the platform of the "August bloc" with its programme of freedom of working men's associations under the autocracy, cultural autonomy for the national minorities, etc.

We resolutely opposed the Mensheviks and insisted on including the Bolshevik demands in the declaration. Disputes arose not only over the main points, but over every phrase, every expression. In fact, two separate drafts were discussed and were finally merged into one text. In addition to the deputies, Party leaders of both sections took part in the drafting of the statement. Comrade Stalin, representing the Bolshevik Central Committee, was very active in pressing for the inclusion of our three demands,<sup>4</sup> while the Mensheviks mobilised Levitsky, Lezhnov and Mayevsky and many other publicists of *Luch*. After a long and stubborn struggle, we contrived at last to have all the basic demands of the Bolsheviks included in the declaration.

On the initiative of the Mensheviks, Malinovsky, the vice-chairman of the fraction, was appointed to read the declaration. This was a tactical move on the part of the Mensheviks, who thought that, in return for allowing a Bolshevik to read the declaration, the text of which had been decided in detail beforehand, they would be more than compensated in some other direction.

The declaration as read by Malinovsky did not completely correspond with the text as framed by the fraction. Although he was reading the written statement, Malinovsky omitted a passage of considerable length criticising the State Duma and demanding the sovereignty of the people.

When questioned with regard to this, Malinovsky replied that he himself did not know how it had occurred, that he failed to understand how he had omitted one of the most important points of the declaration. We accounted for it by the great agitation experienced by Malinovsky in making his first speech in the Duma. It appeared

that he had felt the antagonistic atmosphere of the Duma and had been affected by the conduct of the chairman and the hostile shouting of the Rights. This explanation seemed quite plausible to us then, the more so since we knew from our own experience the difficulties of speaking for the first time in the Duma.

The truth was learned subsequently when the role of Malinovsky as an agent-provocateur was revealed and established by documentary proof. Then it was discovered that he had previously shown the declaration to Byeletsky, the director of the police department, who in his turn had informed Makarov, the Minister of the Interior. Malinovsky was asked to introduce a number of amendments in order to soften the tone of the declaration, but being afraid of arousing suspicions as to his true role, he refused and finally consented to omit the passage on the "people's sovereignty," about which the police were particularly concerned.

While he was reading from the rostrum, Malinovsky took advantage of the fact that, just before he came to the passage in question, Rodzyanko uttered one of his usual reprimands. As if in a flurry, due to the chairman's reprimand, Malinovsky turned over the pages lying in front of him and omitted the whole passage. Malinovsky had also been instructed by the police to behave in a most provocative way to the chairman so as to be cut short by the latter. Malinovsky, however, did not manage this and Rodzyanko failed to understand his signal when, in reply to repeated warnings by the chairman, he shouted "Well, stop me!" The declaration, though with omissions, was read to the end.

The speech was fully reported in *Pravda*, which was permitted by law to publish the stenographic reports of the Duma sittings. In this way the text of the declaration was widely circulated among the masses to whom it was, in fact, addressed. Thus the demands incorporated in the declaration, its criticism of the Black Hundred regime and of the tsarist government, assisted and intensified the struggle of the workers against tsarism.

## CHAPTER V

**THE FIRST INTERPELLATION**

The Significance of Duma Interpellations – The Persecution of the Metal-Workers' Union – The First Interpellation of the Social-Democratic Fraction – My First Speech in the Duma – Speech in Support of "Urgency" – Strikes and Demonstrations in Support of the Interpellation – The Lock-out at Maxwell's Factory

The workers' deputies found that interpellations addressed to the government from the Duma rostrum were a most useful means of agitation. By asking various questions we succeeded in concentrating the attention of the masses on definite crimes committed by the tsarist government. These interpellations, based on current events, enabled us to use the rostrum in a Bolshevik manner, i.e. to carry on an agitation, over the heads of the Black Hundred majority, among the working class for solidarity and determination in the revolutionary onslaught on the existing regime. On these occasions the Bolsheviks trenchantly and straightforwardly exposed the sores and rottenness of tsarism and the bourgeoisie. In connection with every event which served as the occasion for an interpellation, we showed the worker that there was no reason for him to expect any improvement in his conditions and that the only path for the proletariat was the path of revolution.

"Is the minister aware of this and what steps does he propose to take?" – this concluding sentence of every interpellation had no importance for the workers' deputies. We were perfectly aware that every instance of oppression and police outrage was well known to the tsarist ministers with whose blessing and by whose orders it occurred, and we knew in advance that the ministers would do nothing to prevent such infractions of the law. Neither did we attach any importance to the replies given by the ministers who, in the most flagrant cases, tried to hide the facts behind a hedge of formalities. For us, the significance and purpose of each interpellation was that we proclaimed to the entire working class the truth about the nature of the autocratic regime and enabled the masses to draw the necessary conclusions.

Since the interpellation became a powerful weapon in the hands of the Social-Democratic fraction, it was only natural that the government, assisted by its faithful Black Hundred Duma, should take all possible measures to blunt it. The procedure by which interpellations in the Duma were made was exceedingly complicated and en-

abled the majority consisting of landlords and nobles to delay or shelve any interpellation which it deemed undesirable or dangerous.

The chief difficulty of our fraction was that an interpellation could only be introduced if it was signed by at least thirty-three Duma members. The signatures of our fourteen members, together with those of the ten Trudoviks, the party nearest to us in the Duma, did not give us the required number. We had to "borrow" signatures from the Cadets or the Progressives. The conditions under which the various parliamentary parties associated were such that individual members of the Cadets and Progressives sometimes added their signatures to our interpellations. But this only occurred rarely and very often they flatly refused to help us.

Even when the signatures had been secured, the matter was by no means settled. It was necessary to insist that the question be brought up for discussion, and this was not in the interests of the Duma chairman, Rodzyanko, gentleman-in-waiting to his imperial majesty. One method of delaying an interpellation was to deny its urgency. Before deciding whether or not the question itself should be allowed, the Duma first discussed whether it should be treated as urgent. The Duma majority decided against nearly all the questions of the Social-Democratic fraction and turned them over to the "interpellation commission" where they remained for several months.

This was a regular method of shelving a question. It was reckoned that if it remained long enough in the commission the point in question would lose its actuality and therefore would not create the effect in the country which it had been calculated to produce.

However, we were able, during the debate on urgency, to achieve the purpose for which the question had been framed. Speeches made in this debate actually dealt with the substance of the question. Under the guise of advocating the urgency of the question, the Social-Democratic deputies exposed and denounced the existing regime. In this connection a constant struggle proceeded with the Duma chairman, who had received special instructions from the government to hinder in every possible way the speeches made by the Lefts. The chairman carefully followed our speeches, trying to anticipate and prevent all digressions from the formal topic of urgency; while we, ignoring his calls to order, went ahead and said what we regarded as necessary. Most of these encounters ended in Rodzyanko or his vice-chairman losing patience and stopping the workers' deputies in the middle of their speeches.

Unceremonious attempts to deprive the Social-Democrats of the right to make interpellations had also been frequently made by the Black Hundreds in the Third Duma. We had to expect a similar procedure in the Fourth Duma, but this was yet another reason why we should fight harder and more persistently to ensure that the voices of the workers' deputies should be heard as far as possible all over the country. *Pravda* wrote:

We can predict with absolute certainty that, in the Fourth Duma, the Purishkeviches and the Khvostovs will try to prevent the interpellations of the workers' deputies. These gentry would like to gag all the real representatives of the people. We can foretell, however, with equal certainty, that now that the working class is awake and democracy is closing its ranks, the reactionary gentlemen will be less successful than ever in their efforts.

In their demands drawn up during the election campaign, the workers had advocated the introduction of a number of interpellations. From the commencement of our Duma work, workers' resolutions began to stream into our fraction requesting that the government be questioned on various matters. They suggested that interpellations should be framed on the faking of the Duma elections, the persecution of trade unions, the treatment of political prisoners in Kutomarskaya, Algachinskaya and other prisons, the results of the inquiry into the Lena goldfields shootings, the passing of the "insurance law," the case of the Social-Democratic deputies of the Second Duma, etc.

Immediately after it was formed, the Social-Democratic fraction began to collect material for interpellations, and to prepare for their introduction. In order to introduce an interpellation it was necessary to word it in the correct legal language and make the appropriate references to the various laws and government regulations constituting the official grounds for the interpellation. In this legal side of the work we were assisted by N. Krestinsky, N. D. Sokolov, A. Yuriev and other social-democratic lawyers who were living in St. Petersburg.

As soon as the opening formalities had been disposed of, such as the verification of credentials, the elections of the presidium, the government's declaration of policy and the debate on it, our fraction introduced its first interpellation. This dealt with the persecution of trade unions. The formal ground on which it was based was the re-



fusal to register a trade union in St. Petersburg, but in reality it covered the position of trade unions in general.

The formation and existence of trade unions was regulated by the law, or "provisional rules" as they were called, of March 4, 1906, which dealt with all associations and societies. This law really provided not for the formation of societies, but for their suppression. Trade unions were entirely at the mercy of any official, from the governor of the province or city down to the police inspector. But however much trade union rights were restricted legally, it was not enough for the authorities. The "provisional rules" were not regarded as binding by the police, who violated them most unceremoniously.

Unions were suppressed in rapid succession and on most incredible grounds. Immediately a trade union began to develop its work, it was suppressed. This persecution did not discourage the workers, but, on the contrary, led to an increase in the number of workers joining the unions. When a union was closed down, a new one was organised with the same membership and the same aims, but under another name. There were, however, a multitude of police obstacles to be overcome before a new society could be formed. The registration of unions was in the hands of the so-called "special boards" which rejected applications on the most absurd grounds. A union was never registered the first time it applied; only after a series of refusals, and if the patience and persistency of the founders were superhuman, was the new union finally granted the right to exist, or rather the right to a quick death at the discretion of the police.

According to the official statistics, 497 trade unions were suppressed and 604 were refused registration during the first five years (1906-11) after the law of March 4, 1906, came into force. In April 1908, the Social-Democratic fraction in the Third Duma introduced an interpellation dealing with the persecution of trade unions and quoting 144 cases of illegal suppressions of unions in various parts of Russia. The interpellation, of course, was not considered urgent and was turned over to a commission, from which it emerged a year later accompanied by a meaningless resolution which expressed the pious wish "that the Minister for the Interior should take the necessary steps so that the authorities concerned observe the provisional rules of March 4, 1906."

After 1911, as the labour movement developed, there was a corresponding growth in trade union activity. The number of unions

increased and police persecutions became more violent. During this period, the St. Petersburg union of metal workers, which played an important part in the progress of the labour movement, was subjected to particularly savage persecution. The metal workers' union was important, not only as an industrial organisation, but principally as a centre for all the progressive, revolutionary workers and as an organisation around which the Party forces were concentrated. It therefore displayed exceptional vitality and naturally incurred specially virulent attacks from the authorities.

This union was founded illegally during the 1905 revolution, and since 1906, when it was officially registered, it had survived several suppressions and resurrections under new names. Its name, which was at first the "Union of metal workers," changed successively to "trade union of workers in the metal industry," "trade union of workers engaged in enterprises of the metallurgical industry," etc. Each of these unions, although officially a new society, was, in fact, a continuation of the preceding one, from which it took over the union funds and membership. The police were well aware that this changing of names was a farce, but they could not take action against the union on this ground and were forced to wait for an appropriate moment to dissolve the "new" association.

In March 1912, the police made one of their periodical raids and the union was closed by the "special board" on several grounds, of which the principal were the possession of illegal literature and the organisation of strikes. This time the police had planned to delay the registration of a new society as long as possible, hoping that, in the meantime, the organisation would collapse. But they were wrong in their calculations. To preserve the union, the committee had taken advantage of statutes they had in reserve of a society which they had succeeded in registering in 1908, the registration still possessing legal force. Account books and membership books of this society, which never actually existed, were hastily fabricated and the liquidation meeting of the suppressed union decided to hand over all its property and funds to this society and recommended all its members to join it. In this way the metal workers' union continued for another five months until, in the autumn of 1912, after further police raids, it was again suppressed. The following three charges were officially made against the union: non-admittance of the police to inspect documents, organisation of strikes and granting of relief to the unemployed. The "special board" asserted that grants could only be made to union members and that only workers actu-

ally employed in a particular industry could be members of the union. Thus an unemployed worker ceased to be a member of the society. This ruling was a direct violation of the union statutes, framed in accordance with the law, and it supplied the employers with a very simple method of smashing the trade union organisation whenever they decided to do so. It was enough to declare a lock-out, and then, since there were no members of the union working, the union would have to close down.

The suppression of the society caused great indignation among the St. Petersburg workers, but in no way lessened their enthusiasm for trade union work. The liquidation commission elected at the general meeting continued the work of the old committee and endeavoured to prolong the business of liquidation until a new union had been organised. The police, on the other hand, hampered the work of the commission as much as possible. Contrary to all rules and law, they appeared at the meetings of the commission and finally prohibited it from meeting. The members of the society lodged a protest, but this was filed at the city governor's office and its consideration indefinitely postponed. The complaint was lodged on November 2; after waiting a month members of the liquidation commission went to the governor's office to inquire whether they were allowed to meet. The reply was: "this will be communicated to you by the police." After another two weeks they applied again and received the same reply and so it went on.

At the same time the police did everything they could to prevent the formation of a new society. The statutes of the new society were framed with due observance of all the requirements of the law, but this did not prevent the "special board" from refusing to register them. This decision of the "board," which was taken on October 6, but not communicated to the organisers until November 28, had no legal justification. It plainly revealed the real motive of the refusal – the fear that the union would again become the centre of the revolutionary struggle of the St. Petersburg metal workers.

The Social-Democratic fraction decided to use all these illegal proceedings, which plainly revealed the general policy of persecution of trade union organisations, as material for a new interpellation of the government. Besides, the interpellation referred to a number of illegal requirements enforced on organisers of new societies: they were prohibited to include amongst the objects of the society any measures calculated to further the intellectual and cultural development of the members; the right of unemployed members of

the society to continue in membership was not admitted; instead of monthly, yearly membership dues were to be introduced; the societies were not permitted to expel members "found guilty of dishonourable behaviour by a court of comrades," they were required to name in the statutes a charitable organisation to which the funds of the society were to be transferred in the event of its suppression, etc. These demands were very prejudicial to the independence of the unions and altogether paralysed their activities. They were enumerated in the interpellation, which continued as follows:

All the above demands were made by the "special board" not only on the metal workers' union, but on all trade unions which have recently submitted their statutes for registration. It is impossible to regard this action of the "board" as anything but a flagrantly illegal interference with the internal life of trade unions and an open violation of the law of March 4, 1906. On this ground we address the following interpellation to the Ministers of the Interior and Justice:

1. Is the Minister of the Interior aware that the St. Petersburg special city board refuses to register trade unions on grounds not provided in the law of March 4, 1906, and thereby violates this law?
2. Is the Minister of Justice aware that a representative of the public prosecutor, although a witness to repeated violations of the law by the St. Petersburg city special board, refrains from making any protest against these violations?
3. If the Ministers of the Interior and Justice are aware of these facts, what measures have they taken to enforce the law.?"

It was arranged that the question should be discussed in the Duma on December 14, on the eve of the adjournment for the Christmas recess. I was charged by the fraction to speak on the interpellation. Under the guise of defending the urgency of the question, I was to deal with the subject-matter of the interpellation itself and, after exposing the illegal character of the persecution of trade unions, show that the masses could only achieve any improvement in their conditions through revolutionary struggle. Such was the usual content and trend of speeches delivered by the workers' deputies.

This was to be my "maiden" speech in the Duma. To the reactionary majority of the latter our speeches were intolerable. The straightforwardness and bluntness and sharpness of the workers' deputies made the Black Hundred "diehards" mad with rage. This was specially apparent when our speeches touched on the conditions of the St. Petersburg workers. The steady growth of the revolutionary movement among the St. Petersburg workers made itself felt even within the Taurida Palace and our appeal to the workers to intensify their attack was another reminder for the faithful defenders of tsarism that, sooner or later, the movement would sweep away that tsarist stronghold and all that it supported.

To confuse and frighten a workers' deputy, to cut short his speech, such were the tactics of the Duma majority, especially on his first attempt to speak. The majority and the chairman, who carried out their will, strove to make the first speech of a workers' deputy his last; they tried to make him lose his nerve and so remain voiceless, like so many members of the Duma majority who sat in the Taurida Palace throughout the whole of the Fourth Duma without once opening their mouths. They were so cowed by the Duma atmosphere that force would have been needed to drag them to the rostrum.

The nervousness to which every workers' deputy was subject when making his first speech in the Duma was unique in his experience. When I mounted the rostrum I felt very keenly the responsibility which rested on a workers' representative. A speech in the Duma did not resemble in any way those speeches which I had to deliver at various illegal and legal meetings of workers. Here, we, the representatives of the workers, stood face to face with the enemy, the age-long oppressors of the working class. We had to express directly and openly, without subterfuges or parliamentary tricks, all that the masses were thinking, to proclaim their needs and to hurl their accusations at the representatives of the existing regime.

Every word spoken by a workers' deputy was listened to, not only in the Duma hall, but by the millions of the Russian proletarians, who regarded us as the defenders of their interests. Our speeches and appeals delivered in the Duma echoed the revolutionary sentiments of the workers and strengthened them in their struggle against their enemies. From the floor of the Duma we had to show the straining of the will of the working class, to demonstrate the force which the Russian proletariat had accumulated during long years.

Each of us experienced great difficulty when making his first speech in this home of tsarist autocracy. It was a great strain to talk down the howling of the Black Hundreds, to fight against the continual interruptions of the chairman and, having described the political and economic enslavement of the working class, to challenge its oppressors.

The immunity of deputies and "freedom of speech" in the Duma were only tsarist lies. It was perfectly plain to us that the government was merely waiting for a suitable pretext to deal summarily with the workers' deputies. The case of the Social-Democratic members of the Second Duma, who were sent to penal settlements in a body, was still fresh in our minds. "Some leave the Duma rostrum to become ministers, others, workers' deputies, to become convicts." These words of Lenin described very exactly the possible fate of workers' deputies. But the greater the menace, the more difficulties we had to overcome, the more vigorous our speeches became. The persecutions suffered by the deputies had a radicalising effect on the workers and stiffened them in the revolutionary struggle.

At first my speech was listened to in rapt attention by the entire house. It was an evening sitting and the great hall of the Taurida Palace was flooded with light. The ministerial box was occupied by members of the government, another box next to the tribune was filled with representatives of the press. The public galleries were crowded. Wives of high officials peered at me through their lorgnettes anxious to see how a locksmith would behave himself and what he would say in the Duma. On the other side, holding their breath and trying to catch every word, a handful of workers, who had managed to obtain tickets, were listening to the speech of their deputy.

The portly figure of Rodzyanko towered on the chairman's seat. He kept his bell ready and concentrated all his attention on my speech in order not to let slip any opportunity of interrupting me.

I was not allowed to conclude my speech, which was cut down by the chairman as soon as I touched on the general conditions of the working class and the persecutions to which it was subject on the part of the government.

Both sides of the house applauded as I left the rostrum; it was genuine approval of my speech from the Left, whereas the Right and centre were congratulating Rodzyanko on keeping a workers' deputy in order.

Our interpellation concerning the persecution of trade unions was of course voted down by the Black Hundred majority. The same fate befell the second interpellation of the Social-Democratic fraction. This dealt with the non-authorisation of meetings and the elections of the insurance commissions; it was discussed at the same Duma sitting on December 14. In both cases the Duma rejected the motion for urgency and the interpellations were sent to the interpellation commission, where they were shelved. The working class could expect no other decision from this Duma of landlords and nobles. The aim of our interpellations was to demonstrate and expose the real nature of the existing regime.

This demonstration arranged by the Social-Democratic fraction inside the Black Hundred Duma was supported and strengthened by the action of the St. Petersburg workers, who declared a one-day strike on the same day. While we were speaking from the Duma rostrum about the latest example of tsarist oppression, the workers deserted the factories and works and, at hastily summoned meetings, carried resolutions of protest.

The one-day strike on December 14 was well organised and prepared. Examples of the persecution of trade unions, such as the prohibition of meetings called to deal with insurance questions, appeared daily in *Pravda*; the paper also dealt with the "appointment" of "workers'" representatives to the insurance commissions and with the actual working of the abortive government insurance law. These articles were so worded that, although the censor could not object to them, the advanced workers could read between the lines an appeal to organise demonstrations on the day that our interpellations were discussed in the Duma. Finally on December 13, the Bolsheviks, in a proclamation signed by the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, appealed for strike action to support the Social-Democratic fraction.

On the day that the proclamation was issued, meetings were held at a number of factories and resolutions were passed welcoming the Duma interpellations and promising support for the fraction. For example, the resolution passed at Pahl's factory stated: "By our strike we are supporting the interpellation of the Social-Democratic fraction in the Fourth State Duma." All the resolutions contained a determined protest against the persecution of trade unions and against the police control of the insurance commissions. The appeal to strike action met with an enthusiastic response, the workers of thirteen establishments immediately leaving work, and only insig-

nificant groups, or rather individual workers, mainly women, remained at work.

The strike did not end on December 14. The next morning other factories and works joined in, while those already out did not return. Factory after factory came out and in all the strike movement lasted for over a week. It is difficult to form a reliable estimate of the number of workers who participated, but it was certainly not fewer than 60,000, i.e. the number employed in the largest works in St. Petersburg. In addition, however, a number of small undertakings were involved: printing shops, repair shops, etc. This formidable protest strike of the St. Petersburg proletariat demonstrated the full solidarity of the masses with their deputies.

The strike was accompanied not only by the usual police repression, but also by a counter-offensive of the employers. The 3,000 workers employed at the Petrovskaya and Spasskaya factories, owned by Maxwell, found the following notice posted on the closed gates on December 15, the day after the one-day strike: "In view of the frequent strikes and the warning that has already been given to workers, the management is compelled to pay off all workers. The date when the paying-off will take place will be announced later." Large patrols of police officers and constables were stationed round the factories. The workers decided not to accept payment of their wages so as to delay the re-opening of the factory, as they knew that there were many orders to be fulfilled and that every idle day caused a great loss to the owners. During the first half of the day only a few foremen strike-breakers appeared to be paid and thereby ensured that they would be reinstated. After dinner the spirit of the workers gave way a little and a queue assembled before the office. The management were assisted throughout by the police, who shepherded the workers into the office. Inside, the manager of the factory himself was in command, with a list in his hand of all "rebellious elements." As the cashier paid off the workmen – in most cases they only drew fifty kopeks to one ruble, as provisions bought in the factory store were deducted from wages – the manager stamped the paybooks of those who were reinstated. Very many were refused. Trying to hit the "unreliables" as hard as possible, the management discharged whole families, husbands and wives, fathers and daughters, brothers and sisters.

This sifting of the workers, however, did not help the management much. On the following day, after a few hours' work, the reinstated workers all came out on strike demanding the re-engagement



of the dismissed workers. The police attempt to prevent the workers from leaving the factory failed and the workers dispersed, deriding and threatening the police.

In spite of arrests and a series of repressive measures, such as the eviction of those discharged from the factory-owned apartments, the workers did not give in. The stubborn fight against victimisation of the workers at Maxwell's factories gained the support of the rest of the St. Petersburg proletariat. At all factories and works collections were taken to relieve the victims of the lock-out and to support the strike.

Our Duma fraction was the centre and organiser of these collections. Daily we received funds collected not only at St. Petersburg factories, but also from the workers of other industrial centres (Moscow, Warsaw, Lodz, Riga, etc.). *Pravda* published a long list of factories and works at which collections were made. It demonstrated that the working class regarded the fight at Maxwell's factories not as an isolated phenomenon, but as a phase in the class war with the capitalists.

The members of the Social-Democratic fraction, the workers' deputies, were in the thick of the fight. We were in constant communication with the strikers, helped to formulate their demands, handed over the funds collected, negotiated with various governmental authorities, etc.

At both factories the strike lasted over a fortnight. In those days it was regarded as a very protracted strike and the workers were only able to hold out because of the moral and material assistance which they received from the whole of the St. Petersburg workers.

## CHAPTER VI

**THE CRACOW CONFERENCE**

The "Six" and the Bolshevik Central Committee – The Questionnaire of Lenin – How Connections with the Central Committee were kept up – The Cracow Conference – The most important Decisions of the Conference – Lenin's Suggestions and Directions – The Journey of the Deputies to the Provinces – The Mood of the Workers in the Provinces

The Social-Democratic fraction in the Fourth State Duma was an integral part of the Russian Social-Democratic Party. The fraction played an important part in the work of the Party, but it was only one of the Party organisations. Decisions and resolutions of Party congresses and conferences, bearing on the work of the Social-Democratic fractions in the previous Dumas, defined the fraction as an auxiliary organisation subordinated to the Party and to its Central Committee. This subordination within a strictly centralised system was the prerequisite of successful revolutionary work. Work in underground conditions was impossible unless we adopted this principle. It was only owing to such an organisational structure that our Party was able to overcome the difficulties of the transition period between the two Russian revolutions.

In the Menshevik camp this strict subordination to the directions of the centre was not recognised. In the preceding Dumas, the Menshevik members ignored and violated Party discipline, acting independently of the leading centres of the Party. They regarded the fraction as a super-party organisation and often set it in opposition to the Party centre. The same policy was followed by the Menshevik deputies in the Fourth Duma.

The Bolshevik deputies, on the contrary, were bound by close and indissoluble ties to the leading Party organisations. The entire election campaign to the Fourth Duma had been conducted under the guidance of and in accordance with the instructions of our Central Committee. From Cracow, where our Party headquarters abroad were located, thousands of threads stretched forth, uniting into a single web all our organisations engaged in the election campaign. In addition to issuing general instructions, the Central Committee played an active part in the selection of candidates at the workers' electoral colleges. Thus the Bolshevik deputies entered the Duma as the representatives not only of the local organisations, but of the Party as a whole.

The Duma elections and the entire activity of our “six” from its commencement were under the immediate guidance of Comrade Lenin. During the course of the elections he followed with extreme care the spirit of the workers, the illegal election meetings, directed the election propaganda of *Pravda*, etc. In article after article in that newspaper, he appealed to the workers to vote for the Bolsheviks against the wire-pulling Liquidators.

Immediately the elections were over and the workers’ deputies had arrived in St. Petersburg, Lenin took up the question of the organisation of the fraction, interested himself in each individual deputy, summed up the results of the campaign, investigated the circumstances under which the elections had taken place and examined the instructions given to the deputies by the voters.

A special questionnaire was sent out from Cracow to all deputies elected from workers’ electoral colleges. Nineteen points of this questionnaire contained detailed questions on the course of the election campaign and on the deputies themselves. The questionnaire dealt very fully with the degree of workers’ participation in the elections, the causes of inadequate attendance at meetings, the prevalence of boycottist sentiments, the distribution of election literature, the methods of drawing up lists of candidates, the debates at meetings, the personnel of the delegates, the activity of other parties, repressive measures applied during the elections, etc. All stages of the elections were covered, from the election of delegates to the election of deputies; at the same time relations with the electors of the other electoral colleges, especially the peasants, were investigated. Other questions dealt with various phases of Party work – the organisation of illegal meetings, the circulation of our newspaper and underground publications, the degrees of influence exercised by Bolsheviks and Liquidators and similar questions.

Lenin requested every deputy not to confine himself to formal answers, but to give a coherent account of the campaign in his district and to describe everything that occurred at the elections. “These questions should in no way be discussed officially with the fraction – that would result only in red tape and squabbles; the deputies should answer themselves and as quickly as possible,” wrote Lenin.

As the activity of the fraction developed the connection of our “six” with the Central Committee and above all, with Lenin, became closer. Material, information, etc., was sent to Cracow, and from Cracow the Bolshevik deputies received literature, theses for

speeches, instructions on separate questions which arose in the course of their work. These contacts were maintained through letters in code and through Party members who crossed the frontier illegally and by every other possible means. Every opportunity was used and of course everything was done in strict secrecy. Names were never mentioned in correspondence; instead numbers agreed on beforehand or nicknames were used. I was referred to as No. 1, Malinovsky as No. 3, Petrovsky as No. 6, Samoylov as No. 7, Sverdlov was called Audrey, Stalin Vassily, etc. These nicknames and numbers were changed whenever it was suspected that the secret police had guessed their identity.

As we can see now from the material in the archives, the secret police in its turn gave us nicknames which varied in different localities.

The "Black Cabinet" (a secret police department for opening and examining letters) at the General Post Office read all letters addressed to Social-Democratic deputies. Therefore we rarely used the post, or if we did we arranged for letters to be sent to other addresses.

The secret police obtained their most important information from agents-provocateurs. We were, of course, aware that we were surrounded by spies, but it was difficult to discover them. Therefore the strictest secrecy was maintained and a system of conspiracy pervaded everything from the top to the bottom.

Every violation of the system of conspiracy was in itself a ground for suspicion, and made us wonder whether a police scheme was being hatched. I remember one characteristic case. Kiselyov, a Party member employed at the Putilov works, once sent me a letter by post referring to a question to be decided by the St. Petersburg Committee. The fact that the letter was sent in the ordinary way by post and without using any code aroused in me the suspicion that the author was connected with the secret police. I reported the matter to the St. Petersburg Committee and the fraction and it was decided to watch Kiselyov and to be careful in our relations with him. Subsequently our suspicions proved to be well-founded, for Kiselyov turned out to be an agent-provocateur.

We were not always successful in detecting such police agents before harm was done, for they in their turn observed strict secrecy and were very cautious. Yet it can be said that, however well organised the tsarist police were and however well informed they may have been, our relations with Party organisations and, in particular,

with the Central Committee were concealed by an efficient technique of conspiracy.

Correspondence and communications through third persons did not, however, enable us to discuss details of our plan of work or to deal fully with questions of our activity both inside and outside the Duma. More direct contact was required to use the experience and to learn the opinions of the workers' deputies, around whom Party work within Russia was centred, the more so since the convocation of regular Party congresses in illegal conditions presented enormous difficulties.

As I have already mentioned, the calling of a conference of the Central Committee and the Bolshevik deputies somewhere abroad had been mooted before the opening of the Duma. It was proposed that this conference should outline a plan on which the whole of the activity of the Duma fraction should be based. But the conference had a much wider importance, it had to deal also with the tasks of the Bolsheviks in the new period of growing revolutionary activity among the workers and with the consequent developments within the Social-Democratic Party. As the result of its deliberations and decisions, it became one of the outstanding events in the history of our Party and of the revolutionary struggle.

The convocation of the conference, which was to be held at Cracow in Galicia, coincided with the Christmas recess of the Duma. The Bolshevik deputies were unable to leave St. Petersburg at once owing to the strike and lock-out at Maxwell's factories. Only after the strikers' maintenance funds had been organised and all workers' organisations mobilised to help, were we able to go to Cracow.

The Cracow Conference sat from December 28, 1912, to January 1, 1913. For purposes of camouflage it was called the February Conference and figured as such in the press and in Party literature. Lenin was in the chair and in addition to the deputies the following were present: Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya, G. Zinoviev, A. Troyanovsky, Valentina Nikolayevna Lobova, E. Rozmirovich and a few other comrades, delegates from big working-class centres. Of the deputies, Petrovsky, Malinovsky, Shagov and myself were present.

A year had passed since the Prague Conference, January 1912. That year had been one of powerful development of the revolutionary movement, which found its expression in the growth of political and economic strikes, in mass demonstrations, in the creation and

consolidation of the workers' press, etc. Big developments had also occurred within the Party during this period; a sharp cleavage between the two sections of the Social-Democratic Party and an acute struggle between us and the Mensheviks. Liquidationist tendencies, clearly indicated in speeches and articles, were dominant among the Mensheviks.

The division between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks was spreading throughout the whole labour movement and everywhere the revolutionary policy of the Bolsheviks was gaining ground. The elections to the State Duma, which had given us a decisive victory in the workers' electoral colleges, were most instructive in this respect. They demonstrated the enormous influence that the Bolsheviks exercised over the masses and that the working class was following the Bolshevik path in its revolutionary struggle.

The first month of the work of the Duma fraction showed that the workers' deputies were following a correct policy. At the same time, it became clear that the Mensheviks were conducting, and would in future continue to conduct, a stubborn struggle against the workers' deputies, who opposed their revolutionary tactics to those of the majority of the fraction. From the point of view of the interests of the working class the Mensheviks, in the first Duma session, contrived to commit many errors. These errors, harmful to the revolutionary movement, had to be definitely condemned.

These were the questions dealt with at the Cracow Conference. On these matters of great revolutionary importance, the conference had to give directions for the future activity of the Party. After several days' work, a number of decisions were taken which solved many practical problems, gave an estimate of the political situation in Russia and defined the policy of the working class.

The Cracow Conference, recognising the extreme importance of unity, emphasised that unity was possible only subject to the condition that the secret illegal organisation was acknowledged. The union must take place "from below – in the shop committees, district groups, etc. – with the workers themselves checking in fact whether the illegal organisation is being recognised and whether the revolutionary struggle is being readily supported and revolutionary tactics adopted."<sup>5</sup>

This resolution stressed once again the breach between us and the Mensheviks and the necessity for a persistent struggle against the corrupting influence of the Liquidators on the workers. Another resolution stated: "The only true type of organisation in the present

period is an illegal Party composed of nuclei each surrounded by a network of legal and semi-legal societies. The illegal nuclei must be organisationally adapted to the local everyday conditions." The chief task was stated to be the setting up at factories and works of illegal Party Committees with one leading organisation at each centre.

The conference recognised that the best type of organisation was that which prevailed at St. Petersburg. The St. Petersburg Committee was composed of delegates elected by the districts and of co-opted members, which resulted in a very flexible organisation, in close touch with the nuclei, and at the same time well concealed from the secret police. It was also recommended that regional centres should be organised and contact maintained with the local groups on the one hand and the Central Committee on the other by a system of delegates. The resolution on organisation established a harmonious system firmly welded from the bottom to the top.

One of the crucial questions at the conference was the report of our Duma fraction. The work of the fraction was subjected to careful and minute discussion. During the first month of the Duma, the fraction had had to take a number of decisions on important matters. The admittance of Jagello to the fraction, the declaration and the first interpellations were points which enabled the conference to judge the activity of the Duma fraction and to note the mistakes committed by the Menshevik majority.

1. The conference notes that, in spite of unparalleled persecutions and governmental interference in the elections, in spite of the Black-Hundred-Liberal bloc against the Social Democrats, which was definitely formed in many districts, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party achieved great victories in the elections to the Fourth Duma. Nearly everywhere there was an increase in the number of votes received by the Social Democrats in the second city electoral colleges, which are being wrested from the hands of the Liberals. In the workers' electoral colleges, which are the most important for our party, the R.S.D.L.P. enjoys undivided rule. By electing only Bolsheviks as deputies from the workers' electoral colleges, the working class has unanimously declared its unswerving loyalty to the old Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and its revolutionary traditions.

2. The conference welcomes the energetic work of the Social-Democratic deputies in the Fourth Duma as expressed in the introduction of interpellations and in the declaration which, in the main, defined correctly the basic principles of Social Democracy.
3. Recognising, in accordance with Party tradition, that the only correct policy is for the Duma Social-Democratic fraction to be subordinated to the Party as a whole, as represented by its central organisations, the conference considers that, in the interests of the political education of the working class and to ensure the maintenance of a correct Party policy, it is necessary to follow every step of the fraction and thus establish Party control over its work.

The conference resolutely condemned various actions of the Mensheviks which were not in accordance with the general policy of the Party. By accepting Jagello into the fraction, thereby indirectly approving the secessionist activity of the Bund, the Mensheviks, in the opinion of the conference, accentuated the split among the Polish workers and delayed the achievement of the unity of the entire Party. In the course of a Duma speech, A. I. Chkhenkeli, a Menshevik, under the pretext of "creating the necessary institutions for the free development of each nationality," spoke in favour of organisationally distinct national Social-Democratic parties within Russia. The conference strongly condemned this speech, which was delivered in the name of the fraction, as a direct violation of the Party programme. "Concessions to nationalist tendencies, even in such a disguised fashion, are inadmissible in a proletarian party." Finally, the fraction, the conference pointed out, had neglected its duties by voting for the Progressive motion on the ministerial declaration instead of submitting its own.

Although the resolution on the Duma Social-Democratic fraction contained nine points, only six were published in the Party press because the other three dealt with matters which it was inadvisable to make public. Owing to the loss of all documents referring to the Cracow Conference, these three points have not yet been reproduced, and it would be very difficult to quote them from memory after a lapse of fifteen years. They referred to the work outside the Duma of the Bolshevik "six" to whom the conference delegated many important tasks in connection with illegal Party work. The



conference also dealt with the question of co-opting the Bolshevik deputies on to the Central Committee.

During our stay in Cracow, the work of the "six" was discussed in general and in detail in our conversations with Lenin and other members of our foreign centre.

The workers' deputies, said V. I. Lenin, must use the Duma for agitation and help to develop the revolutionary movement by exposing both the tsarist government and the hypocrisy of the so-called liberal parties. The workers' deputies must be heard by the entire working class of Russia. But activity in the Duma was only a part of the work of the fraction; as an integral part of the Party the Bolshevik "six" must take part in the vast work to be done outside of the Duma. The organisation and guidance of Party groups and activity in the Party press and in the trade unions were among the important duties of the workers' deputies and demanded from them continual work and effort.

The workers' deputies must remain in touch with the masses and all working-class organisations, legal and illegal, must regard the Duma Bolsheviks as the leaders and organisers of the revolutionary struggle. Lenin constantly stressed these points in conversation with us.

On the recommendation of Comrade Lenin himself I was charged with the duty of publishing *Pravda*. Lenin told me that being the deputy for St. Petersburg, the representative of the St. Petersburg workers, I must take on that task. *Pravda* pursued not only educational and propagandist aims, but it was also the most important centre for organisation. He emphasised the point that my duty was to work there.

We returned from Cracow armed with concrete practical instructions. The general policy to be followed by the "six" was clearly outlined and also the details as to who was to speak on various questions, the material that should be prepared, the immediate work to be done outside the Duma, etc. Coming, as we did, from an extremely complicated and hostile environment, this direct exchange of ideas with the leading members of the Party and above all with Lenin was of the utmost importance for us.

Lenin approached each deputy individually and succeeded in reinforcing in each of us the will to conduct an intense and sustained struggle. On the other hand, our participation in the work of the conference played a considerable part in determining the decisions reached. We were thoroughly acquainted with the sentiments

of the masses and our contributions to the discussions enabled the conference to grasp the attitude of the workers and to draw the necessary conclusions.

On their return from Cracow, all the workers' deputies, taking advantage of the Duma recess, toured the constituencies from which they were elected. These journeys were undertaken in order to give an account of the first Duma session and to increase the activity of the local illegal nuclei, thus carrying out the decisions of the Cracow Conference.

Such tours, which were undertaken between the Duma sessions and sometimes in the middle of a session, did much to stir up the activity of the local working-class movement. The deputies established new Party contacts and renewed old ones, organised new Party nuclei and did a great deal of agitation and propaganda, at the same time receiving recommendations and instructions from the workers of their district. An instruction which was given to all the Social-Democratic deputies was that they should visit their districts as often as possible and keep generally in close contact with their constituencies.

It must be admitted that the workers' deputies did this. Each one of us received daily a large volume of correspondence, which supplied detailed information of what was taking place and in which various recommendations and demands were expressed. All this served as material for our Duma work, was worked up and summarised in questions to the government and dealt with in our speeches on government bills, etc.

Still more material was gathered on the personal trips of the deputies, which were a continual source of anxiety for the tsarist secret police. The police were unable to prevent the deputies from making these tours, since parliamentary immunity still existed for the workers' deputies, but they seized the occasion to watch all those whom the deputies consulted. Before the Duma session terminated, the police department used to send orders to all governors and heads of secret police departments to watch carefully for the arrival of the revolutionary deputies "into the provinces entrusted to their care." Our distinguishing characteristics were enumerated and our photographs attached. Then at the railway station, the workers' deputy would be met by an escort of "pea-coloured overcoats" (as the spies were called) and shadowed wherever he went.

To make doubly sure that the deputy should not be lost sight of, the St. Petersburg secret police would often arrange for one of its

men to accompany the deputy to his destination until the local spies took up their work. The St. Petersburg spy delivered the deputy to the provincial spy against a receipt, as if he were handing over some inanimate object. Nevertheless we often caused some confusion by escaping their notice "in an unknown direction." The police could not always discover when we were leaving and, needless to say, we endeavoured to do so secretly, going to the station from anywhere but where we lived.

In this case the police reprimanded the house porters and door-keepers for not letting them know of our departure, while the porters protested in self-justification that the deputies had not informed them of their departure, had not presented passports to be endorsed and had not fulfilled other formalities.

The shadowing of workers' deputies was so persistent and open that members of our fraction sometimes lost their patience and wired to the minister demanding that they should be left in peace. It was never stopped on that account, the only result of the complaint being that the spies were exhorted to carry out their work more efficiently and to try "not to irritate" the deputies. On the other hand the local authorities, following the instructions of the police department, made use of every pretext to cut short the deputy's tour "on legal grounds" or if luck favoured them to find material for his prosecution.

I believe it was to Comrade Muranov that the following incident occurred whilst he was in one of the Volga towns. He was in his apartment when the police arrived, arrested the landlord and then started to search the house. Muranov's case was lying on the table, and when a police officer wanted to open it he protested, stating that he was a deputy, and produced his documents from the case. The officer was forced to retire, but later his superiors reprimanded him severely. He was told that so long as Muranov had not produced his papers, which were in the case lying some distance from him, the officer conducting the search should not have "believed" that Muranov was a deputy and therefore should not have allowed him to approach the case "which might have belonged to some other person." Then he should have seized the occasion to examine the contents of the case in the hopes of finding some evidence which might serve for a charge against the deputy, or, perhaps, against the whole Social-Democratic fraction.

Not daring to attack us openly because of their fear of revolutionary outbreaks of protest, the police confined themselves to strict

surveillance of our movements. On the other hand, all those who had even the remotest relations with the workers' deputies were subjected to cruel persecution. The position of a workers' deputy was an exceptionally hard one; the least carelessness on his part was liable to cause, not only the imprisonment of individual comrades, but also the destruction of whole organisations. Therefore when setting out on our provincial tours (and more so in St. Petersburg itself) we acted as secretly as possible and tried to avoid the spies who were shadowing us. In the small provincial towns where all comings and goings can be clearly observed and where the arrival of a member of the State Duma was an important event, it was by no means easy to preserve secrecy. Yet the members of our fraction worked hard in the provinces and greatly strengthened the activity of local legal and illegal organisations. The tours of the workers' deputies usually resulted in a development of the strike movement, in the creation of new party nuclei, in an increase of subscribers to *Pravda* and generally in the intensification of revolutionary activity.

On their return from the first trip to the provinces in January 1913, all the workers' deputies remarked on the great growth of revolutionary feeling among the workers. The period of apathy, typical of the preceding years of reaction, was finally left behind. Throughout the working class there was evident a will to struggle, a striving for organised action and a lively interest in the political life of the country.

My comrades of the fraction were unable to give their reports at big legal meetings – all such meetings were invariably prohibited by the governors; they had to speak illegally or organise short meetings at factories without police authorisation.

On the whole, the workers approved of the first month's work in the Duma. They noted with satisfaction that our declaration contained the "unabridged" demands of the working class; the speeches made on the occasion of our first interpellation were also endorsed. The workers asked many questions about the Duma and were very interested in the details of Duma work. They were also curious about the enemy camp, the Black Hundred "die-hards," of whom Purishkevich and Markov had acquired special notoriety.

The general attitude to the Duma, however, was clear and definite: the workers expected no ameliorations from it; they fully realised that the proletariat could only obtain satisfaction by a persistent revolutionary struggle. During their journeys, the Bolshevik members were able to verify the correctness of the decisions of the Cra-

cow Conference in regard to Liquidationist tendencies and Party unity. The Liquidationist tendency, which arose among and was chiefly supported by the intellectual publicists, was completely foreign to the workers and was altogether absent from many districts. Consequently in many Social- Democratic groups, the acute controversy waged between *Pravda* and *Luch* was not understood. It was apparent that to achieve unity, it was not diplomatic negotiations at the top that were necessary but the participation of all members of the local nuclei in underground activities and the cessation of struggle against such activities. By this means Party unity would become a fact.

This opinion fully corresponded to the policy laid down by the Cracow Conference.



**THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN  
ST. PETERSBURG IN 1913**





## CHAPTER VII

**THE OKHTA EXPLOSION**

The Commencement of 1913 – Explosion at the Okhta Powder Works – The Cause of the Explosion – Interpellation in the Duma – Reply to the Explanations of the War Minister

The St. Petersburg proletariat entered the new year, 1913, in the stormy atmosphere which was the aftermath of the recent strikes and demonstrations in connection with the first interpellations of the Social-Democratic fraction in the Duma. The workers at Maxwell's factories had just returned to work after fighting the lock-out for over a fortnight, with the assistance of the whole of the St. Petersburg workers.

The first political strike of the new year – on January 9 – was supported in St. Petersburg with exceptional enthusiasm. About eighty thousand workers downed tools on the anniversary of "Bloody Sunday." On the previous day the whole of the police force had been mobilised in anticipation of demonstrations and many arrests made in working-class districts. Strong detachments of both mounted and foot police guarded all bridges and avenues leading to the centre of the city, and police reserves were concealed in courtyards behind closed gates. Groups of workers appearing in the Nevsky Prospect were forced back into side streets by the police.

At all the St. Petersburg factories, from the biggest to the smallest, the workers, immediately after arriving in the morning, left work and poured into the streets singing revolutionary songs. In the Vyborg, Neva and some other districts, red flags, edged with black mourning, were carried through the streets.

From the morning onwards, long processions of workers wended their way towards the Preobrazhensky Cemetery to the graves of the victims of January 9. Throughout the day, a strong police detachment stationed at the cemetery was driving the workers away.

At numerous factory meetings held on the same day, collections were taken for a fund to build a memorial to the 9th January victims and to assist workers prosecuted by the police. At some works it was decided to subscribe one day's wages and all the money collected was sent to our Duma fraction. Numerous resolutions, reflecting the political demands of the working class for civil rights, freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of the press, etc., were passed at the meetings and sent in to the fraction. Recommen-

dations were carried concerning the unity of the movement. Other resolutions protested against the so-called "52 points," i.e. the list of 52 localities where political exiles were prohibited from residing, the appointment of representatives to the insurance commissions by the authorities instead of their election by the workers, the persecution of trade unions, etc.

The imposing strike and demonstration on January 9 showed that the struggle of the working class was again in the ascendant. Revolutionary sentiments increased from month to month amongst the St. Petersburg workers, and such was the case too all over Russia.

Such were the conditions under which the Fourth State Duma resumed its work on January 21. The deputies – landowners and officials – were in no hurry to begin their legislative work, only a small proportion of the members having turned up at the first sitting. The session commenced drowsily and the first business was the long-drawn-out question of the confirmation of the elections. Things became lively only when our fraction introduced new interpellations concerning the explosion at the Okhta powder works, the torturing of political prisoners, and the lock-out in the textile industry.

The explosion at Okhta, where explosives were manufactured for the War Office, took place at the end of December. It occurred in the afternoon and by the evening rumours were spreading throughout the city as to the large number of victims.

Five men perished under the wreckage, among which their bodies were later discovered, totally disfigured. The charred body of one worker was only identified by a rag of material from his suit. Over fifty were seriously wounded, the majority being women, because in the pipe workshop where the explosion took place mainly women were employed.

The explosion caused a mad panic at the works and it was only by chance that more victims were not involved. No medical help was at hand and the doctor who arrived an hour later was unable to do anything.

The next morning I went to the works to ascertain directly the extent and causes of the explosion. The official in charge refused to give me a pass to the scene of the explosion. I went to the chief of the works, General Somov, who also declined, stating that only the Artillery Board could issue passes. It was obvious that the management was afraid to admit deputies to the works and wanted to prevent unwelcome disclosures.

According to General Somov's explanation, the explosion was due to a mere accident. "Such accidents do happen, and may always happen, and I, for one," he said, "never enter the works without making the sign of the cross." Apparently this was the only measure of precaution that the management took to avert accidents in a highly dangerous industry.

I failed to reach the scene of the actual disaster, but the little I saw while at the works revealed its enormous extent.

I had conversations with many of the workers. They were still suffering from nervous shock and panic, and seemed to be expecting another explosion any minute. Before leaving home in the morning, some workers had put on clean underwear, being firmly convinced that they were going to face death. I was asked to insist on obtaining a detailed investigation of the causes of the explosion, to demand from the War Office an improvement in the working conditions and safety measures and to organise help for the victims and their relatives.

The victims of the explosion were buried on December 20. As early as 9 a.m. thousands of workers began to stream towards the church where the bodies were lying. Many workers, besides those from the Okhta works, followed the coffins. At one of the neighbouring plants work was completely stopped because all the workers had decided to attend the funeral. In all over 10,000 people took part in the funeral procession. Scores of wreaths were carried in front, including one from the Duma Social-Democratic fraction bearing the inscription: "To the victims of capital." All the Social-Democratic deputies who were present in St. Petersburg attended the funeral.

The St. Petersburg workers turned the funeral into a formidable demonstration against the capitalist regime which was constantly claiming new victims from their ranks. Every class-conscious worker became more determined on the necessity of an incessant, stubborn struggle.

The War Office opened an inquiry into the explosion in order to present a "report to the Emperor." The results of such an inquiry were known in advance: it would be drawn up by clever officials and would lay the blame entirely upon "divine providence." The Duma Social-Democratic fraction conducted its own investigation. By questioning the Okhta workers and collecting other material, we were able to bring to light the true causes and the attendant circumstances of the explosion.

The immediate cause was careless handling by one of the workers of a charged fuse-cap. According to the regulations not more than ten fuses were allowed to be kept on the premises, but there were, in fact, several thousands, and it was this which caused such a terrible explosion. This, however, was only the immediate cause; the explosion with its attendant roll of human victims was really due to the terrible conditions of work at the Okhta plant.

The manufacture of explosives, which is excessively dangerous work, requires highly skilled labour with correspondingly high rates of pay. Yet the works management, anxious to obtain cheap labour, engaged mainly unskilled labourers and women who came straight from the villages and were completely ignorant of that sort of work. For a continuous working-day of ten hours, a trifle was paid – 65 to 75 kopeks. The workers were little better than slaves. They were not given wage-books and were subjected to coarse abuse, fines, and arbitrary dismissal.

Every striving towards education was severely suppressed: it was considered better that they should indulge in drink rather than read the papers. Oppressed by fierce exploitation, dulled by long working-hours (the management used to force the workers to do eight or nine hours' overtime a day), the Okhta workers were naturally unable to display that degree of attention and caution which is required in the production of explosives.

To these circumstances must be added the very backward technical equipment of the works. The workshops were much too small for the work which had to be done, and a number of government commissions had recommended the thorough re-equipment of the plant and even its transfer to other premises. In such conditions explosions were bound to occur frequently. On January 3, 1913, only two weeks later, another explosion took place and more victims were added to the previous total.

Explosions and building disasters were customary phenomena in Russian industrial life. Capitalism, in its ruthless exploitation of the workers, was responsible for thousands of deaths in the various industries. In our Duma interpellation we had to cover the whole field as well as draw public attention to the terrible Okhta catastrophe. We had to describe from the Duma rostrum the conditions under which the Russian proletariat works, to reveal the extent to which it was being exploited and to strengthen its will for the revolutionary struggle.

The extraordinary circumstances of the case, the numerous victims and finally the danger of new explosions forced even the Duma majority to acknowledge the urgency of the interpellation. The motion for urgency was carried by the 134 votes of the Octobrists and the Centre against 127 votes of the Right.

The fate of this interpellation showed, however, that the recognition of the, urgency of a question by the Duma majority did not, by any means, ensure its treatment as urgent. The interpellation was decided upon by the Duma on January 25, 1913, but the answer in a written form was not given by the War Minister until the summer, six months later. The Duma members were then away on their summer vacation and another six months passed before the answer of the government could be discussed.

I was put up by the fraction as speaker for this debate. But, as might have been expected, the Duma majority remained true to itself and refrained from any action which might inconvenience the government. The Okhta explosion case was buried in the obscurity of Duma commissions and thus shared the fate of so many other of our fraction's interpellations.

## CHAPTER VIII

**THE LOCK-OUT IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY**

The Economic Causes of the Lock-out – The Lock-out at the Rossisskaya Mill – The Attitude of the Factory Inspectors – The Aid of the St. Petersburg Workers – The Interpellation Concerning the Lock-out – The Second Lock-out at Maxwell's Factory

The intensification of the struggle of the working class led to the consolidation and mobilisation of all the forces of the manufacturers and mill-owners. The rising tide of the labour movement frightened the capitalists. Fines, disciplinary punishments, arrests of the ringleaders – all these measures had been tried. Now the united capitalists brought into action a powerful long-range weapon, mass dismissals. The lock-outs threw thousands of workers on to the streets and threatened them with destitution and starvation.

The partial crisis through which the textile industry of Russia was passing at that time strengthened the hands of the mill-owners. From the beginning of January 1913, lock-outs became common at the textile factories in St. Petersburg, especially at the bigger firms.

The most protracted lock-out was that at the Rossisskaya cotton mill, where 1,200 workers were employed. It was obviously deliberately provoked by the management, which decided to discharge all trade unionists. Moreover, the employers wanted to get rid of old workers who had been at the factory for twenty to thirty years and replace them by younger men.

On January 21, thirty workers in the carding department were informed without any previous notice that their wages were reduced by 10 kopeks a day. The next morning the workers in this department declared a strike to maintain the old rates of pay. This was precisely what the management desired. That night, when the new shift arrived, the steam engine was stopped, the electric light extinguished, and the workers were told as they arrived that the factory was going to suspend work for an indefinite period and that all workers would be paid off. The provocative nature of the owners' action was obvious. The demands of the thirty workers concerned only amounted to three rubles a day, but on account of this, 1,200 workers who were not involved in the strike were doomed to unemployment and starvation.

Ignoring the provocation, the workers presented themselves for several days at the factory at the correct hour, but they were not allowed to enter. Two days later, a notice was posted on the gates

inviting the workers to attend at the office to be paid off. At first the workers refused, demanding two weeks' wages in compensation for dismissal for which the mass of the workers were in no way to blame. However, the owners found allies to assist them. The house-owners and tradesmen of the neighbourhood refused to continue supplying goods on credit until the workers paid off their old debts, which were rather large owing to the recent Christmas holidays. Under this pressure, the workers were forced to attend to be paid off. Each worker had about ten to twenty rubles to draw; the whole of this had to be paid to the local tradesmen, but in return they could obtain further credit and on a semi-starvation level pull through for a few more days.

From the early morning of the day of the lock-out, a nervous tension was apparent in the district around the mill. The teashops and inns, the "labour clubs" of that period, where workers met and discussed their affairs, were crowded with men who had passed sleepless nights in anticipation of the moment when they and their families would be faced with starvation.

Owing to their low wages, textile workers could barely make ends meet even when employed, and the first day of unemployment was the first day of severe hunger.

The more class-conscious workers, Social-Democrats and trade unionists, devoted their efforts to bringing about some sort of order and organised action. Several hundred copies of *Pravda* containing an appeal to the workers not to surrender were rushed to the spot for distribution. Attempts were made to arrange meetings to discuss the state of affairs at the mill, but the police dispersed all gatherings, however small.

When the first outburst of panic and despair caused by the lock-out had subsided, the mood of the workers underwent a change. The workers began to prepare for a long struggle, and in spite of the police a meeting of those locked out was called. It was decided that all workers locked out should keep in touch, that an appeal for help should be made to all St. Petersburg workers, a determined struggle waged against the use of alcohol during the lock-out, and that workers' educational societies should be requested to organise free lectures, etc. No man or woman was to approach the gates of the factory, and to plead for him or herself, or on behalf of groups of workers. When the factory was re-opened, no worker was to return unless all were reinstated.

Considering that the owners had broken the government factory regulations, the workers applied to the factory inspector, who, theoretically at any rate, was there to protect the interests of the workers. The conversation which took place in the office of the senior factory inspector for St. Petersburg showed very convincingly whose interests he really "protected."

The representatives of the textile union who went to the inspector to state their case were told by him: "I cannot conduct any negotiations with a trade union organisation. According to the law, I only have the right to discuss matters with the workers of the particular undertaking where the dispute has occurred."

"But we, too, are acting in accordance with the law," replied the delegation. "According to our statutes confirmed by the lawful authorities, the union has the right to negotiate concerning the needs of its members both with private persons and with the representatives of government institutions."

The conflict between these two contradictory "legal enactments" was solved by the happy chance that one of the dismissed workers happened to be among the representatives of the union. Therefore the factory inspector allowed the interview to proceed. The conversation lasted two hours with the inspector comfortably stretched out in his armchair, while the union delegates stood, cap in hand, before the "defender" of labour interests.

"As regards the police rough-handling the workers and beating up those who went to the factory," said the inspector, "you should complain to the Chief of the Police. It is no business of mine and I cannot help you."

But it appeared that neither could he interfere with the actions of the works management. He thought everything was perfectly in order. Workers were not entitled to receive a fortnight's wages in advance. His department had no power to stop the lock-out which the factory owners had decided among themselves. "You have got a bad case," was the inspector's parting shot.

The visit to the factory inspector showed once more by whom and for whom the laws of Russia were framed. The workers could only rely on themselves and on the comradely help of the St. Petersburg proletariat. And they obtained this help. The ready assistance given by the workers to the men and women affected by the lock-out – at about the same time over 2,000 men were dismissed in a similar provocative fashion in another large cotton mill – showed the strong solidarity uniting the working class. A struggle at one



factory was perfectly understood by the workers to be a struggle of the whole working class.

The lock-out at the textile factories raised a storm of indignation among all St. Petersburg workers. At some places agitation was conducted by anarchist elements, who called on the workers to retaliate by breaking machines, by arson and other terrorist methods. Social-Democrats vigorously opposed this propaganda which only promised new dangers for the working class. Such methods were always rejected by Social-Democrats as entirely useless and harmful to the labour movement. Fortunately only a handful of people supported the anarchists and we were soon able to overcome these tendencies.

The assistance given by the St. Petersburg proletariat to the textile workers assumed a different form. Collections in relief of the dismissed workers were soon started in all factories and workshops. The money collected was sent to the Duma Social-Democratic fraction, which arranged for its distribution in the correct way.

In the early days of the lock-out, the textile workers had applied to the Social-Democratic fraction with the demand that an interpellation be introduced into the Duma concerning the revolting treatment of thousands of workers by the employers. An emergency meeting of the fraction decided to draft the interpellation at once and to introduce it at the first opportunity. It was drafted and introduced in the beginning of February, but was not put down for discussion until March 1, almost six weeks after the beginning of the lock-out. The Duma majority purposely postponed the discussion of the question so as to allow the excitement of the workers to die down before it was taken.

Interpellations could be addressed to the government only on the ground of some infraction of the existing laws. A lock-out did not constitute such an infraction, since the law of the Russian Empire did not prohibit mass dismissals of workers. Therefore in order to formulate the interpellation in a legal fashion we had to make it a question of the failure of factory inspectors to carry out their duties. Behind this formal ground was the real substance – the exposure of the organised campaign of the capitalists against the working class and its trade union organisations.

The text of the interpellation opened with a general description of the lock-outs declared by the mill-owners. In conclusion, the fraction proposed that the Duma ask the Minister for Trade and Industry whether he was aware of the unlawful actions on the part of

factory inspectors and what he proposed to do "to induce these officials under his department to carry out their duties as imposed on them by law."

Although this interpellation was accepted by the Duma it fared no better than the other interpellations introduced by our fraction. On receiving the interpellations, the ministries concerned set in motion the entire bureaucratic machine of red tape, "making enquiries," "waiting for reports," etc. While the interpellation was thus being thickly covered with office dust, the acuteness of its subject-matter passed and it was only then that the minister fulfilled his formal duty and presented his "explanations."

The interpellation was answered, after six weeks' delay, by Litvinov-Falinsky, an official of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. This official was well known as the inspirer and executor of the whole labour policy of the tsarist government. His explanations excelled in open cynicism anything that had been said before by the tsarist ministers. Litvinov simply asserted that the state of affairs referred to in the interpellation did not exist; that there had been no reduction in wages in the carding department of the cotton mill, that there had been no lock-out and no unlawful actions on the part of factory inspectors. This answer was simply revolting even when judged by the standards that prevailed at that time. The Markovs, Purishkeviches and their colleagues on the extreme Right were delighted and applauded heartily, while mocking at the "lies of the Left."

The struggle at that cotton mill had hardly ended when a fresh lock-out occurred in the textile industry. This affected the workers at Maxwell's factories, where a bitter dispute had already taken place in December 1912. Here the owners' attack was even more blatant. As was the case in the previous dispute, the workers were summarily discharged for participating in a political strike (on the anniversary of the Lena shootings).

A meeting was held and the workers decided not to accept payment and dismissal but to reply by a strike, demanding the reinstatement of all workers previously employed at the factory: Incidentally additional demands were made referring to working conditions. Despite their privation, the workers fought with enthusiasm and, as before, relied on the support of the St. Petersburg proletariat.

The strikers asked me to organise the collection of relief funds and, during the first days of the strike, I published an appeal in *Pravda* addressed to all workers. The response was immediate and

satisfactory; collections were made at all factories. In the evening the money was brought to me and I handed it over to the strikers' representatives. The first day brought in 700 rubles, the second over 500, etc.

The lock-out and strike lasted for a whole month. When the factory reopened on May 2, all the workers were not reinstated, but the management did not succeed in carrying out its plan in full. Instead of the wage-reductions and longer hours announced when the lock-out was declared, the old rates were maintained. This constituted a victory for the workers, who had conducted the long struggle in an organised manner.

In the spring of 1913, further lock-outs were declared in the textile industry involving a number of mills. The system of lock-outs was applied by the mill-owners as long as the state of the market was against them. In the summer, with the gradual improvement of the textile market in view of the approaching Nijni-Novgorod fair, the lock-outs became no longer profitable to the employers. This led the workers, by a number of economic strikes, to improve their conditions of work and to gain higher rates of pay.

During the lock-outs of 1912-13, the St. Petersburg textile workers suffered many hardships, but despite a number of defeats great favourable results could be noted. The textile workers, the most backward of the proletariat, learned the great importance of organisation and solidarity. The suffering was not in vain, it played its part in preparing the workers and steeling them for future battles.

## CHAPTER IX

**THE STRIKE AT LESSNER'S FACTORY**

The Causes of the Strike – Strongin's Funeral – The Struggle of the Workers at Lessner's – Solidarity of the Workers – Three Months of Struggle – The Railway Repair Sheds

During the years immediately preceding the war there were several instances when the St. Petersburg workers gave evidence of close solidarity and organised power. But in this period of intense and heroic struggle the strike at Lessner's factory, which, lasted throughout the summer of 1913, was of special importance. Its cause, its duration and the vast sympathy it evoked among the masses make this strike one of the outstanding episodes of the labour movement of the pre-war years.

The strike at Lessner's cannot be classed either as purely political or as purely economic. It was one of those strikes which occur during a period of revolutionary upsurge. The only demand made by the workers – the removal of a foreman who had caused the death of one of their comrades – seemed at first sight comparatively insignificant, yet it was the cause of a long and stubborn fight such as could only arise under conditions when the working class faced the class of the capitalists in a general and open battle.

The strike at the "New Lessner" works arose in the following way. The foreman of one of the machine shops gave several hundred screw nuts to a worker, Strongin, to cut threads on them. In the course of the work several nuts were lost; they were either accidentally thrown into the rubbish heap or taken by mistake to another shop. Strongin informed the foreman, who, after shouting vile abuse at him, demanded the return of the nuts within two days "or else I shall sack you and mark your book 'for theft.'" Strongin was unable to find the nuts or to prove that he had not stolen them. The foreman's threat to sack him branded as a thief loomed before him as a disgrace that he could not endure. Strongin obtained permission to work late and during the night he went to an unfrequented part of the works and hanged himself on a staircase.

On the morning of April 23 the body was found by the watchman and, as the news spread through the works, all the workers left their benches and gathered round the dead body. The workers demanded that the management should at once investigate the matter. Instead of this, the management sent for the police, in whose presence Strongin's clothes were searched. In one of his pockets a letter was

found which, after reading it, the manager tried to conceal. The workers protested and insisted that the letter should be read immediately. It was addressed to his mates at the works and read as follows:

Comrades: I am not sure whether I should write to you. But I shall write.... The foreman accuses me of theft. Before I finish with life, I want to tell you this, comrades, I am innocent. This is vouched for by my conscience, my heart, my worker's honesty, but I cannot prove it. I cannot leave the works, branded as a thief by the foreman, so I have decided to end it all.... Good-bye, dear comrades and remember – I am innocent. Yakov Strongin.

The crowd, deeply shocked by the dying declaration of a comrade hounded to death by the management, stood spellbound for several minutes. Then voices were heard: "Hats off, comrades," and the revolutionary funeral march was sung in chorus. When the foreman, the murderer of Strongin, appeared, he was met with cries of "Judas," "Betrayer," "Hangman," "follow the coffin and never show yourself again at the works." All the workers accompanied the body to the mortuary.

Next morning on arriving at work they saw there the man who was responsible for Strongin's death. When the manager declared that the board of directors refused to dismiss the foreman, the workers at once decided to strike until the murderer was removed from the works. The factory closed and all the workers employed at the "New Lessner" went home determined not to return until their demand had been granted.

A huge demonstration took place at Strongin's funeral. The police and the employers, as is customary in such cases, did all they could to prevent a large attendance. The day and hour of the funeral were kept secret as long as possible; but on the day before the editors of *Pravda* managed to obtain this information. An announcement was published in the stop press column, but, as the paper did not reach the workers before they started work, only individual workers learned that the funeral was to take place at 9 a.m. Yet at that hour more than 1,000 men had gathered at the mortuary. Workers from the New Lessner were there in full force, as well as representatives from other factories. Wreaths were hurriedly obtained and, as there was no time to have them printed, inscriptions were written with chalk on black ribbons and with coal on white. Some of these ribbons were cut off by the police because of the revolutionary

nature of the inscriptions. Thousands of people accompanied Strongin's body to the entrance of the churchyard. There the procession was stopped by the mounted police, who only allowed the coffin and a few near relatives of the deceased to enter.

Malinovsky and I had arranged to attend the funeral as representatives of the Duma fraction, but the police in conjunction with the works management tricked us out of being present. At the factory office we were told that Strongin was to be buried at the Mitrofanyevskoye cemetery. When we found that this was incorrect, we rang up the factory and were again misdirected. After wandering for several hours on the wrong track, we finally reached the Preobrazhenskoye cemetery to find that the crowd had been dispersed by the police and the coffin had already been lowered into the ground. Many workers who had also been deceived in this way wrote to *Pravda* expressing their sympathy with the Lessner workers.

In reply to the strike, the management announced that all old workers were dismissed. At the same time, the bourgeois press published advertisements inviting applications for work at the factory. The strikers, however, stood firm and these strike-breaking announcements met with no response. The workers were exceptionally well organised. Realising that they could not hold out for long without assistance, they at once issued an appeal to all workers in St. Petersburg to help them in the struggle.

Soon afterwards, the workers at the other Lessner factory, "Old Lessner," came out in support of their comrades on strike. Now both the Lessner factories stood idle. The management was no longer able to recruit workers for the "New Lessner" under the pretence of accepting them for the "Old." Nor could it any longer even partially cope with its outstanding orders. Since the non-fulfilment of contracts usually entailed penalties, this threatened the owners with considerable loss.

Then the management attempted to get its orders completed at other factories, sending patterns, unfinished articles, and drawings. In spite of the measures adopted to conceal this manoeuvre, the strikers soon learned of it. They appealed to all St. Petersburg metal-workers to boycott all such work. The other workers responded unanimously and none of Lessner's work was executed at the other factories.

Every refusal to perform such blackleg work, every greeting received from other factories, encouraged the strikers and strengthened their hope of victory. Workers' contributions to the strike fund

had never been so plentiful and regular. At many places collections were made not merely on one occasion, but workers gave regularly a certain percentage of their wages. At one factory overtime was allowed to be worked on condition that half a day's wage was given to the Lessner Fund. Married workers at this factory also offered to feed temporarily at their homes the children of Lessner workers who were in special need.

During the struggle about 18,000 rubles were collected – the largest sum ever collected during a strike. All money was first sent to the Duma fraction, which then arranged for its distribution according to the strikers' needs. The strike became famous all over Russia and contributions reached us from some of the remotest towns, even from the outlying regions of Eastern Siberia. I was in charge of the fund and regularly acknowledged the receipt of all donations in *Pravda*, stating in detail the amount collected and the source.

The struggle at Lessner's factories was the most striking event in the working-class movement of 1913. The Party was intimately concerned in it, supporting the strikers in every way and spreading information about the strike among as many workers as possible. *Pravda* published daily reports on the course of the struggle and printed the strikers' appeals to other workers as well as their notes and letters.

All through the summer the strike went on. Early in June the police began to arrest the leaders, hoping in this way to break down the workers' resistance. A number of those arrested were sent out of St. Petersburg and prohibited from residing in fifty-two specified localities. Simultaneously the management of the works sent personal letters to the workers at their homes inviting them to resume work on "the old terms." But still the workers held out.

At last, after sixty-eight days, the workers at the "Old Lessner" returned. At the "New Lessner" the strike continued for another two weeks until August 1; altogether the workers had been out for the unparalleled period of 102 days. In spite of the fact that it ended in defeat, the strike was of enormous importance in the history of the labour movement. It drew in and stimulated new sections of the working class and gave a practical demonstration of the power of the organised solidarity of the proletariat.

While the Lessner workers were out, other strikes were proceeding and were being supported by the workers. The strike movement normally increased during the summer months. In the

summer it was more convenient to call short meetings at the works, it was easier to arrange illegal meetings (usually held in the suburban woods) and to bear the privations entailed, than it was during the winter.

With the growth of the movement, the connections of our fraction with the masses became closer. During the Duma summer recess, as during the other intervals, the deputies returned to work in the regions from which they had been elected and I alone remained in St. Petersburg. At this time I had to perform the work which was usually divided among our six deputies.

Workers would call on me to ask all sorts of questions, especially on pay-days when money in aid of strikers was brought. Each worker who came with a contribution asked many questions. I had to arrange to supply passports and secret hiding-places, for those who became "illegal," help to find work for those victimised during strikes, petition ministers on behalf of those arrested, organise aid for exiles, etc. Where there were signs that a strike was flagging, it was necessary to take steps to instil vigour into the strikers, to lend the aid required and to print and send leaflets. Moreover, I was constantly consulted on personal matters.

There was not a single factory or workshop, down to the smallest, with which I was not connected in some way or other. Often my callers were so numerous that my apartment was not large enough for them, and they had to wait in a queue on the staircase. Every successive stage in the struggle, every new strike, increased these queues which symbolised the growing unity between the workers and the fraction and at the same time furthered the organisation of the masses.

In the spring of 1913, a dispute at the locomotive repair works, where I was employed before I became a deputy, revealed the sound organisation and unity of the masses. As far back as during the election of the delegates remarkable unanimity was displayed, and the vigour and self-reliance of the workers were increased. And after one of them, a worker previously nominated, was elected deputy for St. Petersburg, the revolutionary sentiments grew still further.

The secret police were paying a great deal of attention to the activity at the works and were determined to seize the first favourable opportunity to damp down the workers' enthusiasm. The moment selected for action was the tercentenary of the Romanov dynasty in February 1913. For some time previously the police had been zealously purging all factories, striving to "eliminate" all active workers



so as to prevent any revolutionary demonstrations at this festival. Arrests and expulsions were carried out in batches; all suspects were removed.

During the night of February 13, several railway workers were arrested. They were set free when the occasion for their arrest was over, but were refused readmittance to the works. The general manager told them: "Send in a petition to me. We will consult the police and find out whether you may be reinstated."

The shop stewards insisted on the reinstatement of the liberated men. Thereupon the manager tried to scare them: "You are advancing revolutionary demands. Remember that you will be held responsible. Don't incite the workers."

Indignant at such an attitude, all the workers gathered in one of the shops and, after discussing the situation, demanded the immediate reinstatement of their comrades. The demand was worded uncompromisingly; failing a satisfactory reply, a strike was to be declared at once.

The works management, playing for time, suggested that it should be allowed to consider the matter. But this was greeted with derision by the assembled workers. "You have had a whole week to consider the documents"; "Reinstate the men at once"; "We shall not disperse until our five comrades have been re-engaged."

The resolute stand of the workers had its effect. Confronted with such unanimity, the management was constrained to give way. The general manager announced that after dinner the five men would be allowed to return to their jobs. This incident demonstrated the power of solidarity and I considered that it should be made widely known among the masses. Therefore I published in *Pravda* the following appeal to workers at the railway repair shops:

Dear Comrades: I hasten to congratulate you on your successful united action on March 4, when you boldly prevented your five comrades being deprived of their daily bread and demanded that they be reinstated. Everywhere the workers' conditions are hard, but nowhere more so than in the repair shops of the Nikolaievskaya railway. Prior to being elected to the Duma, I worked for many years in these shops and know personally the oppressive measures of the management: harsh treatment, discharge without notice or reason, etc. Apparently the new manager is following in the footsteps of the old and is perhaps even more arbitrary. Conditions are worse on the railways than in many

private works. One would imagine that in State undertakings, which are less dependent on market fluctuations, working conditions would be considerably better than in privately-owned establishments. They should be models both in regard to technical equipment and the treatment of the workers. Workers in State factories should have a shorter working-day, higher wages and the assurance of not being dismissed for no reason whatever.

But what, in fact, do we observe in the State railway shops? Owing to the prevalence of overtime, 12 hours is the normal working-day instead of 9 hours. These long hours are accompanied by low wages barely enough for the most miserable existence.

As the elected representative from these shops, I am particularly pleased at the action which you have taken. With solidarity and determination you have defeated the management and succeeded in defending the livelihood of your comrades. Remember, comrades, that unity and class-consciousness constitute our force and that only by united, class-conscious action can we improve our conditions.

By order of the city governor, the newspaper was fined 500 rubles for publishing my appeal. Although we knew that it might lead to a fine or even to confiscation and although the financial position of *Pravda* was far from secure, we had decided to run the risk. This appeal to the workers in the railway repair shops was essentially an announcement to the whole working class and had to be circulated as widely as possible. Printed in *Pravda* it was much more effective than if it had been issued in the form of a leaflet from the “underground” printing press.

The appeal created the impression which we had anticipated – it reinforced the determination of the workers. For a time the success of the workers and their revolutionary spirit forced the secret police to hold back. Later, however, the police decided to make another raid.

On the morning of the first day after the Easter holidays (in April 1913), strong detachments of police appeared at the works. Several men were stationed in each shop and the workers were not allowed to pass from one shop to another unless it was necessary for work and then only under escort.

After these preparations the four selected victims were informed that they were discharged. Comrade Melnikov, who had just

been elected member of the board of the metal-workers' union, was again included. The discharged workers demanded that they should be told the reason for their dismissal, but the police refused to allow them access to the general manager. Later the management informed the shop stewards that the workers had been discharged at the request of the secret police. The four discharged workers were then arrested, sent out of St. Petersburg and forbidden to reside in the "52 localities," i.e. in any of the more important cities of Russia.

The same day the workers rushed to me with requests that I should send protests against this action to any authority concerned. It was apparent that no petition or protest would avail. The secret police, smarting under the failure of their former attack on the five workers, were determined this time to inflict heavy punishments on their victims.

I published in *Pravda* another appeal to the workers to reply to this fresh attack by rallying round the Party and strengthening their organisation. This, of course, could not be stated openly and I worded my appeal so that it could be understood by all class-conscious workers:

The workers request me to draw the attention of the highest authorities to these barbarous methods. Very well, I will go to the Minister. But, comrades, I must say at once that this will be of little use. We must all consider our position, read our workers' newspaper more regularly and become acquainted with the ways in which other workers are fighting to improve their conditions.

## CHAPTER X

**THE DOCKYARDS**

Strike at the Baltic Dockyard – Visit to the Minister for the Navy –  
The Struggle of the Obukhov Workers – Interpellation Concerning  
the Obukhov Works – Explosion at the Mine-Manufacturing Works  
– Demonstration at the Funeral – Fine for Attending the Funeral –  
The Duma on my Fine

The Baltic naval dockyards were under the control of the Minister for the Navy. Working conditions there were as intolerable as in the other War Office factories. The ordinary workers earned twelve to eighteen kopeks an hour, overtime was customary and normally meant that working-hours were doubled. The workshops were extremely unhealthy, damp, draughty, smoky, and in winter very cold. Men had to work in awkward, cramped positions. Seven or eight years there were often enough to make a man a complete wreck.

As in all war establishments, where the managers wore officers' uniforms, the workers were persecuted with exceptional ferocity. The management was intimately connected with the police and every manager and foreman was also a political police agent. Espionage was fostered and denunciation encouraged, and on obtaining the necessary information the management immediately handed the "sedition-mongers" over to the police.

Despite these conditions, the workers did not lag behind the rest of the proletariat. Throughout the spring and summer of 1913, disputes were frequent at the dockyards, leading to strikes of the whole undertaking or embracing only some of the departments and shops.

During a dispute which broke out in May in one of the shops affecting ten workers, who refused to work overtime, three delegates were chosen to negotiate with the management. While the negotiations were being conducted, the chief of the dockyards sent for the police, who arrested the delegates. The same night, May 20, after their homes had been searched, the ten workers were also arrested. In reply to this, 2,000 workers of another shop came out and added to their economic demands the demand for the release of those arrested. The same day, the strikers sent representatives to the Duma fraction to inform them of what had happened and ask them to intercede on behalf of the men who had been victimised. Another member of the fraction and myself sent a wire to the Minister for the Navy requesting an interview.

During my membership of the Duma, in common with the rest of our fraction, I had frequently to call on various Ministers. Generally we had to visit the Minister for the Interior, who controlled the police and consequently dealt with cases of arrests, expulsions, etc.

We were perfectly well aware that we would obtain no tangible results from these visits. Why then did we go? We considered that, as in the case of speeches delivered in the Duma, the visits had a certain agitational importance. When the workers were informed that their deputy, a worker like themselves, had demanded to be received by the tsarist minister, and that the latter was bound to negotiate with him, they had more heart for the struggle. The information, published in *Pravda*, that the workers' deputy had presented this or that demand drew fresh strata of workers into the fight. After each of my visits to a minister, new workers appeared at my apartment, workers who had hitherto had nothing to do with the Party or with the trade unions, but who now made demands, brought material for interpellations and thereby were drawn into the ranks of the organised workers. The advanced detachments of the workers were thus reinforced by fresh recruits.

Admiral Grigorovich, the Minister for the Navy, was away at the time that we applied, so we received a reply from Admiral Bubnov, his assistant, who agreed to see us the following morning. After relating all that had taken place at the works, we proposed to Bubnov that he should now give serious attention to the abuses practised by the dockyard management.

The assistant minister at first made the usual excuses: that he knew nothing of the affair, that the head of the dockyards had not informed him in his report that workers were dismissed for refusing to work overtime, or that wages had been reduced, etc. When the conversation passed on to the question of arrests, however, Bubnov forgot these denials and it became clear that the head of the dockyards acted in accordance with instructions received from higher authorities. True, Bubnov protested that his orders to the head of the dockyards did not contain a request to the police to arrest the workers. As if the police could have understood in any other way the request addressed to them for help as against the strikers!

As the result of our protests, Bubnov had to promise that he would send a special official to investigate conditions at the Baltic dockyards. This promise was merely a subterfuge. The next day, instead of an investigation, a notice, emanating from the assistant

minister, was posted at the works, announcing the closing down of the workshops concerned and mass dismissals of the workers.

Our visit to the assistant minister, however, had some effect. The next day, by orders "from above," the police released the arrested men. But the strike did not end; on the contrary other departments joined in, including the carpenters and painters. These workers presented demands for higher wages and better conditions, and characteristically enough, also the demand to be treated civilly. The workers were protesting against the barrack-like regime which was then prevalent in military and naval establishments. Over 3,000 men were on strike on this occasion.

In a month's time, at the end of June, another strike broke out at the Baltic dockyards. The immediate cause was bad treatment of the workers and the systematic rate-cutting enforced by one of the managers, Polikarpov. The workers chased him out of the workshop, which was thereupon closed down. The workers, in their turn, declared a strike and put forward a number of demands. In order to break the spirit of the workers, the aid of the police was obtained, as during the first strike. More than ten workers, whom the management suspected of being leaders and organisers, were arrested. The strikers immediately informed me, and once again I called on Grigorovich, the Minister for the Navy, to speak on behalf of the prisoners.

Admiral Grigorovich was one of those tsarist ministers who posed as liberals and who attempted to keep on "good terms" with the Duma members. Their liberalism, however, was a sham. Their object was merely to avoid irritating the public by too glaring reactionary measures, but in reality they followed the same Black Hundred policy as the pogrom-makers, Maklakov, Shcheglovitov and others. Grigorovich's "reasonable" attitude was so much to the liking of the Octobrist majority that later, when the Octobrists were playing at opposition, Rodzyanko proposed Grigorovich as Premier of a responsible cabinet.

Fully aware that our conversation would be broadcast among the masses, Grigorovich played the part of a friend of the people. He told me: "I have worked my way up from the bottom of the ladder and have been through the hard school of work since I started as a simple clerk."

He even said that at one time he had addressed meetings of workers from a soap-box and preached radical ideas, etc. Hence he regarded himself as an expert on labour questions and he discussed the conditions and needs of the workers at length. I was, of course,

under no misapprehension as to whom I was talking to, and fully understood his purpose in giving expression to these sentiments of love for the workers. As soon as possible I turned the conversation on to the business with which we were concerned and stated the workers' demands with regard to the men detained and the arbitrary methods of the authorities.

Grigorovich's "liberalism" at once vanished into thin air; I could get no definite answer, and finally he called in his assistant, Bubnov, and asked him to start the investigation. We knew what Bubnov meant by investigation from the example he had given us during the previous strike, when he was responsible for many further dismissals and the complete whitewashing of the management. Bubnov began to assure us that now everything was going well at the dockyards; earnings were high, no one was forced to work overtime, in fact the workers had no grievances at all. And with regard to the men arrested, no anxiety need be felt, since if they were innocent, they would be released.

When I pointed out that the picture of prosperity painted by the assistant minister was far removed from reality, that the working conditions and the managerial measures were continually provoking the workers, Grigorovich once more promised to investigate, to look into, to find out, etc.

Knowing the value of ministerial promises and in order that the workers should understand what to expect from tsarist ministers, I printed in *Pravda* a detailed account of this conversation, pointing out how false the promises and assurances were. My account of the visit to the Minister was, in effect, an appeal to the Baltic workers to continue their struggle and not to place any hope in the authorities.

Soon afterwards I had further negotiations with the Minister for the Navy in connection with the strike at the Obukhov works, which were also controlled by the Navy Department. The strike, which commenced at the end of July and involved the 8,000 men employed there, was caused by the intolerable working conditions. The workshops were full of noxious gases, but ventilation appliances were not installed in spite of repeated requests from the workers. All the men worked a twelve-hour day with no break for dinner, and wages were from twenty to forty rubles a month – less than the legal minimum.

The strike lasted over two months and, when it was over, about a hundred workers were black-listed and not reinstated. In the course of the strike thirty men were arrested and fourteen deported from St.

Petersburg and forbidden to reside in fifty-two cities in the Empire. But this did not satisfy the police; a trial was staged of a number of Obukhov workers; they were accused of bringing about a strike "in undertakings where a strike endangered national interests."

When the first men were arrested I applied to Bubnov for an interview, but apparently afraid that I would obtain new material for agitation, he did not answer my telegram.

The Obukhov workers were tried after the strike was ended on November 6, 1913. On the day of the trial over 100,000 St. Petersburg workers came out on a one-day strike and at all factories and mills meetings were held and resolutions of protest passed. More than a hundred such resolutions were received by our fraction and the *Pravda*, but they were so sharply worded that the *Pravda* could not print them even in extracts. This political strike met with enthusiastic and unanimous response. Caused by the desire to defend the few rights which the workers enjoyed under the existing regime, it was in fact not a defensive measure but a new attack on the government.

A week after the trial the Obukhov workers came out again; this time the strike was the result of new rules introduced by the management. Under the new rules it was impossible for even the most careful worker to avoid incurring a fine every day; overtime was compulsory and was paid at the ordinary rate instead of at time-and-a-half, and on pay-day the workers were systematically cheated.

The management assumed a most provocative attitude towards the workers. No meetings were allowed, not even those provided for in the rules, and it was announced that criminal prosecutions would be started against certain grades of workers if they stopped work. The entire district was flooded with police.

As the Obukhov workers considered that it was impossible to enter into negotiations with their immediate chiefs, they decided to send a delegation to the Minister for the Navy in order to acquaint him personally with the conditions at the dockyards and to state their demands. Once again at the request of the workers I went to Grigorovich and described the conditions of the Obukhov workers.

This time Grigorovich did not even pretend to be liberal or a friend of the people. He stated that he could neither receive a delegation from the workers nor authorise a meeting to elect one, "Whatever their needs," he said, "the workers can only submit them to the chief of the dockyards."



The autumn session of the Duma was about to open, and the Obukhov workers requested us to introduce an urgent interpellation on the conditions of the workers at the dockyards and on the actions of the management. The interpellation was introduced on November 15, but it did not appear on the agenda until ten days later.

In the debate that followed the Right produced their big guns; their chief spokesman was Markov, the outstanding leader of pogroms, never tired of appealing for hangings and shootings. The prison regime set up by the tsarist government was too mild for him. Representing in the Duma the most reactionary wing of landowners, who had still fresh in their memory the burning and looting of their estates in 1905, Markov demanded extreme measures against all symptoms not only of a revolutionary, but even of a liberal bourgeois movement. Naturally he had a fierce hatred of the working class, which he regarded as the most dangerous enemy of the existing regime,

Markov's speech was directed against the strike movement and the Social-Democratic party which was leading it. He began with a personal attack on me, taking up my last words about the challenge which the Social-Democratic fraction, in the name of the entire proletariat, hurled at the Black Hundred majority in the Duma.

"Mr. Badayev," said Markov, "you are a young man; a challenge is only made when a fight is intended. But you are not fighting yet. A challenge to the Ministry must not be confused with common sense and common sense ought to be your principal guide."

Markov wound up his speech with a question addressed to the government. He wanted to know whether the government considered that it was sufficiently energetic in its struggle against the revolutionary movement:

"Are you, gentlemen, really doing your duty of protecting the Russian people against miscreants and enemies who act from without but who penetrate into the country with the aid of persons guilty of high treason? I declare that our fatherland is in danger."

His speech was full of threatening words and gestures directed at the Social-Democratic fraction. Turning to the benches of the Left, he put up his hands as if holding a rifle aimed at them and said: "You are attacking us, but we will have a shot at you first!"

The interpellation was passed by the Duma, but this did not mean that the workers gained anything, everything at the works re-

mained as before; the Minister for the Navy did not make the slightest concession.

The conditions of the Obukhov workers were not exceptional. The most ruthless exploitation and intolerable conditions prevailed at other works, especially at those working for the army and navy departments. Every moment the lives of the workers were threatened by an explosion or catastrophe. Formerly, under the heavy heel of reaction, fatal accidents passed quietly, almost unnoticed; now however the funeral of every worker who died as the result of an accident was the occasion of a huge revolutionary demonstration.

Crowds of workers followed the coffins of workers whom they did not know personally, singing the revolutionary funeral march beginning: "You fell, victims" and bearing wreaths with revolutionary legends written on red ribbon. The cemetery was transformed into a meeting place for thousands. In conditions of illegal work, when workers' meetings were prohibited, when it was only possible to assemble secretly in the woods or in small apartments, demonstrations at funerals assumed a revolutionary importance. Party organisations appealed to the workers to come in thousands, speakers were appointed in preparation, leaflets were distributed, etc.

The police also made extensive preparations; strong detachments accompanied all funeral processions and both mounted and foot police were active at the cemetery. They rushed across the graves, destroyed wreaths, refused to allow even relatives of the deceased to approach the grave, prevented speeches, seized anyone who attempted to speak, and dispersed the people after making a number of arrests.

I have already recalled the conditions under which the funeral of the victims of the Okhta explosion took place. I shall tell now of a funeral demonstration during which I incurred special police persecution, and which roused the workers and was the subject of a debate in the Duma.

Early in September 1913, two workers were killed in an explosion at the St. Petersburg mine manufacturing works (formerly the Parviainen works). The twenty-pound cover of a machine was blown clean through the roof of the building, two workers were killed on the spot and the whole workshop spattered with their blood. The explosion was the result of carelessness on the part of the management, as the machine had not been tested.

On September 9, thousands of workers downed tools to be present at the funeral. Men from the mine works and also men from the

Putilov, Aivaz and other factories followed the coffin. From the beginning the police obstructed the procession. First they demanded the removal of red ribbons from the wreaths; later, on the Liteyni bridge, they insisted that the coffin and wreaths should be placed on the hearse.

In answer to my question why the coffin could not be carried by hand, the police representative replied that such were his instructions from higher authorities. The procession was diverted from the main streets along Voskresenskaya and Znamenskaya. In Ligovka, taking advantage of the fact that there were fewer policemen, the workers again carried the coffin on their shoulders up to the Mitrofanyevskoye cemetery, singing the revolutionary funeral march "You fell, victims."

Near the cemetery, more police appeared and the red ribbons which had been re-attached to the wreaths were again torn off. During the burial service, many more workers arrived; they had left the factories at the dinner interval. The crowd of about 5,000 was in fighting spirits and the singing of the revolutionary funeral song was interrupted by appeals to fight. Knowing I was to speak, they surrounded the grave in a solid ring so as to give me time to begin before the police could reach me. The forces of law and order were fully armed and only waited the word from the inspectors to make use of their whips.

When the coffins had been lowered into the grave, I mounted a bench and began my speech:

"Comrades! Bloodthirsty capitalists, in their striving for larger profits, are prepared to sacrifice the lives of the workers. You see the reward which the workers receive for their hard and painful toil. The working class will only obtain improvements in its conditions when it takes the matter into its own hands...."

But no sooner had I uttered these words than policemen began to shout:

"Hold him, don't let him speak."

The police inspector ordered:

"Mounted police, whips ready!"

The mounted police rode down, trying to disperse the crowd. A free fight developed near the grave. Several policemen pulled me down from the bench and an inspector ran up, seized me by the arm and told me that I was arrested. I showed him my deputy's card.

"You are free, but I shall not allow you to speak. I am instructed to allow no speeches."

In the meantime the crowd, thinking that I was arrested, had become very agitated and surrounded the inspector, uttering threats against the police. I again mounted the bench to continue my interrupted speech and called on the workers to keep quiet and avoid causing fresh casualties. The mounted police, flourishing their whips, pressed the crowd back from the grave to the cemetery gates, and it was only by a mere chance that fresh blood was not spilt.

After the funeral, the police drew up a protocol accusing me of disobeying the orders of the authorities. Three months later, the St. Petersburg city governor, Drachevsky, issued an order fining me 200 rubles for "interfering with the actions of the police." When an official called on me and demanded payment, I flatly refused. The city governor's order was quite illegal as the law concerning the Duma prescribed that deputies were liable to no punishments or fines except by sentence of a court and then only with the consent of the Duma itself.

I informed the workers through *Pravda* of this new attempt to encroach on the rights of deputies and many protest strikes were declared. Action was first taken at the mine manufacturing works where the explosion had taken place. A one-day strike was agreed on and at a meeting a resolution was carried protesting against my being fined for speaking at the funeral of their fellow workers. The Langesippen works, employing 1,000 men, followed suit, and the movement quickly spread to other factories.

After two weeks, when it evidently became clear to him that I did not intend to pay the fine, the city governor issued an order substituting six weeks' detention for the fine. He also gave orders that I was to be arrested during the next Duma recess. When this became known it led to renewed unrest among the workers.

Then the chairman of the Duma, which had as yet done nothing to protect the "immunity of deputies," thought fit to interfere. Rodzyanko, however, insisted that I should take the initiative, i.e. that I should apply to him requesting protection. In this way he could excuse himself to the Black Hundreds, saying that he was not defending an enemy of the government, but merely passing on to the correct authorities a statement received from a deputy. When he saw that I did not intend to present such a statement, he tried to achieve his purpose in a roundabout way. He sent one of his subordinates who, in the name of the chairman of the Duma, expressed sympathy with me. Rodzyanko thought that in reply I would apply for protection. Without showing that I understood the object of this

visit, I stated: "I am legally entitled to protection as a deputy. Let them try to arrest me."

In view of the fact that this affair of my fine was assuming the character of a public scandal, Rodzyanko sent a letter to Maklakov, the Minister for the Interior, and received a reply stating that I would only be arrested after the expiry of my Duma immunity.

Although the attack on our "six" had been warded off for the moment, the fraction decided none the less to make this attempt the basis for an interpellation. On the one hand, the case illustrated the reactionary offensive and therefore served as agitational material; on the other hand, the more widely the persecution of workers' deputies became known, the stronger became the ties which bound the fraction to the masses.

Our interpellation ended with the following words:

Being of the opinion that the city governor of St. Petersburg acted unlawfully in imposing a fine on a member of the State Duma, the Social-Democratic fraction invites the Duma to address the following question to the Minister for the Interior on the basis of Article 33 of the regulations governing the Duma: (1) Whether he is aware of the order issued by the St. Petersburg city governor; (2) If so, what steps he proposes to take with regard to this unlawful order and to protect deputies of the State Duma from such actions of administrative bodies in the future. We request that this interpellation be regarded as urgent.

This interpellation had been signed also by certain deputies belonging to the Cadets and Progressives, but when the debate was about to take place after the Christmas recess, twenty-three "liberal" deputies withdrew their signatures. Thus the interpellation was frustrated at the very moment when it should have been read out in the Duma. This alone characterises with sufficient clarity the attitude of the Cadets towards the workers' deputies.

We collected further signatures as required by law and again introduced the interpellation a week later. Petrovsky spoke on behalf of our fraction.

"In spite of persecution and police brutality," said Petrovsky, "the workers' deputies will stand by the workers, always and everywhere. Neither the police nor the Black Hundred majority in the Duma will be able to prevent the working class from hearing the voices of their deputies.

“The city governor was afraid to carry out his own unlawful order; his fear was well founded, for the St. Petersburg workers would have replied with a general strike.”

Buryanov, who had now left the Mensheviks, also spoke in favour of urgency. He dealt with the flagrant violation of the immunity of deputies which, he said, had to be checked if the Duma was to retain any self-respect.

But the Duma made no attempt to check the aggression of the tsarist police. Only the workers' deputies were concerned about the case and the Duma Black Hundreds heartily endorsed the persecutions. The interpellation was defeated by an overwhelming majority. The government received in advance the approval of the Duma for any repressive measures it might wish to take against the workers' deputies.

# **THE SPLIT IN THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC DUMA FRACTION**





## CHAPTER XI

## THE CONDITIONS WITHIN THE FRACTION

The Relations between the "Seven" and the "Six" – The Question of Collaborating in the *Luch* – The "Methods" of the Mensheviks Before the Split

With every month that passed it became more clear that the unity of the Social-Democratic fraction was only a formal unity, and that it was bound to collapse sooner or later. The conditions within the fraction were not only a complete reflection of the conditions prevailing within Russian Social-Democracy, but they greatly intensified the mutual contradictions. The Bolshevik and Menshevik deputies, while formally bound by the existence of a united fraction, were in daily conflict on a whole series of questions concerning the revolutionary movement. The divergences between the Bolshevik "six" and the Menshevik "seven" were rooted in the very conception of the course of the Russian revolution. With the growth of the revolutionary movement these differences increased, and this was bound to lead, sooner or later, to a final split of the fraction into two independent sections, deepening that line of cleavage which was followed by our Party as a whole.

Sharp encounters between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks began from the very first days the fraction was organised. I have already given an account of the struggle which developed within the fraction about the Duma declaration and the admission of Jagello to the fraction. In both cases our Bolshevik "six" stubbornly fought the Mensheviks and forced them to surrender a number of positions.

The first clash within the fraction, which became the subject of a wide discussion, not only in Party circles but also amongst the masses of the workers, occurred in connection with the question of the Bolshevik deputies collaborating in the Menshevik newspaper, *Luch*. A bitter struggle raged around this question, which shed abundant light on the situation that arose within the fraction. The question was of enormous importance in the sense that the attitude of the masses of the workers to the Bolshevik "six" and to the future final break with the Mensheviks could be ascertained on the basis of a definite concrete instance.

In December 1912, the workers' deputies for tactical reasons consented to the inclusion of their names in the list of collaborators of the *Luch*.<sup>6</sup>

At the end of January 1913, again in agreement with our Party circles and, in particular, following the instructions of the Central Committee, we demanded that the editors of the *Luch* strike our names off the list of contributors to their openly Liquidationist newspaper.

Our refusal to collaborate in the *Luch* served as the pretext for the first open attack by the Menshevik "seven" on the Bolshevik section of the fraction.

Of course, it was obvious to all of us already at that period, that the time was drawing near for a complete rupture with the Mensheviks. But the desire to preserve unity within the Social-Democratic Party by some means or other was still strong among the broad masses of the workers. Naturally the wide public did not know what was taking place inside the Party organisation, in our underground committees or nuclei, owing to the police regime then prevailing in Russia. But the Duma fraction operated in the sight of all; every worker, not only in St. Petersburg, but even in the most remote corners of Russia, knew of its existence and activities. When the broad masses referred to Party unity, they mainly had our fraction in mind.

Under such conditions the correct political step was to show the workers that the real perpetrators of the split were the Menshevik "seven."

In every one of its issues, *Pravda* appealed for resistance to the Menshevik attack. Comrade Stalin, in *Pravda* of February 26, wrote:

The duty of class-conscious workers is to raise their voices against the secessionists' attempts within the fraction, from whatever quarter they may come. The duty of the class-conscious workers is to call to order the seven Social-Democratic deputies, who attacked the other half of the Social-Democratic fraction. The workers must intervene at once to protect the unity of the fraction. Silence has now become impossible. More than that, silence is now a crime.

Our Party nuclei started a wide propaganda campaign in the factories and works, explaining the position that arose within the fraction and why the workers' deputies refused to take part in a Liquidationist paper. Resolutions at once began to pour in, supporting our attitude and disapproving the tactics and position of the Mensheviks. Representatives of factory and works organisations of St. Petersburg personally called on the workers' deputies and

brought resolutions bearing the signatures of workers who hitherto had supported the Mensheviks. To the voices of the workers of St. Petersburg were soon added the voices of those in the provinces.

Even Plekhanov came out against the Menshevik "seven" and their paper, *Luch*.

The attacks of the Mensheviks in the *Luch* and at workers' meetings were accompanied by a fight against us in the fraction itself. Profiting by their majority of one vote, the Mensheviks tried to stifle the voice of the workers' deputies and to prevent us whenever possible from speaking in the Duma.

We had to fight the majority of the fraction every time we wanted to speak and they agreed to put us up as speakers only after a long and stubborn struggle. Under such conditions it became still more difficult for the Bolsheviks to carry out the main task they had set themselves; to use the Duma tribune for revolutionary agitation.

The "seven" did not merely confine themselves to preventing us from making speeches at the Duma sittings. They attempted to exclude us from the Duma commissions, which were formed for the purpose of discussing interpellations, for the preliminary discussions of bills, the budget, etc. These commissions were permanent and were set up at the beginning of the session.

A great volume of material, both from government and other sources, accumulated in the commissions and it was necessary for deputies to acquaint themselves with this material for their future speeches. Government representatives attended the meetings of the commission and gave explanations and answers to the questions of deputies. The Social-Democratic fraction had its representatives in all the Duma commissions except the military and naval commissions, to which the Black Hundred Duma refused to admit the Social-Democrats and the Trudoviks, in spite of all our protests.

The work of the commissions supplied an enormous material for agitation. We made use of it and described in the workers' press what was happening in the most intimate circles of the Duma. Yet the entire behaviour of the "seven" was directed towards getting for themselves the representation of the fraction in most of the commissions set up by the Duma.

During the first year of the existence of the Duma, the Mensheviks were represented on nineteen out of the twenty-six commissions on which the fraction was represented, and the Bolsheviks only on seven. Even in those commissions where two seats were assigned to the Social-Democratic fraction, the Mensheviks tried to

keep us out. The most important commission was the budget commission. This was a kind of miniature Duma, one of the main centres of the Duma's work. During the first sessions, the fraction was represented on this commission by Chkheidze and Malinovsky. Such a state of things did not satisfy the "seven," and when at the end of the year Malinovsky resigned from the budget commission in favour of Petrovsky, the Mensheviks elected a second candidate of their own to the commission.

The entire behaviour of the Menshevik "seven" was definitely directed towards gagging the labour deputies. They put spokes in the wheel of our work in every possible way. They also monopolised the representation of the Social-Democratic fraction on the International Socialist Bureau, sending their own candidate, who could by no means be regarded as a genuine representative of the Russian workers.

Already by the spring of 1913, when the winter session of the Duma was drawing to a close, the conditions in the Social-Democratic fraction became intolerable.

It was quite obvious to us that the preservation of the state of affairs which had arisen within the fraction could only be harmful to our activity and to the revolutionary movement as a whole.

The summer recess, which began soon afterwards, only postponed the question of the final split in the Duma fraction.

## CHAPTER XII

**THE PORONINO CONFERENCE**

Preparations for the Conference – In Poronino – The Report of the Central Committee – The Main Resolutions – Discussion on the Work of the “Six” – Should we face a Split of the Fraction?

On June 15, 1913, the State Duma rose for the summer recess. The regular Party conference, which was to have been called immediately the session ended, had been postponed to the end of summer so as to allow our Bolshevik “six” to tour their constituencies. They had to report to the local organisations on the Duma work, and themselves to learn of developments in the provinces. One of the main questions which the workers’ deputies were to put before the local organisations was that of the state of affairs within the fraction. On the other hand, the information obtained by the deputies was to serve as material for discussion at the forthcoming Party conference.

The departure of the workers’ deputies from St. Petersburg naturally created considerable activity among the secret police. Local authorities were flooded with orders from the police department: watch – observe – prohibit, etc. It was extremely difficult to evade the police and accomplish our work without endangering the local Party organisations.

Visits to provincial working-class centres, speeches at workers’ meetings, and the exchange of views with local Party officials convinced our “six” that there had been a steady growth of Bolshevism among the masses. The attitude adopted by the “six” both inside and outside of the fraction was approved by the majority of local organisations, some even demanding an immediate break with the seven Mensheviks.

The majority, however, considered that it was necessary to make one more attempt to preserve the unity of the Social-Democratic fraction, if only in externals. Should it prove impossible to secure Bolshevik leadership of the fraction as a whole, the seven should at least be prevented from doing harm and the Bolshevik deputies guaranteed facilities for making wide use of the Duma. If such an arrangement could not be made, we should definitely break with the Mensheviks, as had been found necessary in other Party organisations.

After summarising the results of our tours as regards both the opinions of the Party groups and the sentiments of the workers in

general we proceeded, late in September, to the Party conference. The conference was held at Poronino, a village in Galicia (Austria), not far from Cracow, where Lenin and a few members of the Central Committee were staying. In order to mislead the police, the Poronino Conference was always referred to as the August Conference, although it actually took place at the end of September, 1913.

Twenty-five to thirty representatives from the larger Party organisations were present. In addition to Lenin, Zinoviev and Krupskaya, who were living in Galicia, Kamenev, Shotman, Inessa Armand, Troyanovsky, Rozmirovich, Hanecki and other Party workers also attended, as well as all the Duma Bolsheviks except Samoylov, who was ill.

Nearly twelve months had elapsed since the Cracow Conference, and meanwhile the Russian revolutionary movement had made much progress. Political strikes on January 9 (anniversary of Bloody Sunday), April 4 (anniversary of the Lena shootings) and May 1 had assumed a formidable character. During that year, the Russian workers had celebrated, for the first time, International Women's Day. Economic strikes, also, had been distinguished by stubbornness and good organisation, while the struggle against the capitalists' new weapon, the lock-out, had been conducted with extraordinary vigour. In the whole of Russia during 1913 about one million workers had participated in strikes; of these over half a million were involved in political strikes.

Party work had been strengthened, extended and consolidated, new groups had been formed and the old ones had grown larger and more effective. Bolshevik influence had increased in all legal working-class organisations and in cultural and educational societies. As a result of this revolutionary growth, the Poronino Conference dealt with a large number of subjects, such as organisation, tactics, propaganda, agitation, etc.

The first item of the agenda was the reports of the organisations of St. Petersburg, Moscow, the Ukraine, Poland, and the Urals.

Since all the delegates were informed of the course of the strike movement and the political actions of the workers of St. Petersburg, I devoted my report chiefly to the state of Party organisation and to the work of the St. Petersburg Committee. On the basis of decisions taken at the Cracow Conference, important measures of reorganisation were adopted and the St. Petersburg organisation consolidated. Sporadic guerrilla actions such as those that occurred on the opening day of the Duma were no longer possible. Leadership was now

concentrated in an executive commission, and the St. Petersburg Committee was closely connected with the Narva, Neva, Vyborg and Vassileostrovsky districts, i.e. with the main working-class areas. I dealt further in detail with the organisation of the two underground printing shops which were then working for the St. Petersburg Committee and which had issued leaflets in 20,000 copies with trade union work, support for *Pravda*, appeals for funds, etc.

An abridged version of my report, signed "Member of the Executive Commission of the St. Petersburg Committee," appeared in the December issue of the Party's central organ, *Sotsial-Demokrat* (published abroad). The published part of the report refers to the structure of the St. Petersburg organisation and to the work of the St. Petersburg Committee.

All activity in the St. Petersburg District is now controlled by the St. Petersburg Committee, which has been functioning since autumn last year. The Committee has contacts at all works and factories and is informed of all developments there. The organisation of the district is as follows: At the factory, Party members form nuclei in the various workshops and delegates from the nuclei form a factory committee (at small factories, the members themselves constitute the committee). Every factory committee, or workshop nucleus in large factories, appoints a collector who on each pay-day collects the dues and other funds, books subscriptions for the newspapers, etc. A controller is also appointed to visit the institutions for which the funds were raised, to see that the correct amounts have been received there and collect the money. By this system, abuses in the handling of money are avoided.

Each district committee elects by secret voting an executive commission of three, care being taken that the committee as a whole should not know of whom the executive commission actually consists.

The district executive commissions send delegates to the St. Petersburg Committee, again trying to ensure that the names should not be known by the whole district committee. The St. Petersburg Committee also elects an executive commission of three. Sometimes, for reasons of secrecy, it was found inadvisable to elect the representatives from the district commission and they were co-opted at the discretion of the St. Petersburg Committee.

Owing to this system, it was difficult for the secret police to find out who are members of the St. Petersburg Committee, which was thus enabled to carry on its work, to guide the activities of the organisations, declare political strikes, etc.

The Committee is held in high esteem by the workers, who, on all important points, await its guidance and follow its instructions. Special attention is paid to the leaflets which the Committee issues from time to time.

St. Petersburg trade union organisations have decided not to call political strikes on their own initiative but to act only on instructions from the St. Petersburg Committee. It was the Committee which issued the call for strikes on January 9, April 4 and May 1. The workers strongly resented the suppression of *Pravda* and wanted to strike, but the Committee decided that it was necessary first to prepare the action properly and to issue an explanatory leaflet which should reach the masses. Within a few days another paper appeared and as it followed the same policy the workers were somewhat reassured. Although no appeal to strike action was issued, some 30,000 workers left their work.

Leaflets are of great importance and the Committee devoted much effort to perfecting its machinery for their printing and distribution. The Committee consists entirely of workers, and we write the leaflets ourselves and have difficulty in finding intellectuals to help in correcting them.

The St. Petersburg political strikes, far from ruining the organisation, strengthened it. It may be asserted that the St. Petersburg organisation was revived, strengthened, and is developing, owing to the political strike movement. The shouts of the Liquidators about a "strike fever" show that they are completely detached from the workers' organisations and from the life of the masses; they altogether fail to grasp what is now taking place among the workers. From my position in the centre of the St. Petersburg working-class movement, I notice everywhere how the strength of the workers is increasing, how it shows itself and how it will overwhelm everything.

The resolutions of the Cracow Conference were read and studied by the workers in the factories and the entire



work of our organisation was conducted in their spirit. Their correctness was fully proved in practice; taking active part in the work, I felt all the time that the line of policy was correct. I rarely met a Liquidator or heard of one; this surprised me at first, but later, at a meeting of metal-workers, I learnt that they were almost non-existent in St. Petersburg.

Comrade A. V. Shotman made a supplementary report on work at St. Petersburg and gave many further details. The local reports were received as information; no decisions were then taken in connection with them, but they served to illustrate the state of Party organisation and thus enabled the conference to tackle the general problems.

Immediately after the conclusion of local reports, Lenin read the report of the Central Committee. He pointed out that the development of the revolutionary movement and the successful Party work confirmed the correctness of the Bolsheviks' policy as decided at the Prague Conference in January 1912, when a new Central Committee had been elected.

The course of the elections to the Duma, the successful launching of a newspaper and the high level of the strike movement were all results of Party work under the guidance of the Bolshevik Central Committee. Lenin declared: "We can truthfully say that we have fully discharged the duties which we assumed. Local reports show that the workers are active and anxious to build up and strengthen their organisations. Let the workers realise that it is they and no one else who can do this."

Comrade Krupskaya dealt with the technical side of the Central Committee's work, with correspondence, contacts, transport and the Committee's representatives in the important cities. Comrade Zinoviev spoke on the results of the work of our "six."

After preliminary reports, the conference proceeded to discuss other questions on the agenda. Deliberations continued for almost two weeks and the subsequent work of the Party was fully outlined. The conference stressed once again that the principal slogans for the working-class struggle must be: "a democratic republic," "confiscation of landlords' estates," and "the eight-hour day." These slogans were to be used in every political strike. In the matter of the organisation of a general political strike, the conference welcomed the initiative of the St. Petersburg Committee and of a number of Moscow

Party groups and considered that agitation and preparation for an all-Russia general political strike should be conducted immediately.

The resolution on strikes contained six points, the last of which for reasons of secrecy was not published. Until recently the text of this last point was not known, because naturally the documents of the conference have not survived. However, I accidentally came across a copy of the full text of the resolution in the archives of the police department. The sixth point dealt with the necessity of carrying on political strikes simultaneously in various cities, especially St. Petersburg and Moscow:

The conference calls on all local workers to reinforce their agitation by the distribution of leaflets and to establish permanent and close co-operation between the political and other workers' organisations in various cities. It is especially important to secure agreement between Moscow and St. Petersburg workers in the first place, so that political strikes which may occur for various reasons (persecution of the press, insurance protests, etc.) should as far as possible take place simultaneously in both towns.

In the same archives a copy of the resolution on the Party press was also preserved. The first five points of this resolution were not published and it was thought that they had been lost. The following is the full text:

1. The conference recognises the enormous importance of a legal press for the cause of Social-Democratic agitation and organisation and therefore calls on all Party organisations and class-conscious workers to lend their whole-hearted support by distributing papers as widely as possible, by organising mass collective subscriptions and by the payment of regular dues. The conference once more emphasises that the said dues are membership dues to the Party.
2. Special attention should be paid to the strengthening of the legal workers' paper in Moscow and to the speedy establishment of a paper in the south.
3. The conference desires to bring about the closest co-operation between the existing legal papers by means of mutual exchange of information, the holding of conferences, etc.

4. Recognising the importance and the necessity of a theoretical Marxist organ, the conference desires Party and trade union papers to call the attention of the workers to the journal *Prosveshchenye* (Enlightenment), and to appeal to them to subscribe regularly and support it in a systematic fashion.
5. The conference calls the attention of Party publishing organisations to the necessity for a wider circulation of popular pamphlets for agitation and propaganda.
6. In view of the recent development of the revolutionary movement and of the importance of analysing it thoroughly, in the complete manner which is impossible in the legal press, the conference draws special attention to the necessity of extending our illegal publishing work and recommends that, in addition to illegal pamphlets and leaflets, a central illegal Party paper should be issued regularly at short intervals.

The conference pointed out that the most important task in respect of Party organisation was not merely the strengthening of the different Party units but their co-ordination into a united whole. For this purpose it was suggested that wherever possible regional Party conferences should be held and that representatives should be sent to the Central Committee. The question of convoking a regular Party congress was also raised at the conference.

The report presented by our "six" on the work of the Social-Democratic fraction in the Duma was one of the main issues dealt with at the conference. Since the Cracow Conference we had gained fresh experience both as regards speaking in the Duma and our work outside. But it seemed to us that our use of the Duma for revolutionary agitation was not enough. Before the conference opened, we had private talks with Lenin on our work.

"We arrange demonstrations against ministers and the Black Hundreds whenever they appear on the rostrum," I said to Lenin, "but this is not enough. The workers ask 'what practical proposals do you make in the Duma? Where are the laws which you put forward?'"

Lenin answered with his usual laugh: "The Black Hundred Duma will never pass any laws which improve the lot of the workers. The task of a workers' deputy is to remind the Black Hundreds, day after day, that the working class is strong and powerful and that the day is not far distant when the revolution will break out and sweep away the Black Hundreds and their government. No doubt it

is possible to move amendments and even to introduce some bills, but this must only be done in order to expose more effectively the anti-working-class nature of the tsarist regime and to reveal the absolute lack of rights of the exploited workers. This is really what the workers should hear from their deputies.”

Several sittings were devoted to the debate on our report, and in the resolution adopted the conference reaffirmed previous Party decisions that Social-Democratic deputies were not concerned with so-called positive legislative work but that their task was to utilise the Duma for revolutionary agitation and propaganda. Although none of the bills submitted to the Duma were satisfactory, the question arose as to what should be done when a bill did propose some improvement in the conditions of the workers. The conference decided that we were to vote for such measures only when an immediate and direct improvement such as shorter hours or higher wages, etc., was involved. If, however, the effect of the proposal was doubtful, the fraction was to abstain after expressing clearly its reasons for doing so. The conference decided that, in connection with every question raised in the Duma, the Social-Democratic fraction should formulate and introduce its own independent resolutions for passing to the order of the day.

A special resolution dealt with internal conditions in the fraction and with our differences with the Mensheviks. The conference had to consider the advisability of a final break with the Menshevik “seven” and of forming an independent fraction of Bolsheviks. Although this step was regarded as necessary and inevitable in the long run, there were many aspects to be considered before such a serious move could be made. How would the masses react to it? Would they understand that unity with the Liquidators was only harmful to the interests of the workers? Would they not consider it necessary that both wings of the Party should act together against the Black Hundreds? The situation was rendered more difficult by the fact that, owing to the strict censorship and police persecutions, it was impossible to conduct a wide campaign of enlightenment on this question. Our press was unable to call a spade a spade and even the three basic slogans of the Bolsheviks had to be camouflaged by the use of similar words. It was essential that the split should occur in such a way that the greatest number of those people who were hesitating between the two wings should be attracted to our side. This applied both to class-conscious workers and to members of the

fraction itself. Our task was to wrest from the Mensheviks all who were not irretrievably sunk in the Liquidationist swamp.

The resolution of the Poronino Conference, adopted after these points had been considered, required as a preliminary step that an ultimatum should be presented to the Menshevik "seven" demanding absolute equality for both sections of the fraction. Only if this was refused were we to break with the "seven" and form an independent fraction. The following was the text:

The conference is of the opinion that the unity of the Social-Democratic Duma fraction is possible and necessary, but considers that the behaviour of the Menshevik "seven" is seriously endangering this unity.

The "seven" make use of their bare majority of one to obstruct the work of the six workers' deputies who represent the overwhelming majority of the Russian workers. On a number of occasions when important matters relating to workers were dealt with and when the Social-Democratic fraction put up two or more speakers, the six deputies were refused the opportunity of nominating one of them.

The "seven" also refuse to allow the "six" one of the two seats on Duma commissions (e.g. the budget commission).

When a representative has to be elected from the fraction to bodies of importance to the labour movement, the seven deputies by their majority of one always deprive the six of any representation. The officials of the fraction are elected in this one-sided way; e.g. the demand for a second secretary has been rejected. The conference considers that these actions of the seven deputies prevent the smooth working of the fraction and must inevitably lead to a split.

The conference protests most emphatically against such actions of the seven deputies. The six deputies represent the enormous majority of the working class of Russia and act in full accord with the political line of its organised vanguard.

The conference is, therefore, of the opinion that only if there is full equality between the two wings of the fraction and only if the "seven" give up their policy of stifling the voice of the "six," will it be possible to maintain the unity of the Duma Social-Democratic fraction.

In spite of irreconcilable divergences on work not only in the Duma, the conference insists on the unity of the fraction on the above-stated basis of equal rights for both sides.

The conference invites all class-conscious workers to express their opinion on this important question and to contribute with all their energy to the preservation of the unity of the fraction on the basis of equal rights for the six workers' deputies.

In proposing this solution our Party made a last attempt to minimise the harm that the Mensheviks could do without causing an official split. But the division of the fraction into two wings, each enjoying equal rights, would in itself establish a sharp distinction between the "six" and the "seven," and even if no formal split were to occur, we would be able to conduct our Duma activities in accordance with Party decisions.

Just before we left Poronino the workers' deputies attended a meeting of the Central Committee, at which the practical steps to be taken by the "six" in regard to the Mensheviks were discussed. It was decided that we should present a series of demands: that a second secretary be appointed, that new members be nominated for the budget commission, that new delegates be appointed to the International Socialist Bureau, and that the speakers for the fraction be chosen in equal numbers from Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. The text of the letter containing these demands was drafted there and then. In the event of the "seven" refusing, it was agreed that we should break away from them altogether and appeal to the masses.

## CHAPTER XIII

## THE SPLIT

Our Ultimatum to the Mensheviks – The Split – How the Workers Reacted to the Split – Echoes in Party Organisations– Plekhanov against the “Seven” – The Significance of the Split for the Party

On our return from Poronino, the six workers’ deputies proceeded to their various districts to report on the conference and to put into operation the decisions of the conference on the question of organisation. At the request of the Central Committee I went out to the Bejetzk works at Bryansk, where we had a strong organisation; during the whole period of my membership of the Duma I remained constantly in touch with the workers there.

We returned to St. Petersburg in time for the opening of the autumn session of the Duma on October 15. At the first meeting of the Social-Democratic fraction, which was held on the following day, a special announcement was at once made by us. After briefly describing the position which had arisen in the Party, we presented our demands for equality of treatment for both wings of the fraction, stating at the same time: “We demand an immediate reply. In the event of a refusal, we shall leave the fraction.”

Chkheidze tried to avoid the discussion of our demands: “Is the meeting willing to discuss the declaration of the six deputies?” he inquired, and being assured of his usual majority he wanted at once to put the question to the vote.

In answer to our protest against such a method of procedure, one of the “seven” came to the assistance of the chairman with the suggestion that the meeting should first discuss the current affairs of the fraction and then pass on to the consideration of the issue raised by the “six.” But, definitely refusing to continue to work as a united fraction until we received a reply to our demands, we left the meeting in a body.

The Mensheviks were obviously taken aback by this determined action and at first were at a loss as to how to react. Therefore, in order to gain time, they requested us to present the declaration in writing and promised to give a reply within a week, inviting us meanwhile to continue to participate in the work of the fraction. On the next day we handed in the following declaration:

A year of common work in the State Duma has given rise to much friction and a number of clashes between us

and you, the other seven Social-Democratic deputies. The differences were frequently discussed openly in the press, and your last decisions, taken just before the closing of the Duma in June, when a number of the members were away, show the utter impossibility of continuing the present state of things. These decisions mean that by virtue of your seven votes you intend to refuse to allow the Bolshevik "six" one of the two seats on the budget commission or a representative to a most important organisation.

Coming on top of your repeated refusals to allow the workers' deputies one of two speakers put up in the Duma, this decision is more than we are prepared to stand.

You are aware that we have been, and are, acting fully and exclusively in the spirit of consistent Marxism, adhering, as we do, ideologically to all its decisions. You know, comrades, that we do not exaggerate when we say that our activity is in complete harmony with the ideas and will of the vast majority of the advanced Marxist Russian workers. This is proved by the way in which *Pravda*, the first workers' newspaper created by the upsurge of the labour movement in April-May 1912, has rallied the majority of the working class. It is proved by the elections in the workers' electoral colleges to the Fourth State Duma, when in every case Bolsheviks were elected as deputies, revealing that in comparison with the workers' electoral colleges for the Second and Third Dumas, there has been an enormous growth of Marxism and anti-Liquidationist ideas among the class-conscious Russian workers. It is also apparent in the results of the election of the Board of the St. Petersburg Metal-Workers' Union and in the history of the first workers' newspaper in Moscow.

It is clear that we consider it our duty to act in strict conformity with the will of the Russian workers united under the banner of Marxism. Yet you, the other seven deputies, choose to act independently of that will. You adopt decisions which are in opposition to it. We would remind you of your acceptance of the Polish deputy, Jagello, into the fraction, although he was not recognised by any Social-Democrat in Poland, and also of your adoption of the nationalist slogan of cultural autonomy against the wishes of the workers, etc. We have no exact data about your rela-



tions to the Liquidationist tendency, but we believe that you incline towards it, although only in a half-hearted fashion. But, be that as it may, it is apparent that you do not consider yourselves bound by the opinions and demands of the class-conscious Russian workers with whom we work hand in hand.

In these conditions every Socialist, every class-conscious worker, in any country in the world would condemn outright your attempt to suppress us by your one extra vote and to use this slight advantage to force down our throats a policy which is rejected by the majority of the Russian workers.

We are forced to recognise that our differences as to how work should be conducted both inside and outside the Duma are irreconcilable. We are convinced that your conduct in refusing us a just proportion of representation aims at a split and precludes the possibility of our working together. But in view of the insistent demand of the workers to preserve the unity of the Social-Democratic fraction, if only for outward appearances, if only in the Duma work, and being of opinion that the experience of the past year has shown that it is possible to achieve such unity by agreement in our Duma work, we request you to state once for all, precisely and unambiguously, that no further suppression by your seven votes of the six deputies from the workers' colleges is to take place. The preservation of a united Social-Democratic fraction is only possible if there is a full recognition of equality between the "six" and the "seven" and if our work in the Duma follows the line of an agreement between us on all questions at issue.

This declaration was published in *Pravda* together with an appeal to all workers to support the demand of the "six." On the same day, *Pravda* opened a campaign against the "seven" and explained the meaning of the struggle which had arisen in the fraction. One of the articles contained figures showing the number of workers in the districts from which Social-Democratic deputies had been elected: nine-tenths of the total number lived in the districts which had returned Bolsheviks, while one-tenth stood to the credit of the Menshevik seven. Many articles exposing the Liquidators and explaining the criminal part which they were playing in the struggle against the Party were received from members of the Central Committee

abroad, including some from Comrade Lenin.

"Rally to our defence!" was the appeal of *Pravda*. "Our patience is exhausted. The workers' deputies approached the majority of the fraction requesting freedom to carry out their work and to fulfil the tasks imposed on them by the proletariat; the 'seven' answered as before by trying to shirk the issue. Therefore the workers themselves must settle the question. We appeal to all those to whom the interests of the working class are dear, to rally to the defence of the workers' representatives and to declare to the 'seven' that the workers will not allow the will of their chosen deputies, the consistent Marxists, to be violated."

The workers of St. Petersburg responded readily to our appeal and their example was followed by the workers of other big cities. The columns of *Pravda* were filled with resolutions passed by the workers condemning the behaviour of the "seven" and promising support to the workers' deputies. The following is one of the first resolutions received before the Mensheviks had given an answer to our demands:

We, the workers in the gun workshop of the Putilov works, having learned from the press of the disputes that have taken place in the Social-Democratic fraction in the State Duma, state that we regard the demand of the six deputies elected from the workers' electoral colleges, who are the representatives of the Russian working class as a whole, to be perfectly correct. Further, we require from the seven deputies the recognition of the right of the "six" to guide all the work concerning working-class tactics.

During the first week after the publication of our declaration to the Menshevik "seven," *Pravda* received resolutions adopted by the workers of twenty-five factories and signed by over 2,500 workers. Moreover, four meetings of delegates representing about a hundred works in the St. Petersburg area declared against the Liquidators and for the "six." Similar resolutions were carried by the executive committees of the four trade unions representing some 3,000 members.

At that time, when the split was imminent, all our Party organisations did good work amongst the masses. Several meetings were arranged by the Metal-Workers' Committee and all our "six" spoke daily at gatherings of workers who were keenly interested in the struggle against the Mensheviks. In some districts the supporters of the Mensheviks, when they learned that one of us was to speak, in-

vited also a representative of the "seven." The debates which followed on such occasions usually ended in the discomfiture of the Mensheviks, since the majority of the workers, once they had grasped the true character of the quarrel, sided with the Bolsheviks and demanded that the Duma fraction should pursue a Bolshevik policy.

Whilst refraining from giving a direct answer to our demands, the seven published a lengthy explanation of their position in the *Novaya Rabochaya Gazeta*, which now appeared in place of *Luch*. Their policy was perfectly clear. They wished to delay the matter as long as possible and, while conducting a campaign in the press and among the workers, to bring in some way pressure on us from outside. But their calculations were all wrong; our decision had been taken after serious consideration and could not be affected by a few days' delay.

We attended the regular meeting of the fraction on October 21, and again demanded an answer to our conditions. Chkheidze, in the name of the "seven," replied that a final answer would be given within four days and meanwhile they considered it possible for work to be continued only on the old basis, i.e. without recognising equal rights for both sections of the fraction. The meeting then adjourned and separate conferences took place of the "six" and the "seven" with Comrade Novosyolov, the doorkeeper of the fraction, acting as intermediary to convey proposals from one to the other. Finally we informed the "seven" that we were willing to wait a few more days, but that during this time we would not take part in the general voting of the fraction but would announce the collective decision of the "six" on any question that arose.

The ensuing fraction meeting showed that the Mensheviks were far from considering any renunciation of the power which their one-vote majority gave them. They refused to allow us a speaker on the interpellation concerning the press and proceeded to appoint two Mensheviks. It is interesting to note that they stated that since there was no difference of opinion between the two wings on this question there was no reason to have a speaker from each. Thus, if there were differences of opinion, a Bolshevik should not speak because that would destroy the unity, and if there were no differences, then, too, it was not necessary for a Bolshevik to address the Duma.

At the next session of the Duma the "seven" demonstrated the extent to which they accepted Liquidationist principles. The Menshevik, Tulyakov, speaking on behalf of the fraction, declared: "The freedom of association, which includes the right to hold meetings, is

our fighting slogan." Thus Tulyakov openly proclaimed a Liquidationist slogan which had been definitely opposed by the Party because it was substituted for the genuine revolutionary demands of the workers.

Finally, on October 25, the Mensheviks gave their long-awaited answer to our declaration. As we expected, they rejected all of our demands and proposed to continue the work of the fraction along the old lines. After receiving the written reply, we left the meeting. This was the last meeting of the united Social-Democratic fraction of the Fourth State Duma. The split had become an accomplished fact.

On the following day *Pravda* published the following appeal of the "six" addressed to all workers:

Every worker, on reading the reply of the seven deputies in which they reject all our demands, will undoubtedly ask himself: "What is the next step?"

Will the fraction reunite? Will the workers allow the seven deputies who keep aloof from the Marxist organisation to speak in the name of Social-Democracy? What are we, the six workers' deputies, to do now that the "seven" have decided by means of their one-vote majority to follow a policy which is contrary to the will of the workers?

We realise that the workers demand the unity of Social-Democrats in the Duma. When we asked the proletariat if they agreed with our conception of how that unity should be achieved, thousands of workers replied: "We do." We are convinced that this is the opinion of the majority of Russian workers.

For the sake of that unity, we did not discontinue our work within the fraction and did all we could to prevent the majority in the fraction destroying that unity. We had the right to expect that the seven deputies would put aside factional considerations and would listen to the voices of the hundreds and thousands of workers who, by their resolutions, approved our demands.

But this did not happen. The "seven" rejected our demands, ignored the workers and countered their clearly expressed will. We are now faced with the necessity of maintaining an independent existence. That must now be clear to all workers to whom the interests of the Marxist organisation and the cause of the proletariat are dear.

We appeal to you, comrades, for support in this critical period.

We had now finally broken with the "seven." On October 27 we held the first meeting of the new Bolshevik fraction of the State Duma and sent an official notification to the "seven" that in view of their refusal of our demands, we should henceforward constitute an independent fraction in the Duma. For the purpose of joint action from the Duma tribune we told the "seven" that we were prepared to open special negotiations whenever necessary.

At the same time we published another statement in *Pravda* announcing the organisation of the Bolshevik fraction and explaining the causes of the split. We wrote:

It is common knowledge, that for some time past, two tendencies have been struggling for mastery within the ranks of the class-conscious, organised workers: one upholding the old slogans written on the old proletarian banner, the other represented by leaders who reject these slogans, declare the past of Social-Democracy to have been a kind of masquerading and preach the substitution of partial for basic slogans.

These two tendencies have been struggling for a number of years within the workers' ranks and, obviously, there could be no conciliatory attitude towards such a tendency. The "seven" made use of their voices, not only to advocate their views within the fraction, but also in order to give effect in the Duma to a line of policy rejected by us, a line of Liquidationist policy.... We could not submit to our old banner being outraged, to our old demands being ignored. For the sake of our demands, and in order to serve the cause of the working class, we deem it our duty to come out in defence of our slogans, and to withdraw from a place where they are ignored. Comrades, we shall now single-handed keep our banner flying both inside and outside the Duma and we appeal to you for assistance in this responsible work.

We submitted all the differences which arose between us and the Liquidators to the consideration of the working class with no fear as to the result. This was a moment of great historic importance. The division of the Party into Mensheviks and Bolsheviks extended from the bottom to the top, but so far the question of a

split had only become urgent within the illegal underground organisations which included the most revolutionary class-conscious workers. Now this question, which had enormous influence on the course of the Russian revolution, had to be answered by the entire working class. By supporting our Duma "six," the Russian proletariat would show that it was determined to struggle not only against the tsarist autocracy but against the bourgeois regime as a whole. For us, as for the Mensheviks, the position that the working class took on the question of the split in the Duma fraction was a matter of life or death as far as Party organisation was concerned. The correctness of the whole of our political line was, as it were, submitted to a general test, to be effected by the widest masses of the Russian proletariat.

We were under no misapprehension as to the seriousness of the step which we had taken in finally breaking with the Menshevik "seven" and appealing for support to the masses of the workers. The advisability of the split had often been discussed by the Party centres and a close examination of all the circumstances strengthened the opinion that the working class would follow us and not the Mensheviks. Yet some Party comrades still wavered and asked whether it was not premature to make a complete break, whether the support of the workers would be unanimous and whether we ought not to make another attempt to preserve at least a semblance of unity.

A feeling of enormous responsibility to the working class weighed heavily upon us during those days. Conscious of that responsibility we awaited with anxiety the workers' response to our appeal; although sure that the majority of the workers would be with us, we could not calculate the extent or the nature of their support. All Party organisations threw themselves into the task of conducting an agitational campaign in favour of the "six."

The question of the position which the workers would assume was, in fact, reduced to the question of how powerful will be the response of the St. Petersburg proletariat. Both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, therefore, devoted most of their attention to the conquest of the workers of St. Petersburg. At every factory, in every workshop, the question of the split in the fraction was the subject of heated controversy and lively discussion and members of our "six" were continually asked to attend meetings to explain the reasons why the Bolsheviks left the fraction. From St. Petersburg the campaign rapidly spread throughout the country, the workers' deputies

sent letters, appeals, etc., to their constituencies and in reply there was a stream of resolutions, greetings and promises of support.

The campaign grew wider in extent, embracing more and more of the workers. The split was at first a matter of discussion in the narrow Party nuclei; later it became a topic in trade union branches and other legal workers' organisations and finally it was a subject which interested the entire working class.

Despite the difficulties, all the workers' resolutions received by our "six" bore genuine signatures, although such an action rendered the signatories liable to arrest and exile or at least to dismissal. Consequently the number of signatures could not give a correct idea of the number of workers who supported us, the more so since, in many cases, the resolutions were signed by representatives of several hundreds or thousands of workers. Nevertheless the number of resolutions and the number of signatures received by us is significant when compared with the numbers obtained by the Mensheviks. The "seven," assisted by the Party apparatus and press of the Liquidators, had, of course, launched a campaign against us, but in the first few days after the split it was apparent that their position was hopeless.

By November 1, in the course of two weeks, *Pravda* and our fraction received over eighty resolutions of support bearing over 5,000 signatures. During the same period, the Mensheviks could only muster 3,500 signatures. And even this proportion was not maintained, since the Mensheviks had exhausted all their efforts in the first weeks, and every day saw a falling off in the number of Menshevik resolutions while the number of resolutions in favour of the "six" continued to increase. In the course of the next month our lead was still more pronounced; the flow of pro-Menshevik resolutions from the provinces ceased almost entirely, whereas our supporters were only beginning to act.

By December 1 it was clear that the Bolsheviks could count at least two and a half times as many supporters among the Russian workers as the Mensheviks. The amount of money collected by each group among the workers was also significant. The Mensheviks were able to raise only about 150 rubles for every 1,000 which we obtained.

The split in the Duma fraction and the organisation of an independent Bolshevik fraction had important results within the Russian Social-Democratic Party. All Party organisations and Party groups

decided one way or the other on the question, thus joining one of the two wings of the formerly united Party.

Our fraction received many letters from groups of comrades in prison and exile, where thousands of revolutionary workers were living at that time. Being far away and detached from recent developments, not all of them saw at once the correctness of our position; some thought that by each side making some concessions it would still be possible to preserve unity. The split was especially painful to former Social-Democratic deputies of the previous Dumas. A group of ex-deputies of the Second Duma, who were in exile in Siberia, sent us a telegram imploring us to find some way of preserving a united fraction. After a time, however, they, like all genuine revolutionary Marxists, saw clearly that the final break with Menshevism was not only historically inevitable but also absolutely necessary for the successful progress of the revolutionary struggle.

Some Social-Democratic circles abroad too did not grasp the nature and meaning of the split in the fraction, but hovered between the two camps, passing from Bolshevism to Menshevism and vice versa. One of the largest of these groups, *Vperiod* (Forward), thought that the split was the result of the "absence of a single leading Party centre, enjoying the confidence of the majority of Party members." The *Vperiodists* recognised that the demands of the "six" were just, but they thought that the whole question only amounted to minor organisational clashes within the fraction. Thus they entirely missed the significance of the split and the fundamental differences which had led to it.

The leading committees of both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks issued outspoken and clearly expressed statements on the question of the split.

The following resolution was adopted by the St. Petersburg Committee of our Party.

We send warm greetings to the six workers' deputies who now constitute the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Fraction, and who in the whole of their activity were guided by the will of the Marxist organisation and remained true to the old programme and tactics of Social-Democracy. Without striving to accomplish so-called positive work, they have boldly proclaimed from the Duma tribune the fundamental slogans of the proletariat....



Then, after enumerating the principal motives of the "six" in presenting their demands to the Menshevik "seven," the resolution concluded as follows: "We emphatically condemn the seven deputies and consider that they have no right to assume the title of 'Social-Democratic fraction' and that, being unworthy to represent the workers, they should resign their seats unless they are willing to restore unity and act in agreement with the Marxist organisation and the 'six'."

This resolution was published in the *Proletarskaya Pravda*, and in order to deceive the censor, it was called "resolution of the leading institution of the St. Petersburg Marxists." For the same reasons the word "Party" was replaced by the expression "Marxist organisation," as in other resolutions and articles printed in the newspaper.

At about the same time, the Liquidationist *Novaya Rabochaya Gazeta* published the appeal issued by the Mensheviks' Organisational Committee which, also for censorship considerations, was called the "leading institution of the Social-Democratic workers who united in August 1912." The Mensheviks called us "deserters," "violators of the workers' instructions," "supporters of the Lenin circle," "secessionists," etc., and appealed for support on the ground that they were the only genuine representatives of the working class. We have already seen the results of their appeals. Having been defeated in the agitational campaign among the workers, the Mensheviks made another attempt to bring pressure to bear on our "six." Taking advantage of the lack of information concerning Russian affairs among foreign Social-Democratic parties and of the fact that it was their nominee who represented the fraction on the international Socialist Bureau (of the Second International), the Mensheviks decided to raise the question at the next meeting of the Bureau. Chkhaidze and Skobelev left for London, where the Bureau was to meet on December 1.

Hoping to gain also the weighty support of Plekhanov, Chkhaidze wired to him in Italy asking him to come to London to express his opinion on the split at the Bureau meeting. Plekhanov, however, not only declined to come to London, but sent a letter to the International Socialist Bureau stating that he supported the "six" and considered that the Mensheviks were to blame for the split. At the same time, since he believed that this matter finally clinched the question of a split in the Social-Democratic Party, Plekhanov decided to resign from the Bureau, on which he was the representative of the whole Party. The following is an extract from his letter:

The differences of opinion which have existed within the Russian Social-Democratic Party during the last few years have now led to the division of our Duma fraction into two competing groups. This split occurred as the result of certain regrettable decisions taken by our Liquidationist comrades, who chanced to be in a majority (seven against six). Since a decisive blow has been dealt at the unity of our Party, I, who represent among you the whole Party, have no other choice but to resign. This I am doing by the present letter.

The attempt of the Liquidators to rush the Bureau into taking their side in this quarrel failed miserably. The International Socialist Bureau paid little attention to the communication concerning the Russian Party, to which only a few minutes were devoted. On Kautsky's motion a vaguely worded resolution was adopted on the need for unity in the Russian Party, and for this purpose the Bureau charged its executive committee to "enter into negotiations with all groups within the Russian Party and all groups whose programme was in accord with the Party's for the purpose of arranging for a general exchange of views concerning the points at issue." This failure completed the discomfiture of the Mensheviks they had been defeated all along the line.

During their struggle against the seven deputies, the Bolsheviks had carried new positions and considerably widened and deepened their influence among the workers. The Party had not wavered, and it emerged victorious and strengthened. The split in the fraction and the creation of an independent Bolshevik fraction was discussed by thousands of workers, and the fact that such questions obtained wide publicity was of extreme organisational and political importance. The campaign in support of the "six" resulted in an influx of workers into the ranks of the Party, and the whole of our Party work was infused with new vigour. Many revolutionary workers, who until then had no clear notion of the essence of the Party differences and inclined towards the Menshevik-Liquidators, joined the Bolsheviks as the result of the information gained during this period.

Fundamentally the question of the split was the general question of how the Party organisation "should be built up. By supporting our Bolshevik "six," the workers showed that they had chosen their path, the path which conducted the Russian proletariat to the final victory.

## CHAPTER XIV

**THE BOLSHEVIK FRACTION**

The First Acts of the Fraction – Sabotage by the “Seven” –  
Reinforcing Duma Work – The Eight-Hour Bill – The  
Disintegration of the Menshevik Fraction

The “six” had, in reality, existed as an independent fraction since the first day of the autumn session of 1913, when, after presenting our demands to the Mensheviks, we refused to carry on joint work. From that day forward, the “six” and the “seven” held separate meetings and on only a couple of occasions combined to discuss the appointing of official speakers for the fraction in the Duma. At the end of October we formally announced the creation of an independent Bolshevik fraction.

At the first meeting of the fraction, officials were elected and questions of organisation settled. Malinovsky was elected chairman, Petrovsky vice-chairman, Samoylov treasurer, and Rozmirovich secretary. The “six” assumed the name “Russian Social-Democratic Workers’ Fraction,” stressing the word “Workers” which distinguished them from the Mensheviks.

Until premises could be secured, the fraction held its meetings and received visitors at my apartment in Shpalernaya Street. Later on special premises were rented; we obtained some furniture, engaged an attendant, published the address in the newspaper and from then on received our visitors and did other business there. All expenses connected with the fraction were equally borne by the “six”; each of us paid monthly about twenty-five to thirty rubles.

The Presidium of the Duma tried in every possible way to prevent the formation of the Bolshevik fraction. And since official registration was necessary in order to obtain the same rights as the other Duma fractions (to receive papers and send representatives to the commissions, etc.), Rodzyanko attempted to postpone registration as long as he could. He declared: “There cannot be two Social-Democratic fractions in the State Duma, therefore the six workers’ deputies will be registered as ‘independent’ – i.e. non-fraction.”

The other members of the Presidium supported their chairman, referring to the practice of foreign parliaments where, they asserted, there was no such precedent. But according to the Duma rules any group of deputies was entitled to form a fraction, and therefore after some procrastination the Duma was forced to recognise us.

Meanwhile the Menshevik “seven” did all that they could to

hamper our work. As soon as we left the fraction they announced officially in the Duma that any interpellation or declaration which was not signed by Chkheidze or his deputy did not emanate from Social Democrats. The "seven" would hear of no joint action. On leaving the fraction, we proposed to the Mensheviks to arrange jointly in future our representation on commissions and any other Duma work. This offer was made to meet the wishes of those groups of workers who believed that in face of the Black Hundred Duma, the "six" and "seven" should combine on certain questions. The Mensheviks, however, who until then had shouted so volubly about unity, absolutely refused to make any sort of agreement.

Our personal relations with the "seven" became strained to the point of hostility; we no longer greeted or spoke to them for some time. Chkheidze, in the name of the "seven," declared that they would treat us like any other Duma fraction and would add their signatures to our interpellations on the same basis as they did for the Cadets, Trudoviks, etc. Eventually it turned out that they treated us worse than they did their neighbours on the Right.

At the request of the fraction, I collected signatures for one of our first interpellations – I believe it was on the question of workers' insurance in State enterprises. I had already obtained several signatures from the Trudoviks and even from the Cadets when I asked Chkheidze and he refused. The other members of the "seven" did likewise.

Professing to act in the name of fourteen Social-Democratic deputies, the "seven" had sent representatives to three newly-formed Duma commissions dealing with the press, the police and public meetings. They had also refused to divide with us the representation on the budget commission. The time had come, however, when the Mensheviks were forced to offer to come to terms on the question of participation in commissions. Before the closing of the Duma for the Christmas recess, several new commissions were formed on which the Mensheviks were unable to obtain representation, because by that time our fraction was formally registered and only fractions of more than ten members were entitled to be represented.

The Mensheviks then requested us to send joint representatives to these commissions. Naturally enough, we declined this offer and agreed to negotiate only on condition that the "seven" divided with us the seats that they had previously captured. To make terms with the Mensheviks only when it suited them meant to revert to the state of things which existed before the split. The Mensheviks replied

that they declined on principle to open any general negotiations with us and absolutely refused to consider the reappointment of representatives on the Duma commissions.

After the formation of an independent fraction, the work of our "six" became much wider in its scope. The break with the "seven" greatly increased our tasks and every workers' deputy was required to display greater energy. We were only able to accomplish our duties because of the support which we received from the majority of the workers, and this support was forthcoming. The very split called forth a strong tide which brushed aside the Mensheviks and greatly strengthened the Bolshevik deputies. The greater activity of our fraction after the split attracted to us still more support from the workers. This was a period of great working-class activity and all branches of our work both inside and outside the Duma were invigorated and enlivened. Money streamed in for revolutionary objects and there was a considerable increase in the number of visitors to the fraction and to the editorial offices of the newspaper. The scope of the Duma work became different too.

The autumn session of the State Duma was very short, lasting only six weeks. Even during that period, however, in spite of the fact that we had to devote considerable time and energy to fighting the "seven" and to internal Party matters, we got through an enormous amount of work. During the six weeks we introduced the following thirteen interpellations: (1) on the press, (2) on the use of agents-provocateurs to secure the arrest of the Social-Democratic fraction in the Second Duma, (3) on strikes, (4) on trade unions, (5) on insurance questions, (6) on the arrest of workers' representatives, (7) on the press (second interpellation), (8) on strikes (second time), (9) on the fine imposed upon me by the city governor, (10) on strikes at the Obukhov works, (11) on the non-insurance of workers in State undertakings, (12) on mining disasters, (13) on measures for combating the plague.

Most of these questions were introduced independently by our fraction after the formal split had occurred. In addition the "six" made speeches in every important debate during the twenty-four sittings.

The intolerance of the Black Hundred Duma majority towards our speeches and interpellations still further increased after the split. Purishkevich complained that the workers' deputies were overwhelming the Duma with interpellations and the Duma invariably denied the urgency of our questions and turned them over to commissions to be buried. The Black Hundreds were determined to pre-

vent us making use of the Duma tribune. With the close collaboration of the Cadet, Maklakov, they drew up new regulations under which speeches on interpellations were limited to ten minutes, also restricting the right to introduce such interpellations as it was obvious that the Duma would not accept. These new regulations were designed expressly against the "six," since our interpellations were only introduced for the purpose of revolutionary agitation.

Our fraction frequently met representatives of the St. Petersburg workers to discuss all aspects of Duma work. They formed for this purpose a "workers' commission" which regularly held joint meetings with the fraction. Although this regularity was often interrupted by the arrest of visitors to the fraction's rooms, new comrades came forward to replace them. The workers' commission did not restrict its activities to the discussion of Duma questions; it became the vehicle for the transmission of Party instructions to the illegal organisations.

The workers' commission met for the first time at the end of January 1914, when the winter session opened; various sub-committees were formed to discuss the different bills and interpellations. Animated discussions took place on every point; bills were discussed both from the aspect of their significance under the tsarist regime and of how the question would be dealt with after the revolution. Were it possible to re-establish now all the details of the meetings of the commission, it would be found that many proposals and resolutions discussed then are now realised in the form of laws.

The eight-hours bill, which was of special importance in our Duma work, was drafted with the aid of the "workers' commission." Was this so-called "positive legislative work" to which our Party was definitely opposed? Most decidedly not. In the first place, the eight-hour day was not one of those partial demands which the Liquidators considered could be realised through the Duma; it was one of the three fundamental slogans under which the Party mobilised the workers for the struggle. The introduction of the bill into the Duma provided an opportunity for the proclamation of one of our fighting revolutionary slogans from the Duma tribune itself. The bill had nothing to do with "positive work," since there was not the slightest chance that it would be accepted by the Black Hundred majority. On the other hand, the very failure of the bill could be made the occasion of further revolutionary agitation.

*Pravda* published the text of the bill and stated:

Of course we do not for a moment expect that the Fourth Duma will pass this bill. The eight-hour day is one

of the fundamental demands of the workers in the present period. When this question is raised in the Duma the other parties will be forced to declare their attitude towards it and this will assist our struggle for the eight-hour day outside the Duma. We appeal to all workers to endorse the bill. Let it be introduced not only in the name of a group of deputies, but in the name of tens of thousands of workers!

To-day all the provisions of the bill seem commonplace enough, but it was very different under tsarism. The working class devoted immense efforts to the struggle for the eight-hour day, which they were unable to obtain until they had overthrown and destroyed the entire autocratic regime. The sacrifices made by the Russian proletariat during the revolution were also made for the right to work not more than eight hours a day.

In order to understand the enormous impression which the publication of this bill made on the workers, it is necessary to visualise the conditions of that time. The workers of St. Petersburg and other cities overwhelmed our fraction and the editors of *Pravda* with resolutions, warmly welcoming the introduction of the bill. The following is characteristic: it bore 319 signatures.

We, a group of workers from various shops at the Putilov works, warmly thank our six workers' deputies of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Fraction for the bill which they have drafted and placed on the agenda of the State Duma to establish a maximum working-day of eight hours. We all endorse this bill and whole-heartedly support the deputies elected from the workers' electoral colleges.

The introduction of this bill further increased the sympathy between the workers and our "six" and lessened that between them and the Mensheviks. The "seven" were rapidly losing the last vestiges of their influence and very soon became altogether divorced from the workers. The demands, needs and requests of the workers were addressed to our fraction and the Mensheviks were ignored. The members of the "seven" made their usual speeches in the Duma, but they were compelled to admit among themselves that they had entirely lost the support of the working class.

In the archives of the police department there is a document describing a meeting of the Menshevik "seven" held at the end of January 1914, which reveals clearly that the Mensheviks had already begun to realise where their policy had landed them. Chkhenkeli re-

proached his fraction because "it had lost all influence, deserted the political life of the country, broken its connections with the workers and finally forced the most active members to leave the fraction and consequently brought the work of the fraction to a standstill." Tulyakov spoke in a similar strain: "The fraction calls itself Social-Democratic but it does not reflect the life and aspirations of the workers either in the State Duma or in the press. The fraction has, for political, police and ethical considerations, abandoned the workers and landed itself in a state of 'splendid isolation.' "

It is quite possible that the reports of the secret police do not correctly reproduce the words of the Menshevik deputies, but in any case it is beyond dispute that the "seven" began to disintegrate immediately after the split. Early in January, the deputy Buryanov left the Menshevik fraction. He regarded himself as a Plekhanovist and during the Christmas recess he visited Plekhanov in order to learn more precisely his views on the split. He sent the following letter to Chkhaidze on his return:

Of course I understand, as you probably do too, that the causes of the split in the Duma fraction lie outside of the Duma. In these circumstances the complete unity of Social-Democrats in the Duma will be achieved only when there is unity among the advanced elements of the Russian class-conscious workers. Whilst striving for this complete unity in the future, I consider that united action on the part of Social-Democratic deputies is imperative at the present moment. This can only be obtained on the basis of equality between the Social-Democratic Fraction and the Social-Democratic Workers' Fraction. Up to now we have unfortunately rejected this method of avoiding a split in the fraction. I hope that, since my leaving the Social-Democratic Fraction will equalise the two wings numerically, you will revise your views as to the possibility of joint work on a basis of equality.

Buryanov did not proceed further with his protest but adopted a middle position, declaring that he would support both fractions in any activity which was "consistent with a Marxist line of policy."

Soon afterwards the Mensheviks lost another member when they were forced to expel Mankov for too obvious deviations to the Right. Thus while the Mensheviks disintegrated and lost the confidence of the workers, the influence of our "six" increased and we were enthusiastically supported by the revolutionary proletariat.



**THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT  
ON THE EVE OF THE WAR**



## CHAPTER XV

**POISONING OF WORKING WOMEN**

The Growth of the Strike Movement – Strike on the Occasion of the Interpellation on the Lena Events – Poisoning of Women at the Provodnik Factory and at the Treugolnik – Interpellation Concerning the Treugolnik – The “Explanations” of the Government – Answer to the Government’s Explanations– Protest Strike of 120,000 – The Lock-out – Demonstration at the Funeral – Purishkevich appeals for Executions

In March 1914, a number of events took place in St. Petersburg which called forth a remarkably strong outburst of the workers’ movement. A number of political strikes broke out in St. Petersburg early in that month. The workers protested by one-day strikes against the persecution of the workers’ press, the systematic rejection of our fraction’s interpellations by the Duma, the persecution and suppression of trade unions and educational associations, etc. The movement spread all over the city and many works were involved. The workers also protested against a secret conference arranged by Rodzyanko, the Duma president, for the purpose of increasing armaments. Representatives from all the Duma fractions except the Trudoviks and Social-Democrats were invited, and when we denounced this fresh expenditure of the people’s money on armaments we were supported by a strike of 30,000 workers.

Throughout March the movement continued to grow and it received a fresh impetus on the anniversary of the shooting of the Lena workers. The government had not answered our previous interpellation calling for an investigation, although it was passed by the Duma. In view of the impending anniversary, we decided to introduce a new interpellation calling upon the government to expedite its reply.

All Party organisations were preparing for the anniversary demonstration and conducting propaganda at all factories and works. A proclamation was issued by the St. Petersburg Committee calling upon the workers to demonstrate in the streets in support of the interpellation, and workers from a number of factories decided to proceed in a body to the State Duma.

The demonstration was fixed for March 13, and the strike began in the Vyborg district. At the Novy Aivaz works the night shift left off at 3 a.m. and in the morning they were joined by the other workers. The strike quickly spread through the city and over 60,000 men

participated in the movement, 40,000 of whom were metal-workers. Resolutions of protest were carried at the factories and Party members from amongst the workers spoke reminding the workers of the Lena shootings and explaining the general tasks of the revolutionary struggle.

The workers came out of the factories and works singing revolutionary songs and unfurling their red flags. The Lessner workers advanced towards the Duma from the Vyborg direction but were held up by a police patrol on the Liteiny Bridge. Another crowd managed to cross the Neva on the ice and, carrying a red flag, proceeded towards the Duma buildings along the Voskresensky quay. There the demonstrators were attacked by mounted police who started to use their whips; the crowd replied with stones and one of the police was wounded. Encounters with the police also occurred in other parts of the city and demonstrations took place in the centre, along the Nevsky Prospect.

The strike was continued the next day, when several more factories joined in. More demonstrations took place involving over 65,000 workers.

This movement was immediately followed by another strike wave caused by the poisoning of working women in rubber factories. The new strike wave was considerably stronger than the previous one, both as to the number of strikers and the extent of the street actions.

Information as to the poisoning of women workers was first received by our fraction from the workers of the Provodnik goloshes factory, the biggest in Riga. The workers there were being systematically poisoned by the fumes given off by a low quality polish used for finishing off the goloshes. Some women were only slightly affected and recovered after a fainting fit and short illness, but there were some fatal cases. Working up to thirteen hours a day, for a beggarly maximum of seventy-five kopeks, undermined the workers' constitutions with the result that they were unable to withstand the poisonous fumes.

The women workers applied several times to the manager and to the factory inspector for improved working conditions and in particular requested that the use of the dangerous polish be discontinued. The reply of the authorities was that anyone who suffered from weak nerves could leave. Finally, after another outbreak, the workers at the Provodnik asked the fraction to help in forcing the administration to move in this matter.

We sent Malinovsky to Riga to investigate and, on the basis of the information which he collected, an interpellation to the Minister for Trade and Industry was drafted and introduced into the Duma. It began as follows:

Physical degeneration and frequent deaths of the workers are a common result of the capitalist exploitation of the proletariat. The political disfranchisement of the Russian workers and their weakness in the face of combinations of powerful capitalists who control all politicians in office, renders the condition of the working class worse than that of serfs. An example of these conditions was provided by the incidents at the Lena Goldfields, where workers were fed on horseflesh, evicted, turned out into the *taiga* and finally shot. And now a special investigation conducted at Riga by Malinovsky, a member of our fraction, has revealed a similar case of capitalist ruthlessness and similar passivity on the part of the authorities. The biggest industrial undertaking in Riga, the Provodnik rubber factory, which employs some 13,000 workers – mainly women – was the scene of this new tragedy....

We insisted that the interpellation was urgent, but before it could be placed on the Duma agenda, similar events had happened in St. Petersburg itself.

On March 12 I was called away from a meeting of the interpellation commission in the Duma to answer the telephone. There one of the workers who assisted our fraction told me hurriedly that the workers of the Treugolnik factory were asking for a deputy to call on them, numerous cases of poisoning having occurred and the workers being in a state of panic.

I at once went along to the factory and was met at the gates by a crowd of excited workers. They began firing questions at me, but as I knew nothing I tried to get them to tell me what had taken place. It was difficult, as each woman worker explained the poisoning in her own way, some even calling it a plague, and meanwhile patient after patient was being carried to the first-aid room.

After hearing several accounts I was able to gather what had taken place at the factory. That morning a new polish had been issued for goloshes, the main constituent of which was a poor substitute for benzine, which emitted poisonous gases. Shortly afterwards scores of women workers began to faint. Terrible scenes followed;

in some cases the poisoning was so strong that the victims became insane, while in others blood ran from the nose and mouth. The small, badly equipped first-aid room was packed with bodies and fresh cases were taken into the dining-room, while all who were able to move were sent out of the factory. "If they drop down there, the police will pick them up" – so ran the cynical excuse of the management.

About 200 cases of poisoning (only twenty were men) occurred in a department employing about 1,000. Most of the 13,000 workers employed at the factory were women and they were exploited most callously. The earnings of a goloshes worker were from forty to ninety kopeks for a ten-hour day; there was no dinner interval and overtime was common, while the owners of the Treugolnik factory obtained a profit of ten million rubles a year.

Towards the end of the day some thousands of workers assembled in the courtyard of the factory and demanded that the management issue a statement as to the number of victims, their names and the causes of the disaster. Among the crowd were many relatives of the workers affected and all were in a state of great excitement. The management refused to give any information to the workers, but sent for the police. Whilst one of the workers was making a speech from the factory wall, the police arrived and drove the crowd out of the gates. The workers went home, anxious about the fate of relatives and indignant at the bosses who were poisoning people for the sake of making bigger profits.

On the following day fresh cases of poisoning occurred in another department of the factory and the first-aid room was again full of suffering women. The women workers protested that it was impossible to continue working in the poisonous atmosphere, but the manager callously replied: "This is nonsense, you must get used to such an atmosphere. We cannot discard that polish because of a few accidents, we must fulfil our contracts. You will get used to it."

After work a meeting attended by several thousand workers was held near the factory gates. Various suggestions were made, but before any decision could be taken, a strong police detachment arrived and began to disperse the crowd. Stones and pieces of concrete were thrown at the police and two were injured.

When further workers were taken ill on the next day, the patience of the workers reached its breaking point. They left work in all departments and streamed into the yard; without previous arrangements a strike was declared. About ten thousand strikers gath-

ered around the factory gates and approving shouts interrupted the vehement speeches which were delivered. Whilst they were discussing the demands that should be presented to the management, the mounted police appeared and rode into the crowd flourishing their whips. The workers resisted and stones and bricks were thrown. Police reinforcements soon arrived and charged the crowd with drawn sabres, driving them in all directions and forcing some into the Obvodny Canal. There were casualties on both sides and many workers were arrested.

To avoid fresh disturbances, the management announced that the factory would be closed for several days and warned the workers that if further demonstrations occurred, the closing would be indefinite.

On my return from the factory I reported to a special meeting of the fraction, which decided to introduce another urgent interpellation combining this matter with the events at Riga which had previously been raised. However, on March 15, a message informed us of yet another case of poisoning, this time at the Bogdanov tobacco factory.

In Cabinet Street, where the factory is situated, I was met by about two thousand workers who had left their work in panic. I entered the factory gates and learned from the workers that the events there were very similar to those which had taken place at the Treugolnik. I went to the director of the factory to learn his explanation of the poisonings, but his reply was sheer mockery: "There is nothing to cause poisoning at this factory. The women are poisoned because they have been fasting and eating rotten fish. That accounts for the fainting fits." This made it evident that the management had already decided to shift the blame on to the workers themselves.

The next day I wrote a detailed account of my visit to the factory for *Pravda* and appealed to the workers: "In order to prevent these occurrences, the workers must be better organised and must set up their own trade union of tobacco workers." Many articles appeared in *Pravda* dealing with these poisonings, pointing out that this was only one of the results of the exploitation of the workers and drawing the necessary political conclusions.

Cases of poisoning continued to occur at other tobacco factories, printing offices, etc. Disease was rampant throughout St. Petersburg and the outbreak revealed the almost complete absence of medical aid at most St. Petersburg factories. No doctors or nurses

were available, medicines were deficient and there was no room for the casualties.

Excited workers from the factories affected came to the fraction and requested us to visit their factories, to investigate the causes of the poisonings and to bring solace to the masses. I had to visit a number of works and met everywhere the same picture. The panic caused amongst the workers by the immediate danger of being poisoned was accompanied by a deep feeling of resentment against the bosses. While it was not possible to establish in all cases the real cause of the poisoning, it was evident to all the workers that the chief reason for the accidents was profiteering on the part of the employers, for the sake of which the most ordinary and simple rules of health and labour protection were ignored.

The widespread outbreak of poisoning among the workers had repercussions in all branches of society; bourgeois publicists could not remain silent. It was natural that they should endeavour to explain events in their own way and even seek to make capital out of them. The staunchest defenders of capitalism, such as the yellow *Birzhevy* *Vyedomosty*, fully supported the factory owners and declared that the true culprits were the revolutionary parties, which tried to set the workers against their employers and force them to strike. A calumny was circulated to the effect that a "committee of poisoners," operating under the orders of our Bolshevik fraction, was working to create disturbances among the workers. In a vain attempt to avoid its obvious responsibility for the illness of hundreds of women workers, the united bourgeoisie used all means, including the foulest, and set its machine of lying insinuations into motion.

Not even the tsarist government, however, ventured to endorse the lies of the bourgeois scribblers. The commission set up by the Ministry of Trade and Industry recognised that the "prime cause of illness among workers in the rubber industry is the inhaling of fumes from benzine while at work." Replying to our interpellation in the Duma, an official of the Ministry of Trade, Litvinov-Falinsky, was forced to admit that the poisonings were caused by benzine of bad quality and that these poisonings differed little from the nicotine poisonings at tobacco factories. With regard to the spread of the epidemic, Litvinov acknowledged that it was due to the stifling atmosphere in the factories, the weakness and exhaustion and strained nerves of the workers. Litvinov, of course, did not forget to refer to mass psychosis and hysteria which, it was alleged, played an impor-



tant part in the spread of the disease.

This debate took place in a very strained atmosphere. Everyone in the Duma knew that on the previous day mass strikes, in protest against the poisonings, had broken out in St. Petersburg. More than 30,000 workers were out and there had already been a number of demonstrations and encounters with the police. While the discussion was taking place in the Duma, more workers left the factories and joined the strikers. The workers of St. Petersburg were electrified and excited, and their excitement penetrated into the Taurida Palace, making the Duma Black Hundreds nervous. The Black Hundreds rightly interpreted our speeches at that moment as appeals to the workers for further action and they were afraid and wished to gag us.

After Rodzyanko had cut short the speech of the first speaker, Tuliakov, it was my turn to speak, but I was not allowed to remain long on my feet. My speech was continually interrupted by shouts from the benches on the Right and by warnings from the president, Rodzyanko, who at length chose an opportune moment and stopped me in the middle of a sentence. Finally the debate was adjourned to the following sitting.

Among the workers the ferment increased and on the following day nearly 120,000 were involved in the strike movement. Party cells had carried on preliminary agitation at all factories and the police had endeavoured to forestall any action. Mass searches were made in the workers' districts and scores of workers were arrested. The secret police paid special attention to the leaders of trade unions and insurance societies who, in most cases, were active Party members. Despite this attempt to comb out all leaders, the movement assumed such dimensions that the police were unable to cope with it.

Demonstrations were held all over the city. The workers marched through the streets singing revolutionary songs; the police, both mounted and foot, flocked to the working-class districts and many collisions occurred. That day the secret police reported no less than thirteen big demonstrations in various parts of the city. During one encounter, when the crowd attempted to rescue a worker who had been arrested, the police drew their revolvers and fired on the crowd. A hand to hand fight followed and, despite a stubborn resistance, the police, armed with sabres and whips, finally gained the upper hand over the unarmed workers. Similar skirmishes took place in other districts and the demonstrations were distinguished by the determination and vigour of the workers.

The government and the capitalists sensed the threat behind this movement and at once passed to the counter-attack. On March 20 the Manufacturers' Association declared a lock-out which directly involved 70,000 workers. All the biggest works were closed and the Assistant Minister for the Navy ordered the Baltic shipyards to stop work. It was announced that the works would remain closed for a week and in the event of further strikes there would be mass dismissals. Police patrols were posted at all works.

The government promptly came to the assistance of the employers in this open war on the workers and suppressed the metal-workers' union in order to weaken the workers' resistance. By order of the city governor the activities of the union were suspended "pending a further decision," which meant until the St. Petersburg proletariat again succeeded in wresting from tsarism the right to restore their union to life. The offensive against the workers proceeded along the whole front.

The lock-out, which threw tens of thousands of workers on to the streets, caused a great deal of commotion among the St. Petersburg proletariat and some alarm in bourgeois circles. This alarm explains the decision of the municipal authorities to allocate 100,000 rubles for the organisation of soup kitchens for those out of work. It is characteristic that this decision was repealed as soon as the labour troubles were somewhat allayed, although there were as many unemployed in St. Petersburg as before.

Representatives from the factories and works involved called at our fraction headquarters and requested us to take measures to end the lock-out which doomed thousands of workers to starvation. The organised workers of the Narva district sent in the following resolution:

We regard the lock-out as a provocative challenge from the Manufacturers' Association. We call on the workers' deputies of the Social-Democratic Workers' Fraction to question the Minister of Trade and Industry and demand an answer within three days. We also propose that all employed workers lend monetary assistance to their comrades who are being victimised.

As in previous lock-outs, our fraction organised a collection on behalf of the dismissed workers. At the same time, through the columns of *Pravda*, we called on the workers of those factories where work had been stopped "for an indefinite period" to sue their employers for a fortnight's wages in lieu of discharge. *Pravda* warned the

workers to watch carefully that the management did not insert in their pay-books the phrase "I have no further claims," which if signed inadvertently by the worker would prevent him obtaining justice.

On March 21, protest demonstrations were again held in the Narva district and several arrests were made. At the same time another demonstration in connection with the funeral of two workers, who were killed by an explosion at an electrical station, revealed the revolutionary enthusiasm of the St. Petersburg proletariat. More than 3,000 workers attended the funeral and many wreaths bearing revolutionary inscriptions were laid on the coffins.

Closely watched by the police, the workers walked eighteen kilometres from the Obukhov hospital to the Preobrazhensky cemetery. Detachments of mounted police were posted at the gates of every works on the route to prevent more workers joining the procession; nevertheless the crowd continually increased.

On the previous day, the workers had asked me to attend the funeral. I did so, and as the coffins were being lowered into the grave I began my speech. "New victims have been torn from the vast family of the St. Petersburg workers. What do the stony-hearted capitalists care?" A police inspector approached me and demanded that I should stop; I ignored him and continued: "Exhausting toil, noxious gases in the workshop, premature death, and on top of all this, lock-outs – such is the lot of the working class. Lately the victims claimed by capitalism have become more numerous. Explosions, poisonings..."

Before I could finish the sentence, the mounted police rode into the crowd and the whips began to hiss; the crowd was forced back, and left the cemetery singing the revolutionary funeral march. Several hundred workers returned by rail and, after singing revolutionary songs in the train, they raised me shoulder high at St. Petersburg station and carried me out into the square. Police arrived from all directions and quickly dispersed the crowd.

I hurried from the station to the Duma where I was due to take part in the postponed debate on the poisonings. But here too I was unable to finish my speech. Rodzyanko interrupted it just as the police inspector had done at the cemetery.

The Black Hundred majority had decided that no Social-Democratic deputy should be allowed to speak on that day. When, immediately after me, one of the "seven" protested against the calumny about the poisonings, Rodzyanko stopped him and with the approval of the Duma majority suspended him for two sessions.

This created an uproar on the Left and all the members of the two Social-Democratic fractions demanded the right to speak to protest against this action. Rodzyanko, however, refused and, taking advantage of the late hour, closed the sitting.

A similar scene occurred during the next Duma sitting. Zamyslovsky, one of the most rabid of the Black Hundreds and a leader of pogroms, repeated the vile calumny about a "committee of poisoners."

Shouts of "Liar! *agent-provocateur!*" arose from the Left; Rodzyanko was powerless and unable to restore order. We continued to protest while the Rights applauded their leader and shouted threats at us.

Taking advantage of a lull in the riot, Rodzyanko suspended Chkhaidze for two sessions and allowed Purishkevich to address the house. Purishkevich continued the provocation: "The Treugolnik and Provodnik factories have hitherto been regarded, so to speak, as 'Black Hundred'; it was difficult to persuade the workers there to strike, so the friends of those who sit there" – here Purishkevich waved his hand towards our benches – "resorted to those measures...." Shouts of "Get out," "Remove him," drowned the rest of the sentence. He continued: "Since this crime is unparalleled and strikes at the very foundation of stable government and social life, these gentry" – pointing to us – "should be tried by court martial and hanged."

Whilst any of our workers' deputies would undoubtedly have been suspended for using words much milder than these, Purishkevich was allowed to pour out what abuse he liked. He resumed his seat without the slightest remark from the president but amidst the jeers of the Left.

The whole episode had assumed such importance in St. Petersburg that even the Black Hundred Duma dared not reject our interpellation. But they defeated our proposal for a special parliamentary commission to inquire into the causes of the poisoning by an overwhelming majority, and turned the interpellation itself over to the general commission which had already had so much experience in burying the most urgent of Duma interpellations.

The fact that the Duma did not reject the motion unconditionally did not hamper the government or the employers in their general offensive against the workers. After keeping the workers unemployed for some time, the owners lifted the lock-out, but, when reinstating their employees, carefully sifted out all the "unreliable" and "troublesome" elements.

## CHAPTER XVI

**OBSTRUCTION IN THE DUMA**

Prosecution for a Duma Speech – Obstructing Goremykin –  
 Suspension of the Left Deputies – Demonstrations and Strikes –  
 The Counter-Offensive of the Black Hundreds – The Liquidators  
 Support the Liberals – Declarations by the Three Fractions on the  
 Termination of the Suspension – The Importance of the Duma  
 Obstruction

The general political situation throughout Russia and, in particular, the situation within the labour movement, invariably determined the forms which the struggle inside the Duma would take. It is this consideration which gave special interest to the obstruction in the State Duma in April 1914, as a result of which all Social-Democrats and Trudoviks were suspended for fifteen sittings. The incidents which occurred in the Duma directly reflected the development of the working-class struggle, which, as often happens, temporarily rendered the liberal parties more radical. The whole episode, however, revealed another normal feature of liberal tactics. As soon as the Duma position became somewhat acute, the Liberal parties quietly dropped their opposition and resumed their place in the ranks of the counter-revolutionary Duma majority.

The immediate cause of the obstruction was the prosecution of Chkheidze for a speech made in the Duma. On the initiative of Maklakov, the Minister of the Interior, the Council of Ministers decided to prosecute Chkheidze for referring to the advantages of a republican regime. The tsarist government had frequently prosecuted deputies in court or by administrative order for activity outside the Duma, but this was the first case of prosecution for a speech delivered within the Duma itself. This was a direct attempt by the government to destroy freedom of speech from the Duma tribune, a freedom which was already restricted by the actions of the Black Hundred presidium. If it succeeded, it meant that the entire Left would be crushed.

The Liberal parties, the Cadets and the Progressives, were also alarmed by the prosecution of Chkheidze. They were not concerned with the fate of the Social-Democratic deputies, but regarded the event as an attack on the "constitutional guarantees" to which they clung as the principal achievement of the "emancipation struggle." Some Cadets, stimulated by the unrest in the country, even began to talk about refusing to vote the budget, whilst the Progressives intro-

duced a bill on the immunity of deputies for speeches made in the Duma.

Rodzyanko at once took counter measures. After having consulted Goremykin, the newly appointed Premier, he arranged for a series of clauses to be introduced into the bill in committee which imposed still greater penalties for "abuse of freedom of speech." These clauses were particularly directed against the extreme Left and entirely destroyed the value of the rest of the bill. In fact it handed over the Social-Democrats and Trudoviks to the tender mercies of the government.

Since the Black Hundred Duma held up even this distorted version of the "freedom" of speech bill, the Social-Democratic fraction decided to introduce a motion proposing that all Duma work be suspended until the discussion and passing of the bill dealing with the immunity of deputies. This, however, was too drastic for the Liberals, and so they introduced another motion which proposed to postpone discussion of the budget until the bill was passed. This motion was, of course, defeated, somewhat to the relief of the Liberals themselves. The two Social-Democratic fractions and the Trudoviks, however, refused to surrender and planned to organise obstruction in the Duma to prevent discussion on the budget. In view of the rise of the revolutionary spirit in the country, such a demonstration within the Duma was of far greater importance than a dozen or two of the most radical speeches directed against the government.

The first budget debates coincided with the second anniversary of *Pravda*, when our Party organised "Labour Press Day." The demonstrations held by the St. Petersburg workers, the numerous resolutions received by the editors and the collections made for the *Pravda* "iron" fund, the wide circulation of the jubilee number of *Pravda*, of which 130,000 copies were sold, made us absolutely sure that our demonstration in the Duma would assist in the new forward movement of the masses and would be supported by the entire working class.

Before the opening of the sitting on April 22, the two Social-Democratic fractions and the Trudoviks introduced a resolution to postpone the budget discussion until after the freedom of speech bill had become law. The Duma listened impatiently to speeches from the representatives of the three fractions and then decided by a huge majority to start the debate on the budget immediately. During the speech of the representatives of the budget commission, the members of the three fractions left the hall to discuss their further action.

We decided to return in time for the expected speech of Bark, the Minister of Finance, and to prevent him from speaking.

Instead of Bark, Goremykin, the new President of the Council of Ministers, made his way to the tribune. Goremykin, an elderly tsarist dignitary appointed in place of Kokovtsev, because the latter was considered too soft-hearted and liberal, was charged with the task of ruthlessly checking the revolutionary movement, which was daily becoming more menacing. Thus our plan of obstruction was more appropriate than we had hoped; it would now be directed against the head of the government and would be a demonstration against tsarism itself.

Goremykin had barely managed to begin, "Gentlemen, members of the State Duma," when pandemonium broke out on the benches of the Left, with shouts of "Freedom of speech for deputies" rising above the noise. Powerless to stop the noise, Rodzyanko apologised to Goremykin and proposed that the deputies concerned should be suspended for fifteen sittings. Goremykin then left the rostrum, which was ascended in turn by the offending deputies, each of whom, according to Duma regulations, had the right to speak in his own defence before being excluded. One by one they protested vehemently and members of our "six" seized the opportunity to hurl accusations at the government and to reveal the cowardice and impotence of the Liberals.

The suspensions followed one another rapidly and any defence which lasted too long was unceremoniously cut short by Rodzyanko. Some of the suspended deputies refused to leave the Duma hall; then the procedure was as follows. Rodzyanko adjourned the house and during the interval a military detachment entered the hall, the soldiers lined the barrier while the officer approached the suspended member and demanded his withdrawal. Only then, with the words "I submit to force," did the deputy leave the hall.

This use of force was unprecedented in the history of the Duma; the ministerial benches were full and all the ministers watched Rodzyanko's efficient work. After the removal of a deputy, the sitting was resumed and then the whole process was re-enacted. Finally, when all who had offended had been removed, Goremykin reappeared at the rostrum. Once again, however, he was unable to utter a word – the surviving members of the Left fractions resumed the obstruction. The Rights demanded "Suspend them all," and

Rodzyanko again excused himself and the procedure of expulsion recommenced.

For the third time, Goremykin was greeted with the banging of desks and shouts from the Left, and it was only after every surviving member of the three fractions had been suspended and removed by force that the president of the Council of Ministers was able to begin his speech. He uttered a few incomprehensible words about mutual understandings, common work and the "regrettable incidents" which had just occurred and was then followed by the Minister of Finance, Bark. Freed from the "pernicious" speeches of the Left deputies, the Duma settled down to the discussion of the budget.

The behaviour of the Cadets and Progressives during these suspensions was typical of Liberals whose real allegiance was to the counter-revolution. But yesterday they had used high-sounding phrases about the struggle for freedom of speech, but, far from taking part in the obstruction, some even voted for Rodzyanko's motion of exclusion. It was true that some abstained from voting, but not one was bold enough to vote against. More than that, in their press the Cadets went so far as to defend the use of force because "...it was not simply brute, physical force, but the action of a disciplined body acting under the orders of the head of the institution representing the people." The Cadets openly revealed their abject flunkeyism towards tsarist autocracy and the Black Hundreds.

But the whole question of obstruction and our suspension was in no way decided by the attitude which the Liberals adopted towards it. As was the case in all our Duma work, the efficacy of our action depended on the support which we could muster among the workers. Though the Duma reflected to some extent the political struggles which occurred in the country, the question had ultimately to be settled at the factories and in the streets and not within the walls of the Taurida Palace.

Our fraction, together with other Party organisations, began to prepare workers' demonstrations in connection with the Duma events. Through trade unions, educational societies and other working-class organisations, in all of which strong Bolshevik cells existed, the movement was started. Foreseeing this development, the secret police redoubled their activities. Every member of the fraction was closely watched and the fraction's rooms were besieged by spies. In the evening of the day on which the deputies were suspended the secret police arrested six Party members, workers who



had come to our rooms to discuss the question of organising strike action.

These arrests forced the fraction to take more precautions. Representatives of Party organisations were forbidden to visit the fraction and our work with Party cells was conducted in strict secrecy. We arranged with the comrades from the various organisations to meet at a concert in one of the halls where working-class concerts and lectures were usually held, and while there made the final arrangements for the protest-action.

The protest strike began on the day after the expulsions, April 23, and although only about 4,000 workers (mainly printers) left work, it was a beginning which flared up into a mass strike on the following day. On April 24 the number of strikers had swollen to 55,000 and these were joined by another 17,000 on the third and fourth days. The movement spread to Moscow where over 25,000 men left work. Everywhere the strikes were started at meetings, at which protest resolutions were adopted.

The Manufacturers' Association replied as usual by closing down all the big establishments. On April 24 sixteen large works were closed and about 25,000 workers discharged. The Manufacturers' Association, which was called the "lock-outers' association," thus revealed itself as an organisation for political as well as economic struggle against the workers. Work was resumed at most of the factories on April 29, but some employers prolonged the lock-out until May 2 in order to punish the workers in advance for the anticipated strike on May Day. The capitalists thought that they could destroy the revolutionary enthusiasm of the working class by starvation and unemployment, but this was not enough for the Black Hundreds, who called for ever more severe measures against the workers.

The reactionary *Russkoye Znamya* (Russian Banner) with cynical frankness proposed that wages should be reduced and that all representation of the workers, e.g. in the Duma or on insurance bodies, should be abolished. The Black Hundreds were forced to acknowledge the existence and growth of revolutionary feeling among the masses and they thought that the causes were to be found in the agitation carried on by the workers' press and in the activity of the Social-Democratic deputies. In a leading article on April 26, *Russkoye Znamya* wrote as follows:

Since the workers' press, which is entirely controlled by the Social-Democratic deputies, was incautiously al-

lowed to develop, very close connections have been established between the deputies and the workers. A year ago the workers were almost unmoved by events in the Duma: Social-Democrats were excluded from meetings, their friends, escaped convicts, were rearrested and their premises searched, and yet the workers remained quiet. Now on the other hand, every speech in the Duma arouses a response among 200,000 organised workers. All live questions in working-class circles are immediately re-echoed from the Duma rostrum, whence the Social-Democrats censure the government and still further excite the ignorant masses. At the same time all utterances of the Social-Democratic deputies are taken up by the workers. The objectionable obstruction in the Duma organised by the Social-Democrats as a protest against their arrogance being curbed, entailed a mass strike which though only partially successful was of considerable extent. It is time to take stock of the position and consider the danger of this close connection between the cannon fodder and the trouble-makers.

*Russkoye Znamya* then proceeded to enumerate its proposals, such as deprivation of political rights and wage reductions, since in the words of the pogrom-makers "hunger does not lead to strikes; it is only the well-fed who engage in riots." The paper then drew the following conclusion:

Only in this way will calm be restored. It will then not be necessary to have cavalry regiments galloping about St. Petersburg to maintain order in the streets every time the Social-Democrats make a demonstration in the Duma.

It will be noticed that the Black Hundreds correctly estimated the importance of the ties which bound the workers' deputies to the masses. The existence of these ties was amply demonstrated by the support which our activity received from the workers of St. Petersburg, Moscow and other cities.

Whilst our fraction and the two others which took part in the obstruction received from all quarters messages of approval and support, the Cadets were forced to invent all sorts of excuses for their behaviour in order to placate their constituents. The most out-

spoken representative of the Right Cadets, Maklakov,\* the deputy for Moscow, complained bitterly that he was obliged to go to Moscow and explain why he did not vote against the exclusion of the Left deputies. He said: "A new movement of protest is sweeping the countryside which ignores our party and which regards the lawful channels of protest as discredited." Milyukov, the leader of the Cadets, supported him: "If it is true that revolutionary tendencies are growing, then it is very regrettable." The only object of the Liberals was to hold back the revolution; even in their speeches against the government their chief argument was that the government's policy was stimulating and provoking the revolution.

It was at this moment, when the Cadets and their allies, the Progressives, were showing their hands so cynically, that the Liquidators broached the question of joint action with the Liberals. In their press they wrote that the proletariat would be only too willing to work with the progressive bourgeois parties. Having analysed the situation they attempted once again to foist on the working class their policy of "freedom of association for the workers." The Menshevik *Severnaya Rabochaya Gazeta* (Northern Workers' News) wrote: "The questions of liberty of speech in the Duma and of the immunity of deputies have become the most vital in the political life of the country. These questions are closely associated with the fundamental demands which were formulated in August 1912" (the August Bloc).

This standpoint was directly opposed by *Pravda* on the grounds that the question of freedom of speech in the Duma, etc., was not of fundamental importance for the workers and that the Duma could only serve as one of the means of strengthening the revolutionary struggle. *Pravda* wrote:

The Liberals were fresh from the crime of assisting Messrs. Rodzyanko and Purishkevich in their attack on the Social-Democrats and Trudoviks when they received offers of collaboration from the Liquidators. Such offers at this time are gravely prejudicial to the interests of the working-class movement. The slogan of the moment is not collaboration with the bourgeoisie but forward with the revolution despite the hesitations and betrayals of the bourgeoisie. The

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\* Not to be confused with the Minister for the Interior – a brother of the deputy.

Liquidators may obtain joint action with the bourgeoisie inside the Duma, but it is outside that we must seek the true policy.... The working class also accepts "joint action," but on a basis which is rejected both by Liberals and Liquidators.

The attitude of the Mensheviks to the wave of strikes which spread over St. Petersburg when the Left deputies were expelled from the Duma, was characteristic of their fear of any mass action. Confronted with the possibility of revolutionary developments, they completely lost their heads and attempted to hold back the movement.

A secret police report reproduces the minutes of a meeting of the Menshevik fraction on April 25, at which, in the presence of Dan, the question of strikes and demonstrations in St. Petersburg was discussed. At the meeting several members expressed the opinion that "it was necessary to thank the workers for their support and ask them to postpone the strike until May 1." The resolution adopted by the fraction was framed in that spirit, stating that "it was necessary to refrain from striking now in order to act with increased vigour on May 1."

The same report contains further accounts of meetings of the "seven," giving many examples of vacillations and waverings within the Menshevik fraction itself. The strength and extent of the revolutionary revival had its effect on individual Mensheviks. According to the police report, Chkhenkeli argued that "the fraction should discard its old tactics of purely parliamentary work and its old slogan of 'preserve the Duma at all costs' and pass on to more revolutionary work." This argument, however, met with no support from the other members of the "seven." Chkheidze, opposing Chkhenkeli, called on fraction members "to keep their heads cool during these difficult times and endeavour to achieve something within the limits imposed by the law."

There is no need to state that such damping down of the strike movement during a period of revolutionary enthusiasm could only be harmful. The influence of the Mensheviks, however, weakened considerably at this time and they were powerless to prevent the spread of the movement. Eighty thousand workers participated in the protest strike against the exclusion of the Left deputies, creating a powerful impression throughout the country.

Whilst the Left deputies were absent from the Duma, the Liberals spoke against the government and introduced motions condemning it, but they were in no way able to delay the passing of the budget, which was approved in its entirety by the Duma majority.

This quiet atmosphere delighted the government and all the ministers endeavoured to have the estimates of their departments passed before the suspended deputies returned. According to newspaper reports the Ecclesiastical Department was particularly anxious; one of their chiefs said: "They will return from their enforced absence more enraged than ever – they will bite."

Meanwhile the deputies of the three Left fractions discussed the tactics that should be followed when they returned to the Duma. Proposals were made to continue the obstruction, to delay debates by making very long speeches and, on the other hand, to regard the conflict as finished and to resume the usual Duma work. Finally the deputies of all the fractions agreed to make a joint statement on their return and to have it read in the Duma.

The statement was drafted and adopted at a joint meeting of the three fractions. Despite our precautions we discovered later that Rodzyanko was informed by the secret police of the text. Hence when the deputies returned to the Duma on May 7 Rodzyanko was in the chair and determined to prevent the reading of the statement. But we also were prepared. We had arranged for a number of speakers, so that if Kerensky, who was entrusted with the reading of the statement, was stopped, another speaker could continue. A prolonged struggle ensued between the president and the Left fractions, but in the end the whole of the statement was read.

Thus the return of the suspended deputies to the Duma was, with the involuntary assistance of Rodzyanko, transformed into a fresh demonstration against the government and brought to the notice of the whole country.

The April events in the State Duma and the mass response which they aroused from the workers played an important part in the subsequent strengthening and development of the revolutionary movement. The effects were immediately visible in the First of May demonstration, which in 1914 far excelled those of previous years. In St. Petersburg 250,000 workers struck, in Moscow about 50,000, whilst First of May strikes were organised and carried out with exceptional enthusiasm in provincial cities where the labour movement had hitherto been relatively weak. Everything pointed to the fact that the working class was preparing to enter into a decisive struggle with tsarism. The admission of Purishkevich, the greatest enemy of the revolution, is significant. Speaking in the Duma on May 2, with the impression of the May Day strikes fresh in his mind, he said:

We are witnessing remarkable scenes; we are passing through a period strikingly similar to 1904. If we are not blind we must see that despite certain differences there is much in common between what is happening now and what took place in 1904. We must draw the necessary conclusions.

This time it was not the workers' deputies but Purishkevich himself, the leader of the Black Hundreds, who spoke of the approach of a new revolutionary year. This itself demonstrates the intensity of the revolutionary movement among the working class.

Although the main provisions of the budget had already been sanctioned before the deputies returned, we managed to participate in the later stages of the debate. Every time we spoke we dealt not only with the particular estimate under discussion, but with the entire policy of the tsarist government. At the request of the fraction, I spoke on the estimates of the Ministry of Education, which at that time were arousing great public interest.

Kasso, the new Minister of Education, had initiated a number of repressive measures, driving out professors from the universities, arresting and banishing students; he had even arrested a number of juveniles from secondary schools for taking part in very harmless circles. My speech was based to a large extent on material sent by Lenin from Cracow. It was a damning exposure of these measures and at the same time it dealt with the hypocrisy of the "remedies" proposed by the Cadets and other liberal parties.

## CHAPTER XVII

## ROMAN MALINOVSKY

Malinovsky Leaves the Duma – The Fraction Appeals to the Workers – Malinovsky, *agent-provocateur* – Malinovsky and the Secret Police – Arrest of Sverdlov and Stalin – Why Malinovsky left the Duma – Malinovsky's Trial

During the afternoon of the day after the return to the Duma of the suspended deputies, Malinovsky entered Rodzyanko's office, threw a document on the table and said: "Good-bye."

Rodzyanko asked what this meant, and Malinovsky answered: "Read that – you will see for yourself," adding hurriedly that he had resigned and was going abroad.

Muranov, the only member of our fraction present in the Duma at the time, at once communicated with the fraction, but by the time we had met in the fraction's rooms, Rodzyanko had already read Malinovsky's statement of resignation in the Duma.

Malinovsky's resignation came as a bolt from the blue; until then there had been no hint that he contemplated any such action. The resignation of his seat without the consent of the Party and without making any statement to the Party was such a flagrant and extraordinary breach of Party discipline that we could not imagine the cause.

The fraction instructed Comrade Petrovsky to call on Malinovsky and demand that he come immediately to the fraction and explain his action. Malinovsky refused, stating that he was too excited to be able to give any explanations at the moment. We at once sent Petrovsky back to insist on Malinovsky's presence. He refused the second time and, in a state of great excitement bordering on insanity, shouted: "Try me, do whatever you please, but I won't speak," and at the same time declared that he was leaving the country that evening.

All other attempts to obtain an explanation from Malinovsky proved futile and letters sent to him by the fraction and Comrade Kamenev were only handed to him just before the train left.

Malinovsky's desertion from the Duma and his sudden flight from St. Petersburg placed our fraction in a difficult position. This action, in itself treacherous to the Party and the workers' struggle, supplied a weapon to our enemies. Statements were issued, sensational in character, alleging; that something serious was wrong in our Party. Slandorous insinuations and lying rumours were circu-

lated about the Party and the fraction.

At that time nothing authentic was known about Malinovsky's real activities, but all sorts of rumours and gossip were spread by bourgeois parties and Liquidators with the obvious object of damaging the reputation of our entire fraction. It was necessary to clear up the case and the fraction decided to place all its information at the disposal of the workers.

We published in *Pravda* a full statement setting out in detail all the facts known to the fraction. A precise chronological account was given of all the steps taken by the fraction to elucidate the causes and attendant circumstances of Malinovsky's behaviour. The fraction had no facts on which to base any accusation against Malinovsky, but it violently and uncompromisingly condemned his undisciplined action. The statement concluded:

At the time of his election, Malinovsky asserted that he consented to stand at the request of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. This statement bound him to work in a disciplined way within the Party. Class-conscious workers understand the necessity of strictly maintaining this principle in the struggle against all bourgeois parties. In contravention of this principle Malinovsky resigned his mandate as a deputy without consulting the leading Party committees or his own immediate organisation, the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Fraction. Such action is inadmissible and as an anarchic breach of discipline deserves thorough condemnation; it is no better than the action of a sentry deserting his post. Malinovsky's statement that he did not consider his responsibility when embarking on this course does not in any way mitigate his offence. He has placed himself outside our ranks. The Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Fraction invites all class-conscious workers to endorse this decision in order to render impossible repetitions of such action among the organised proletariat in the future.

The masses reacted to Malinovsky's desertion in the way that we expected. Telegrams, greetings and resolutions began to pour into the fraction and *Pravda*, condemning Malinovsky's treachery and expressing full confidence in the work of our fraction. The temporary damage done by Malinovsky's desertion was made good by the way in which the advanced organised workers rallied to our



support. Our fraction, now reduced to five, re-formed its ranks and continued its work in the revolutionary struggle both from the Duma rostrum and outside.

No true explanation for Malinovsky's action was forthcoming at that time. We explained it by certain traits in his character, nervous tension, hot-headedness and lack of balance, which he had often displayed in his dealings with his associates. It was only after the revolution that the true motives actuating his behaviour were fully revealed, when the archives of the police department showed that Malinovsky had acted as an *agent-provocateur*. The material then made public and his subsequent trial provide us with the complete history of his treason.

Malinovsky began his career as an *agent-provocateur* in 1910, when he was enrolled as an agent of the Moscow secret police under the name of Portnoi. He had settled in Moscow after being expelled from St. Petersburg and, although there are some grounds for believing that he had had dealings with the secret police before, it was in Moscow that his real work as an *agent-provocateur* commenced.

He offered his services to the police after he had been arrested with a group of Party workers, and immediately became a very active and important secret agent. Malinovsky was a very capable and intelligent man and succeeded in penetrating very deeply into Party organisations. He appeared at all meetings, attended workers' clubs, trade unions, etc., and actively participated in organisational work. For a long time he maintained relations with both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks and betrayed both to the secret police. He was responsible for the arrest of Party workers and for the destruction of entire organisations, and supplied the police with particulars about meetings which had been arranged, the real and assumed names of Party comrades who were living in illegality, the names of the members of leading Party committees, addresses where literature was stored, in fact, all features of Party life.

His activities resulted in the arrest in Moscow of the Russian collegium of the Central Committee and the conciliatory group "Vozrozhdenie" headed by Comrade Milyutin. Information supplied by him resulted in the break-up of the newly formed Bolshevik centre in Tula when some leading comrades were arrested.

In order to safeguard Malinovsky from exposure, the police used to arrest him together with others present at an illegal meeting, but after a few days he would be released while the others were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment or exile. Sometimes, for the

sake of precaution, the secret police would release all those arrested and then re-arrest all but Malinovsky in the course of a couple of weeks.

Owing to his cleverness and undoubted talents, Malinovsky soon made his name in Party circles. Even earlier in St. Petersburg, he had shown himself a capable and forceful worker in the trade union movement. From 1906 to 1909, he was secretary of the St. Petersburg Metal-Workers' Trade Union, one of the biggest and most progressive unions. This alone shows his organising ability and his power to gain the confidence of the workers.

Malinovsky was exceedingly ambitious and exerted himself to ensure his election to the State Duma; his popularity made it easy for him to be nominated as candidate. But he was also guided by other motives. Byeletsky, the Director of the secret police department, in his evidence on the Malinovsky case (Byeletsky was arrested after the revolution and subsequently shot), stated that Malinovsky in trying to enter the Duma reckoned on strengthening his position with the secret police and thereby raising the salary which they paid him. Malinovsky had begun to delight in his treacherous work and was preparing to extend it on a much larger scale.

Malinovsky impressed on the secret police how convenient it would be for them to have their own "informer" in the Duma. Needless to say, the police were soon persuaded and the question was discussed by the highest police officials; the project received the blessing of Makarov, the then Minister of the Interior. Code messages were sent to Moscow by Byeletsky and his notorious assistant, Vissarionov, instructing the Moscow secret police to facilitate Malinovsky's election.

The first obstacle to be tackled was the fact that Malinovsky had been arrested several times on criminal charges. According to the law, a person who had been condemned on a criminal charge was disqualified from being elected to the Duma. With the help of the secret police, Malinovsky went to his native district in Poland and by bribery obtained a false certificate declaring that he had never been convicted.

The second difficulty was that it was necessary for the candidate to have worked at his factory for six months prior to the election. Malinovsky was employed in a small factory near Moscow, and a few weeks before the election, when he had not quite completed six months' service, he quarrelled with the foreman and was under threat of dismissal. Thereupon the police arrested the foreman

and kept him in prison until after the elections. Nevertheless Malinovsky was dismissed from the factory and had to bribe a clerk to give him a certificate that he was "on leave." Thus, with the help of the secret police, the way was clear for his election.

After his election to the Duma, Malinovsky became one of the most important agents of the police, and was tutored in his new duties by Byeletsky himself. The St. Petersburg secret police referred to him as "X" in their documents and paid him a salary of 500 rubles a month, later raised to 700 with additional amounts for special information. A telephone was installed in his apartment at the expense of the police and all his conversations with Byeletsky were conducted in code. He used to meet Byeletsky and his assistant Visarionov in a private room at some restaurant. There Byeletsky, as he stated during the trial, would ask a list of questions drawn up beforehand and his assistant wrote down Malinovsky's answers. Arrests, searches and deportations followed, although great care was taken not to compromise Malinovsky. When the police department decided in February 1913 to arrest Comrade Rozmirovich, Malinovsky advised that the arrest should be made in Kiev, and when a month later her arrest aroused suspicions in the foreign centre, she was released at his request.\*

The information which he supplied was particularly valuable because he was well informed about the underground work of the Party as well as the work of the Duma fraction. He regularly related to the police everything which took place at the editorial offices of *Pravda*. He gave full particulars about the persons who attended meetings there, the decisions reached and the financial state of the paper. This enabled Byeletsky to arrange for fines, confiscations of issues, etc., at times which were most critical for the paper. He also supplied lists of all persons contributing to funds for the support of *Pravda* and the names of subscribers. These lists were of great assistance to the police when repressive measures were decided upon.

Malinovsky's oratorical powers made him one of the frequent speakers of our fraction. But a careful analysis of his speeches reveals the fact that the blunt revolutionary content characteristic of the speeches of our workers' deputies was absent. Whereas the other workers' deputies deliberately accentuated their speeches,

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\* The police finally dealt with Comrade Rozmirovich in April 1914, when she was arrested together with Comrades Samoylova and Kudelli at an editorial meeting of *Rabotnitsa* (The Woman Worker).

sticking at nothing, Malinovsky always tried to work round the dangerous passages, to avoid in one way or another the revolutionary presentation of the question and took great pains to make his speeches innocuous so as to deprive them of that revolutionary content which the Party insisted should be present in all speeches of our fraction members. When he addressed open-air meetings, he arranged with the police department that police agents should be present who would cut short his speech when he reached an agreed passage. Such was the case on the important occasion when he addressed the Congress of Clerical Workers in Moscow.

Although while he was in the Duma his main activities were confined to St. Petersburg, he did not entirely break his connections with the Moscow secret police. During his visits to Moscow, each of which entailed new arrests of revolutionary workers, he supplied information to the police and received a special remuneration.

In St. Petersburg, Malinovsky informed Byeletsky of the meetings of the fraction, the ideas and plans of the deputies, the routes of their journeys and their impressions of local conditions. On the basis of information transmitted from the police department, the local police were able to break up meetings arranged by the visiting deputy. On one occasion, Malinovsky even allowed Byeletsky to inspect the fraction's documents and files and to copy passages which interested him.

Byeletsky also referred in his evidence to an occasion when Malinovsky delivered to the police the larger part of a consignment of illegal literature which only reached St. Petersburg after great difficulty.

Fear of exposing the *agent-provocateur* caused the secret police to be very cautious in arresting Party comrades who worked in close touch with Malinovsky, but when Sverdlov and Stalin returned to St. Petersburg, the police department demanded that he should help to arrange their arrest.

Sverdlov was arrested in the following circumstances. He had escaped from exile and was hiding in my apartment; the police had begun to watch for him, acting on information supplied by Malinovsky. One day the *dzornik* (janitor) came to see me and, after describing Sverdlov, asked whether he was not in my apartment. Of course I replied that there were no strangers with me, but we decided that it was no longer safe for Sverdlov to stay there and that he ought to leave at once. As soon as it became dark, Malinovsky and I went out and seeing that there was no one about we lit ciga-

rettes; on this agreed signal, Sverdlov went out into the courtyard at the back. We helped him climb over a wall and then across a timber yard over another wall and out on to the embankment where a *droshky* was waiting. We then went to Malinovsky's room and later Sverdlov went to stay with Petrovsky. But he was arrested there the same night. It turned out that Malinovsky, who had been showing so much concern for Sverdlov's safety, had phoned the address of his new refuge to the police.

At about the same time, Malinovsky betrayed Stalin in a similar way. Stalin had recently made one of his periodic escapes from exile and was in hiding, not venturing into the streets. The police knew that he had returned and were waiting for him to appear in order to rearrest him. A concert had been arranged in the Kalashnikov hall for the benefit of the funds for *Pravda*. Such concerts were usually attended by sympathisers among the intellectuals and Party members who seized the opportunity, while among the crowd, of meeting and talking to people whom it was inadvisable to meet openly. Stalin decided to attend the concert and Malinovsky, who was aware of this, informed the police department, with the result that Stalin was rearrested there and then.

These two arrests show the depths to which Malinovsky had descended. He betrayed into the hands of the police the most prominent Party workers who had only recently escaped from exile after great difficulty and suffering.

Relations between Malinovsky and the rest of the fraction were strained from the first. During discussions he often became hysterical or lost his temper over quite unimportant questions. The other members of the fraction objected to such conduct on his part and this led to constant friction and conflicts. One such scene occurred in the fraction a few days before he left the Duma. When the fraction was discussing what action it would take in reply to its exclusion for fifteen sittings, Malinovsky insisted on the necessity of leaving the Duma completely and of appealing to the masses for revolutionary action. There is no doubt that this plan was of a provocative nature and the fraction quite rightly rejected it. But it must be assumed that in advocating such a form of protest, Malinovsky was also preparing the ground for his own withdrawal from the Duma, since, as it became known afterwards, it was at this time that the police department decided to dispense with his services. In the winter of 1913-14, changes took place in the Ministry of the Interior. The notorious General Junkovsky, formerly governor-general

of Moscow, was appointed Assistant Minister in charge of the police and gendarmerie. This appointment led to changes in the personnel of the police department; Junkovsky appointed his own men instead of Byeletsky and his assistant, Vissarianov, and decided to get rid of Malinovsky.

In his evidence, Junkovsky stated that he could not tolerate the "nuisance" of an agent of the police acting as a deputy in the State Duma. This explanation is not to be believed; it is much more likely that Malinovsky's activity as a member of our fraction had become more than the police dared allow. It is also possible that the usual departmental jealousy was responsible for his dismissal. The new officials very often tried to discredit their predecessors and suggest to the public that they were instituting a new and much better policy.

By order of Junkovsky, the chief of the secret police department called on Malinovsky to leave the Duma and proceed abroad immediately. Before leaving he received a final payment of 6,000 rubles from the police. The only person in the Duma who knew the true cause of Malinovsky's resignation was Rodzyanko. According to his own words, somebody rang him up on the telephone on the morning of the day when the suspended deputies were to return to the Duma, and informed him of the text of their intended declaration. Rodzyanko decided to investigate the matter further and was informed by Junkovsky that Malinovsky was a police spy and that it had been decided to get rid of him. So Rodzyanko, while knowing the truth, kept it secret from the Duma.

Malinovsky then completely disappeared from the sight of the Party and public. At the beginning of the war he was conscripted and soon afterwards taken prisoner by the Germans. He returned to Russia after the revolution and was arrested.

On November 5, 1918, Malinovsky was tried in Moscow by the Revolutionary Tribunal. Numerous witnesses, including the chiefs of the tsarist police (Byeletsky, Vissarianov, Junkovsky, Makarov and others), and volumes of documents from the archives of the secret police, established the history of his treachery. His life was one long string of crimes. His intelligence and abilities were placed at the disposal of the highest bidder to the detriment of the working-class movement.

At the trial, when his activity as *agent-provocateur* was fully revealed, Malinovsky was, of course, unable to deny his crimes. He chose another method of defence. He alleged that he was forced to become an *agent-provocateur* because he was already completely in

the hands of the police. He represented his career as *agent-provocateur* as a long martyrdom, accompanied by suffering and remorse, from which he could not escape. But at the same time, in contradiction to that theory, he confessed: "...I could not agree to the first proposal not because I felt any repugnance – I did not feel the slightest – but simply because I did not want, and did not see any possibility of being able, to play the double role required."

But when the police threatened him with revelations of his criminal past he at once consented to serve them: "Now the question was settled, I no longer hesitated and felt no remorse."

Throughout his trial, as throughout his whole career, Malinovsky lied. He tried to prove that he left the Duma of his own free will, because of his personal unhappiness, and that he obtained permission from the police to quit politics. "...The circumstances of the case are immaterial; what is important is that I obtained Byeletsky's permission to leave.... I told Junkovsky that I was leaving on account of new conditions which for moral and other reasons made it impossible for me to continue the work."

But we know now the real reasons of his resignation and we know that when Byeletsky was removed, Malinovsky begged him to help him re-establish his connections with the police department. The lies in Malinovsky's evidence were as deliberate as the whole pose he adopted, a pose of sincere repentance while admitting the gravity of his crimes. He said that he expected nothing but the death penalty, although, in saying this, Malinovsky undoubtedly imagined that this attitude would gain him some measure of indulgence. His voluntary return to Russia after the revolution was the last desperate throw of a gambler. The revolutionary court did not forgive him for his crimes against the working class; he was condemned to be shot.

Malinovsky will be remembered as one of the most active *agents-provocateurs*, who was able to do enormous harm to the revolutionary cause. There is, however, another aspect of his activities which shows that they were harmful to tsarism itself. In his second role as a member of the Bolshevik fraction, Malinovsky was forced to deliver revolutionary speeches from the Duma tribune and to play his part in our agitational campaigns. These activities inevitably produced the results which we desired and the tsarist government was forced to bring grist to the mill of revolution.

V. I. Lenin described the situation in which the police were placed by Malinovsky's activity in the following way:

It is obvious that by helping to elect an *agent-provocateur* to the Duma and by removing, for that purpose, all the competitors of the Bolshevik candidate, the secret police were guided by a vulgar conception of Bolshevism, or rather, a distorted caricature of Bolshevism. They imagined that the Bolsheviks would "arrange an armed insurrection." In order to keep all the threads of this coming insurrection in their hands, they thought it worth while departing from their own standpoint and having Malinovsky elected both to the Duma and to our Central Committee.

But when the police achieved both these aims they found that Malinovsky was transformed into a link of the long and solid chain connecting in various ways our legal base with the two chief organs by which the party influenced the masses, namely *Pravda* and the Duma fraction. The *agent-provocateur* had to protect both these organs in order to justify his vocation.

Both these organs were under our immediate guidance. Zinoviev and myself wrote daily to *Pravda* and its policy was *entirely* determined by the resolutions of the Party. Our influence over forty to sixty thousand workers was thus secured. The same applies to the Duma fraction, particularly to Muranov, Petrovsky and Badayev, who worked more and more independently of Malinovsky, strengthened their connections with and extended their influence over the workers.

Malinovsky could and did ruin individuals, but he could neither hold back nor control the growth of the Party nor in any way affect the increase of its importance to the masses, its influence over hundreds of thousands of workers (through strikes, which increased after April 1912, etc.). I should not be at all surprised if the secret police used the following argument for Malinovsky's removal from the Duma: that Malinovsky had turned out to be too closely involved with the Duma fraction and with *Pravda*, which were carrying on their revolutionary work among the masses much too energetically to be tolerated by the police.

This estimate of the objective part played by Malinovsky in no way tones down, but brands still more definitely, the personality of the traitor.



## CHAPTER XVIII

**THE STRIKE MOVEMENT IN THE SUMMER OF 1914**

Strike at the Izhorsky Works – Strikes in the Provinces – Struggle of the Baku Workers – Nicholas II sends a “Peacemaker” – St. Petersburg Workers Hit Back – A Visit to Maklakov, Minister for the Interior

The State Duma rose for the summer recess in June 1914, after the budget had been successfully piloted through all its stages. The session, which was the last before the war, closed during a period of a rising tide of the working-class movement throughout the country.

After the formidable demonstrations on May 1, arrangements were made for a protest strike in connection with the sentences passed on the Obukhov workers. When the first trial took place in November 1913, strikes had broken out in St. Petersburg, and now when the case was again taken in May 1914, the court condemned the Obukhov workers to two months' imprisonment for taking part in strikes. Over 100,000 workers responded to the call for a protest strike, which aroused as much enthusiasm as the May Day movement.

The next political strike of the St. Petersburg workers was caused by the trial of the defending counsel in the Beilis\* case at Kiev, and the death sentence passed on a worker charged with the murder of the shop manager of the pipe-works. This strike, which occurred early in June, embraced 30,000 workers.

At the same time, stubborn economic struggles were being waged continually at one or another of the many St. Petersburg factories or works. One of the most prolonged of these strikes took place at the Izhorsky Works, which were controlled by the Navy Department. The movement started in the electric power station where the workers presented several economic demands; when a number of these workers were dismissed, the strike spread to the other shops, where the workers demanded a rise in wages, the eight-hour day, etc. The strike was under the leadership of our St. Petersburg Committee and, at the request of the strikers, I went to Kolpino

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\* Beilis – a Jewish clerk who, on the strength of some faked evidence concocted by the Black Hundreds, was tried on a charge of a ritual murder and acquitted by the jury. – Ed.

to meet a gathering of delegates. The meeting took place at night in the cemetery and it was decided to hold firm as long as possible.

The strike caused considerable anxiety at the Naval Department. A detachment of cossacks was sent to Kolpino and quartered in barracks next to the works so as to be in readiness "to maintain order."

The next day I again went to the works and found the workers highly incensed and indignant over the calling out of the cossacks. At the meeting which followed tempers ran high and the determination to win the fight despite dismissals and other possible forms of repression was strengthened. Party organisations assisted in the preparation and distribution of leaflets enumerating the economic demands and also calling for the dismissal of the chief manager. The management of the works attempted to prevent the distribution of leaflets and sent round officials who tore the leaflets out of the workers' hands. Naturally this only made the workers more hostile.

The Izhorsky strike lasted three weeks and ended when the management promised to raise the rates of pay and to grant several other concessions. I have dwelt on this strike in order to illustrate the normal course of an economic strike during this period of revolutionary enthusiasm. The close contact between the workers and the Bolshevik Party organisations and the action of the workers under Bolshevik leadership on the one hand, and the calling out of armed forces for the suppression of the strikers on the other, are typical of the circumstances in which the workers' economic struggles were being conducted at that time.

This development of the struggle was not confined to St. Petersburg. The example set by the St. Petersburg proletariat served as a spur to the labour movement throughout the country. Strikes, both economic and political, spread from one city to another. The workers in provincial towns acted in an organised way unseen before and their persistence in the struggle revealed a high degree of class-consciousness. Consequently the strikes, although nearly always connected with definite economic demands, contained elements related to the political struggle.

A prolonged dispute arose during May in the textile industry in the Moscow district. The movement originated in the Kostroma Gubernia and quickly spread to the neighbouring Gubernias of Moscow and Vladimir, involving nearly 100,000 workers.

This was an extraordinarily large number of textile workers, who worked in small mills far removed from each other. The chief

demand was for higher rates of pay, but amongst other things the strikers demanded the organisation of libraries where they could read *Pravda*, *Prosvyeshchenye*, *Voprosy Strakhovania* (Insurance Questions) and other newspapers and magazines.

The Bolshevik fraction led the strike and supported the textile workers by all the means at their disposal. Shagov, who was elected from the Kostroma Gubernia, toured the district as soon as the Duma session closed, calling on the workers to continue the struggle and opposing all talk of surrender to the employers. Shagov's journey was made in conditions that were now customary for workers' deputies. Everywhere he went he was accompanied by police spies, who forced their way into houses which he visited and arrested workers with whom he spoke.

The strike lasted into the summer, and thanks to the sound organisation and stubbornness of the workers, forced the employers to make a number of concessions including higher wages. The workers had chosen the right moment for the struggle as the employers were accumulating stocks for the forthcoming fair at Nizhni-Novgorod.

At the same time that the textile strike was being waged in the Moscow district, events were taking place in the far south, in Baku, which were of great importance for the entire working-class movement. The Baku strike, which was distinguished by its long duration and by the exceptional means adopted by the capitalists and the tsarist government to suppress it, gave rise to the historic action of the St. Petersburg workers on the eve of the war.

The strike at the Baku oilfields did not occur spontaneously; it was the result of careful preparation for several months. Workers' committees composed of delegates from the workers of all the big firms drew up beforehand, in consultation with Party organisations, the details of wage demands and other questions connected with the workers' conditions.

The immediate cause of the strike was an outbreak of plague in the district adjoining the oilfields. The menace of this terrible disease at once brought to the front the question of the disgusting housing conditions of the Baku workers. Prominent scientists who investigated conditions at Baku testified that they had never seen such conditions, not even in India – the permanent home of plague.

The question of housing had repeatedly been raised before and, remembering previous strikes, the oil magnates had often promised to commence the building of properly fitted houses. But when the workers' movement flagged they at once forgot their promises.

Immediately after the outbreak of plague in May 1914, the oil-workers' trade union raised the housing question with the owners' association. The association declined to move in the matter and at the same time many of the workers were arrested. Strikes at once started in several districts and soon became general. About 50,000 workers were involved, fighting under a strike committee closely connected with the Party, which issued manifestos, organised the collection of a strike fund and took other necessary steps. The workers presented a long list of demands containing more than sixty points of which the following were the most important: higher rates of pay, better housing and food, the abolition of premiums, compulsory primary education, the organisation of medical aid, etc. On some jobs the workers demanded the eight-hour day and the official recognition of May 1 as a workers' holiday.

The fact that the demands included several which were of a political nature was the result of the considerable influence exercised by our Party organisations. The demand for the abolition of premiums deserves special attention. The very fact that the workers protested against this system of degrading sops, by means of which the employers kept in hand the working masses, testified to a high degree of class-consciousness in the Baku workers. In spite of the racial differences among the workers – there were Russians, Armenians, Persians and Tartars – there was almost 100 per cent, solidarity in this fight with the capitalists.

The oil magnates flatly rejected all the demands and decided to resort to extreme measures to break the strike. When the strikers did not return within the time limit fixed by the employers, they were all discharged; their passports were handed over to the police and they were ordered to leave the miserable rooms which they occupied. The courts hastened to the assistance of the employers and issued eviction orders against the workers who lived in the oilfields. The authorities stuck at nothing; beds were carried out of the workers' barracks, stoves were broken, the electric light and water supply cut off.

The police were as active as the owners. Baku was transformed into a military camp and the usual garrison was replaced by six squadrons of cossacks, prepared to fight the "internal enemy." The trade union was smashed, all active members arrested and all workers' meetings forbidden. Martial law was proclaimed and no one was allowed to appear in the streets after 8 p.m.

At the end of June the Baku workers organised a demonstration in which over 20,000 people participated. Carrying posters stating the workers' demands, the demonstrators marched towards the headquarters of the oilowners' association. As the police were unable to cope with the crowd, they called out the cossacks who surrounded and dispersed the workers. About a hundred workers were driven into a courtyard and arrested. There were already several hundred prisoners in the central prison; the cells were full and the prison yard was packed with workers. It is significant that the city governor warned the owners that they had no right to discuss, much less grant, such non-economic demands as the establishment of factory committees, the May 1 holiday, universal education, etc. But this warning was quite unnecessary; the owners had no intention of making the least concession.

As the strike developed it aroused the interest of the whole country. The employers and the tsarist government on the one hand, and the working class on the other, eagerly watched the progress of the struggle. The shortage of oil, the production of which had almost entirely ceased, began to alarm a number of industrial organisations, particularly the shipowners, who were confronted with the necessity of laying up ships.

The tsarist government decided that the measures taken by the local authorities were too mild and the Assistant Minister for the Interior, General Junkovsky, was sent to Baku by special order of the tsar. He was given full powers and was accompanied by the head of the police department.

On his arrival, the repressive measures increased. He forbade the newspapers to refer to the strike, enforced the censorship of all telegrams referring to the strike, inquired into the destination of all money sent to Baku and confiscated all sums destined for the strikers. In short, Junkovsky, a worthy head of the tsarist police, "pacified" to the utmost extent of his power. The tsarist government was definitely allied with the oil magnates in the attempt to break down the stubborn resistance of the Baku workers.

These measures did not fail to excite the indignation of all the Russian workers and above all of the St. Petersburg proletariat. The Baku workers appealed to the Duma fraction for assistance and we organised a demonstration in St. Petersburg to help the strikers.

In a report to the director of the police department, the secret police described fairly correctly the work of our Party in organising the sympathetic action of the St. Petersburg workers:

The outbreak of the strike in the Baku oilfields quite accidentally (?) coincided with an intensification of the activity of revolutionary underground circles which were then attempting to rouse the interest of the workers in the forthcoming International Socialist Congress to be held the following autumn. Seeing in the strike a pretext for carrying on agitation and inciting the workers to disturbances, the representatives of the socialist parties hastened to seize the opportunity to develop their organisations in preparation for the election of delegates to the congress.

Later the report refers to the agitation conducted at this time:

In addition to regular bulletins of a frankly seditious character published in the legal Social-Democratic press, the leaders of the underground organisations issued instructions that the nature and significance of the Baku strike should be discussed at all workers' meetings. It was hoped, by describing the conditions of the workers under the present regime, to rouse revolutionary feeling in working-class circles and to interest the workers in the ideal of world socialism.

Close watch has revealed that the chief agents of this work are Badayev, member of the Social-Democratic Duma fraction, and various party members who are associated with and guided by him.

The above-mentioned deputy and persons associated with him organise workers' meetings outside the town under the guise of scientific excursions. At these meetings, the aims and tasks of the forthcoming socialist congress are thoroughly examined, the Baku strike is discussed, and the desirability of establishing solidarity among the different groups of workers is urged, to take the form of both moral and material assistance.

Assistance to the Baku workers was soon forthcoming in the shape of large collections which were forwarded to our fraction. At a number of factories the workers gave a definite percentage of their wages and *Pravda* printed as a regular feature the list of moneys received and at the same time appealed for increased subscriptions. The authorities as well as the advanced workers realised that the appeal for further help was a form of revolutionary agitation.

As the revolutionary temper among the St. Petersburg workers continued to rise, an attempt was made to prevent the collection of funds for the Baku workers. The city governor of St. Petersburg issued an order prohibiting the collection of funds "for objects contrary to the maintenance of public order and peace, such as the support of strikers, exiles, the payment of fines imposed by the authorities, etc., by any means whatsoever." At the same time he forbade the publication of advertisements and appeals for such funds in the newspapers and threatened a fine of 500 rubles or imprisonment up to three months for any offence against this order.

Thus the city governors of Baku and St. Petersburg acted in complete accord; the former confiscated all money which arrived for the strikers, while the latter endeavoured to prevent any being sent. *Pravda* published the city governor's order prominently on the front page and then immediately beneath it stated in large print my address and the hours when I received visitors, i.e. money for the strikers. The collections did not cease but, on the contrary, increased considerably; the order served as a signal for renewed efforts on behalf of the Baku workers.

Within a couple of days I sent off another fifteen hundred rubles with the following telegram which was published in *Pravda*.

In the name of the St. Petersburg proletariat, I congratulate the heroic proletariat of Baku on the unanimity and perseverance they are displaying in their struggle. The workers of St. Petersburg are watching your fight with great interest and sympathy.

The telegraphic reply received by the paper from the Baku strike committee conveyed the comradely thanks of the Baku proletariat to the workers of St. Petersburg for their material and moral help.

Every day of the Baku strike witnessed an extension of the campaign in St. Petersburg. News of evictions, deportations and arrests of strikers led the St. Petersburg workers to organise protest strikes during the latter days of June. The movement started slowly at first and only affected a few enterprises, but all our Party organisations threw themselves energetically into the work of extending the movement and preparing for mass action.

But the secret police were also active; numerous arrests were made and a campaign inaugurated against all workers' societies. They first turned their attention to workers' educational societies

and began by smashing the organisation located in the Sampsonievsky Prospect. About forty people – mainly Party members – were arrested on the premises. The police paid almost daily visits to other societies, searching and sometimes arresting those present.

After these raids, I demanded an interview with Maklakov, the Minister of the Interior. I had already a number of matters which I wanted to discuss with the Minister, such as the arrests, exiles, rough-handling by the police, etc. I was informed that Maklakov was ready to receive me the next morning.

The Minister's house in Fontanka was closely watched by uniformed and plain-clothes policemen, both inside and outside. I passed through the ranks of the police into the Minister's room. Maklakov, a relatively young tsarist dignitary, was a nominee of the empress and he tried hard to justify the confidence placed in him. He had already made all preparations for the destruction of working-class organisations and flatly refused to release the persons arrested during the raid on the Sampsonievsky Society, where he alleged an illegal library had been discovered. When I insisted that the reckless activities of the police should be restricted, he answered with generalities.

"We swore allegiance to and are now serving his majesty just as you are keeping the oath which you swore to your Party," said Maklakov, "and we are taking all measures necessary to fight the revolutionary movement."

He then decided to show how well informed he was of everything our organisation was doing. "I am aware that you are conducting underground work, printing and distributing leaflets," and opening a drawer of his desk, he produced a newly printed manifesto.

The manifesto had been drafted a couple of days before in my apartment and had been printed the previous night. Obviously Maklakov, in preparation for this interview, had ordered the secret police to supply him with some tangible evidence of our illegal activities. He wanted to prove that nothing could escape the vigilant eye of the secret police, and the manifesto was probably obtained from Ignatiev, an *agent-provocateur* who had helped in the printing of the leaflet.

Without showing in the least that I recognised the leaflet, I decided that no useful purpose would be served by continuing the conversation. On leaving, I said: "We shall not talk to you in a



study, nor from the tribune; the working class will settle the question in the streets in a direct struggle against the present regime.”

In spite of Maklakov's boasts and the mobilisation of the police, the government was unable to hold back the development of the revolutionary movement, which in the course of a few weeks grew to unparalleled dimensions.

## CHAPTER XIX

## JULY

The Shooting of Putilov Workers – At the Works – Interview with Junkovsky – “The Union of the Russian People” asks for Blood – Barricades in St. Petersburg

From the beginning of July, the strike movement at St. Petersburg factories and works grew rapidly. On July 1, the workers of the Langesippen, Lessner, Ericson, Siemens-Schuckert, Aivaz and other factories left work. Before leaving the factories, meetings were held and resolutions of protest passed against the persecution of the Baku workers. “Comrades of Baku,” declared the St. Petersburg workers, “we are with you, and your victory will be our victory.” At several other establishments the workers did not declare a strike, but left work an hour earlier and arranged meetings and collections for the Baku workers.

Twelve thousand persons attended the meeting arranged by the Putilov workers in the factory yard. But as soon as the first speaker had said two words, cries of “police” were heard and the meeting was broken up before any resolution could be passed. Two days later, the Putilov workers again assembled for a meeting in connection with the Baku events and this meeting gave rise to incidents which marked a turning-point in the July movement in St. Petersburg.

The Putilov workers left work two hours before the end of the working-day and about 12,000 workers attended the meeting. Two speakers described the conditions of the Baku workers and called on the workers to contribute in aid of the strikers and to declare a one-day protest strike.

At the close of the meeting the workers approached the gates and demanded that they be opened. But when they were opened, it was not to let the workers out but to allow the mounted and foot police in. Then the gates were again closed and the police, who had been concealed near the factory, called upon the crowd to disperse, although this was of course impossible with the gates closed. The workers protested and in reply the police fired a volley. With shouts of: “To the barricades,” the crowd rushed to one end of the yard and from thence threw stones at the police. The police fired a second round and then began to arrest one man after another, amidst the cries of the wounded.

According to the statement of the workers, two men were killed, about fifty wounded and more than a hundred taken to the

police station. As soon as I was informed of the shooting, I went to the works. A crowd of workers told me of the shooting, the use of sabres and whips and of the arrests; but no one knew the precise number of casualties. As is usual on such occasions, the most varied rumours circulated through the crowd, but all were unanimous in their indignation at the action of the police.

I applied to the works management for definite information, but all those I spoke to were afraid to commit themselves and tried to avoid all conversation. The scared medical assistant at the hospital declared that he had seen nothing and that no killed or wounded had been brought in. After repeated questions to various workers, I finally succeeded in obtaining the facts.

From the works I went to the police station to inquire into the fate of those arrested. A dozen fully armed police officers crowded the pristav's\* room and listened with surprise to the insistence with which I demanded an immediate reply to a number of questions. I asked who had ordered the shooting of unarmed workers, how many had been killed and how many arrested, and on what charge.

The pristav replied that he was under no obligation to give explanations to strangers and that no one had the right to interfere with the actions of the police. When I showed him my deputy's card he was rather at a loss, and rang up the city governor, who gave strict orders that no information should be given to me.

Then the police officers pushed me out of the station and refused to allow me to speak with the arrested workers. It was obvious that the workers had been cruelly beaten; many were lying on the floor too weak to stand or sit.

I went to the Pravda offices for my usual night's work with my mind full of impressions of the incident, the suffering of the wounded, the overbearing attitude of the police and the panic and indignation among the workers. There I reported on all I had seen and we drew up a brief report for the paper. At the same time we informed the editors of the Liquidationist paper *Den* (The Day), who used the same press.

Next day *Pravda* appeared with a full account of the incidents and a short note explaining their significance. The material appeared in the space usually occupied by the leading article.

During the night I telephoned to the Ministry of the Interior and asked to be received on the question of the Putilov incident. Makla-

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\* Police officer in charge of a ward. – Ed.

kov was out of town and his assistant, Junkovsky, sent me a message saying that he would see me the next morning at his home at 8 o'clock.

A few minutes after the appointed hour, I arrived at his home in Sergeyevskaya Street. "I am late," I began, "because during the whole night I have had to deal with your raiders on *Trudovaya Pravda*." This excuse at once made the general feel uncomfortable.

"Of course you have no time, you are always at the factories inciting the workers to strike. I am surprised that you were allowed to enter the Putilov works. You are a deputy of the State Duma, your business is to legislate – that is why you were elected – but instead you spend your time at the workshops, hatching plots, issuing leaflets and publishing a newspaper which incites its readers to criminal acts." He pointed to the latest number of *Trudovaya Pravda* which was lying on the table and went on: "I have ordered a special commission for immediately prosecuting you and the newspaper."

"It is not the first time I have been prosecuted under one or other of your laws," I replied, "and I know you are able to do it, but I am here now for another purpose. Tell me what right the police had to fire on the Putilov workers; I shall report your answer to the workers at the other St. Petersburg factories and works."

"No shots were fired there," he rapped out, "the police fired two rounds of blank cartridges."

We both rose and stood facing each other across the table. "We shall not allow the workers to stone the police," he went on, "the police have rifles and sabres and in the future in similar circumstances they will shoot. That is why they are armed."

"I did not expect any other answer from our Ministers," I replied, "I shall inform the workers. You cannot prevent me going to the factories. A deputy elected by the workers will never confine himself to speeches in the Duma while the workers are being beaten up in your police stations."

I abruptly put an end to the interview and left the chief of the tsar's firing-squads.

An account of my interview with Junkovsky was published in *Pravda*; the number was confiscated. But in its next issue, *Pravda* again printed it; we were determined that the workers should know that the shots fired at the Putilov works were not accidental but part of the repressive measures that the tsarist government were bent on putting into execution.

The news of the shooting at the Putilov works made a tremendous impression on the St. Petersburg workers. Their indignation was as great as that caused by the news of the Lena shootings. The secret police, who put everything down to "criminal agitation," reported that "the publication of articles in the workers' press on the shooting of Putilov workers has made an impression on the masses which is exceptional in its intensity and effects."

The police endeavoured to localise the conflagration. All copies of *Pravda* containing news of the shootings were confiscated although no legal order had been issued. This occurred not only in the streets; searches were made at the homes of all newsvendors who lived in the Narva district. The police took every copy of *Pravda* that they could lay their hands on.

The Black Hundreds scented the danger and called on the police to do their duty to the tsar and the fatherland and stamp out all signs of the revolutionary movement. The organ of the "Union of the Russian People," the *Russkoye Znamya*, hysterically called for blood in an article entitled "Badayev to the Gallows."

On the day after the shootings, strikes broke out all over St. Petersburg; no less than 70,000 left work. The workers of the Winkler Works declared in their resolution: "On hearing the news of this new blood-bath, we determined not to start work but to reply by a strike. Our indignation is beyond words and we are resolved not to tolerate this sort of thing any longer...." The next day, *Pravda* was full of such resolutions and the streets were crowded with demonstrators. The strikers marched round to the other factories calling on their comrades to join the movement and the demonstrations grew like snowballs.

The demonstrations in the Moscow district of St. Petersburg were particularly stormy; all the works and factories were closed and the workers came out on the streets. All inns and government vodka stores were closed at the demand of the workers and all shops had to shut down because the assistants left their work to join the demonstrators. About midday, an enormous crowd marched towards the Putilov works singing revolutionary songs, a red flag being carried before the crowd.

At the Putilov railway siding the crowd was met by the police, who fired several volleys; the demonstrators did not disperse, but replied with stones. After a struggle lasting some fifteen minutes the police were put to flight, as they had fired their last cartridges. Four workers were wounded and taken to hospital.

Another clash occurred in the Vyborg district. A big demonstration headed by the Aivaz workers was marching along the Sampsonievsky Prospect towards the centre of the city when the police attempted to bar their route. Shots were fired and stones thrown, but fortunately no one was injured and the crowd was forced back into the side streets. Smaller encounters with the police took place throughout the day in all quarters of the city.

Late in the evening of the same day, the St. Petersburg Committee of the Party discussed the further plan of action. Our task was to solidify the independent action of the workers and to transform it into a powerful, organised movement. We decided to continue the mass strike for another three days and to organise new demonstrations, first on the Vyborg side. A big demonstration was fixed for July 7, the day when Poincare, the President of the French Republic, was due to arrive in St. Petersburg.

Formerly we had issued appeals to support the Baku strikers; now the principal motive of the movement was the protest against the shooting of workers in St. Petersburg. In order to establish a general plan of action we arranged a meeting of delegates from the factories, near the Porokhovye station outside the city. A password was given to the delegates and guides were appointed to conduct anyone using it through the forest to the meeting place.

On July 5, the demonstrations and clashes with the police were repeated, but no shots were fired although the police made free use of their sabres and whips. As July 6 was a Sunday no big demonstrations were held, but preparations were made in the working-class districts for the mass action which had been fixed for the following day.

On the morning of July 7 the city looked as it had done during 1905. With very few exceptions, factories and works were closed and about 130,000 workers were on strike. The workers poured into the streets and the police patrols were totally unable to control them; they could only manage to prevent any demonstration on the Nevsky Prospect. In order to avoid any "scandal" in the presence of the French President, huge police forces were concentrated there to prevent the workers reaching the centre of the city. The movement was not confined to mere demonstration. The normal traffic was interrupted; tramcars were stopped and passengers forced to alight, and the controls were removed. Workers filled the cars and prevented them from moving. Later in the day the men at one of the tramway depots joined the strikers.

The workers again closed all the government vodka shops and beer-houses, in some cases smashing bottles and pouring away the beer. Even the bourgeois papers subsequently referred to the absolute sobriety that prevailed in those days in the working-class districts. Taught by the experience of the preceding days, the police did not venture to use firearms, but attacked scattered isolated groups and individuals with whips and sabres. The workers had lost all fear of the police; they put up a vigorous fight against the police brutality, and many hand-to-hand fights took place.

The same evening the city governor and the Minister of the Interior had an urgent consultation on the events of the day and decided to take strong measures. The next morning the city governor issued a proclamation warning the population of the consequences of these disorders and reproducing, in effect, the famous order issued by Trepov in 1905: "Spare no cartridges."

In spite of this there were no signs of slackening and the movement continued to grow during the following days until July 12. The number of strikers increased to 150,000, and on July 9 barricades were seen in the streets of St. Petersburg. Tramcars, barrels, poles, etc., served as material for the construction of barricades which were built mainly in the Vyborg district. All traffic was interrupted and in many areas the workers had complete control of the streets.

The July movement of 1914 was interrupted by the declaration of the war. Although the strikes had stopped two days before war was declared on July 17 (old style) the patriotic demonstrations had already started and the task of the police was easier. At the same time, the manufacturers who had declared lock-outs were now prepared to make concessions in expectation of war orders and profits.

It is quite possible that in any case the July demonstrations would not have led to the decisive point of the revolutionary struggle, but that moment could not have been long delayed. It would have arrived with the next turn in the revolutionary tide, which would have quickly followed the ebb after July. But that moment was postponed by the war for almost two-and-half years. Although separated by the war years, July 1914 and February 1917 are directly linked together in the general development of the revolutionary movement.

## CHAPTER XX

**PRAVDA**

*Pravda's Place in the Revolutionary Movement – Pravda and the Duma Fraction – The Day to Day Struggle with the Police – The Interpellation on Pravda in the Duma – Pravda Raided*

*Pravda* played an extremely important role in the development of the revolutionary movement before the war and, from the moment of its foundation, was one of the chief means of conducting our Party work. The editors and the workers concerned in the printing and distribution of the paper became directly engaged in the organisation of the masses. Every revolutionary worker considered it his duty to obtain and read his Bolshevik newspaper every day, despite all the difficulties which might arise. Every copy was passed from hand to hand and read by scores of workers. The paper gave expression to their class-consciousness, educated and organised them.

The popularity of *Pravda* among the workers can be explained by the fact that it consistently followed a firm Bolshevik policy and, unlike the opportunist Liquidationist press (*Luch* and other papers), it always stated the problems in simple, straightforward language. Whereas the circulation of *Luch* never exceeded a maximum of 16,000 copies, that of *Pravda* reached 40,000 a day. A similar relation in the degree of support among the workers was visible in the amounts brought in by the collections which were made on behalf of the papers. *Pravda* was started on the money of the workers and supported throughout by workers' subscriptions, but the Liquidators published their paper mainly on big donations given by individuals in sympathy with the Mensheviks. In 1913, *Pravda* received no less than 2,180 contributions from workers' groups while *Luch* during that period only received 660. The following year (until May) *Pravda* received 2,873 and *Luch* 671.

In connection with every political event, every battle of the working class, workers sent letters, resolutions and reports to *Pravda*. We were unable to publish all this material on the four pages of the paper, even in its enlarged form, and much could not be printed for censorship reasons. The workers bluntly expressed their opinions of the tsarist regime and their willingness to engage in revolutionary struggle against it and, when the editors decided to take the risk and publish such correspondence, the paper was invariably fined and confiscated. As this was such a common occur-



rence, the workers provided for it in advance by requesting: "In case the paper is confiscated, please publish our news once more in the following number."

*Pravda* maintained its close contact with the workers also through the numerous visitors to the editorial offices, which became an important centre for organisational work. Meetings between delegates from local Party cells were held there, information was received from factories and workshops and from there instructions and the arrangements about secret meeting-places were taken back to the districts.

The tsarist secret police were well aware that the Bolshevik *Pravda* was a very dangerous enemy to the regime. Although, owing to the growing revolutionary temper of the St. Petersburg workers, the police hesitated two years before deciding to crush *Pravda*, they continually worried it with minor persecutions designed to reduce its power. Throughout the existence of the paper, every issue appeared after a struggle, every article after a fight. Arrests, fines, confiscation and raids – the police gave us no rest.

The Party created its newspaper under extremely difficult conditions and the Central Committee attached enormous importance to its part in the revolutionary movement. The group of comrades who were responsible for it were assisted in their difficult work by the Bolshevik fraction in the Duma. *Pravda* and the fraction worked hand in hand and only with the aid of the paper was the fraction able to carry out the tasks assigned to it by the Party and the revolutionary movement. We used the Duma rostrum to speak to the masses over the heads of the parliamentarians of various shades. But this was only rendered possible by the existence of our workers' press, as the so-called liberal newspapers devoted only a few lines to our speeches and sometimes passed them over in silence. Had there been no workers' Bolshevik paper, our speeches would not have been known of outside the walls of the Taurida Palace.

This was not the only assistance which we received from *Pravda*. At the editorial offices we met delegates from the St. Petersburg factories and works, discussed various questions and obtained information from them. In short, *Pravda* was a centre around which revolutionary workers could gather and which provided the support for the work of the fraction in the Duma.

From the moment that the fraction was formed it made newspaper work one of its chief tasks. Immediately the Fourth Duma

opened, the Bolshevik "six" published the following appeal in *Pravda*:

Being absolutely convinced that *Pravda* will carry out the task of welding together the forces of the proletariat during the present period, we appeal to you, comrades, to support it, distribute it and supply it with material. No doubt *Pravda* has its shortcomings, like any new paper which has not had the time or experience to gain strength, but the only way to remedy this is to support it regularly.

When I was charged by the Party with the task of attending to the issue of *Pravda* I addressed the following message to the St. Petersburg workers:

A workers' deputy and a workers' newspaper serve the same cause. There must be the closest co-operation between the two; that is why, comrades, I consider it my duty to take the most active part in bringing out our workers' newspaper, *Pravda*. Comrades! by our own efforts, with our hard-earned pence, we have created the first workers' daily in Russia. We, the workers of St. Petersburg, took a leading part in this work. But it is not enough to found a newspaper, we must strengthen it, and to put it securely on its feet a great deal has to be done. Every worker must become a regular reader and every reader must recruit other regular readers. We must organise collections for *Pravda* and ensure that it is distributed as widely as possible. Comrades! Let us all work together to build up the paper which serves the cause of Labour.

But in addition to organising support for *Pravda* and arranging for the means to continue its publication, I had also to struggle against the continual persecution of the police. We were constantly fighting against the confiscation of the paper and had to resort to the most varied subterfuges in order that the issue of any particular day should reach its readers.

To comply with the law a copy of the newspaper was sent from the printing shop to the Press Committee at the same time as the paper was issued for sale. As the Committee usually issued an order immediately for the confiscation of the issue we had to utilise the short interval between the dispatch of the paper from the printing

shop and its receipt by the Committee for the distribution to our vendors.

Representatives from factories and works gathered in the courtyard outside of the printing office in the early dawn ready to receive the paper straight from the press and dash off to their districts. Later the police became familiar with our manoeuvres and the printing establishment was surrounded with spies and the neighbouring streets filled with detachments of mounted and foot police. Often, in contravention of the law, the officials of the Press Committee came to the print shop and confiscated the paper as it came off the presses. Then we attempted to conceal a few bundles of the paper in the attic or on the staircase in order to smuggle out at least a few copies after the police had gone.

The "immunity" which I enjoyed as a member of the State Duma somewhat facilitated our task in this constant struggle with the authorities, but, needless to say, it in no way insured either my comrades or myself from police persecution and legal prosecution. The investigating magistrates accumulated case after case against me and, when they considered that a favourable moment had arrived, they presented their bill – I was prosecuted several times in respect of the newspaper. The government did not venture to arrest workers' deputies, but during the proceedings tried to involve other more vulnerable people.

Many times I was asked: "Who edits the newspaper *Pravda*?" And every court official received the same stereotyped answer: "The name of the editor is printed in each copy of the paper and the collaborators are thousands of St. Petersburg workers."

In May 1913, *Pravda* was closed down and a few days later appeared under the new title of *Pravda Truda*. This very obvious camouflage was resorted to on many other occasions; the editors had a supply of titles all containing the word *Pravda*: *Za Pravdu*, *Proletarskaya Pravda*, *Severnaya Pravda* and *Put Pravdy*\* followed one after the other. The secret police lost no opportunity of suppressing *Pravda*, yet our work was so well organised that the St. Petersburg workers were rarely without their daily newspaper.

Not the least of our difficulties was the lack of funds. The main source of money was the regular collections made among the work-

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\* The English translation of the above titles in the order as they are printed, reads: *Pravda (Truth) of Labour; For Pravda; Proletarian Pravda; Northern Pravda; The Path of Pravda*. – Ed.

ers at factories and works, but we sometimes received material help from individual persons who were in sympathy with the workers' revolutionary movement, including Maxim Gorky, who helped us whenever he could. Gorky was a regular contributor to all Bolshevik publications and he not only lent material support himself, but took steps to procure funds for the paper from others.

When he returned from abroad, Gorky settled in Finland, not far from St. Petersburg, and I visited him there in the summer of 1913. His help was needed both in regard to the paper and in relation to other Party work and I went to see him at the request of the Party Centre, taking care not to compromise him and subject him to fresh police persecution.

Gorky overwhelmed me with questions concerning Party life, the state of the revolutionary movement, the underground work, the activity of the Duma fraction, etc., and displayed an enormous interest in all the details of the struggle. He was particularly insistent in all matters which concerned work in the factories and I was unable to keep pace with the rate at which he poured out questions. With regard to the particular request, Gorky promised to do all in his power and devoted much time to helping us to obtain the necessary connections and means for the publication of *Pravda*.

Incensed by the tenacity of *Pravda*, the police became ruthless and ignored all legal formalities. Although they had no orders of confiscation, they arrested newsvendors, took away bundles of *Pravda*, and did not even trouble to get a retrospective decision of the Press Committee to legalise their actions.

At the end of February 1914, a police detachment under the command of a high official, but without any order, raided the editorial offices late at night. Locks were wrenched off the doors, everything was turned upside down and manuscripts and correspondence thrown into a heap in the middle of the floor. I was informed of the raid by telephone and at once ran to the offices and remonstrated with the police about the illegality of the search. But, as I no longer figured as the official editor of the paper, the officer replied: "Why do you interfere? You are a stranger in this office, it does not concern you."

"It certainly does. I am a workers' deputy, and this is a workers' paper. We are serving the same cause," was my reply.

The police concluded their search and took away all the material that they wanted. On the following day I made another protest

to the Minister responsible, but it was ineffective; the Minister and the police were working hand in glove.

At this time, the government introduced a new press law into the State Duma, designed to take away the last vestiges of the "freedom" conquered in 1905. The police raids on *Pravda* were a foretaste of the intention of this law. The fraction framed an interpellation dealing with the illegal confiscation of *Pravda* and on March 4 I spoke in support of the urgency of the interpellation. I dealt with the general conditions of the workers' press throughout Russia and my speech amounted to an appeal to all workers to rally to the defence of *Pravda*. The Black Hundred majority rejected our motion, but my speech attained its object – the workers heard our call; both the amount of collections and the number of subscribers to *Pravda* increased daily.

*Pravda* was indispensable during the July days of 1914. Full reports of the development of the struggle were published every day and the editors were in constant touch with the strike committees, helping them and organising collections in aid of the strikers. As a consequence the police persecutions increased, fines, confiscations and arrests became more frequent and day and night the offices were besieged by spies and by every variety of policemen. Every number was in danger and was only saved from the police with the greatest difficulty. We had to argue as to whether such or such an article of the law rendered the newspaper liable. I spent much time at the editorial offices helping the editors and I always carried with me copies of the relevant statutes so as to be able to confront the police officials with the actual text.

When the revolutionary movement in St. Petersburg had reached the stage where the workers were constructing barricades, the government decided to act. The secret police were instructed that our organisations must be smashed and the revolutionary movement deprived of its principal weapon, the press.

This time the raid on the newspaper was planned to take place at a moment when the principal visitors to *Pravda* as well as the whole editorial board could be arrested. The police descended on the offices just after dusk on July 8, when the work was in full swing and the workers had just arrived from the districts with their correspondence and the workshop collections and on other kinds of Party or trade union business. I at once went to the offices and found the building surrounded by police. After forcing my way through with some difficulty, I saw the place was in complete dis-

order, police officials were ransacking all drawers and cupboards and all the collaborators of the paper together with the visitors had been arrested and bundled into one room. I was not allowed to reach them and had to talk through an open door.

I at once protested against the search and the arrests and said that I would raise the matter in the State Duma. The police rang up their superiors and, on being told to proceed without ceremony, they ordered me to leave the place at once. I persisted, but they forced me out, and drew up the usual charge against me for interfering with the actions of the police.

This ransacking of *Pravda* was the signal for a series of attacks on labour organisations. During the few days just before the declaration of war the police destroyed all working-class papers, educational and trade union organisations. Mass arrests were made in St. Petersburg and batches of prisoners exiled to the northern provinces and Siberia.

The war brought still more stringent police measures and the Party was forced completely underground. Our fraction often discussed the question of resuming the publication of a workers' newspaper and the matter was on the agenda of the November Conference when the whole of the Duma fraction of the Bolsheviks was arrested.

Throughout the war, we were unable to resume the publication of *Pravda*.

## CHAPTER XXI

**PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONGRESS**

The Decision to Convene a Congress – Lenin's Instructions – Our Congress and that of the International – The Menshevik "Plan" – Preparations – How Documents were Preserved

The last (Fifth) All-Russian Party Congress was held in London in 1907. The years that followed had witnessed many important events in the country and many important changes within the Party. It was quite impossible to convene a Party congress during the years of the reaction, but now the position had changed. At the same time, the amazing development of the working-class movement had raised enormous new problems relating to the revolutionary struggle and given rise to many internal Party problems. These matters required to be settled at a Party congress.

In September 1913, the Poronino Conference had discussed the necessity for a congress and decided that: "The growth of the working-class movement, the deepening of the political crisis and the necessity for the working class to act on an all-Russian scale make it imperative that a Party congress be convened after due preparation." The conference invited local organisations to discuss the matter, map out a preliminary agenda, submit resolutions and organise collections.

At Poronino, it was decided to call the congress about the same time that the Socialist International was to meet in congress at Vienna, in August 1914. The Central Committee regarded it as both necessary and desirable that the Bolsheviks should play as great a part as possible at that Congress. At the same time, since the preparatory work for both congresses could be combined, it became possible to conduct it more thoroughly and, what is more, to screen more effectively from the police the very fact of the convocation of the Party congress.

Speaking at the Poronino Conference on the International Congress, Lenin pointed out the necessity of ensuring that the workers participated in the congress. He said:

"Hitherto the Social-Democratic Party has been represented in the international arena either by the central Party organs or by its various groups abroad, the Vperiodists, Conciliators, etc., made up almost entirely of intellectuals. Now we must take steps to ensure that the genuine working man be directly represented by delegates elected directly

from the workers' organisations, trade unions, co-operatives, etc. The Duma fraction must assume the representation of those organisations which are unable to send their own delegates. Every Bolshevik deputy must be present, since they are workers themselves and represent the Russian working class."

Lenin also emphasised the necessity of making the Party congress coincide with that of the International so that the election of delegates could take place at the same time. Preparations for the congress began immediately after the conference and discussions were started in the local organisations, but the most active work was done in the spring and summer of 1914.

In April 1914, together with the usual instructions which the fraction received from the Central Committee, there were a number of proposals from Lenin on how the preparations for the congress should be intensified.

Lenin insisted that in the first instance the underground organisations of the Party should be strengthened; without this, he argued, the growth of the Party would prove less effective since it would be deprived of revolutionary leadership. The strengthening of our underground cells was the chief means of ensuring the success of the congress and assisting it in the work of promoting the further consolidation of the Party. At this congress the Liquidators and, in particular, the Menshevik Duma "seven" would be finally defeated.

Lenin pointed out:

We have won a great victory, a victory for revolutionary Marxism. The press, the trade unions and the educational associations are ours. But this victory has its dangers. We owe it to our discipline and hard work.... If we want to maintain our position and not allow the growing movement to pass beyond Party leadership and become anarchist, we must at all costs strengthen the underground organisations. It is possible to dispense with a part of the Duma work, although it has been successfully conducted in the past, but we must reinforce our activity outside the Duma. We require well-organised, disciplined factory groups, ready to



act rapidly on instructions transmitted from above.\*

At this period the proposed agenda of the congress was as follows: (1) Report of the Central Committee and local reports; (2) The political situation; (3) The Party organisation; (4) The strike movement; (5) The new Press Bill; (6) The tactics of the trade union movement; (7) The tactics of the social insurance commissions; (8) The Party programme; (a) the national question, (b) some supplements to the minimum demands; (9) The Narodniki; (10) Attitude to the Liquidators; (11) Contributing to the bourgeois press; (12) Elections to the Central Committee and the Editorial Board of the Party paper; (13) Current affairs.

The congress was thus to deal with all fundamental and cardinal questions of internal Party organisation and the tactics of the revolutionary struggle. The number of delegates to the various local organisations was also provided for and representatives of the Bund, the Lettish, Polish and Lithuanian organisations were invited to attend as guests.

In view of the enormous preparatory work to be performed – the election of delegates, the drafting of instructions, the conveyance of the credentials, the safe passage of the delegates across the frontier and the collection of funds to defray the expenses – a special organisation committee was set up to deal with all matters concerning the congress. This committee worked in St. Petersburg and local committees were also constituted in the districts, which at once proceeded with the work of strengthening and, where necessary, rebuilding the local Party organisations; wherever possible, district and city Party conferences were arranged.

Members of our fraction also proceeded to their districts on tours of organisation and agitation in connection with the congress, and after they had covered their own district they went on to other regions in accordance with plans drawn up by Lenin. Petrovsky, after visiting the Ukraine, had to go to Esthonia, Muranov to the Urals and Shagov to Vladimir. Apart from my work in St. Petersburg, I had to go to the Caucasus and the Volga district.

Simultaneously with the strengthening of local organisations, Lenin took measures to consolidate the Central Committee working

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\* These passages are reproduced from the report of the Moscow Secret Police Department, dated April 27, 1914. The material was probably supplied by *Pelageya* (the *agent-provocateur* Romanov).

within Russia. For this purpose he proposed to arrange for the escape of Stalin and Sverdlov from exile and at the same time he arranged for several other comrades to be given responsible Party work. I received a letter from Lenin informing me of my inclusion on the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee.

Thus the work of preparation for the congress involved a general overhauling of the Party organisation and, as I mentioned before, it included the preparation for the International Socialist Congress.

The Russian Party congress was to meet before the International, to which our delegates would thus proceed with definite instructions from the supreme organisation of the Party. The International Socialist Bureau drafted the following agenda for the Vienna Congress: (1) Unemployment; (2) Alcoholism; (3) The rise in prices and the agrarian question; (4) Imperialism in connection with the colonial question; (5) The conditions of Russian political prisoners; (6) Party unity.

The inclusion of this last item was the result of the decision taken by the International Socialist Bureau in December 1913, in London, with regard to the split in the Duma fraction. The question of "unity" had been dealt with at other more recent conferences of the Bureau, but without any definite decision being arrived at. In view of the exceptional progress of Bolshevism among the workers accompanied by the practical extinction of Menshevism, it was quite out of place to raise the question of the Bolsheviks "uniting" with the Mensheviks. Not less than four-fifths of the working class now stood behind the Bolshevik Central Committee; therefore, it was no longer a question of reunion with the Mensheviks, but of recognising that they had placed themselves outside of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, and that their "centre" had no claim to existence. This was the point of view advocated by the Bolsheviks at the meetings of the I.S.B. and the latter decided to submit this question to the congress.

As in other campaigns carried out in Russia, the major part in the preparations for the two congresses fell to the Duma fraction. The preparations for the Party congress had, of course, to be kept strictly secret, but we were able to conduct a limited amount of propaganda for the International Socialist Congress in our press. But this was strictly limited; we did not even call it socialist, but referred to it as an international congress of labour organisations, congress of trade unions, or by some similar description. The masses were accustomed to the guarded language of our newspapers

and understood what was meant, especially as the speeches and the illegal literature supplemented the newspaper reports. In the press we discussed a number of questions which referred to the International congress, but were essentially connected with the Party congress too.

The Mensheviks were also making their own preparations. As they understood that at the Party congress they could at best form but a small minority, many of them considered the advisability of refusing to attend the congress and organising instead a conference of all organisations which took part in the August Bloc of 1912. But they could not refuse to take part in the International Congress since, in that case, the decision on the Russian question would almost certainly be unfavourable to them. Therefore they began a lively campaign in all workers' organisations.

But it was soon obvious that the Liquidators were fighting a lost battle. In the trade unions, insurance societies and other labour organisations, the majority of the members supported the Bolsheviks. In the summer of 1914, the Bolsheviks were in a majority on the boards of fourteen out of eighteen trade unions existing in St. Petersburg; on one of the others there was an equal number of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks and only three could be regarded as Menshevik. All the largest unions, including the metal-workers, supported the Bolsheviks. And a similar proportion of Bolsheviks to Mensheviks obtained among the representatives of the workers on the insurance societies.

When it became clear that they could not obtain a majority in the workers' organisations and might be even left without delegates to the Vienna Congress, the Mensheviks devised the idea of "double representation." They first tried this among the metal-workers, from whom, they suggested, two delegates should be sent, since one, representing the majority only, would be "factional," and would describe the unions' activity in a one-sided way. Naturally, as soon as the Mensheviks made this suggestion, the Socialist-Revolutionaries also demanded a delegate, although their supporters in the union only amounted to a few score. But the Liquidators could not refuse this demand, and thus their system would have brought about a multi-coloured delegation at the International Congress incapable of expressing the actual standpoint of the organisation as a whole.

The Mensheviks' scheme was overwhelmingly rejected by the workers, and as an example of the attitude of the latter, I will quote a resolution of a delegates' meeting in the Okhta district:

We, twenty-five delegates from the workshop committees of the Metal-Workers' Union, consider it necessary to send a representative to the International Congress who should represent the majority and who can adequately and correctly express our standpoint. We consider the suggestion, that representatives should be sent from the various tendencies, to be essentially wrong since it runs counter to all ideas of organisation and discipline.

The scheme of the Mensheviks to misrepresent the workers organisations abroad was completely defeated and most of these bodies elected Bolsheviks to the Vienna Congress.

The preparation for the Party congress proceeded satisfactorily. The main task of strengthening the local Party units was greatly assisted by the growth of revolutionary enthusiasm in the country. More and more workers were drawn towards the Party, new groups of revolutionary workers joined the ranks and the leading committees of the Party gained wider influence over the masses. Therefore it was natural that the question of organising an all-Russian congress should be discussed with great interest.

These favourable conditions did not in any way lessen our work. The organisation of even the smallest party meeting, not to speak of the convocation of regional and city conferences, was attended with great difficulties. All our work had to be conducted in secrecy and required a thorough knowledge of the technique of conspiracy, since the arrest of one or two delegates might endanger the whole congress and be very prejudicial to the interests of the Party. Finally, the collection of funds for the congress was also a very serious matter.

The whole of the St. Petersburg Party organisations threw themselves into the work of preparation. Thanks to the summer weather we were able to organise meetings in the woods outside the city, where we were comparatively free from police raids. When we wished to hold large meetings we organised excursions under the auspices of some educational society. After travelling some twenty kilometres from St. Petersburg, we went for a "walk" into the thicker parts of the woods and there, after posting sentries with an agreed password, held our meeting. Such meetings were not confined to the business of arranging the congress, but discussed all questions of the revolutionary struggle which became particularly urgent during 1914.

The secret police realised that something was afoot and spies swarmed all round the party centres, particularly at the editorial of-

fices of *Pravda* and the premises of the fraction. However, our technique had improved and, although individual comrades were occasionally arrested, there were no wholesale arrests.

The work was also successfully carried out in the provinces. Members of our fraction went from one city to another reorganising Party cells, giving instructions, reading reports on the congress and arranging for the election of delegates. At the same time they had to deal with current Party work in connection with the strike movement, trade union organisation, the workers' press fund, etc. Here, too, Bolshevik organisations played the leading role, while the influence of the Mensheviks vanished from month to month.

Preparations for the congress progressed. Credentials and other documents found their way to me by secret methods; the routes of delegates to the congress abroad were mapped out and they were informed where they had to cross the frontier, etc. Muranov, after touring his own district, was working in the Urals, Petrovsky was preparing to go to Esthonia, while I had already completed preparations in St. Petersburg, but was unable to leave for the Volga district because of the work entailed by the July events in the city.

By the time war was declared the principal part of the preparations both for the International Congress and the Party congress had been completed. Most of the delegates had been elected, instructions drafted and credentials collected. The technical organisation was also ready – the secret meeting-places, the routes and the passports. Sufficient funds had been collected and there was no reason to expect that the congress would not be highly successful.

The declaration of war and the rabid reaction which accompanied it radically altered the situation in the country. The convocation of a Party congress was now rendered impossible, especially since the closing of the frontiers made connections with foreign countries extremely difficult. The Party congress had to be postponed until a more favourable time and the International Congress could not meet either.

Since, however, we considered that perhaps the Party congress would be able to take place later, we decided to preserve all the documents relating to the congress. These documents, which were extremely important since they contained the whole scheme of our Party organisation, were at my home. According to the previous plan, I was to arrange that they should be forwarded to the Central Committee abroad so that the individual delegates could travel without having any compromising papers on them. Now that military operations had started at the frontier and all routes and corre-

spendence abroad were watched by the military secret service, it was impossible to get the documents abroad.

Yet they were no longer safe at my home. Most of the workers' organisations had been destroyed and we felt that it would soon be the turn of the Duma fraction. The government had already opened a campaign against the workers' deputies and we expected the police to raid our homes at any moment. At one time we even thought of burning all the material. The days of "parliamentary immunity" were drawing to a close and it was necessary to find some safe place to keep the documents.

Finally, we decided to conceal them in Finland, at a place two or three hours' train journey from St. Petersburg. I took the documents and, having wandered about the city until I had shaken off all spies, went to Finland. We had decided that only one other comrade should know of the hiding-place; I met Comrade Olminsky at the appointed station and we buried the documents under a tree, placing a heavy stone over the spot to make matters more certain.

After a time, however, I managed to get the documents to the Central Committee. The Finnish Social-Democratic Party still had facilities for communicating with foreign countries and we agreed that their Central Committee should undertake the task. I went again to Finland, dug out the documents and took them to Helsingfors.

The Finnish Party was legal and was in a much more favourable position than our organisation; I therefore raised the question of their helping us. We had suffered setbacks all along the line and funds were necessary to re-establish our work.

"Our organisation has been smashed," I told the Finnish comrades, "you must help us. We want to borrow both money and printing equipment. We are badly in need of every thousand, nay, every hundred, rubles that we can get."

Although the Finnish Social-Democratic Party was legal and therefore open to police surveillance, the Finnish comrades found ways to lend us some assistance.

The work of preparation for the Party congress was of great importance from the point of view of organisation. All Party units took part in the work from the Central Committee down to the local cells. Although the Party congress was not held at the time fixed owing to the war, the preparations had strengthened and consolidated the Party. Party membership had increased and new cadres of Party workers had been created.

## **THE WAR**





## CHAPTER XXII

**THE OUTBREAK OF WAR**

The Declaration of War – Workers' Demonstrations during the Mobilisation – The Duma Declaration – Refusal to Vote War Credits – Conditions of Party Work at the Commencement of the War – First Anti-War Proclamations of the St. Petersburg Committee – A Raid by the Secret Police – A Journey across Russia

The Baku strike and the July demonstrations of the St. Petersburg workers were the last big revolutionary events before the outbreak of war. These struggles had produced many victims among the workers. When the mass movement had developed into barricade fighting and armed collisions, the tsarist government did not let anything stand in the way of their endeavours to crush the incipient revolution. The series of lock-outs had struck at the economic conditions of the workers and mass arrests and deportations weakened the political organisation of the working class. The proletariat required a certain time to recover, to collect its forces for fresh onslaughts on tsarism. The workers were, however, denied this respite; on the contrary, subsequent events struck a heavy blow at the revolutionary movement.

The declaration of war was a signal for the blackest reactionary forces to redouble their attacks on the working-class movement. In the atmosphere of rabid chauvinism and artificial jingoism, the tsarist government savagely repressed all legal and illegal working-class organisations.

The war, although nominally caused by a quarrel between Austria and Serbia, was really a gigantic struggle between imperialist brigands, who were ready to cut each other's throats in the fight for new markets. The war promised the bourgeoisie the possibility of fresh plunder abroad and enormous profits from war orders at home. The bourgeoisie of all countries greeted the outbreak of war with delight, cloaking their desire for booty under a thin veneer of nationalist ideals. The Russian bourgeoisie was no exception in this respect. It had formerly allowed itself the liberty of playing at liberalism and opposition, but now for the sake of imperialist aspirations it hastened to bend the knee and swear whole-hearted allegiance to the flag of tsarism. It suddenly discovered that the Romanov autocracy with its bloody police regime and its cruel oppression of the masses was a champion of democracy and the defender of small nations against the Prussian Junkers and German militarists.

Patriotic demonstrations were staged in the streets of St. Petersburg. House-porters, policemen, secret police, together with the riff-raff of all descriptions paraded the streets, carrying portraits of the tsar and national flags, singing "God save the tsar," and shouting "hurrah" at the top of their voices. Under the protection of the forces of "law and order," the demonstrators became brazen, knocking off the hats of passers-by and beating up any citizen who was not sufficiently enthusiastic in his patriotism. Any such demonstration was liable to be transformed at any moment into a crowd of characteristic Russian pogrom-makers. In St. Petersburg, the "patriots" smashed the windows of the German Embassy, and in Moscow they attacked several German commercial and industrial enterprises.

Patriotic pogroms alternated with ceremonies of kneeling in front of the tsar's palace. Even the students, who were formerly so proud of their "Left" traditions, stood on their knees before the Winter Palace, shouting hurrahs and paying homage to their "beloved" sovereign.

Under cover of the wave of chauvinism which swept over the country the tsarist police hastened to settle accounts with its old "internal enemy," the most advanced section of the Russian proletariat. By a stroke of the pen, such working class organisations as still survived were suppressed. Siberia was once again crowded with exiles, and party organisations lost many of their best members. The war, for which the bourgeoisie had been preparing for some time, found the working-class not only unprepared, but recently defeated in a serious encounter with the forces of tsarism. At the same time, certain groups of backward workers, who did not grasp the real significance of events, were infected by the widely diffused poison of patriotism. In these circumstances it was difficult to envisage any widespread organised resistance to the war-madness and war-reaction by the Russian proletariat.

And yet, despite these handicaps, a number of anti-war actions took place in St. Petersburg in the first days of the war. As soon as general mobilisation was announced, the St. Petersburg Committee issued its first anti-war proclamation: "A sanguinary spectre haunts Europe," "Down with war! War against war! These words must re-echo through all the cities and villages of Russia." This was the Party's appeal to the workers, peasants and soldiers. "The workers must remember that workers across the frontier are not their enemies. The workers of all countries are oppressed by the rich and governing classes, they are exploited everywhere.... Soldiers and

workers, you are being called upon to die for the glory of the cos-sack whips, for the glory of your country – your country, which shoots down workers and peasants and which imprisons your best sons. We must declare that we do not want this war. Our battle-cry is ‘Liberty for Russia.’ “

This proclamation was hastily drafted as soon as the news of the outbreak of war had become known, and only contained a brief survey of the situation, but it will be seen that the St. Petersburg Party organisation had already given the cue which was subsequently strengthened, developed and completed by all other Party organisations.

Although communications with the provinces were interrupted immediately, we had little doubt that a similar spirit animated the advanced provincial workers. We obtained only fragmentary news of which a letter I received from Kostroma a few days after the mobilisation is typical. This letter contained the following resolution adopted by a group of Kostroma workers:

We protest most emphatically against the action of the tsarist government in involving the Russian proletariat in a fratricidal war with the proletariat of Germany and Austria. We ask the Duma Social-Democratic Workers’ Fraction what steps it has taken against the war and what it has done to express fraternal solidarity with the proletariat of the belligerent states.

On the day that the army was mobilised the workers of about twenty factories struck in St. Petersburg in protest against the war. In some places the workers met the reservists with shouts of “Down with the war” and with revolutionary songs. But the demonstrations now took place under conditions different from those of a few weeks before. The onlookers, particularly in the centre of the city, were incited by patriotic sentiment and no longer maintained a “friendly neutrality,” but took an active part in hunting down the demonstrators and helping the police to make arrests.

One such “patriotic” outburst occurred in the Nevsky Prospect on the first day of mobilisation, while a workers’ demonstration was marching past the town Duma. The people in the street, mostly bourgeois loafers, who usually hid themselves or made off through side streets when workers’ demonstrations appeared, now became very active and, with shouts of “traitors,” assisted the police to beat

up the demonstrators. The police were able to arrest the workers and take them off to the police station.

In such conditions it was impossible to organise a widespread movement against the war and the heroic acts of individual workers were drowned in a sea of militant patriotism.

In order to demonstrate more clearly the complete "unity" of the tsar with the people and, above all, to get war credits voted, the State Duma was hastily convened. Most of the deputies from the extreme Right to the Cadets were thoroughly war-minded and talked of nothing but "war until victory is won," "defence of the fatherland," etc. The newspapers competed with each other in reproducing the patriotic utterances of the party leaders in the Duma on the necessity of combining to fight the foreign enemy.

The bourgeois press was very anxious about the attitude the workers' deputies would adopt with regard to the war. While I was receiving visits from workers one evening at home, a crowd of bourgeois journalists from all the St. Petersburg papers, from the Black Hundred *Zemschina* to the Left *Den*, arrived and asked me a number of questions.

"What is the attitude of the workers towards the war? What is the position taken up by your fraction? What do the workers' deputies propose to do in the Duma?"

Producing their note-books and pencils, they made ready to take down my answers. But what I said was altogether unsuitable for publication in their newspapers. I declared:

The working class will oppose the war with all its force. The war is against the interests of the workers. On the contrary, its edge is turned against the working class all over the world. The Basle Congress of the Socialist International, in the name of the world proletariat, passed a resolution declaring that, in case of the declaration of war, our duty was to wage a determined struggle against it. We, the real representatives of the working class, will fight for the slogan "War against War." Every member of our fraction will fight against the war with all the means at his disposal.

Needless to say, my answer was not published in any newspaper, but immediately became known to the secret police, who saw in my words a confirmation of the anti-war position of our Party, and I began to receive abusive letters written not to convince but to terrorise.

"You will share the fate of Herzenstein and Yollos," was the theme of several letters from members of the Black Hundreds. Herzenstein and Yollos were two deputies of the previous Dumas assassinated by members of the Union of the Russian People with the connivance of the secret police. One of the letters also contained a drawing of a skeleton, representing the fate that would overtake me.

When the workers learned of these threats, they insisted on providing me with a special guard at my home. Despite my protests as to the impossibility of protecting oneself against the assassin's bullet, the workers insisted on this proposal.

This occurred in the first few days of the war, before the public declaration of the fraction which was to be made in the Duma during the discussion on the war credits vote. At first we attempted to work out a joint declaration for the two Social-Democratic fractions and the Trudoviks. After consulting with Party comrades who were in St. Petersburg, we decided to insist that the declaration should emphatically condemn the war and definitely refuse any support from the working class. Negotiations were opened between the three fractions, but the Trudoviks left at the first consultation. Kerensky, Chkheidze and myself were present, and Kerensky declared bluntly that the Trudoviks considered it necessary to declare in favour of war. Chkheidze wavered at first, inclining toward the need of "defending the country."

However, after prolonged negotiations the two fractions proceeded to draft a joint declaration. The main lines of the declaration were decided at a conference attended by some members of our St. Petersburg Committee and some prominent Mensheviks. The first draft was drawn up, if I remember right, by Sokolov. Later in the day Shagov and Petrovsky returned to St. Petersburg and joined us. Later more deputies of both fractions arrived, and after several more meetings and much discussion, the final text of the declaration was agreed to by both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

The next sitting of the Duma was to be held on July 26. A few days previously, most of the deputies, this time the Trudoviks included, went to a reception at the palace where they were able to give full vent to their sentiments of loyalty to the tsar. Rodzyanko opened the Duma with a highly patriotic speech about the "complete unity between the tsar and his loyal people": for the "defence of the State" and how "all the nationalities inhabiting Russia had merged into one fraternal family when their fatherland was in danger," etc. These clap-trap formulas of militant patriotism were sub-

sequently repeated with slight alterations by the leaders of the parties which composed the Duma majority. Kerensky, speaking for the Trudoviks, read a declaration which, after a few pseudo-revolutionary phrases, asserted that the Trudoviks were firmly convinced that "the great elemental force of Russian democracy would offer a determined and successful resistance to the enemy and would protect its home country and its culture which had been created by the sweat and blood of past generations."

The declaration of the Social-Democratic fraction was then read, but Rodzyanko censored it before it was printed in the stenographic report.

Although our declaration did not contain a clear and precise characterisation of the war or of the position of the working class and did not give a well-defined revolutionary lead, yet, when set off against the jingo background, it sounded a clear call of protest against the war madness. In contrast to the statements made by the other parties, the Social-Democratic declaration resolutely condemned the war and opposed to it the solidarity of the working class, denying the existence of any "unity" between the tsar and the people which had been so hypocritically welcomed by the Black Hundred Duma.

After its patriotic orgy, the State Duma proceeded to vote the war budget. In accordance with decisions taken at all congresses of the International, our fraction refused to take any part in the voting and left the hall. Our declaration and our refusal to vote war credits raised a storm of protest from the Duma majority. Deputies from all other parties, including the left Cadets and Progressives, lost their temper and attacked us in the lobbies.

"What are you doing? You are the representatives of the workers and should lead them, but instead you are dragging the Russian people to the edge of an abyss. You will destroy the nation."

The Right were very abusive and threatened to deal with us later, although quite ready to fall upon us then and there. We left the Duma followed by the threatening shouts of the Duma "diehards."

Our anti-war stand in the Duma soon became widely known among the workers and it was taken as the guiding line for the anti-war work of the Party. We began gradually to rebuild our underground work, directed mainly towards organising the masses for a struggle against the war. The difficulties of Party work in the atmosphere which was created in the early days of the war and the difficulties of maintaining connections with the Central Committee

abroad became intensified more than ever before. The Austrian authorities had arrested Lenin and it was two months before we could satisfactorily re-establish communications with the foreign centre. Our chief work was anti-war propaganda which, under war conditions, rendered every member who was caught liable to trial by court-martial and almost certain death.

After the destruction of *Pravda* and the labour press the Duma fraction remained the only rallying centre for the Party forces. The St. Petersburg Committee had been destroyed, and scarcely any of its members were left in St. Petersburg. Many had been arrested and others were forced into hiding in the adjoining districts. Their chief base was Finland, where Olminsky, Yeremeyev, Kamenev, Demyan Bedny, Gorky and other comrades were living. It was extremely difficult to keep in close touch with them, but it was very important that the Committee should be reconstructed. On the other hand, it was imperative to keep the activity of the St. Petersburg Committee as secret as possible. Hence the new St. Petersburg Committee had fewer members, although it was confronted with a larger amount of work.

The first task of the Committee was to establish contacts with the districts and to reorganise the printing facilities for the issue of proclamations. We had to make arrangements to dismantle the printing plant and transfer it and all other accessories to another place as soon as a proclamation had been printed. By this means, although the secret police continually arrested fresh batches of our members, we were able to continue our work.

I took the draft of the first proclamation to Finland to be edited from there. As the frontier was very carefully watched, I put one copy of the draft in my top-boot and another in a matchbox which I could burn at any moment if I was searched by the police. At the appointed place I met Comrade Yeremeyev and spent the whole night correcting the draft. The next morning, taking the same precautions, I returned to St. Petersburg and handed the draft to the group of comrades who were to print and distribute it. These comrades used to go to the most crowded points of the town – to the railway stations and the mobilisation depots – and give the proclamations to the reservists or sometimes push them into their pockets.

The St. Petersburg Committee issued its second proclamation on the war in the beginning of August. This proclamation dealt with the necessity of conducting propaganda among the troops, with preparing for an armed struggle, and with the approaching social revo-

lution. Thus, the slogan of "War against war" was evolving into a practical programme of utilising the war for the revolutionary struggle.

The appearance of this proclamation alarmed the secret police, who had hoped they had succeeded in completely smashing the Party organisations and that their repressive measures and the prevailing patriotism had cut away the ground from under the feet of the revolutionary parties. The proclamation demonstrated that the Bolsheviks, far from being destroyed, were making use of the situation to further the revolutionary movement. The government decided to stamp out this "treason" and the secret police began to hunt down those comrades who were associated with the printing of the proclamation and to search for the illegal printing-press. Several arrests were made but the press was not discovered.\*

Two weeks later we were able to issue another manifesto in the name of the St. Petersburg Committee. Despite the strict war-time measures, the manifestos were distributed at the factories and works and reached the reservists and to some extent the regular troops. They fulfilled their purpose of gradually reinforcing the revolutionary sentiments of the masses and dispersing the chauvinist fog spread by the government press. We exposed the true face of the imperialist war and appealed to the masses to prepare for an armed struggle under the banner of the international solidarity of the proletariat.

Gradually Party cells were reconstructed and Party members who had escaped arrest gathered around themselves all active workers and observing strict rules of secrecy recommenced their work. In

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\* It can be seen from the documents preserved in the Archives of the Police Department that the secret police considered that I was the chief agent in the issuing of these manifestos. The chief of the secret police reported that though "the St. Petersburg Committee has ceased its activity" yet "the restless youthful members of the illegal organisations are not content with their enforced inactivity and, under the influence of the Social-Democratic deputy, Badayev, have begun to issue a series of leaflets dealing with current events with the set purpose of discrediting the government's conduct of the war." The secret police were obviously acting under instructions to prepare the material necessary for my arrest and prosecution. But they failed to obtain the proofs they expected from their searches and reported: "All measures will be taken to obtain from persons arrested confessions which will prove that the deputy Badayev is engaged in revolutionary propaganda."



the absence of any other legal working-class organisations, Party members turned their attention to the insurance societies which gave them contacts with the workers. District organisations were again formed and in some districts the work became very lively and delegates were sent to the St. Petersburg Committee. With great difficulty, and not so quickly as we would have desired, the Bolshevik organisation in St. Petersburg began to revive, to gather in new links and cells, and was able to continue its revolutionary work, directed now mainly towards fighting the war and preparing for revolutionary action by the working class.

The provinces slowly followed suit. In the second half of August I went round Russia on a tour originally planned in connection with the preparation for the Party congress and which I now used for the purpose of strengthening and re-establishing the local Party organisations. I proposed to visit some Volga cities and then proceed to Baku and Tiflis, for the Baku organisation had been destroyed after the long strike in the summer. I was also to initiate preparations for a Party conference proposed for the autumn.

In order to avoid spies I had to leave St. Petersburg secretly. After having walked about the city for some time I went to a forest near the Obukhovo station and waited until I saw a goods train approaching, then I ran to the line and jumped on the train which took me to Lyuban. Concordia Samoylova and Yuriev, who were living there since the destruction of the Party organisation, met me at an agreed spot and handed me a railway ticket. I went to the station just before the train left, climbed into a carriage and at once clambered into an upper bunk. The secret police soon missed me from St. Petersburg and hunted for me unsuccessfully all over the city.

I visited a number of cities, got in touch with Party members and with their help held a series of meetings. I gave them addresses to which they could safely send correspondence and literature and took part in settling various questions of local Party activity.

In Baku it was necessary to build up the organisation anew. After several conferences with Baku Bolsheviks, including Comrade Shaumyan, I decided to organise large meetings of workers throughout the oil-fields. These meetings, however, were never held; some *agent-provocateur* had managed to sneak into the conferences and I was immediately surrounded by spies who prevented me going anywhere without endangering the persons I met. In these circumstances we had to give up the idea of holding large workers'

meetings and, as I could not continue with a string of spies at my heels, I was forced to return directly to St. Petersburg.

On my arrival at St. Petersburg, I learned that a large force of secret police had been mobilised to discover my whereabouts. And, in the Duma, I was told how happy Junkovsky was when at last he was informed that I had turned up in Baku. In a conversation with a member of the Duma, Junkovsky had said, without attempting to hide his satisfaction: "Badayev had completely disappeared, but now we have found him in Baku."

It was now September, and the other members of our fraction returned to St. Petersburg soon afterwards. Although they had had to discontinue their work of preparing for the congresses, they had strengthened Party work in the provinces. News from the localities brought evidence that our anti-war propaganda met with the support of the revolutionary workers.

## CHAPTER XXIII

**THE NOVEMBER CONFERENCE**

The Treachery of the Second International – Vandervelde's Letter –  
 The Mensheviks Support the War – Lenin's Theses on the War –  
 The Conference – Proclamation to the Students – Discussion of the  
 Theses

By developing our Party work, conducting anti-war propaganda, and organising a campaign against war, we were acting in accordance with the decisions of the International Socialist Congresses. These congresses had repeatedly condemned war between bourgeois governments, stressed the duty of Social-Democrats to vote against war credits in parliaments and appealed to the workers to end by means of an armed insurrection any war which might occur.

The Basle Congress, the last congress before the war, held in 1912 during the war crisis in the Balkans, addressed a manifesto to the world proletariat in which it declared: "Let the governments remember that the Franco-Prussian war called forth the revolutionary explosion of the Commune, that the Russo-Japanese war brought in its wake the revolutionary movement of all the nations within the Russian Empire.... The workers of the world regard it as a crime to shoot each other in the name of capitalist profits, dynastic rivalries or secret diplomacy." Our Duma fraction based its work on these statements.

Our fraction, then just organised, had sent the following letter to the Basle Congress: "War and bloodshed are necessary to the ruling classes, but the workers of all countries demand peace at all costs. And we, Russian workers, extend fraternal hands to the workers of all other countries and join with them in their protest against war – the disgrace of our time." Later, in April 1913, when there was a danger of a Russo-Austrian clash, the Duma Social-Democratic fraction exchanged letters with the Social-Democratic fraction in the Austrian parliament and with the executive committee of the Hungarian Social-Democratic party. At that time we wrote:

The nations within the Russian Empire know of no justification for this criminal war... we scornfully repulse the anti-German and anti- Austrian agitation of Russian liberals who try to varnish with a progressive colour the barbaric at-

tempt to incite the Russian peoples against the Germans and everything German....

In their reply, the Austrian Social-Democrats expressed joy and satisfaction with our attitude:

We regard your fearless action again Pan-Slav chauvinism as one of the best guarantees of European democracy and European peace.... We are bitterly hostile to your oppressors but we are bound to the Russian people by indissoluble ties in a common struggle for peace and freedom.

As is well known, on the day after war was declared, the leaders of the International committed one of the greatest betrayals in history and deserted the standard of the international working class. Carried away by the wave of nationalism, the Socialist Parties followed the lead of their respective governments and became tools in the hands of their national bourgeoisie. The notorious doctrine of "defencism" made its appearance. The leaders betrayed the revolution and adopted the theory that once war had been declared it was necessary to defend the fatherland, joining the bourgeois press in inciting the worst jingoist passions and calling for a ruthless struggle against the "enemy." The German Social-Democrats declared that they were fighting Russian tsarism, while the Allied Socialists asserted that they supported the war against German militarism and Prussian Junkerdom. Both sides thus supported the imperialist brigands in their attempts to destroy their competitors at the expense of the lives of millions of workers and peasants.

I shall not deal with the details of this betrayal, the voting of war credits and the acceptance of posts in bourgeois cabinets, but shall refer to an attempt to lead the Russian Social-Democrats along the same path. This task was undertaken by Emil Vandervelde, Belgian Socialist and Chairman of the International, who became a minister in the Belgian government in the early days of the war.

A few months previously, in the spring of 1914, Vandervelde came to Russia in order to become acquainted with the Russian working-class movement. At conferences with representatives of the various Social-Democratic tendencies, including our Bolshevik fraction, he had ample opportunity to acquaint himself with the irreconcilable struggle which the Russian proletariat was waging against tsarism. During his stay in Russia he was able to observe the ruthless oppression of the workers by tsarist autocracy. After all this it was particularly strange to hear from Vandervelde a proposal to

cease the struggle against tsarism and to support the war which it had engineered. Vandervelde's action is a clear example of the opportunism which overtook the leaders of the International and which finally led them into the position of aiders and abettors of the international bourgeoisie.

Vandervelde's proposal was addressed to both Social-Democratic Duma fractions, and naturally the tsarist government willingly allowed this foreign telegram to reach us. The wording of the telegram reveals the depths of chauvinism to which the European Social-Democrats had fallen:

For Socialists of Western Europe, the defeat of Prussian Militarism – I do not say of Germany, which we love and esteem – is a matter of life or death.... But in this terrible war which is inflicted on Europe owing to the contradictions of bourgeois society, the free democratic nations are forced to rely on the military support of the Russian government.

It depends largely on the Russian revolutionary proletariat whether this support will be effective or not. Of course, I cannot dictate to you what you should do, or what your interests demand; that is for you to decide. But I ask you – and if our poor Jaures were alive he would endorse my request – to share the common standpoint of socialist democracy in Europe.... We believe that we should all unite to ward off this danger and we shall be happy to learn your opinion on this matter – happier still if it coincides with ours.

This telegram was proudly signed “Emil Vandervelde, delegate of the Belgian workers to the International Socialist Bureau and Belgian minister since the declaration of war.”

Vandervelde stated that he allowed us to make any use we liked of his telegram; in other words he proposed that we should use it as an argument for stopping our struggle against the war.

It was quite obvious that we could only return one answer. There could be no talk of making peace with tsarism, which remained the principal and implacable enemy of the working class. On the other hand the workers had no enemies in the armies which were facing each other. The enemy in each case was on the near side of the trenches, represented by the national bourgeoisie, against whom the weapon had to be directed. This was the only way in

which the Party of the revolutionary proletariat could reply to the appeal of Vandervelde, the king's minister.

At first it seemed that the Mensheviks also were bound to share this point of view. In the joint declaration read in the Duma on July 26, the Mensheviks refused to support the war and did not suggest concluding a truce with the government. But the example of the West European opportunists made them waver in, and then change, their position and they too sank to social patriotism and defensism.

Among the Mensheviks there were several supporters of the final victory of Russia, who considered that it was wrong to vote against war credits and to oppose the war. Vandervelde's message gave rise to violent discussions within the Menshevik fraction as to the reply which should be sent. In the final draft they withdrew their opposition to the war and, after enumerating the hardships suffered under tsarism, wrote:

But in spite of these circumstances, bearing in mind the international significance of the European conflict and the fact that Socialists of the advanced countries are participating in it, which enables us to hope that it may be solved in the interests of international Socialism, we declare that by our work in Russia we are not opposing the war.

The Romanov autocracy was so savage and repulsive that the Mensheviks were, of course, unable to declare openly their support of the government; nevertheless their reply was equivalent to such support. This decision not to oppose the war implied a renunciation of the last traces of a revolutionary struggle against the government, surrendering the working class to the tender mercies of tsarism.

The Bolshevik fraction also drafted its reply to Vandervelde, explaining our attitude to the tasks of the working class in the war. The draft was submitted to a conference of the fraction and Party members which was held in Finland at the end of September, in Kamenev's apartment.

After thorough discussion the text drafted by the fraction was approved. In our reply we rejected outright any suggestion of supporting the war and ceasing the struggle against the government. In opposition to this, we advocated as the task of the Party the utilisation of the war crisis to further the revolution. Military victory for Russian tsarism would merely strengthen the autocratic regime and make the Russian government the greatest obstacle and menace to international democracy. We wrote:

In no circumstances can the Russian proletariat co-operate with the government, nor can it even call for a temporary truce or render it any support. This is not a question of passivity. On the contrary we consider it our most urgent task to wage an implacable struggle against tsarism, on the basis of the demands advanced and supported by the Russian working class during the revolutionary days of 1905, demands which in the past two years have won widespread support in the mass political movement of the Russian workers. During this war, which involves millions of workers and peasants, our task is to counteract the hardships caused by the war by means of developing and strengthening the class organisations of the proletariat and wide masses of democracy and utilising the war crisis in order to prepare the masses for the successful realisation of the tasks of 1905. At the present moment we demand the convocation of a Constituent Assembly and we demand it in the interests of that democracy which your telegram invites us to support.... This is the only way in which we can serve the Russian working class and world democracy, as well as the cause of the International, which, we believe, will have to play an important role in the near future. When the results of this terrible war are summed up, the eyes of backward sections of the masses will be opened and they will be forced to seek salvation from the horrors of militarism and capitalism in the only possible way, namely by the realisation of our common Socialist ideal.

The full text of this reply, signed by the Central Committee, was published in the November issue (No. 33) of the *Sotsial-Demokrat*.

In addition to deciding on the answer to Vandervelde, the conference dealt with certain current questions of Party life. It was decided to issue another anti-war proclamation (this was published in the beginning of October), and the provisional date for the next All-Russian Party conference was agreed upon. It was proposed that the discussion of the Party attitude to the war should be one of the main items on the agenda.

Lenin's *Theses on the War*, which had now reached Russia, were to serve as the basis for this discussion. These theses, written in September 1914, defined for the first time the attitude of the Bolshevik Central Committee to the war. Lenin wrote:

From the point of view of the working class and the labouring masses of all the peoples of Russia, by far the lesser evil would be the defeat of the tsarist armies and tsarist autocracy....\*

The seventh and last point of the theses advanced the following slogans for Party work:

First, an all-embracing propaganda of the Socialist revolution, to be extended also to the army and the area of military activities ; emphasis to be placed on the necessity of turning weapons, not against the brother wage-slaves of other countries, but against the reaction of the bourgeois governments and parties of all countries; recognition of the urgent necessity of organising illegal nuclei and groups in the armies of all nations to conduct such propaganda in all languages; a merciless struggle against the chauvinism and patriotism of the philistines and bourgeoisie of all countries without exception. Against the leaders of the present International who have betrayed Socialism, it is imperative to appeal to the revolutionary consciousness of the working masses who bear the brunt of the war and are in most cases hostile to chauvinism and opportunism....

These theses formed the foundation for the manifesto of the Central Committee published in No. 33 of the *Sotsial-Demokrat*, the Party organ, the first number issued after the outbreak of war. The manifesto, which revealed the real meaning of the imperialist war and exposed the treason of the leaders of the International, explained as follows the anti-war position of Russian Social- Democracy:

Our party, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, has suffered, and will yet suffer, great losses in connection with the war. All our legal workers' press has been annihilated. Most of the trade unions have been dissolved and large numbers of our comrades have been imprisoned and exiled. But our parliamentary representatives forming the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Fraction in the State Duma considered it their unquestionable Socialist duty not to vote for the war credits and even to leave the meeting-hall of the Duma in order more energetically to

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\* Lenin, Works, Vol. XVIII, p. 63.



express their protest; they considered it their duty to brand the politics of the European governments as imperialist. Notwithstanding the tenfold increase of the tsarist government's oppression, our comrade workers in Russia are already publishing their first illegal appeals against the war, doing their duty by democracy and by the International....

And then, later on:

To turn the present imperialist war into civil war is the only correct proletarian slogan. It is indicated by the experience of the Commune, it was outlined by the Basle resolution (1912) and it follows from all the conditions of imperialist war between highly developed bourgeois countries....

Lenin's theses and the Central Committee's manifesto confirmed the correctness of the policy which we had followed in Russia since the commencement of the war and at the same time strengthened that policy by a clear and precise formulation of "defeatism," as the Bolshevik anti-war programme was subsequently called.

When these documents, after great difficulty and in a roundabout way, finally reached us from abroad, we had first of all to inform representatives of local organisations and then together with these representatives work out how the slogans should be applied in practice, i.e. to plan a definite programme of action. This was the main object of the Party conference called by the fraction in November 1914.

The conference had to find a way of freeing the revolutionary movement from the depression which had set in on the outbreak of war. Working-class organisations had been destroyed and a reactionary war terror was raging with increasing force. The reconstruction of the Party organisation in these conditions required strenuous and persistent effort. Technical means were required too. All these main questions of Party work were to form the objects of the conference: the strengthening of contacts between the centre and the local organisations, the organisation of Party work in the army, the setting up of illegal printing presses, the publication of a newspaper, the maintenance of communication with organisations abroad, finance, etc.

We prepared for the conference with the greatest caution and in strict secrecy. Members of the fraction journeyed through the provinces arranging for the election of delegates from all the important

industrial centres. The delegates were given addresses of secret meeting-places in St. Petersburg to obtain there all necessary information. In order not to arouse the suspicions of the police, the delegates did not meet the deputies until the conference itself.

Originally it was intended that the conference should be held in Finland, but subsequently we found a suitable place in the outskirts of St. Petersburg in the suburb of Ozyorky. Most of the houses were uninhabited in the winter and No. 28 Viborg Road, where lived Gavrilov, a factory clerk, whose wife allowed us to use their apartment, was almost isolated. Ozyorky was a particularly convenient district because it could be reached by tramcar as well as by railway and the terminus was not far from the Gavrilovs' house.

After a part of the delegates had arrived in St. Petersburg, the date of the conference was fixed. We all made our way to Ozyorky by different routes. I left home early in the morning and started out in the opposite direction. Having dodged the spies I approached the Neva, jumped into a boat and crossed to the other side ; this was a favourite way of avoiding all pursuit because it was difficult for anybody to get a second boat immediately. On the other side, after altering my direction a number of times, I finally reached the conference.

The other members of the conference had to adopt a similar strategy. The small room contained our Duma fraction, Petrovsky, Muranov, Samoylov, Shagov and myself, and the delegates from the districts: M. Voronin from Ivanovo-Voznesensk, N. N. Yakovlev\* from Kharkov, Linde from Riga and two representatives from St. Petersburg, N. Antipov, member of the Executive of the St. Petersburg Committee, and I. Kozlov, a Putilov worker, member of the Insurance Board. It was agreed that Kamenev should come from Finland on the next day. Many of the delegates were unable to attend; one, Alexey Japaridze, from the Caucasus, fell into the hands of the police when he left the railway station in St. Petersburg; others were prevented from leaving their respective cities.

The conference started work on the evening of November 2, when all the delegates read reports on conditions in their districts. They described the state of Party organisation, the progress of Party work and the feelings of the workers, particularly with regard to the war. Party cells had suffered heavily as well as the legal organisa-

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\* Comrade Yakovlev was President of the Yenisseisk Province Executive Committee at the beginning of the revolution. He was shot by Kolchak during the Civil War.

tions; our Party, the leader and guide of the proletariat, had been half destroyed. Yet the skeleton still existed, some Party work was still being done and the question of its extension was bound up with the question of preserving the Duma fraction which acted as the centre and core of the whole organisation.

On the strength of the reports a number of decisions were adopted, taken down by Yakovlev, who acted as secretary to the conference.

The conference then proceeded to the question of a proclamation addressed to students. A joint committee of Bolshevik groups in the Mining, Technological, Medical and Agricultural Institutes had been formed and was displaying considerable activity. We decided to issue a proclamation to assist them in their work.

Proclamations issued in St. Petersburg were usually sanctioned either by the Bureau of the Central Committee or by the St. Petersburg Committee, but if this was impossible for technical reasons, I had the text approved by some group of Party members and then handed it directly to the printers.

In view of the importance of anti-war pronouncements, I decided to submit this proclamation for the consideration of the conference, where it was discussed and sanctioned. The proclamation to the students shows how consistent our attitude to the war was. From the first leaflets which gave simple anti-war slogans we passed on to a relatively detailed analysis and drew definite conclusions from it.

On the second day the conference passed on to the main question of the Party's war platform. Comrade Kamenev opened the discussion. Lenin's theses, which served as the basis for the attitude taken up by the Central Committee towards the war, corresponded to the position which we, in Russia, had taken since the outbreak of war, and definitely confirmed the correctness of that policy. The more precise and clear formulation given by Lenin had completed the task of framing the anti-war platform and our job now consisted in working out how that platform should be realised in practice and made widely known throughout the country.

The discussion of the theses proceeded methodically, point by point, and all delegates participated in the debate, but no objections were raised to the principles outlined, although certain formal amendments were suggested. It was accompanied by the discussion of practical suggestions as to how to carry on our anti-war propaganda. But before the conference could complete its work, the police broke into the room and arrested everyone present.

## CHAPTER XXIV

**THE ARREST OF THE FRACTION**

How the Secret Police Made Ready for the Raid – The Raid – The Arrest – Maklakov Reports to Nicholas the Second – The Government Engineers the Trial – The Duma on the Arrest of the Fraction – Proclamation of the St. Petersburg Committee – Action of the Workers – Lenin on the Arrest of the Bolshevik Fraction

The archives of the police department, which are now thrown open to the public, show how the secret police made ready to deal with our conference. The tsarist government, which had been seeking this opportunity for a long time, decided that this was a chance to catch the Bolshevik deputies red-handed. Information concerning the conference was supplied by the agent "Pelageya," the pseudonym of the *agent-provocateur* Romanov, a member of the Moscow Party organisation. Romanov was to take part in the conference as the delegate from Moscow, but when they decided to raid the conference, the secret police ordered him to stay away. The police department sent instructions to Moscow to the effect that "the presence of agents at the conference itself is not desirable, but they should remain in close touch with the delegates in order to be able to inform us of the time and place of the conference." At the same time the Moscow secret police urged their agents to exert themselves to discover these particulars and "wire immediately to the department and to the chief of the Finnish gendarmerie so that the latter can arrange for the suppression of the conference."

Assuming that the conference would be held in Mustamyaki, Finland, the task of raiding it and arresting the participants was entrusted to the Finnish gendarmerie. The director of the police department advised Colonel Yeryomin, chief of the Finnish forces, that "it is most desirable to discover at this conference members of the Social-Democratic fraction of the State Duma and that the correspondence on the liquidation of the conference be conducted in pursuance of the regulations relating to districts under martial law."

The police department sent a circular telegram in code to the secret police departments of thirty-three cities instructing them to watch closely delegates from local organisations: "Take all necessary steps to find out the delegates, watch them and wire news of their departure to Colonel Yeryomin at Helsingfors and also to the department."

Railway stations at St. Petersburg were flooded with spies and a special detachment of the secret police was sent to Finland to reinforce Colonel Yeryomin's men. In Byeloostrov on the Finnish frontier, spies were posted who knew all the members of the fraction by sight. And, needless to say, the crowd of spies who dogged our footsteps in St. Petersburg increased and became more brazen than ever.

The Moscow *agent-provocateur* Romanov, informed the police about the conference itself and the date of its convocation, but it was undoubtedly the St. Petersburg *agent-provocateur* Shurkanov who revealed the place where it was to be held. Shurkanov, who was at that time working for the St. Petersburg Committee, was present at the preliminary meeting when the place was decided on and he hastened to inform his masters. Consequently the police obtained all the information they desired.

The documents of the secret police show that the arrest of our fraction was not a casual affair such as might happen at any time under a widespread system of spying. The government had decided that the Bolshevik fraction should be destroyed and all that remained was to choose the opportune moment and work out a strategic plan of attack. This was made possible through the work of the *agents-provocateurs*.

At about 5 p.m. on November 4, the third day of the conference, a deafening knock was heard on the door of the Gavrilovs' house. In a few seconds the door had been forced and our room was invaded by a crowd of police and gendarmes. The police officer in charge drew his revolver and shouted: "Hands up."

In reply to our protests, the officer declared that he had orders to effect a search and presented a document which, on the basis of Clause 23 of the State of Martial Law, authorised him to search the apartment and arrest all persons found in it.

First all the persons present who were not deputies, including Mrs. Gavrilov, were searched. But when the police attempted to search members of the Duma fraction, we protested vigorously and declared to the officer in charge:

"We shall not allow you to search or arrest us. As members of the Duma we enjoy parliamentary immunity according to Articles 15 and 16 of the State Duma Regulations. No one has the right to search or detain us without an authorisation from the Duma. The police are acting illegally and will be liable for committing this act."

Our protest was so determined that it had its effect; the officer hesitated and went to telephone for further instructions. While some of us argued with the police, others managed to destroy many of the documents in our possession. First we destroyed all material concerning the conference, including the minutes, so that the police did not obtain a single document which established the nature of the gathering at Gavrilov's house. We also managed to get rid of a number of papers containing Party addresses and instructions, but we did not have time to destroy all our papers.

The police officer returned with instructions to pay no attention to our protests and accompanied by another high official on whose order the police pounced on us. Each of us was seized by a few policemen and despite our desperate resistance we were all searched in turn. The search was conducted very thoroughly and everything was taken away, all literature, note-books and even our watches.

On Petrovsky they found a copy of the reply to Vandervelde, a copy of the theses on war, the number of the *Sotsial-Demokrat* containing the manifesto of the Central Committee and several pamphlets published abroad, including the constitution and programme of the Party.

From me the police took a similar collection of literature and a copy of the draft proclamation to the students and a passport in another name, one of the passports used in our illegal work. From Samoylov they obtained a copy of the paper, pamphlets and a note-book containing notes on which his report was based. No documents were found on Shagov.

The most compromising find of the police was Muranov's note-book, which they discovered the following day in the lavatory, where Muranov had attempted to destroy it. In it, Muranov described with painstaking accuracy all his activity in the Urals, information concerning local organisations, pseudonyms of Party members, results of meetings, certain addresses, etc. Muranov's book left no doubts as to the nature of the illegal work on which he was occupied.

After the search, all the members of the conference except the deputies were taken off to prison. The officer again telephoned to his superiors as to what he should do with the Duma members, and then he told us that we were free. On our release he returned our deputy-cards and all our possessions except the documents.

Twelve hours had passed since the appearance of the police and it was dawn when we left the house. The entire surrounding district,

which was usually deserted, was flooded with police of all descriptions. Spies accompanied us to the nearest tramcar stop and several boarded the same tram.

The way in which the search was conducted and the subsequent behaviour of the police convinced us that the government would no longer respect the parliamentary immunity of the workers' deputies and that we could expect another police raid at any moment. Therefore we took steps to make the news of the night's events widely known in working-class districts and then proceeded to "clean up" and "put in order" our apartments.

Secret Party documents were kept in our apartments, which hitherto had been regarded as comparatively the safest place. There we had copies of Party instructions and addresses to which literature was to be sent, also correspondence, reports and lists of names, etc. We had established contacts in almost every city and if the documents fell into the hands of the police, thousands of Party members might be imprisoned or exiled and the entire Party organisation destroyed.

All these papers were hastily collected and burnt, so that there was only a handful of ashes waiting for the police to discover. We also had some account books and registers; I tore a number of pages out and destroyed the most compromising entries.

On November 5, the fraction met in my apartment to discuss the new situation. We decided in the first place to spread the news as widely as possible among the masses and, secondly, to apply to the Duma president for protection against the police infringement of our immunity as deputies. Although we realised that we could not count on any protection from the Black Hundred Duma, we decided to make as much fuss as possible in Duma circles in order to draw public attention to our case. After all Rodzyanko was bound to do something in the matter. The search and detention of deputies by the police was a violation of our Duma privileges and, for the sake of dignity, the president had to make some sort of protest.

It must be observed that although the Duma majority savagely attacked the "Left" deputies within the Duma, they were, in general, very touchy about any violation of their privileges. But, of course, their protests never went so far as a quarrel with the government and at the least threat on the part of the latter they ceased at once.

The fraction charged Petrovsky and myself with the task of conducting negotiations with Rodzyanko. We told him all the facts of our illegal detention and search and demanded that he should take steps to have the guilty persons prosecuted.

We left with him a written protest signed by all five of us. He promised to do everything within his competence, but what he actually did and what were the results of his actions will be seen from what follows.

When we left the Duma, the spies were more numerous and more brazen than in the morning; they appeared at each turning and round each corner and surrounded us in a close ring. Never before, notwithstanding the very close watch kept on us, was the behaviour of the police-agents so impudent. Like wild beasts which have tasted blood, they kept circling round us in expectation of the moment when they would be allowed to fall on their prey. For two years the secret police had been waiting for that moment and they were now rejoicing in their victory. This feeling of victory showed on the face of each spy, each police agent.

The police ring round us was becoming tighter and tighter. It was soon to engulf us.

Closely watched by the police in this way, as if afraid that we might escape at the last moment, we were of course unable to get into touch with workers' organisations or organise a protest movement. All we could do was to examine and re-examine our documents and papers, so as to prevent anything incriminating falling into the hands of the police.

I was in bed and had just fallen asleep after several days of worry and anxiety when, about midnight, the bell rang and the police appeared at my door. "Mr. Badayev," said a police officer at my bedside, "I have a warrant for your arrest."

The long-expected moment had arrived. I dressed, packed a few necessities and said good-bye to my family. The whole house was full of police. I went down and out along the dark streets with the police, who took me to the detention prison in Shpalernaya Street. I was carefully searched and placed in solitary confinement. There I learned that all the other members of the fraction had also been arrested during the same night, November 5-6.

At last the tsarist government had laid our Bolshevik fraction by the heels. The question of parliamentary immunity of Bolshevik deputies, like every other attack on the working class, had been decided by the relation of forces, which at that moment seemed to be in favour of the government.

Maklakov, the Minister of the Interior, one of the most reactionary defenders of tsarist autocracy, hastened to report to Nicholas the Second the results of the police exploits at Ozyorky. The "most



humble" report, dated November 5, was written before our arrest and apparently for the purpose of obtaining the necessary authority. In this report, Maklakov wrote:

The Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party exists in the Russian Empire for the purpose of overthrowing the existing regime and of establishing a republic. Since the commencement of the war, it has conducted propaganda for its speedy termination, setting forth as reasons for this course, the danger of the consolidation of the autocratic regime in case of victory and the consequent postponement of the realisation of the tasks of the Party.

Members of the Fourth State Duma who belong to the Social-Democratic Fraction take an active part in the propagation of these ideas and the fraction directs and guides the criminal activity of the party. The most glaring example of the subversive influence of these Social-Democratic deputies was the huge strike movement and street disorders for which they were responsible last year. Unfortunately it has been impossible to produce proof of their work so as to bring them to trial.

At last, however, the detective service which incessantly watches revolutionary groups, obtained information that the Social-Democratic deputies proposed to call a conference with the participation of prominent Social-Democrats in order to work out a programme of anti-war activity and the overthrow of the monarchic regime in Russia.

On November 4, in a private apartment twelve versts from the capital, in the St. Petersburg District, detectives surprised a meeting attended by the following members of the Social-Democratic Fraction in the Fourth State Duma, Petrovsky, Badayev, Muranov, Shagov, Samoylov, and by six representatives of the Party from various parts of the empire. When the police questioned them as to the object of the meeting, they replied that it was in celebration of the eighth anniversary of their hosts' marriage. But this explanation was proved to be false by the husband of the hostess who arrived some time later.

The search effected among the participants revealed the following material: several copies of a foreign revolutionary paper, *Sotsial-Demokrat*, the agenda of the meeting dealing with war questions, thirty-two revolutionary pam-

phlets, party notes and correspondence; and moreover, Badayev, a member of the State Duma, had in his possession the manuscript of a criminal appeal to the students calling on them to take part in the revolutionary movement, and a passport in another name.

All particulars were at once communicated to the judicial authorities, who have instituted a preliminary investigation for the prosecution of all the participants in this criminal meeting, including also the members of the State Duma.

I consider it my humble duty to submit this report to your imperial majesty.

Minister of the Interior, Maklakov.

It must be admitted that with the aid of his very efficient secret police, Maklakov described fairly accurately the activity of the Bolshevik fraction. He reports with annoyance that for a long time the fraction preserved strict secrecy and furnished no facts on which the police could act, and then he tells with glee how at last the deputies were caught.

With the blessing of tsar Nicholas, the government proceeded to stage the trial which was to pass at least "hard labour" sentences. The chauvinist delirium which had swept the country and continued to grow during the first months of the war made the preparation of public opinion more easy. The first public announcement in the *Pravitelstvenny Viestnik* (*Government Messenger*) was worded so as to create the impression that a tremendous plot against "the military strength of Russia" had been discovered. The announcement read as follows:

From the commencement of the war the Russian people, conscious of the necessity of maintaining the integrity of the fatherland, has enthusiastically supported the government in its wartime activities. Members of the Social-Democratic associations, however, took up a totally different attitude and devoted their efforts to shaking the military strength of Russia by underground activity and propaganda. In October, the government learned that a secret conference was to be held of representatives of Social-Democratic organisations in order to discuss measures directed against the present regime and for the realisation of their seditious socialist tasks.

This was followed by particulars of the search at Ozyorky: "Since there was no doubt about the seditious purpose of the meeting, the persons caught there were detained, but the members of the State Duma released."

In spite of the fact that our "five" were already imprisoned in solitary confinement, the *Government Messenger* cautiously informed its readers that the investigating magistrates had decided that all participants in the conference were to be "detained."

This guarded announcement was a sort of feeler to test what the public reaction would be. The tune was given.

The reactionary press received its instructions and immediately launched a furious attack on our fraction. The language of the *Russkoye Znamya* was typical: "We should not stand on ceremony with our enemies; the gallows is the only instrument for restoring peace within the country." This appeal was backed up by the rest of the bloodthirsty reactionary press; the liberal papers were at best discreetly silent, and as to the workers' press, it was non-existent at that time.

After the ground had been well prepared, the government announced the arrest of the fraction on November 15. The second government announcement read as follows:

During the preliminary investigation concerning the conference held near Petrograd attended by some members of the Duma and persons from various parts of Russia, it was found that the conference was engaged in discussing a resolution which stated that "the least evil is the defeat of the tsarist autocracy and its army" and in which the slogan was advanced "to carry on as widely as possible among the troops propaganda for a socialist revolution" and "the organisation of illegal cells in the army." All the persons concerned have been arrested.

What effect did this produce on the Duma itself? As I have mentioned, Rodzyanko, after receiving our declaration, promised to "do all he could." A number of deputies belonging to other fractions admitted the necessity of making some protest, but their protests were wholly insincere. As a matter of fact, the Duma majority was entirely in agreement with the government. In so far as they decided to make a protest, they were guided by the fear that the workers would retaliate to this new governmental provocation by another revolutionary outburst.

Since the Duma was not sitting at the moment, the protest could not take the usual form of an interpellation to the government. Therefore, on the initiative of Chkheidze, who was joined by Kerensky of the Trudoviks, Efremov of the Progressives and Milyukov of the Cadets, the question was raised at a regular sitting of the Duma Committee for the assistance of the sick and wounded, which met daily in the president's room.

It was on the morning of November 6, when the Duma was not yet aware of the arrest of the fraction, and therefore the Committee only discussed the question of our search and detention in Ozyorky. The deputies who attended the Committee revealed an undisguised fear of a revolutionary outburst in the country. The attitude of the Octobrists was characteristic. Godnyev, Opochinin and Lutz advocated the necessity of protesting against the action of the police and declared that the attack on the workers' fraction would cause disturbances among the masses and produce disorganisation in the rear of the army. They condemned the provocative action of the government for these purely patriotic reasons.

The result of the discussion was that Rodzyanko sent a letter of protest to Goremykin, the president of the Council of Ministers. The wording of the letter was typical of the falsity of the position of the Duma majority. Although he sent the letter on November 30, almost a month after we had been arrested, Rodzyanko did not say a word about our arrest but confined himself to forwarding our declaration concerning the incidents at Ozyorky.

In the covering letter addressed to Goremykin, Rodzyanko referred to the violation of Article 15 of the Duma constitution and then added: "such action by the authorities cannot be tolerated, the more so since this disregard for the law and the reckless, irresponsible behaviour on the part of the administrative authorities is sowing discontent among the peaceful population and exciting it during the difficult period which we are now passing through, when it is already agitated by the hard conditions of the world war." But what were Rodzyanko's conclusions? Did he demand that the persecution of our fraction should cease? Not in the least. He wound up his letter with the following words: "I allow myself to hope that your excellency will take the necessary steps in the future to protect members of the State Duma from illegal police activities." Thus the whole protest was just a formal declaration and a request that the

offence would not be repeated, without a word about any protection for our Bolshevik fraction.\*

This meaningless and unavailing letter addressed to Goremykin was the only action of the Duma majority in connection with the arrest of the workers' deputies. The attempt made by the Mensheviks and the Trudoviks to call a special conference of Duma members was resisted by Rodzyanko, who declared that no meetings of deputies during a recess were allowed by law and that, in his opinion, there was no necessity for one.

When the Duma met again in January 1915, after a lengthy interval, the majority would not allow an interpellation to be made concerning our arrest. As the Cadets refused it was impossible to collect the required number of signatures. When Chkheidze and Kerensky devoted large parts of their speeches in the budget debate to the fate of the Bolshevik fraction, the Duma president would not allow the press to reprint them.

Quite naturally, the Black Hundred Duma fully endorsed the action of the Romanov government. The arrest of our fraction completed the rout of all revolutionary organisations and entirely corresponded to the desires of the interests represented in the State

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\* This letter was sent to Maklakov, Minister of the Interior, for his consideration. On the letter, which was preserved among the papers at the Police Department, are Maklakov's remarks which reveal the character of this tsar's first policeman. Rodzyanko's letter made Maklakov furious; after a note "File," he wrote: "I cannot accept the suggestion that the action of the police in establishing that five members of the State Duma are criminals is 'reckless' or 'irresponsible.' This may prove disagreeable to the President of the Duma, but such are the facts. It is not such action that should be described as 'intolerable,' but the fact that grave crimes against the state could be perpetrated with impunity under the cover of 'parliamentary immunity.' The integrity of the Russian state is more important than any parliamentary immunity and the police will always check Duma members who attempt to break the law. It is not the administrative authorities fighting revolution who are sowing discontent among the people, but those who, in connection with such dastardly behaviour, find nothing better to do than to shout about the recklessness of the authorities. It is time that these habits were discarded. The false pathos of indignation is too cynical and out of place in this connection. I thank again those members of the police force who found out and arrested the Duma members."

Duma. While the government distributed rewards to the police and secret service men, the heroes of the home front, the flower of Russian liberalism, cringed at the feet of the tsarist government.

But what took place in the opposing ranks? In the factories, works and mines? The news of the arrest of the Bolshevik deputies could not fail to arouse the masses. We have seen that even the Octobrists, those miserable props of the government, grasped the fact that the destruction of the Bolshevik fraction was bound to produce a powerful impression on the Russian proletariat. They were not mistaken; the demand for the release of the Bolshevik deputies was advanced along with the basic demands of the revolutionary movement right up to the February Revolution. But at the time of the arrest the working class had not enough strength to undertake any far-reaching movement; the war terror was clutching the country by the throat and all revolutionary activity entailed either death by court-martial or long periods of penal servitude. The arrest of the fraction meant that the chief Party centre in Russia was destroyed. All the threads of Party work had been centred in the Duma "five" and became now disconnected.

The secret police, while it prepared for the arrest of the deputies, took various precautionary measures against any action among the workers in defence of the fraction. The spy service was redoubled in working-class districts and many party members were arrested. Yet in spite of everything, the St. Petersburg Committee managed to issue a proclamation concerning the arrest. The proclamation, hectographed and distributed on November 11, called on the workers to strike and arrange meetings of protest:

Comrades! On the night of November 5, the mean tsarist government, already red with the blood of fighters for democracy, the government of hangmen, which has tortured the exiled workers' representatives of the Second Duma and imprisoned thousands of the best sons of the proletariat, threw into jail the members of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Fraction.

The autocratic government has treated the Duma representatives of 30 million workers with shameless cynicism. The falsity and hypocrisy of the talk about the unity of the tsar and his people is now exposed. An end has been put to the deceit and corruption of the masses.... The tsarist government has gone to the extreme.... The working class and all the forces of democracy are now confronted with the need

for taking up the struggle for genuine representation of the people, for the convocation of a constituent assembly.

The war and the state of martial law has enabled the government to carry out their attack on the workers' deputies, who were so valiantly defending the interests of the proletariat.

To the sound of guns and rifles, the government is attempting to drown the revolutionary movement in rivers of blood, and in driving the workers and peasants to slaughter it hopes to kill their hopes of liberty.

Proclaiming phrases about the liberation of all Slavs, the tsarist government is smashing all working-class organisations, destroying the workers' press and imprisoning the best proletarian fighters.

But this is not enough for the enemy of the working class. It was decided to launch an attack against the workers' deputies because they were heroically fighting against the government policy of oppression, violence and iron fetters. The tsarist bandits told the chosen representatives of the working class: "Your place is in prison."

The whole of the working class has been put in prison. A gang of robbers and exploiters, a gang of pogrom-makers has dared to condemn the entire working class of Russia. A challenge of life and death has been flung at the working class. But even the iron repression of martial law will not prevent the workers from uttering their protests. The cry "Down with the hangmen and murderers" will be shouted by millions of Russian workers, prepared to defend their deputies.

Comrades! The St. Petersburg Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party calls on the St. Petersburg workers to arrange meetings and one-day strikes in protest against the acts of this tsarist-landlord gang.

Down with tsarism!

Long live the democratic republic!

Long live the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party!

Long live Socialism!

November 11, The St. Petersburg Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

At the same time, the St. Petersburg Social-Democratic students' organisation issued the following proclamation:

Russian absolutism remains true to itself and continues its work against the nation. Its last deed, the arrest of the Social-Democratic Duma Fraction, is equivalent to a *coup d'état*. The comedy of the people's representation is at an end. The autocrats have acted and the actual naked facts now loom before democracy in all their ugly cynicism.

In issuing its proclamation, the St. Petersburg Committee did not count on the possibility of any extensive action by the workers. Its leaflet was intended to inform the workers of this new governmental crime and to explain the events in a way which countered the patriotic agitation of the government and bourgeois press. Pointing out that the arrest of the fraction was equivalent to the imprisonment of the entire Russian working class, our Party prepared the masses to take up the challenge of the tsarist government.

But the appeal had its immediate effect. At a number of factories the workers called one-day protest strikes and at others they were only prevented from striking by the intervention of fully mobilised police forces.

Thus at the "New Lessner" works, when the workers gathered in the morning to discuss the question of strike action, a strong police detachment which had previously been brought into the works fell upon the workers and made a number of "demonstrative" arrests. By the same means strikes were frustrated at other factories.

At places where strikes did occur, drastic punishment was meted out. Those workers considered most dangerous were pounced on and sent out of St. Petersburg, whilst for others a new punishment was found. Workers who were in the reserve, or whose mobilisation had been delayed by agreement with the military authorities, were immediately sent to advanced positions at the front. Of the 1,500 workers on strike at the Parviainen works, ten were exiled and over twenty reservists were sent to the trenches.

In these conditions the strike movement could not grow to any size, but even these strikes showed that the working-class movement had not been altogether stifled and that sooner or later it would rise again in all its strength.

There was a vast field of work for our Party but it was extremely difficult for the Party to function. The arrest of the fraction had completed the destruction of our organisation. The Central



Committee, isolated and cut off from Russia, was confronted with the task of creating anew the whole Party organisation. Lenin, greatly alarmed, wrote to Shlyapnikov in Stockholm: "If this is true, it is a great misfortune," and requested him to find out if the first reports of the arrest of the fraction were correct.

Three days later, when the news was confirmed, Lenin wrote to Shlyapnikov: "It is terrible. Apparently the government decided to wreak its vengeance on the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Fraction and stuck at nothing. We must expect the worst; forged documents, manufactured proofs, false evidence, secret trials, etc." Further on Lenin pointed out the enormous difficulties in connection with Party work, which had increased a hundredfold: "Yet we shall continue. *Pravda* has educated thousands of class-conscious workers, from whom, in spite of all difficulties, a new group of leaders, a new Russian Central Committee, will arise...."

As always the words of Lenin were inspired by an enormous faith in the strength of the working class and in the victory of the revolution. He clearly envisaged the difficulties hampering the Party's work, but this did not for an instant shake that exceptional force and energy which never abandoned him in the hardest and most difficult periods of the revolutionary struggle.

## CHAPTER XXV

**THE TRIAL**

In Prison – Question of a Court Martial – Preparations for a Workers' Demonstration – The Trial – The Declaration of the Members of the Fraction – Speech of the Public Prosecutor – Speeches for the Defence – The Sentence

We were placed in solitary confinement under a strict prison regime and isolated from the outside world. Occasionally we heard scraps of news, official reports about the victories of the Russian armies and about the patriotism throughout the country.

A new agitator appeared in the St. Petersburg factories. Trying to realise his "union with the people," Nicholas himself was touring the works, surrounded by a brilliant suite and carefully guarded by crowds of uniformed and plain-clothes police. He visited the Putilov and other establishments and the whole procedure was stage-managed with due observance of all the rules of patriotic demonstrations. Shouts of hurrah, the singing of national anthems, the presentation of ikons, all went off like a play.

But we were not, and could not be, informed what was really happening among the workers, how revolutionary propaganda was being conducted among them and what their genuine feelings were.

We were questioned for the first time two or three days after our arrest, and when we came together we had the opportunity of exchanging a few words. However, we were quickly separated and examined individually.

During the search at Ozyorky we agreed to do all we could to prevent the police being able to prove that we were holding a Party conference. We managed to destroy all important documents, minutes, agenda, etc., and we decided to say that we were on a friendly visit as guests of Mrs. Gavrilov. When questioned by the examining magistrate we followed this course and all pleaded not guilty. We pointed out that we had come to Mrs. Gavrilov as guests and took the occasion to discuss a number of questions about working-class organisations, insurance matters, the publication of a newspaper, etc., and that it was natural that we should take advantage of the opportunity to meet a few representatives of the workers since a visit to our fraction at once rendered a person suspect in the eyes of the police. The fact that some Party literature was found in our possession we explained by pointing out that as deputies we had to keep ourselves informed of the various political tendencies. When

questioned about our attitude to the war we referred the magistrate to the declaration read by both Social-Democratic fractions at the Duma session of July 26.

Shagov stated that he had made Mrs. Gavrilov's acquaintance when she came to the fraction on business and that later when she met him in the street she had invited him and the other deputies to call and see her. There was no conference at her apartment and no resolutions had been drafted there and the whole conversation had turned round insurance clubs and the publication of a newspaper.

I declared that I was there at the personal invitation of Mrs. Gavrilov. The nature of that invitation was immaterial to the case. We had had a simple conversation, as among friends, on the events of the day. No conference was held and no resolutions were discussed.

Attempting to pick up some revelation, the magistrate persistently questioned me about my connections with Antipov and Kozlov, the St. Petersburg delegates at the conference. They were both members of the St. Petersburg Committee and Antipov belonged to the Executive of the St. Petersburg Committee. I explained my acquaintance with Antipov by saying that when he was unemployed he called on me and asked me to help him find work. He came with the same object to see me at Gavrilov's. I said that Kozlov was invited in order to talk about the publication of a journal dealing with social insurance, and that I had met Kamenev at the office of *Pravda*, to which he contributed. The most difficult thing for me to explain away was how I came to be in possession of a passport in another name. I said that workmen often brought me their passports with a request that I should try to get them passes for the public gallery in the State Duma. And then sometimes these documents remained for a long time in my possession until their owners called for them. That was what had happened with the passport found on me. This explanation did not satisfy the magistrate, but he was unable to obtain anything further from me.

Petrovsky answered in a similar way. He had called as a guest for no particular reason and he refused to say who had given him the invitation. He did not know anybody in the Gavrilovs' house except the deputies and Kamenev. All the documents which were taken away from him had been received through the post or through messengers from unknown persons. The corrections in the theses on war were made in his handwriting, but had been proposed by another person whom he did not wish to name and he had intended to make use of these alterations in his Duma work. Petrovsky added

that it was impossible to judge his attitude to the war solely from documents which were found on him.

Samoylov stated that the people at Gavrilov's house had met there accidentally and some had come to talk with their deputies. The list of questions found on him had served to aid his memory, as he wished to ask for information of what had happened while he had been abroad undergoing medical treatment.

Kamenev's explanation was that he had come to the house in order to carry on negotiations with regard to the resumption of publication of a workers' newspaper to which he had formerly contributed. He had chosen to meet in the house of a third person because he was afraid to visit Petrovsky's apartment. The conversation had been confined to events of the day and there had been no conference or resolutions. In conclusion, Kamenev said that the contents of the documents found did not coincide with his views on the war.

The other comrades arrested with us, Antipov, Kozlov, Voronin, Yakovlev, Linde and Mrs. Gavrilov made approximately the same depositions. Each explained in his own way his reason for being in St. Petersburg and said that they had just chanced to meet in the house because they had come to see their deputies.

Muranov was in a more difficult position. In his note-book there were many remarks in his own handwriting on the illegal work of the Party. Muranov was unable to disown this book and therefore he resorted to complete silence and refused to give any evidence whatsoever.

We were all questioned separately and after the first occasion we were sent for individually by the magistrate. We had no opportunity of communicating with each other in the prison or of learning what the others had said. Only after the preliminary investigation had been completed, when we were allowed to inspect the material on which the charge was based, did we learn what answers had been made.

The preliminary examination proceeded rapidly, as the government was in a hurry to conclude the trial while the situation was favourable. Our arrest and trial had been planned beforehand so that there was no necessity for any thorough-going investigation. The magistrates and the prosecutor had merely to frame an accusation on the basis of the documents seized to enable the sentence decided on in advance to be pronounced.

By the end of December, after six weeks' imprisonment, the preliminary investigation was completed and we were again called

before the investigating magistrate to acquaint ourselves with the results of the investigation. After a long interval we again met each other and were able to come to an agreement as to our behaviour at the trial. The results of the preliminary investigation were set out at length and comprised the documents taken from us, our depositions, information lodged by the police, various proclamations issued in St. Petersburg during the war and various other documents intended to prove that the fraction was guilty of revolutionary work. The reading of all this took several days.

Everything pointed to the possibility of our being tried by court martial and a similar conviction prevailed among our friends outside. They were anxious and were endeavouring with the aid of lawyers to divert our case to the ordinary court,

Ozyorky, where the raid had taken place, was situated in a district where martial law had been declared. It was under a martial law regulation that the raid on the Gavrilovs' house was carried out. Therefore, on formal grounds, we were liable to be tried by court martial. And this admirably suited the government, which wished to deal once and for all with the fraction on the charge of high treason.

Therefore the decision to turn the case over to an ordinary court came to us as a complete surprise. According to the law the accused had the right to inspect all the material on which the charge was based. We made use of this right in order to meet each other and work out a common line of defence. When we started to read the material for the second time, we found at the commencement a ukase in which Nicholas the Second "ordered" that the case be taken out of the hands of the court martial and handed over to an ordinary court. The case was now taken by a special session of the Petrograd High Court.

How can this sudden change in the government plans be explained? Undoubtedly it reflected the change which was occurring in the country. A long list of military defeats and the increasing rumours of the catastrophic state of the army had begun to dispel the chauvinist fog, while there was every sign that the working-class movement, although still weak, was recovering. Economic strikes became frequent and in January 1915, political strikes occurred in some districts. The government could no longer count on the news of the punishment of the workers' deputies being received with patriotic shouts of joy.

These considerations led Nicholas the Second to sign his “gracious” ukase and the government to refrain from its original intention of having the workers’ deputies shot.<sup>7</sup>

In a proclamation published just before the trial, the St. Petersburg Committee explained to the workers the meaning of the government’s retreat:

The workers’ deputies are about to be tried. Originally the government proposed to accuse them of high treason and published this calumny in its newspapers. But they failed. They wanted to try them by court martial, but the supreme rulers and directors of the present wholesale murder, after calling the ministers fools, told them that to court-martial the representatives of the workers would mean sowing disaffection everywhere with their own hands.

By the time of the trial the atmosphere of “high treason,” “plot,” etc., carefully spread by the government, had to a large extent evaporated. The newspaper reports dealing with the trial could not hide the fact that it would be a trial of the workers’ deputies in the Duma for their political activities. In order to revive the original impression, the government unleashed its faithful watchdog, the Black Hundred press, which with loud barks tried to simulate public indignation. All the Black Hundred papers demanded the extreme penalty for the “criminals”; of the whole pack, none were more fierce and merciless than *Svyet* (Light).

*Svyet* accused the fraction of not following in the footsteps of West European socialists and, of course, it did not fail to refer to “German gold,” which subsequently became one of the most common accusations against the Bolsheviks. After pouring out as much abuse as it could, *Svyet* wrote:

These unworthy bearers of a high title – probably under the influence of German agents who are not sparing of their gold – played into the hands of Germany so obviously that there can be no question of any innocent error on their part while acting in conformity with the pernicious teaching of Socialism. Socialists exist in other countries too, but everywhere, in England, France and Belgium, the moment war was declared, they renounced their internal struggles and joined the national ranks against the formidable enemy, German militarism.

Even German Socialists renounced their Utopias for the duration of the war and are behaving like their bourgeois friends. It is only to Russian workers that the honourable Duma Socialists give their advice to act on theories of non-resistance to evil, peace at any price, etc., and it is only Russian Socialists who attempt to stir up internal disorders in war time.

The newspaper demanded the “severest possible sentence on the chiefs of the discovered plot, who had the effrontery to hide behind parliamentary immunity in order to perform their treachery.”

For two years the government and the Black Hundreds had been forced to tolerate the activity of the Bolshevik fraction. Although they perfectly understood its purpose, they had been afraid to act out of fear of a revolutionary outbreak. Now, having taken the plunge, they were determined to finish us off. The task of the Party was to rouse the working class and to demonstrate that no sentence, however drastic, could check the working-class movement, and that sooner or later the workers would face their enemies at the barricades.

Our Party organisations were feverishly preparing for the trial. Despite strict police surveillance and the many gaps in the Party ranks, the St. Petersburg Committee issued a number of leaflets dealing with the trial, of which the following is a specimen.

Remember the events of the last two years. Who defended the workers’ interests in the Duma? Who disturbed the ministers most with interpellations concerning the lawless actions of the authorities? Who demanded investigations into factory explosions, etc.? Who organised collections for victimised comrades? Who published *Pravda* and *Proletarskaya Pravda*? Who protested against the slaughter and mutilation of millions of people in the war? To these questions there is only one answer – the workers’ deputies. And for their activity, they are to be sent to hard labour. The defence of the workers’ deputies is the cause of the workers. The liberals share the pleasure of the government; the Trudoviks and Chkhcheidze’s fraction seem to have suddenly become deaf and dumb....

Who then can defend the workers’ deputies? Only those who elected and supported them; only the proletariat can demonstrate that for them the trial is a serious matter

and that they do not intend to allow it to pass off as quietly and as smoothly as the ministers, the liberals and the secret police would wish.

Prior to the publication of this proclamation, some leaflets were issued on the anniversary of January 9 (22), in which the slogan of a protest against the trial of the fraction was advanced: "The working class must protest against this outrageous insult to its representatives. It must strain all efforts so as to act with its ranks closed on that day...."

The secret police prepared for the trial by further arrests of militant workers, but the Party committee conducted an intense agitation at factories and works. The day before the trial, the St. Petersburg Committee issued another proclamation calling for strikes and demonstrations:

Comrades! It is the working class which is in the dock, represented by deputies who were elected by the workers and who have acted in complete agreement with the workers.... Under the cover of the rumble of guns and the rattling of sabres, the government proposes to bury alive one more fraction of the working class.

Comrade workers! Let us prove that the enemy is mistaken in his calculations, let us prove at this critical moment, when our deputies are threatened with hard labour, that we are with them. Let us proclaim our solidarity with the accused and demonstrate that we are ready to fight to defend our chosen representatives.

Comrade workers! Strike on February 10, arrange meetings and demonstrations, protest against the tsarist mockery of the working class....

The leaflet of the United Students' Committee, issued on the same day, called on the revolutionary students "to support the proletariat in its protest by means of meetings, strikes and demonstrations."

The proclamations of the St. Petersburg Committee were circulated among the workers, arousing their revolutionary spirit, and caused the secret police a great deal of anxiety. Invested with extensive powers under martial law, the police took preventive measures to stop any increase of revolutionary feeling among the workers. On the day of the trial strong police forces appeared at all the main factories and works and police detachments patrolled the streets surrounding the court.



Strangled by these precautionary measures, the strike movement could not assume large proportions, but several strikes occurred and the workers made many attempts to march to the court. Students held a number of meetings and passed resolutions of protest. In this atmosphere of fierce police repression, while the workers were seething with suppressed resentment, the trial of the Bolshevik Duma fraction opened.

The silence of the Liberal bourgeoisie betrayed their satisfaction at the trial of the workers' deputies. Just before the trial the Cadets prohibited any member of their party from acting as counsel for the defence and based their decision on their disagreement with our views on the war. The Cadets endorsed in advance the drastic sentence which the tsarist government had prepared.

The trial started in the morning of February 10. By an inner passage we were brought into the High Court and placed in the dock opposite the lawyers. The public sections of the court were crowded and we could see here and there the faces of relatives and friends. Several deputies were present, including Rodichev, Milyukov, Efremov and members of the Trudovik and Menshevik fractions. Several tsarist dignitaries occupied specially reserved seats and behind the judges we could see Witte, the creator of the State Duma and the author of the law on parliamentary immunity. Representatives of all shades of the press were present, but the government took steps to suppress any speeches and evidence which might be used for agitational purposes. The military censorship ruthlessly cut out whole passages from the reports of the trial.

The most prominent judges were appointed to try our case. The president of the court was Senator Krashennikov, the public prosecutor was Nenarokov; both had had extensive experience in conducting political trials. In short, the court was packed in such a way that there was no doubt that it would do the will of the tsarist ministers.

The trial opened with the roll-call of the defendants and witnesses. One of the counsel petitioned for the calling of an additional witness, N. I. Jordansky,\* in order to elucidate Kamenev's views on the war. The court rejected this petition and proceeded with the reading of the indictment.

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\* N. I. Jordansky was at that time a "defencist." Subsequently he joined the Communist Party.

The indictment started by enumerating the proclamations issued in St. Petersburg and attributing their publication to the fraction. It continued:

In order to intensify their revolutionary work, the State Duma members, who belong to the Social-Democratic Workers' Fraction, decided to call a party congress in St. Petersburg. This congress, known in Social-Democratic circles as the "conference," was to discuss further measures of revolutionary struggle against the war. Representatives of Party organisations in various parts of Russia were invited to attend.

After mentioning the discovery of the delegates in Gavrilov's house, the indictment gave detailed extracts from all the documents found on the accused or in the house; on the basis of the data obtained during the preliminary investigation, we were charged with:

Taking part in a criminal association which, subordinated to the control of the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, aimed at the overthrow, by means of an armed insurrection, of the regime established in Russia under fundamental laws and its replacement by another on the basis of a democratic republic.

To this end, the indictment pointed out, the members of the fraction entered into communication with and assisted in the foundation of "secret organisations," attended meetings and took part in the drafting of resolutions of these organisations, guided their work, kept in touch with the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. and organised money collections for party objects. Also, the fraction members "communicated with each other and with the members of secret organisations by means of secret codes," arranged "secret mass meetings of workers, calling on them to form secret organisations for the purpose of armed insurrection," drafted and distributed revolutionary anti-war leaflets, etc. The concluding part of the indictment dealt with the convocation of the conference at which there was a discussion concerning "the resolution deciding the programme for immediate action of the members of the association during the military operations against Germany and Austria."

The indictment covered all aspects of Party life and all, except Mrs. Gavrilov, were charged under Article 102, part 1, of the Criminal Code, which provided a penalty up to eight years' hard

labour. Mrs. Gavrilov was charged under Article 163 for aiding and abetting and failing to report to the authorities.

After reading the indictment, the president of the court asked us whether we pleaded guilty. In accordance with our original decision we all replied in the negative, as at the preliminary investigation.

When we were allowed to inspect the documents in the room of the investigating magistrate, we had worked out our general line of action in the court. We agreed on the substance of a declaration which was to be read by Petrovsky as president of the fraction. Following him, each of us was to endorse his statement and expound it more fully.<sup>8</sup>

When the examination began, Petrovsky volunteered to give his explanations first. He spoke as follows:

Gentlemen judges, since it is the fraction that is being tried here I must refer to it in a few words. We were elected by the workers under the banner of Social Democracy. We entered the Duma and formed the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Fraction supporting the Bolshevik tendency in the Party.

Stressing the fact that the entire activity of the fraction was in harmony with the sentiments of the workers, Petrovsky pointed to the support given by the fraction to the workers' press, to trade union and educational organisations, the insurance campaign, etc.

Petrovsky acknowledged that a conference was held in the Gavrilovs' house and stated that the conference was called to ascertain the sentiments of the workers, because now that the workers' press had been suppressed, the fraction had to be informed of the opinions of the workers on political questions in order to pursue its work in the Duma. The delegates to the conference were not previously informed of the agenda. Kamenev had been invited to discuss the question of restarting the paper and this question stood first. Then it was proposed to discuss our attitude to Polish autonomy, our lending assistance to the families of workers called to the colours, etc. Finally we proposed to discuss a resolution consisting of seven points dealing with the war, but this was prevented by the intrusion of the police. Petrovsky stated that he had received this resolution, which represented the opinion of the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, from a certain Social-Democrat who proposed that the fraction be guided by it in its activity in the Duma. The fraction considered that it was necessary

first to discuss the resolution with representatives of the workers. He concluded his speech as follows:

We are being tried for our staunch defence of the rights of the people. We are to be condemned because we earned the confidence of the working class and because we defended the workers' interests to the best of our abilities. Therefore, we regard our trial as the greatest injustice.

Muranov spoke after Petrovsky. He confined himself to a few words in which he endorsed everything said by Petrovsky. He added that he belonged to the Party only in so far as he was a member of the fraction and under the existing laws deputies were not liable to prosecution for belonging to a fraction; surely the members of the Social-Democratic fraction could not be tried for it?

In my turn, I said:

"I endorse the words spoken by Petrovsky. On all questions concerning our activity, we addressed ourselves to the workers, heard their opinions and told them ours. We had to introduce interpellations and bills into the Duma and for this purpose it was necessary to know the opinions of our constituents. The authorities refused to allow us to arrange talks with our constituents, therefore we had to find other means of communication. These means were meetings and conferences with delegates from the workers and the careful examination of material or documents sent to us, such as those which were taken from me at the time of the search. The fraction did all it could for the workers' paper and the Ozyorky conference was mainly devoted to the question of founding a new paper. For this purpose we considered it essential that we should hear the opinions of delegates from various cities."

The next to speak was Shagov. He stated that he shared the standpoint embodied in the joint declaration of the two Social-Democratic fractions read in the Duma.

Samoylov, who was the last of the fraction to address the court, referred to his illness which had forced him to spend several months abroad. When he returned to St. Petersburg at the beginning of November he wished to become acquainted with events that had taken place in his absence. He invited Voronin to come to see him because Voronin was a well-known figure in working-class circles.

At the trial we followed the same tactics that we had adopted during the preliminary investigation. We tried not to give the court any clues, any direct indications concerning the Party's revolutionary work. The court had a number of suspicions, but these had to be proved, and it was not our intention to assist the court officials in this task. On the contrary, we did all we could to prevent it.

The other defendants followed the same line in giving their evidence, Kamenev emphasised, as he had done during the preliminary investigation, that he was a professional journalist who had worked for the workers' press and was therefore interested in its existence. This had brought him to Ozyorky where the question of restarting the paper was to be discussed. Accused under his real name, Rosenfeld, he admitted that he used the pseudonym Kamenev for literary purposes.

The questioning of the other defendants was mingled with the examination of the witnesses. The main witnesses were policemen and secret service men who confirmed the circumstances of the arrest, the finding of the proclamations and any other facts necessary to the court to enable it to pronounce sentence. Special attention was paid to Muranov's note-book and Petrovsky's personal diary.

As I mentioned before, Muranov's notes relating to his journey in the Urals clearly disclosed his participation in underground revolutionary activity. Therefore, in answer to questions put by the president of the court, he was forced to admit that he had been engaged in illegal work. He stated that he took part in meetings of local committees, arranged mass meetings of workers, etc., and:

"I called on them to organise. There were trade unions, co-operatives and educational societies, and I insisted that Social-Democrats must do all they could to gain influence in these organisations. I regarded it as my duty to set up such organisations."

The hurried examination was concluded on the second day of the trial and the court passed on to the next formality, the counsel's speeches, as if these speeches could affect in the slightest the pre-arranged sentence.

The public prosecutor started by praising the leaders of West European Socialist parties, who at the commencement of the war had betrayed the International and become patriotic defenders of their respective fatherlands. Only the Russian Social-Democratic Party had not followed the "call to sanity." He said that the Social-

Democratic fraction in the Duma, in refusing to vote the war credits, had announced "an open break with the government at the moment when the latter was most in need of the union of all sections of the population."

The public prosecutor argued that the fraction in its activity was directly under the control of the Central Committee of the Social-Democratic Party, and that following the instructions of the Central Committee, the fraction began to develop its anti-war revolutionary propaganda. He insisted that an important Party conference was held in Ozyorky to determine the subsequent tactics of the Party in its struggle against the war.

The public prosecutor concluded:

"The present case is extremely important both as regards the persons and the questions involved. We have to deal with a firmly welded organisation – the Russian Social-Democratic Fraction.... At a moment when the state is straining every nerve to fight the external foe, when at the frontiers the blood of the Fatherland's sons is being shed unceasingly, the defendants, for the sake of a few paragraphs in their Party programme, stretch out their hands in friendship to the enemy behind the backs of our brave defenders. These people want to deal our gallant army a stab in the back, to bring disorganisation into its ranks. But now they find themselves in the dock, and when our heroes return from the battlefield we want to be able to face them and tell them how we treated those who wished to betray them."

After the public prosecutor, the defending counsel began their speeches. They belonged to a definite group of political lawyers who had had considerable experience in trials of revolutionaries.

The counsel first of all made it their aim to reveal the political nature of the trial, to show that the trial of the workers' deputies was an arbitrary act of the tsarist government and that such trials were only possible in a country where political liberty was trampled underfoot by the boots of the police. Demyanov said:

"This case is of immense historic importance. Do not forget that the five members of the State Duma are the chosen representatives of the peasants and workers who not only trust but love them, for they are flesh of their flesh and bone of their bone. How many other members of the Duma can assert that they are the genuine representatives of the

people?... The defendants need not fear condemnation. They will not remain long in exile but will soon return in triumph. The army – the people – when they return from the war, will ask sternly and insistently, ‘where are our chosen representatives? Where are our elected deputies? Where are our cherished friends...?’ ”

“The sentence will not remain a secret buried in this hall,” said another counsel, Pereverzev, “and it will not only be known in St. Petersburg; the news will spread like wildfire throughout the Russian land. It is possible to violate parliamentary immunity, but it is impossible to stamp out of the people’s memory the injustice and deep significance of this action. The deputies are condemned for being faithful to their duties, everyone knows that. When the prison gates shut behind them, let them remember – and these are not our feelings alone – that sorrow and respect accompany them there....”

Sokolov emphasised that the members of our fraction were the only real representatives of the working class:

“Five deputies are in the dock. They were all sent to the State Duma by the votes of the working class and have the right to be regarded as the representatives of the workers. All of them are Social-Democrats; the working class has sent Social-Democrats to represent it in all four State Dumas. The Russian workers invariably choose Social-Democrats to represent them and Social-Democracy in Russia does not even enjoy freedom of the press to the extent that other political tendencies do....”

Kuchin, Antipov’s counsel, described the social environment in Russia “where the people’s representatives are unable to meet their constituents openly, but in order to do so must steal about like thieves to a deserted house and sit there in hiding with the windows covered up by blankets,” where “agents of the secret police have the effrontery to shout insults at the people’s representatives whom they have arrested; it is this social environment,” declared the counsel, “that is responsible for the defendants being in the dock.”

The other defending counsel described the tremendous social importance of the trial in similar terms. Often they only hinted at this, but their hints made such an impression that the president of

the court interrupted them and requested them to speak on topics "more relevant to the issue."

The second aim of the counsel was to do all they could to mitigate the punishment. For this purpose they analysed the incriminating material in a sense more favourable to the defendants. They devoted their main efforts to refuting the charge of "high treason" which had been alleged by the public prosecutor. Referring to the Ozyorky conference, they asserted that, in view of the few members who attended it, it could in no way be regarded as a Party congress, but that it was simply a consultation of the deputies with a few workers. Finally the counsel also advanced a number of legal points on the basis of which they objected to the formulation of the indictment.

The speeches for the defence closed the proceedings. Now there only remained the pronouncement of the sentence. This was the fourth day of the trial; the court-room was more crowded than at the commencement and everyone was waiting with tense interest for the final act of the drama.

Nearly a whole day was spent on formalities, the framing of questions for the court, amendments by counsel, objections by the public prosecutor, etc. The judges finally withdrew to consider the judgment at 8 p.m. The crowd in the court-room was expectant. Relatives and friends were anxious for those dear to them, and the others were conscious of the enormous historical significance of the trial and the sentence.

A strong police detachment entered the court, filled all the passages and watched the entire audience – the government was still afraid of demonstrations despite all their precautions.

Three hours passed. Our counsel, seated in front of us, advised us to be prepared for the worst. "The sentence," they said, "may be extremely severe. What matters here is not the legal proof, but the orders which the court has received from the government. We must be prepared for anything."

Finally the judges filed into the court, and in a tense silence Krashennnikov read out the sentence.

Petrovsky, Muranov, Shagov, Samoylov and myself together with Kamenev, Yakovlev, Linde and Voronin were found guilty and sentenced under Article 102, part 2, to the loss of civil rights, exile to distant regions and confiscation of property. Mrs. Gavrilov and Antipov were found guilty under Article 136, part 2, for not informing the authorities and were condemned to imprisonment in a fortress, the former for one year and six months, the latter for eight



months, the period of preliminary detention to be included. Kozlov was acquitted owing to lack of proof.

The trial ended about midnight. We were led through dark corridors which connected the court-room with the prison and parted from each other, realising that it might be a long time before we met again. Knowing the ways of tsarist officials, we expected to be sent to different places at different times. On the iron prison staircase, we embraced and kissed each other and cheerfully wished each other good luck and a store of patience during the term of exile.

On the next day we were introduced to the hard labour regime. We became convicts deprived of all property and civil rights. Needless to say none of us had any "property" and the only things that could be confiscated were those which we had with us in prison, and this was promptly done. But the essence of "loss of rights" did not consist in this. Under tsarist laws, a convict was treated as an outlaw, a man who had no right to any protection. A convict was a man whom the most brutal of gaolers could treat as he liked.

We were taken to the depot and given the regulation convict's outfit. These were the only clothes we had for every occasion during our prison life. The convicts' garb was in a filthy condition; in addition to dirt there were traces of pus, mucus and dried blood. These clothes had done service for many a generation of prison inhabitants and every garment spoke more loudly than words of past suffering and at the same time acted as a warning for the future.

As we put on these clothes we felt acutely our new position as convicts; how the thoughts chased through our minds during those few moments! We had long felt that this moment would come sooner or later. The working class had sent us to the front of an unequal struggle and the government was bound to vanquish us as individuals. Our every step had brought us closer to this fate. Now it had come as a reward for our work during the preceding years.

But along with these thoughts there were others, of the future of the working-class movement and the new trials which it would have to face. How would the work of our Party be conducted now? It would be necessary to establish new links in the chain of organisation. How would this be achieved, how could the difficulties be overcome?

Along with the prison garb there came the regime of hard labour; rough treatment, harsh tones and shouts from the warders, etc. For all this there was no redress; we were outlaws and could not expect protection from any quarter.

As soon as I became a convict, I began to be prosecuted on a number of charges which had accumulated during my activities in the Duma. After almost every episode in the revolutionary struggle of the St. Petersburg workers, the authorities had laid charges against me, hoping sooner or later to land me in jail.

I was prosecuted several times for articles in *Pravda*, in connection with the case of the Putilov workers, for my speech at the funeral of one of the Parviainen workers, for addressing the workers at the railway shops, etc.

I was accused under various articles of the legal code and all these counts were now prepared for trial. Under the existing laws, however, the lesser punishment was merged into the bigger one. The investigating magistrates had the satisfaction of seeing me in convict's garb and feeling that, at any rate, their "work" had not been wasted!

After several months in the St. Petersburg prison, we were transferred to a prison in distant Siberia. In the convict train, in boats, on foot, we were taken to the Turukhansk district, the worst district of Siberia both as regards climate and general living conditions. From the standpoint of exiles, Turukhansk was a blind alley, a trap from which there was no escape. It was no chance that practically the whole of the Russian Bureau of our Bolshevik Central Committee turned out to be there.\*

At last the tsarist government had smashed the Bolshevik Duma fraction and completed its task of destroying all working-class organisations. Having put fetters on the workers' deputies, tsarism proceeded to enchain the whole Russian proletariat.

But something went wrong in the calculations of the government. The government of Nicholas the Bloody, far from stifling the revolutionary movement, could not even force the prisoners to desist from their revolutionary work. Even as convicts in Siberia we continued to play our part in the revolutionary struggle.

The tsarist government prepared still further punishments for the workers' deputies. Comrade Petrovsky, while in exile at Yeniseisk, was ordered to be taken to distant Yakutia. A fresh prosecution was commenced against me for "organising defeatist groups among-the exiles and the local population," a prosecution which

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\* The following comrades were exiled in Turukhansk at that time: Comrades Sverdlov, Stalin, Spondaryan, Goloschokin and a number of other leading Party members.

threatened dire punishment. The government, however, did not have time to complete this plan. The February Revolution intervened.

It was with joy that, in our distant Siberian exile, we listened to the revolutionary waves thundering ever louder and louder. The working class had again entered the arena of struggle. Each day its demands sounded louder and more insistent. When the workers again reformed their ranks, they did not forget our Bolshevik fraction. On the anniversary of our trial protest strikes occurred throughout Russia. Every meeting coupled the demand for the release of the deputies with the fundamental demands of the working class. And this demand was one of the slogans of the St. Petersburg workers when they took control of the streets in the historic days of February 1917.

The February Revolution opened wide the prison doors and broke the fetters of the prisoners of tsarism. Hundreds and thousands of liberated revolutionaries returned along the Siberian route. In villages, hamlets and at railway stations, crowds of people welcomed the workers' deputies with revolutionary songs. Revolutionary meetings were held all along the route.

In the last days of March, 1917, we were back again in St. Petersburg among the revolutionary workers. After storming the strongholds of tsarist autocracy, these workers, under the well-trying leadership of the Bolsheviks, had already started their struggle for the complete abolition of capitalism.

The pre-war years, years of an exceptional growth and spread of the working-class movement, played a tremendous part in preparing for the great fights of October.

The 1905 Revolution, the pre-war years of revival and growth, the February Revolution and finally the October Revolution, are the four stages in the Russian workers' revolutionary struggle, the four great steps which the working class took to reach the final victory of the proletarian revolution.

THE END



## **APPENDIX**



## WHAT HAS THE TRIAL OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL- DEMOCRATIC WORKERS FRACTION PROVED?

BY V. I. LENIN

The tsarist trial of five members of the R.S.-D.W. Fraction and six other Social-Democrats seized at a conference near Petrograd on November 17, 1914, is over. All of them have been sentenced to exile in Siberia. From the accounts of the trial published in the legal press the censorship has cut out items unpleasant to tsarism and patriots. The “internal enemies” were dealt with decisively and quickly, and again nothing is seen or heard on the surface of public life apart from the mad howl of a host of bourgeois chauvinists seconded by handfuls of social-chauvinists.

What, then, has the trial of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Fraction proved?

It has proved, first, that this advance detachment of revolutionary Social Democracy in Russia did not show sufficient firmness at the trial. It was the aim of the defendants to make it difficult for the State Attorney to identify the members of the Central Committee in Russia and the Party representative who had had certain dealings with workers’ organisations. This aim has been accomplished. In order that we may accomplish similar aims in the future, we must resort to a method long recommended officially by the Party, namely, refusal to testify. However, to attempt to show solidarity with the social-patriot, Mr. Jordansky, as did Comrade Rosenfeld (Kamenev. – Ed.), or to point out one’s disagreement with the Central Committee, is an incorrect method; this is impermissible from the standpoint of revolutionary Social- Democracy.

We call attention to the fact that according to the report of the *Dyen (Day)* (No. 40) – there is no official and complete record of the trial – Comrade Petrovsky declared: “At the same period (in November) I received the resolution of the Central Committee, and besides this... there were presented to me resolutions of workers from seven localities concerning the attitude of the workers towards the war, resolutions *coinciding with the attitude of the Central Committee.*”

This declaration does Petrovsky honour. Chauvinism was running high everywhere. In Petrovsky’s diary there is a phrase to the effect that *even* radically minded Chkheidze spoke with enthusiasm of a war for “liberty”. This chauvinism was resisted by the Deputies, members of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Fraction,

when they were free; it was also their duty to draw the line between themselves and chauvinism at the trial.

The Cadet *Ryech* (*Speech*) servilely “thanks” the tsarist court for “dispelling the legend” that the Russian Social-Democratic Deputies had wished the defeat of the tsarist armies. The *Ryech* takes advantage of the fact that the Social-Democrats in Russia are bound, hand and foot. The Cadets make believe that they take seriously the so-called “conflict” between the Party and the fraction, declaring that the defendants testified freely, not under the judicial sword of Damocles. What innocent babes! As if they do not know that in the first stages of the trial the Deputies were threatened with court-martial and capital punishment.

It was the duty of the comrades to refuse to give evidence concerning the illegal organisation; bearing in mind the world-historic importance of the moment, they had to take advantage of the open trial in order directly to expound the Social-Democratic views which are hostile not only to tsarism in general, but also to social-chauvinism of all and every shade.

Let the governmental and bourgeois press wrathfully attack the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Fraction; let Socialist-Revolutionaries, Liquidators and social-chauvinists (who must fight *somehow*, if they cannot fight us on the issue of principles!) maliciously “pick out” manifestations of weakness or of a so-called “disagreement with the Central Committee.” The Party of the revolutionary proletariat is strong enough openly to criticise itself, unequivocally to call a mistake and a weakness by their proper names. The class-conscious workers of Russia have created a Party and have placed at the front a vanguard which, when the World War is raging and international opportunism is bankrupt the world over, has proved most capable of fulfilling the duty of international revolutionary Social-Democrats. Our road has been tested by the greatest of all crises, and has proved over and over again the only correct road. We shall follow it still more determinedly and more firmly, we shall push to the front new advance-guards, we shall make them not only do the same work but complete it more correctly.

Secondly, the trial has unfolded a picture of *revolutionary* Social-Democracy taking advantage of parliamentarism, the like of which has not been witnessed in international Socialism. This example will, more than all speeches, appeal to the minds and hearts of the proletarian masses; it will, more than any arguments, repudiate the legalist-opportunists and anarchist phrase-mongers. The re-



port of Muranov's illegal work and Petrovsky's notes will for a long while remain an example of our Deputies' work which we were compelled diligently to conceal, and the meaning of which will give all the class-conscious workers of Russia more and more food for thought. At a time when nearly all "Socialist" (excuse me for debasing this word!) deputies of Europe proved to be chauvinists and servants of chauvinists, when the famous "Europeanism" that had charmed our Liberals and Liquidators proved a routine habit of slavish legality, there was a Workers' Party in Russia whose deputies neither shone with fine rhetoric, nor had "access" to the bourgeois intellectual drawing rooms, nor possessed the business-like efficiency of a "European" lawyer and parliamentarian, but excelled in maintaining connections with the working masses, in ardent work among those masses, in carrying out the small, unpretentious, difficult, thankless and unusually dangerous functions of illegal propagandists and organisers. To rise higher, to the rank of a deputy influential in "society" or to the rank of a Minister, such was *in reality* the meaning of the "European" (read: lackey-like) "Socialist" parliamentarism. To go deeper, to help enlighten and unite the exploited and the oppressed, this is the slogan advanced by the examples of Muranov and Petrovsky.

And this slogan will have a world-wide historic significance. There is not one thinking worker in any country of the world who would agree to confine himself to the old legality of bourgeois parliamentarism once it has been abolished in all the advanced countries by a stroke of the pen (a legality which brought about only a more intimate practical alliance between the opportunists and the bourgeoisie). Whoever dreams of "unity" between revolutionary Social-Democratic workers, and the "European" Social-Democratic legalists of yesterday *and of to-day* has learned nothing and forgotten nothing and is in reality an ally of the bourgeoisie and an enemy of the proletariat. Whoever has failed to grasp at the present day for what reason and for what purpose the Social-Democratic Workers Fraction had split away from the Social-Democratic Fraction that was making peace with legalism and opportunism, let him learn now, from the report of the trial, of the activities of Muranov and Petrovsky. This work was conducted *not only* by those two deputies, and only hopelessly naive people can dream of a compatibility between such work and a "friendly tolerant relation" with the *Nasha Zarya* or the *Severnaya Rabochaya Gazeta*, the *Sovremennik*, the Organisation Committee, or the Bund.

Does the government hope to frighten the workers by sending into Siberia the members of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Fraction? It is mistaken. The workers will not be frightened; on the contrary, they will better understand their aims, the aims of a Labour Party as distinct from the Liquidators and the social-chauvinists. The workers will learn to elect to the Duma men like the members of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Fraction for similar and broader work, and at the same time they will learn to conduct still more secret activities among the masses. Does the government intend to kill "illegal parliamentarism" in Russia? It will only strengthen the connections of the proletariat exclusively with that kind of parliamentarism.

Thirdly, and this is most important, the trial of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Fraction has, for the first time, yielded open objective material, spread over Russia in millions of copies, concerning the most fundamental, the most significant question as to the relation to the war of *various classes* of Russian society. Have we not had enough of that nauseating intellectual prattle about the compatibility of "defence of the fatherland" with internationalism "in principle" (that is to say, purely verbal and hypocritical internationalism)? Has not the time come to face the *facts* that relate to *classes*, *i.e.*, to millions of living people, and not to dozens of phrase-heroes?

More than half a year has passed since the beginning of the war. The press, both legal and illegal, has expressed itself. All the party groupings of the Duma have defined their positions, these being a very insufficient but the only objective indicator of our class groupings. The trial of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Fraction, and the press comments, have summed up all this material. The trial has shown that the advanced representatives of the proletariat in Russia are not only hostile to chauvinism in general but that, in particular, they share the position of our Central Organ. The Deputies were arrested on November 17, 1914. Consequently, they conducted their work for more than two months. With whom and how did they conduct it? What currents in the working class did they reflect and express? The answer to this is given in the fact that the conference used the "theses" of the *Sotsial-Demokrat* as material, that the Petrograd committee of our Party more than once issued leaflets of the same nature. There was no other material at the conference. The Deputies did not intend to report to the conference about other currents in the working class, because there were no other currents.

But did not the members of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Fraction express only the opinion of a minority of the workers? We have no right to make such a supposition, since, for two and a half years, from spring, 1912, to autumn, 1914, four-fifths of the class-conscious workers of Russia rallied around the *Pravda* with which these Deputies worked in full ideological solidarity. This is a fact. Had there been a more or less appreciable protest among the workers against the position of the Central Committee, this protest would not have failed to find expression in the proposed resolutions. Nothing of the kind was revealed at the trial, although the trial, we are frank to say, did "reveal" much of the work of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Fraction. The corrections in Petrovsky's hand do not reveal even the slightest shade of any difference of opinion.

The facts tell us that, in the very first months after the beginning of the war, the class-conscious vanguard of the workers of Russia rallied, in practice, around the Central Committee and the Central Organ. This fact may be unpleasant to one or the other of our "fractions," still it cannot be denied. The words quoted in the indictment: "It is necessary to direct the armies not against our brothers, the wage-slaves of other countries, but against the reaction of the bourgeois governments and parties of all countries" – these words will spread, thanks to the trial, and they have already spread over Russia as an appeal to proletarian internationalism, to proletarian revolution. The class slogan of the vanguard of the workers of Russia has reached, thanks to the trial, the widest masses of the workers.

An epidemic of chauvinism among the bourgeoisie and one section of the petty bourgeoisie, vacillations in another section, and a working class appeal of this nature – this is the actual objective picture of our political activities. It is to this actual picture, and not to the benevolent wishes of intellectuals and founders of little groups, that one has to adapt one's "prospects," hopes, slogans.

The "Pravdist" papers and the "Muranov type" of work have brought about the unity of four-fifths of the class-conscious workers of Russia. About forty thousand workers bought the *Pravda*; many more read it. Let war, prison, Siberia, hard labour break five times more or ten times more – this section of the workers *cannot* be annihilated. It is alive. It is permeated with revolutionary spirit, it is anti-chauvinist. It *alone* stands among the masses of the people, and deeply rooted in their midst, as a protagonist of the internationalism

of the toiling, the exploited, the oppressed. It *alone* has kept its ground in the general debacle. It alone leads the semi-proletarian elements *away from* the social-chauvinism of the Cadets, Trudoviks, Plekhanovs, the *Nasha Zarya*, and on to Socialism. Its existence, its ideas, its work, its appeal to the "brotherhood of wage slaves of other countries" have been revealed to the whole of Russia by the trial of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Fraction.

It is with this section that we must work. It is its unity that must be defended against social-chauvinism. It is only along this road that the labour movement of Russia can develop towards social revolution and not towards national liberalism of the "European" type.

*Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 40, March 29, 1915.

*Complete Works*, Vol. xviii, page 151.

## NOTES

This highly interesting and instructive volume represents a translation of the first Russian edition of Badayev's reminiscences. In preparing the third edition of his book the author provided it with additional material and corrected certain inaccuracies. As we are reprinting the book from matrices prepared for us by Martin Lawrence, Ltd., London, we are unable to make the required changes in the English edition. We therefore append these notes based on the author's changes.

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<sup>1</sup> The electoral campaign was conducted under the general direction of Lenin from Cracow. He supplied the *Pravda* with articles and letters giving advice and direction on the conduct of the fight. The St. Petersburg organization under the leadership of Comrade Stalin carried out these directions and developed a fierce fight for the Bolshevik election platform.

<sup>2</sup> In the third edition of his book the author admits the mistake committed by the Bolshevik members of the Duma fraction in joining the Mensheviks in their opposition to the strike. The Party, while directing the movement into organised channels, should have led all the revolutionary actions of the workers and utilised them for the purpose of extending the revolutionary struggle.

The meeting at the printing office of the *Pravda* to which the author refers declared the attitude of the Duma fraction in this question to have been mistaken.

<sup>3</sup> The Trudoviki, whose programme was akin to that of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, pretended to represent the whole of the Russian peasantry, but actually they represented only the interests of the well-to-do strata of the peasants. It was therefore quite natural for them to act in contact with the parties of the liberal bourgeoisie – the Cadets and Progressives. On the other hand, the group expressed the protest of the peasantry as a whole against the feudal landlord regime, and this made common action with the social-democrats possible from time to time.

<sup>4</sup> In the third edition of his book the author adds a few lines stressing the persistence and firmness displayed by Comrade Stalin in the struggle against the Mensheviks over the Duma declaration.

<sup>5</sup> Lenin repeatedly pointed out that the question of unity can and must be put only from "below" and that unity in any form is possible only

with revolutionary workers, but not with those who opposed and distorted revolutionary Marxism.

<sup>6</sup> The consent of the workers' deputies to have their names included in the list of collaborators of the *Luch* "for tactical reasons" was given without the knowledge and sanction of the Central Committee and Lenin. As soon as the latter learned about this he at once pointed out to the Bolshevik members of the fraction that they had committed a mistake. There could be no unity whatsoever, he explained, even in the press, with the Liquidators who were carrying on disruptive treacherous work against the Party and its illegal organisations. The decision of the Menshevik majority of the fraction to create a united press organ was a manoeuvre to deceive the masses of the workers by false demonstrations of unity. It was necessary to expose and reject this manoeuvre, in the first instance by refusing to participate in the Menshevik paper.

<sup>7</sup> In the third edition of his book the author adds a number of interesting details throwing light on the struggle which went on behind the scenes concerning the course to be adopted in connection with the trial of the Duma Bolsheviks.

"Of course nobody from Nicholas II right down to the last secret service agent, had any doubt as to the necessity of completing the suppression of the fraction by getting them sentenced to death... It was only a question of doing this in a way that would be least dangerous for the autocracy. The tsarist government knew perfectly well that even in prison the Bolshevik deputies would not be entirely isolated from the masses. The whole activity of the deputies bore witness to the strong ties which connected them with the labour movement and to the strong support which their utterances inside and outside of the Duma received among the working class. But on the other hand there could be no doubt that the masses would not quietly tolerate the deputies being sentenced to death. In other words, it was a question of preventing the arrest and trial of the deputies from becoming a stepping-stone to an increased outbreak of the revolutionary movement instead of serving to forcibly crush it..." The actual rulers of the country at that time were the General Headquarters Staff of the Army. Practically the whole country, including Petrograd, was under martial law, so the case should have been tried by court-martial. The Commander-in-Chief, the Grand Duke Nicholas, fearing that the trial of the deputies by court-martial would have a bad effect upon the population and the army, decided to intervene, and insisted on the case being tried by a civil court. This decision met with violent opposition on the part of certain ministers, and for two months the question was discussed in correspondence be-

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tween General Headquarters and Petrograd. Finally, being unable to agree, the government submitted the question to Nicholas II. Evidently he too was impressed with the danger that would arise if the deputies were court-martialled and sentenced to death, and so he sided with the Grand Duke and ultimately the case was tried in a civil court.

<sup>8</sup> The whole description of the behaviour of the deputies after their arrest and of the trial shows no sign of self-criticism. It gives a vivid picture, but remains a simple statement of fact and leaves the reader in the dark as to whether the behaviour of the accused was all that was desired from the point of view of a revolutionary party or not. This has been remedied by including in the volume the article by Lenin on the trial of the deputies, a course also taken by the author in the third Russian edition of his book.