

Early Leaflets and Articles of Lenin

Contents

To the Working Men and Women of the Thornton Factory, Leaflet, 1895	1
The War in China, Article, <i>Iskra</i> newspaper, 1900	5
The Drafting of 183 Students Into the Army, Article, <i>Iskra</i> newspaper, 1901	10
Beat – But Not to Death!, Article, <i>Zarya</i> magazine, 1901	15

Notes for each article follow that article

To the Working Men and Women of the Thornton Factory¹

V.I. Lenin

Working men and women of the Thornton Factory!

November 6th and 7th should be memorable days for all of us.... The weavers, by their solid resistance to the employer's pressure have proved that at a difficult moment there are still people in our midst who can uphold our common interests as workers, that our worthy employers have not yet succeeded in turning us for all time into the miserable slaves of their bottomless purses. Let us, then, comrades, stand firm and steadfast and carry on to the very end, let us remember that we can improve our conditions only by our common and concerted efforts. Above all, comrades, don't fall into the trap so cunningly prepared for you by Messrs. Thornton. They reason as follows: "There is a hitch now in disposing of our goods, so that if we keep to our previous working conditions we shall not get the profits we got previously.... And we are not ready to take anything less.... So then, we'll have to tighten up on the workers, let them shoulder the cost of the bad prices on the market.... But the job has to be done cleverly and not in any old way, so that the worker, in the simplicity of his mind, will not understand what Sort of a titbit we are preparing for him.... If we tackle all of them at once, they will all rise up at once, and we shan't be able to handle them, so we shall first dupe those miserable weavers, and then the others won't get away.... We are not accustomed to restrain ourselves in dealing with these creatures, and what for, anyhow? New brooms sweep cleaner here So then, the employers, who are so full of concern for the worker's well-being, want, to quietly and steadily impose on the workers of all departments what they have already imposed on the weavers.... That is why, if we all remain indifferent to the fate of the weaving sheds, we shall dig with our own hands a pit into which we, too, shall soon be thrown. Latterly the weavers have been earning, in round figures, 3 rubles 50 kopeks a fortnight, and during the same period families of seven have contrived somehow to live on 5 rubles, and families consisting of husband, wife and child on 2 rubles in all. They have sold the last of their clothes and used up the last coppers they earned by their hellish labour at a time when their benefactors, the Thorntons, were adding

millions to the millions they already had. To crown it all ever-new victims of the employers' avarice have been thrown out on the streets before their eyes, and the pressure has been regularly increased with the most heartless cruelty.... Without any explanation, they have started mixing noils² and clippings with the wool, which slows the job down terribly; delays in getting the warp have increased as though inadvertently; finally, they have begun without ado to introduce short time, and now the pieces have to be five instead of nine schmitz³ long, so that the weaver has to fuss around longer and oftener in obtaining and fixing the warps, for which, as is known, not a kopek is paid. They want to wear our weavers down, and the earnings of I ruble 62 kopeks per fortnight, which have already begun to appear in the pay-books of some of the weavers, may, in the near future, become general in the weaving sheds.... Comrades, do you, too, want to see the day when you get this sort of kindness from the employers? If not, if, finally, your hearts have not entirely turned to stone in face of the suffering of poor folks like yourselves, rally solidly round our weavers, let us put forward our common demands, and on every suitable occasion let us wrest better conditions from our oppressors. Workers of the spinning sheds, don't delude yourselves about the stability and slight increase in your earnings.... After all, almost two-thirds of your number have already been dismissed, and your better earnings have been purchased at the cost of the starvation of your own spinners who have been thrown out of work. This again is a cunning trick of the employers and is not difficult to understand if you only count how much was earned by the entire mule-spinning department previously, and how much now. Workers of the new dyeing department! Twelve rubles a month, all told, is what you now earn, at the cost of 14 1/4 hours' daily work, saturated from head to foot with the murderous fumes of dyes! Pay attention to our demands: we also want to end the illegal deductions made from you due to your foreman's inefficiency. Labourers, and all nix-skilled workers generally! Do you really expect to retain your 60-SO kopeks a day, when the skilled weaver has to content himself with 20 kopeks a day? Comrades, don't be blind, don't swallow the employers' bait, stand up for one another more firmly, otherwise it will go badly for all of us this winter. We must all keep a most watchful eye on the employers' manoeuvres aimed at reducing rates, and with all our strength resist every tendency in this direction for it spells ruin for us.... Turn a deaf ear to all their pleadings about business being bad: for them it only means less profit on their capital, for us it means starvation and suffering for

our families who are deprived of their last crust of stale bread. Can there be any comparison between the two things? They are now putting pressure on the weavers first of all, and we must secure:

1) an increase in weavers' rates to their spring level, i.e., by about 6 kopeks per schmitz;

2) that the weavers, too, be brought under the law which says that the worker must be told how much he can earn on a job before he begins it. Let the rates list, bearing the factory inspector's signature, exist not only on paper, but in reality, as required by law. For weaving, for example, the existing rates should be accompanied by information about the quality of the wool, the quantity of noils and clippings in it, and there should be an estimate of the time required for preparatory work;

3) that the working time be so distributed that we do not stand idle through no fault of our own; now, for example, things are so arranged that on each piece the weaver loses a day waiting for warp, and since the piece is becoming almost half its former size, the weaver will suffer a double loss, regardless of the rates list. If the boss wants to rifle our earnings this way, let him do so outright, in such a manner that we definitely know what he wants to squeeze out of us;

4) that the factory inspector sees to it that there is no trickery about the rates, that there are no double rates. That means, for example, that the rates list should not contain two different rates for one and the same kind of article. only with different names. For example, we got 4 rubles 32 kopeks a piece for weaving Bieber, and only 4 rubles 14 kopeks for Ural,⁴ – yet as far as work goes isn't it one and the same thing? A still more impudent piece of trickery is the double price given for goods of one denomination. That way Messrs. Thornton dodged the fines laws, which state that a fine may only be imposed for such damage as results from the worker's carelessness and that the deduction has to be recorded in his pay-book under the heading "fines" not later than three days after it is imposed. A strict record has to be kept of all the fines, the total sum of which is not to go into the employer's pocket, but must be used to cover the needs of the workers of the factory concerned. With us, however – we have but to look at our books – there are empty spaces, there are no fines, and one might think our employers are the most kind-hearted of all. Actually, however, due to our lack of knowledge, they dodge the law and easily fix things to suit themselves.... We are not fined, you see, yet deductions are made from us, the smaller rate being paid and as long as two rates have existed, a smaller and a bigger one, there has been

nothing at all to cavil at, they have kept on deducting the money and putting it into their own pockets;

5) that in addition to introducing a single rate, let each deduction be registered in the fines column, with an indication of why it is made.

Then wrong fining will be obvious, less of our work will be done for nothing, and there will be a drop in the number of disgraceful things being done now, as, for example, in the dyeing department, where the workers' earnings are lower on account of the foreman's inefficiency, which cannot, according to law, be a reason for non-payment of labour, since there can be no question here of the worker's carelessness. And haven't all of us had deductions for which we are not in the least to blame?

6) we demand that the payment we make for lodgings be on the pre-1891 level, that is to say, one ruble per person per month, because our earnings being what they are we positively have nothing to pay the two rubles with, and in any case, what for?... For the filthy, smelly, crowded kennel always in danger of fire? Don't forget, comrades, that all over St. Petersburg it is considered enough to pay a ruble a month, and that only our considerate bosses are not satisfied with that – so we must force them here, too, to cut down their greed. In defending these demands, comrades, we are not rebelling at all; we are merely demanding that we be given what all the workers of other factories now enjoy by law, the return of what has been taken from us by those who placed all their hopes on our inability to uphold our own rights. Let us, then, show on this occasion that our "benefactors" are mistaken.

Written: Written and first published in a mimeographed edition in November 1895

Published: Published according to the text of the leaflet, checked with the text in the miscellany *Rabotnik*, No. 1–2 (1896).

Notes

1. The leaflet "*To the Working Men and Women of the Thornton Factory*" was written after November 7(19), 1895, in connection with a strike of about 500 weavers that broke out on November 6(18) against bad conditions and the new oppressive measures introduced by the factory management. The strike was directed by the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class. Be-

fore the strike broke out, the *Leak of Struggle* issue a leaflet, written by G. M. Kzhizhanovsky, containing the weavers' demands, but so far it has not been possible to find a copy of it.

Lenin's leaflet was issued several days later and circulated in the factory when the strike was over. The facts about the workers' conditions were carefully collected by Lenin himself.

The leaflet was mimeographed, and in the spring of 1896 was reprinted abroad in No. 1-2 of the *Rabotnik* miscellany.

2. *Noils* – A short staple combings separated from the long wool fibres by carding.

3. *Schmitz* – A measure of 5 arshins (about 11 1/2 feet) used in fixing weaver' rates.

4. “*Bieber*” and “*Ural*” – names of sorts of woollen cloth.

The War in China

V.I. Lenin

Russia is bringing her war with China to a close: a number of military districts have been mobilised, hundreds of millions of rubles have been spent, tens of thousands of troops have been dispatched to China, a number of battles have been fought and a number of victories won – true, not so much over regular enemy troops, as over Chinese insurgents and, particularly, over the unarmed Chinese populace, who were drowned or killed, with no holding back from the slaughter of women and children, not to speak of the looting of palaces, homes, and shops. The Russian Government, together with the press that kowtows to it, is celebrating a victory and rejoicing over the fresh exploits of the gallant soldiery, rejoicing at the victory of European culture over Chinese barbarism and over the fresh successes of Russia's “civilising mission” in the Far East.

But the voices of the class-conscious workers, of the advanced representatives of the many millions of the working people, are not heard amid this rejoicing. And yet, it is the working people who bear the brunt of the victorious new campaigns, it is working people who are sent to the other end of the world, from whom increased taxes are extorted to cover the millions expended. Let us, therefore, see: What

attitude should the socialists adopt towards this war? In whose interests is it being fought? What is the real nature of the policy now being pursued by the Russian Government?

Our government asserts first of all that it is not waging war against China; that it is merely suppressing a rebellion, pacifying rebels; that it is helping the lawful government of China to re-establish law and order. True, war has not been declared, but this does not change the situation a bit, because war is being waged nonetheless. What made the Chinese attack Europeans, what caused the rebellion which the British, French, Germans, Russians, Japanese, etc., are so zealously crushing? "The hostility of the yellow race towards the white race," "the Chinese hatred for European culture and civilisation" – answer the supporters of the war. Yes! It is true the Chinese hate the Europeans, but which Europeans do they hate, and why? The Chinese do not hate the European peoples, they have never had any quarrel with them – they hate the European capitalists and the European governments obedient to them. How can the Chinese not hate those who have come to China solely for the sake of gain; who have utilised their vaunted civilisation solely for the purpose of deception, plunder, and violence; who have waged wars against China in order to win the right to trade in opium with which to drug the people (the war of England and France with China in 1856); and who hypocritically carried their policy of plunder under the guise of spreading Christianity? The bourgeois governments of Europe have long been conducting this policy of plunder with respect to China, and now they have been joined by the autocratic Russian Government. This policy of plunder is usually called a colonial policy. Every country in which capitalist industry develops rapidly has very soon to seek colonies, i.e., countries in which industry is weakly developed, in which a more or less patriarchal way of life still prevails, and which can serve as a market for manufactured goods and a source of high profits. For the sake of the profit of a handful of capitalists, the bourgeois governments have waged endless wars, have sent regiments to die in unhealthy tropical countries, have squandered millions of money extracted from the people, and have driven the peoples in the colonies to desperate revolts or to death from starvation. We need only recall the rebellion of the native peoples against the British in India¹ and the famine that prevailed there, or think of the war the English are now waging against the Boers.

And now the European capitalists have placed their rapacious paws upon China, and almost the first to do so was the Russian Gov-

ernment, which now so loudly proclaims its “disinterestedness.” It “disinterestedly” took Port Arthur away from China and began to build a railway to Manchuria under the protection of Russian troops. One after another the European governments began feverishly to loot, or, as they put it, to “rent,” Chinese territory, giving good grounds for the talk of the partition of China. If we are to call things by their right names, we must say that the European governments (the Russian Government among the very first) have already started to partition China. However, they have not begun this partitioning openly, but stealthily, like thieves. They began to rob China as ghouls rob corpses, and when the seeming corpse attempted to resist, they flung themselves upon it like savage beasts, burning down whole villages, shooting, bayonetting, and drowning in the Amur River unarmed inhabitants, their wives, and their children. And all these Christian exploits are accompanied by howls against the Chinese barbarians who dared to raise their hands against the civilised Europeans. The occupation of Niuchuang and the moving of Russian troops into Manchuria are temporary measures, declares the autocratic Russian Government in its circular note of August 12, 1900 addressed to the Powers; these measures “are called forth exclusively by the necessity to repel the aggressive operations of Chinese rebels”; they “cannot in the least be regarded as evidence of any selfish plans, which are totally alien to the policy of the Imperial Government.”

Poor Imperial Government! So Christianly unselfish, and yet so unjustly maligned! Several years ago it unselfishly seized Port Arthur, and now it is unselfishly seizing Manchuria; it has unselfishly flooded the frontier provinces of China with hordes of contractors, engineers, and officers, who, by their conduct, have roused to indignation even the Chinese, known for their docility. The Chinese workers employed in the construction of the Chinese railway had to exist on a wage of ten kopeks a day – is this not unselfish on Russia’s part?

How is our government’s senseless policy in China to be explained? Who benefits by it? The benefit goes to a handful of capitalist magnates who carry on trade with China, to a handful of factory owners who manufacture goods for the Asian market, to a handful of contractors who are now piling up huge profits on urgent war orders (factories producing war equipment, supplies for the troops, etc., are now operating at full capacity and are engaging hundreds of new workers). This policy is of benefit to a handful of nobles who occupy high posts in the civil and military services. They need adventurous policies, for these provide them with opportunities for promotion, for

making a career and gaining fame by their “exploits.” In the interests of this handful of capitalists and bureaucratic scoundrels, our government unhesitatingly sacrifices the interests of the entire people. And in this case, as always, the autocratic tsarist government has proved itself to be a government of irresponsible bureaucrats servilely cringing before the capitalist magnates and nobles.

What benefits do the Russian working class and the labouring people generally obtain from the conquests in China? Thousands of ruined families, whose breadwinners have been sent to the war; an enormous increase in the national debt and the national expenditure; mounting taxation; greater power for the capitalists, the exploiters of the workers; worse conditions for the workers; still greater mortality among the peasantry; famine in Siberia – this is what the Chinese war promises and is already bringing. The entire Russian press, all the newspapers and periodicals are kept in a state of bondage; they dare not print anything without permission of the government officials. This is the reason for the lack of precise information as to what the Chinese war is costing the people; but there is no doubt that it requires the expenditure of *many hundreds of millions of rubles*. It has come to our knowledge that the government, by an unpublished decree, handed out the tidy sum of a hundred and fifty million rubles for the purpose of waging the war. In addition to this, current expenditures on the war absorb *one million rubles* every three or four days, and these terrific sums are being squandered by a government which, haggling over every kopek, has steadily cut down grants to the famine-stricken peasantry; which can find no money for the people’s education; which, like any kulak, sweats the workers in the government factories, sweats the lower employees in the post offices, etc.!

Minister of Finance Witte declared that on January 1, 1900, there were two hundred and fifty million rubles available in the treasury. Now this money is gone, it has been spent on the war. The government is seeking loans, is increasing taxation, is refusing necessary expenditures because of the lack of money, and is putting a stop to the building of railways. The tsarist government is threatened with bankruptcy, and yet it is plunging into a policy of conquest – a policy which not only demands the expenditure of enormous sums of money, but threatens to plunge us into still more dangerous wars. The European states that have flung themselves upon China are already beginning to quarrel over the division of the booty, and no one can say how this quarrel will end.

But the policy of the tsarist government in China is not only a

mockery of the interests of the people – its aim is to corrupt the political consciousness of the masses. Governments that maintain themselves in power only by means of the bayonet, that have constantly to restrain or suppress the indignation of the people, have long realised the truism that popular discontent can never be removed and that it is necessary to divert the discontent from the government to some other object. For example, hostility is being stirred up against the Jews; the gutter press carries on Jew-baiting campaigns, as if the Jewish workers do not suffer in exactly the same way as the Russian workers from the oppression of capital and the police government. At the present time, the press is conducting a campaign against the Chinese; it is howling about the savage yellow race and its hostility towards civilisation, about Russia's tasks of enlightenment, about the enthusiasm with which the Russian soldiers go into battle, etc., etc. Journalists who crawl on their bellies before the government and the money-bags are straining every nerve to rouse the hatred of the people against China. But the Chinese people have at no time and in no way oppressed the Russian people. The Chinese people suffer from the same evils as those from which the Russian people suffer – they suffer from an Asiatic government that squeezes taxes from the starving peasantry and that suppresses every aspiration towards liberty by military force; they suffer from the oppression of capital, which has penetrated into the Middle Kingdom.

The Russian working class is beginning to move out of the state of political oppression and ignorance in which the masses of the people are still submerged. Hence, the duty of all class-conscious workers is to rise with all their might against those who are stirring up national hatred and diverting the attention of the working people from their real enemies. The policy of the tsarist government in China is a criminal policy which is impoverishing, corrupting, and oppressing the people more than ever. The tsarist government not only keeps our people in slavery but sends them to pacify other peoples who rebel against their slavery (as was the case in 1849 when Russian troops suppressed the revolution in Hungary). It not only helps the Russian capitalists to exploit the Russian workers, whose hands it ties to hold them back from combining and defending themselves, but it also sends soldiers to plunder other peoples in the interests of a handful of rich men and nobles. There is only one way in which the new burden the war is thrusting upon the working people can be removed, and that is the convening of an assembly of representatives of the people, which would put an end to the autocracy of the government and com-

pel it to have regard for interests other than those solely of a gang of courtiers.

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Notes

1. The reference is to the uprising for national liberation that began in India in 1857. The insurrection was suppressed by British troops in 1859.

The Drafting of 183 Students Into the Army¹

V.I. Lenin

The newspapers of January 11 published the official announcement of the Ministry of Education on the drafting into the army of 183 students of Kiev University as a punishment for “riotous assembly.” The Provisional Regulations of July 29, 1899 – this menace to the student world and to society – are being put into execution less than eighteen months after their promulgation, and the government seems to hasten to justify itself for applying a measure of unexampled severity by publishing a ponderous indictment in which the misdeeds of the students are painted in the blackest possible colours.

Each misdeed is more ghastly than the preceding one! In the summer a general students’ congress was convened in Odessa to discuss a plan to organise all Russian students for the purpose of giving expression to protests against various aspects of academic, public, and political life. As a punishment for these criminal political designs all the student delegates were arrested and deprived of their documents. But the unrest does not subside – it grows and persists in breaking out in *many* higher educational institutions. The students desire to discuss and conduct their common affairs freely and independently. Their authorities – with the soulless formalism for which Russian officials have always been noted – retaliate with petty vexations, rouse the discontent of the students to the highest pitch, and automatically stimulate the thoughts of the youths who have not yet

become submerged in the morass of bourgeois stagnation to protest against the whole system of police and official tyranny.

The Kiev students demand the dismissal of a professor who took the place of a colleague that had left. The administration resists, provokes students to “assemblies and demonstrations” and – yields. The students call a meeting to discuss what could make possible so horrendous a case – two “white linings”² (according to reports) raped a young girl. The administration sentences the “ringleaders” to solitary confinement in the students’ detention cell. These refuse to submit. They are expelled. A crowd of students demonstratively accompany the expelled students to the railway station. A new meeting is called; the students remain until evening and refuse to disperse so long as the rector does not show up. The Vice-Governor and Chief of Gendarmerie arrive on the scene at the head of a detachment of troops, who surround the University and occupy the main hall. The rector is called. The students demand – a constitution, perhaps? No. They demand that the punishment of solitary confinement should not be carried out and that the expelled students should be reinstated. The participants at the meeting have their names taken and are allowed to go home.

Ponder over this astonishing lack of proportion between the modesty and innocuousness of the demands put forward by the students and the panicky dismay of the government, which behaves as if the axe were already being laid to the props of its power. Nothing gives our “omnipotent” government away so much as this display of consternation. By this it proves more convincingly than does any “criminal manifesto” to all who have eyes to see and ears to hear that it realises the complete instability of its position, and that it relies only on the bayonet and the knout to save it from the indignation of the people. Decades of experience have taught the government that it is surrounded by inflammable material and that a mere spark, a mere protest against the students’ detention cell, may start a conflagration. This being the case, it is clear that the punishment had to be an exemplary one: Draft hundreds of students into the army! “Put the drill sergeant in place of Voltaire!”³ – the formula has not become obsolete; on the contrary, the twentieth century is destined to see its real application.

This new punitive measure, new in its attempt to revive that which has long gone out of fashion, provokes many thoughts and comparisons. Some three generations ago, in the reign of Nicholas I, drafting into the army was a natural punishment entirely in keeping with the whole system of Russian serf-owning society. Young nobles

were sent to the army and compelled to serve as private soldiers, losing the privileges of their estate until they earned officer's rank. Peasants were also drafted into the army, and it meant a long term of penal servitude, where "Green Street"⁴ with its inhuman torment awaited them. It is now more than a quarter of a century since "universal" military service was introduced, which at the time was acclaimed as a great democratic reform. Real universal military service that is not merely on paper is undoubtedly a democratic reform; by abolishing the social-estate system it would make all citizens equal. But if such were the case, could drafting into the army be employed as a punishment? When the government converts military service into a form of punishment, does it not thereby prove that we are much nearer to the old recruiting system than to *universal* military service? The Provisional Regulations of 1899 tear off the pharisaical mask and expose the real Asiatic nature even of those of our institutions which most resemble European institutions. In reality, we have not and never had universal military service, because the privileges enjoyed by birth and wealth create innumerable exceptions. In reality, we have not and never had anything resembling equality of citizens in military service. On the contrary, the barracks are completely saturated with the spirit of most revolting absence of rights. The soldier from the working class or the peasantry is completely defenceless; his human dignity is trodden underfoot, he is robbed, he is beaten, beaten, and again beaten – such is his constant fare. Those with influential connections and money enjoy privileges and exemptions. It is not surprising, therefore, that drafting into this school of tyranny and violence can be a punishment, even a very severe punishment, amounting almost to deprivation of rights. The government thinks it will teach the "rebels" discipline in this school. But is it not mistaken in its calculations? Will not this school of Russian military service become the military school of the revolution? Not all the students, of course, possess the stamina to go through the whole course of training in this school. Some will break down under the heavy burden, fall in combat with the military authorities; others – the feeble and flabby – will be cowed into submission by the barracks. But there will be those whom it will harden, whose outlook will be broadened, who will be compelled to ponder and profoundly sense their aspirations towards liberty. They will experience the whole weight of tyranny and oppression on their own backs when their human dignity will be at the mercy of a drill sergeant who very frequently takes deliberate delight in tormenting the "educated." They will see with their own eyes what the position of

the common people is, their hearts will be rent by the scenes of tyranny and violence they will be compelled to witness every day, and they will understand that the injustices and petty tyrannies from which the students suffer are mere drops in the ocean of oppression the people are forced to suffer. Those who will understand this will, on leaving military service, take a Hannibal's vow⁵ to fight with the vanguard of the people for the emancipation of the entire people from despotism.

The humiliating character of this new punishment is no less outrageous than its cruelty. In declaring the students who protested against lawlessness to be mere rowdies – even as it declared the exiled striking workers to be persons of depraved demeanour – the government has thrown down a challenge to all who still possess a sense of decency. Read the government communication. It bristles with such words as disorder, brawling, outrage, shamelessness, licence. On the one hand, it speaks of criminal political aims and the desire for political protest; and on the other, it slanders the students as mere rowdies who must be disciplined. This is a slap in the face of Russian public opinion, whose sympathy for the students is very well known to the government. The only appropriate reply the students can make is to carry out the threat of the Kiev students, to organise a determined general student strike in all higher educational institutions in support of the demand for the repeal of the Provisional Regulations of July 29, 1899.

But it is not the students alone who must reply to the government. Through the government's own conduct the incident has become something much greater than a mere student affair. The government turns to public opinion as though to boast of the severity of the punishment it inflicts, as though to mock at all aspirations towards liberty. All conscious elements among all strata of the people must take up this challenge, if they do not desire to fall to the level of dumb slaves bearing their insults in silence. At the head of these conscious elements stand the advanced workers and the Social-Democratic organisations inseparably linked with them. The working class constantly suffers immeasurably greater injuries and insults from the police lawlessness with which the students have now come into such sharp conflict. The working class has already begun the struggle for its emancipation. It must remember that this great struggle imposes great obligations upon it, that it cannot emancipate itself without emancipating the whole people from despotism, that it is its duty first and foremost to respond to every political protest and render every support to that protest. The best representatives of our educated classes have proved

– and sealed the proof with the blood of thousands of revolutionaries tortured to death by the government – their ability and readiness to shake from their feet the dust of bourgeois society and join the ranks of the socialists. The worker who can look on indifferently while the government sends troops against the student youth is unworthy of the name of socialist. The students came to the assistance of the workers – the workers must come to the aid of the students. The government wishes to deceive the people when it declares that an attempt at political protest is mere brawling. The workers must publicly declare and explain to the broad masses that this is a lie; that the real hotbed of violence, outrage, and licence is the autocratic Russian Government, the tyranny of the police and the officials.

The manner in which this protest is to be organised must be decided by the local Social-Democratic organisations and workers' groups. The most practical forms of protest are the distribution, scattering, and posting up of leaflets, and the organisation of meetings to which as far as possible all classes of society should be invited. It would be desirable, however, where strong and well-established organisations exist, to attempt a broader and more open protest by means of a public demonstration. The demonstration organised last December 1, outside the premises of the newspaper *Yuzhny Krai*⁶ in Kharkov, may serve as a good example of such a protest. The jubilee of that filthy sheet, which baits everything that aspires to light and freedom and glorifies every bestiality of our government, was being celebrated at the time. The large crowd assembled in front of *Yuzhny Krai*, solemnly tore up copies of the paper, tied them to the tails of horses, wrapped them round dogs, threw stones and stink-bombs containing sulphuretted hydrogen at the windows, and shouted: "Down with the corrupt press!" Such celebrations are well deserved, not only by the corrupt newspapers, but by all our government offices. If they but rarely celebrate anniversaries of official benevolence, they constantly deserve the celebration of the people's retribution. Every manifestation of governmental tyranny and violence is a legitimate motive for such a demonstration. The people must not let the government's announcement of its punishment of the students go unanswered!

Written: Written in January 1901

Published: Published in February 1901 in *Iskra*, No. 2. Published according to the *Iskra* text.

Notes

1. We were going to press when the official announcement was published. – *Lenin*
2. “*White linings*” – the name given in tsarist Russia to monarchist-minded students from aristocratic and bourgeois circles who conducted a struggle against the democratic section of the students, supporters of the revolutionary movement. The name derived from the white silk linings of their uniforms.
3. The words of Colonel Skalozub, a character in A. S. Griboyedov’s comedy *Wit Works Woe*.
4. “*Green Street*” – a form of corporal punishment employed in the army of feudal Russia. The condemned man was tied to a rifle and made to run the gauntlet between two ranks of soldiers who beat him with sticks or green switches. This form of punishment was particularly widespread under Tsar Nicholas I (1825-55).
5. *Hannibal’s vow* – unwavering determination to fight to the end. The Carthaginian general, Hannibal, made a vow not to cease the struggle against Rome until his dying day.
6. *Yuzhny Krai (Southern Region)* – a daily newspaper dealing with social, literary, and political problems founded in Kharkov in 1880. The paper, published and edited by A. A. Yuzefovich, an extreme reactionary, upheld conservative, royalist views.

Beat – But Not to Death!

V.I. Lenin

On January 23, in Nizhni-Novgorod, the Moscow High Court of Justice, in a special session, *with the participation of representatives of the social-estates*, tried the case of the murder of the peasant Timofei Vasilyevich Vozdukhov, who had been taken to the police-station “to sober up” and there beaten up by four policemen, Shelemetyev, Shulpin, Shibayev, and Olkhovin, and by acting Station Sergeant Panov, so that he died in the hospital the next day.

Such is the simple tale of this case, which throws a glaring light upon what usually and always goes on in our police-stations.

As far as can be gathered from the extremely brief newspaper re-

ports, what appears to have happened is the following. On April 20, Vozdukhov drove up to the Governor's house in a cab. The superintendent of the Governor's house came out to him; in giving evidence at the trial the superintendent stated that Vozdukhov, hatless, had been drinking but was not drunk, and that he, Vozdukhov, complained to him about a certain steamboat booking office having refused to sell him a ticket (?). The superintendent ordered Shelemetyev, the policeman on duty, to take him to the police-station. Vozdukhov was sufficiently sober to be able to speak quietly with Shelemetyev and on arriving at the police-station quite distinctly told Sergeant Panov his name and occupation. Notwithstanding all this, Shelemetyev, no doubt with the knowledge of Panov, who had just questioned Vozdukhov, "*pushed*" the latter, not into the common cell, in which there were a number of other drunkards, but into the adjoining "*soldiers' lock-up.*" As he pushed him, his sword got caught on the latch of the door and it cut his hand slightly; imagining that Vozdukhov was holding the sword, he rushed at him to strike him, shouting that his hand had been cut. He struck Vozdukhov with all his might in the face, in the chest, in the side; he struck him so hard that Vozdukhov fell, striking his forehead on the floor and begging for mercy. "Why are you hitting me?" he implored, according to the statement of a witness, Semakhin, who was in the neighbouring cell at the time. "It was not my fault. Forgive me, for Christ's sake!" According to the evidence of this witness, it was not Vozdukhov who was drunk, but sooner Shelemetyev. Shelemetyev's colleagues, Shulpin and Shibayev, who had been continuously drinking in the police-station since the first day of Easter week (April 20 was Tuesday, the third day of Easter week), learned that Shelemetyev was "teaching" (the expression used in the indictment) Vozdukhov a lesson. They went into the soldiers' lock-up accompanied by Olkhovin, who was on a visit from another station, and attacked Vozdukhov with their fists and feet. Police Sergeant Panov came on the scene and struck Vozdukhov on the head with a book, and then with his fists. "Oh! they beat and beat him so hard that my belly ached for pity," said a woman witness, who was under arrest there at the time. When the "lesson" was over, the sergeant very coolly ordered Shibayev to wipe the blood from the victim's face – it would not look so bad then; the chief might see it – and then to fling him into the common cell. "Brothers!" cried Vozdukhov to the other detainees, "see how the police have beaten me. Be my witnesses, I'll lodge a complaint." But he never lived to lodge the complaint. The following morning, he was

found in a state of unconsciousness and sent to the hospital where he died within eight hours without coming to himself again. A post-mortem revealed ten broken ribs, bruises all over his body, and haemorrhage of the brain.

The court sentenced Shelemetyev, Shulpin, and Shibayev to four years' penal servitude, and Olkhovin and Panov to *one month's detention*, finding them guilty only of "insulting behaviour."...

With this sentence we shall commence our examination of the case. Those sentenced to penal servitude were charged according to Articles 346 and 1490, Part II, of the Penal Code. The first of these articles provides that an official inflicting wounds or injuries in the exercise of his duties is liable to the maximum penalty reserved "for the perpetration of such a crime." Article 1490, Part II, provides for a penalty of from eight to ten years' penal servitude for inflicting torture resulting in death. Instead of inflicting the *maximum penalty*, the court, consisting of representatives of the social-estates and crown judges, *reduced* the sentence *by two degrees* (sixth degree, eight to ten years of penal servitude; seventh degree, four to six years), i.e., it made the maximum reduction of sentence permitted by the law in cases of extenuating circumstances, and, moreover, imposed the *minimum* penalty of that low degree. In a word, the court did all it could to let the culprits off as lightly as possible; in fact, it did more than it could, because it evaded the law concerning the "maximum penalty." Of course, we do not wish to assert that "supreme justice" demanded precisely ten and not four years' penal servitude; the essential point is that the murderers were declared to be murderers and that they were sentenced to penal servitude. But we cannot refrain from noting a tendency characteristic of the court of crown judges and representatives of the estates; when they try a police official, they are ready to display the greatest clemency, but when they sit in judgment over an act committed against the police, as is well known, they display inexorable severity.¹

With a police sergeant before it, how could the court refuse him clemency? He had met Vostrukhov as he was brought in and apparently had ordered him to be placed, not in a common cell, but first, in order to teach him a lesson, in the soldiers' lock-up. He took part in the assault, using his fists and a book (no doubt a copy of the Penal Laws); he gave orders to have all traces of the crime removed (to wipe away the blood). On the night of April 20 he reported to the inspector, Mukhanov, upon his return, "everything in order at the station in his charge" (his exact words!) – but he had nothing to do with

the murderers, he was only guilty of an insulting act, just insulting behaviour, punishable by detention. Quite naturally, this gentleman, Mr. Panov, innocent of murder, is still in the police service occupying the post of a village police sergeant. Mr. Panov has merely transferred his useful directing activities in “teaching lessons” to the common people from the town to the country. Now, reader, tell us in all conscience, can Sergeant Panov understand the sentence of the court to mean anything else than advice in the future to remove the traces of a crime more thoroughly, to “teach” in such a manner as to leave no trace? You did right in ordering the blood to be wiped from the face of the dying man, but you allowed him to die. That, pal, was careless. In the future be more careful and never forget the first and last commandment of the Russian Derzhimorda²: “Beat – but not to death!”

From the ordinary human point of view, the sentence Panov drew was a mockery of justice. It reveals a cringing, servile spirit, an attempt to throw the whole blame upon the minor police officers and to shield their immediate chief with whose knowledge, approval, and participation this brutal crime was committed. From the juridical point of view, the sentence is an example of the casuistry resorted to by bureaucratic judges who are themselves not far removed from police sergeants. Speech was given to man to conceal his thoughts, say the diplomats. Our jurists may say that the law is given to distort the concepts of guilt and responsibility. Indeed, what refined juridical art is required to be able to reduce complicity in torture to simple insulting behaviour! Panov was guilty of an offence equal in gravity to that perhaps committed by a factory hand who possibly on the morning of April 20 mischievously struck Vozdukhov’s cap off his head! In fact, milder than that: it was not an offence but merely an infringement. Even participation in a brawl (let alone the brutal assault upon a helpless man), if it results in a fatality, is liable to a severer punishment than that meted out to the police sergeant. Legal chicanery took advantage of the fact that the law provides for various degrees of punishment for inflicting injuries in the exercise of official duties and allows the court the discretion to pronounce sentences ranging from two months’ imprisonment to permanent banishment to Siberia, according to the circumstances of the case. Of course, it is quite a rational rule not to bind a judge to strictly formal definitions, but to allow him certain latitude. Our professors of criminal law have often praised Russian legislation for this and have emphasised its liberal character. However, in praising our law, they lose sight of one trifle, namely, that, for rational laws to be applied, it is necessary to have

judges who are not reduced to the role of mere officials, that it is necessary to have representatives of the public in the court, and for public opinion to play its part in the examination of cases. Secondly, the assistant public prosecutor came to the aid of the court by *withdrawing* the charge against Panov (and Olkhovin) of torture and cruelty and pleading only for a sentence for insulting behaviour. In his plea, the assistant prosecutor called expert evidence to prove that the blows inflicted by Panov were neither numerous nor painful. As you see, the juridical sophistry is not very ingenious: since Panov did less beating than the others, it *may* be argued that his punches were not *very* painful, and since they were not very painful, it *may* be argued that his offence was not “torture and cruelty”; and since it was not torture and cruelty, then it was merely insulting behaviour. All this works out to everybody’s satisfaction, and Mr. Panov remains in the ranks of the guardians of law and order....³

We have just referred to the participation of representatives of the public in court trials, and to the part that should be played by public opinion. The case in point is an excellent illustration. In the first place, why was this case tried, not by a jury, but by a court of crown judges and representatives of the estates? Because the government of Alexander III, having declared ruthless war upon every public aspiration towards liberty and independence, very soon found that trial by jury was dangerous. The reactionary press declared trial by jury to be “trial by the street,” and launched against it a campaign which, be it said in passing, continues to this day. The government adopted a reactionary programme. Having crushed the revolutionary movement of the seventies, it insolently declared to the representatives of the people that it regarded them as the “street,” the mob, which must not interfere in the work of legislation, let alone interfere in the administration of the state, and which must be driven from the sanctuary where Russian citizens are tried and punished according to the Panov method. In 1887 a law was passed removing crimes committed by and against officials from the jurisdiction of courts sitting with a jury and transferring them to courts of crown judges and representatives of the estates. It is well known that these representatives of the estates, merged into a single collegium with the bureaucratic judges, are mute super-numeraries playing the miserable role of witnesses ready to say yes to everything the officials of the Department of Justice decide. This is one of a long series of laws adopted during the latest reactionary period of Russian history and having one single tendency in common: to re-establish a “sound authority.” Under the pressure of

circumstances, the government in the latter half of the nineteenth century was compelled to come into contact with the “street”; but the character of the street changed with astonishing rapidity and the ignorant inhabitants gave place to citizens who were beginning to understand their rights and who were capable even of producing the champions of their rights. Realising this, the government drew back in horror, and is now making convulsive efforts to surround itself by a Chinese Wall, to immure itself in a fortress into which no manifestations of independent public action can penetrate.... But I have strayed somewhat from my subject.

Thanks to the reactionary law, the street was deprived of the right to try representatives of the government. Officials have been tried by officials. This has affected, not only the sentence passed by the court, but also the character of the preliminary investigation and the trial. Trial by the street is valuable because it breathes a living spirit into the bureaucratic formalism which pervades our government institutions. The street is interested, not only, and not so much, in the definition of the given offence (insulting behaviour, assault, torture), or in the category of punishment to be imposed; it is interested in exposing thoroughly and bringing to public light the significance and all the social and political threads of the crime in order to draw lessons in public morals and practical politics from the trial. The street does not want to see in the court “an official institution,” in which functionaries apply to given cases the corresponding articles of the Penal Code, but a public institution which exposes the ulcers of the present system, which provides material for criticising it and, consequently, for improving it. Impelled by its practical knowledge of public affairs and by the growth of political consciousness, the street is discovering the truth for which our official, professorial jurisprudence, weighed down by its scholastic shackles, is groping with such difficulty and timidity – namely, that in the fight against crime the reform of social and political institutions is much more important than the imposition of punishment. For this reason the reactionary publicists and the reactionary government hate, and cannot help hating, trial by the street. For this reason the curtailments put on the competency of jury courts and the restrictions on publicity run like a scarlet thread throughout the whole of the post-Reform history of Russia; indeed, the reactionary character of the “post-Reform” epoch was exposed *immediately* after the law of 1864, reforming our “judicature,” came into force.⁴ The absence of “trial by the street” was markedly felt in this particular case. Who in the court that tried this case could have been inter-

ested in its social aspect, and who would have sought to bring it out prominently? The public prosecutor? The official who is closely connected with the police, who shares responsibility for the detention of prisoners and the manner in which they are treated, who, in certain cases, is actually the chief of police? We have seen that the assistant prosecutor even withdrew the charge of torture against Panov. The civil plaintiff – in the event that Vozdukhova, the widow of the murdered man and a witness at the trial, had put in a civil claim against the murderers? But how was this simple woman to know that it was permissible to bring a civil claim for damages before a criminal court? But even had she known it, would she have been able to retain a lawyer? And even had she been able to do so, could a lawyer have been found who was willing to call public attention to the state of affairs brought to light by this murder? And even if such a lawyer had been found, would his "civic zeal" have been supported by such "delegates" of the public as the representatives of the social-estates? Picture to yourself a rural district elder – I have in mind a provincial court – embarrassed in his rustic clothes, not knowing what to do with his rough, peasant hands, awkwardly trying to conceal his feet encased in greased top-boots, gazing with awe upon His Excellency, the president of the court, who is seated on the same bench with him. Or imagine a city mayor, a fat merchant, breathing heavily in his unaccustomed livery, with his chain of office round his neck, trying to ape his neighbour, a Marshal of the Nobility, a gentleman in a nobleman's uniform, who looks sleek and well tended, with aristocratic manners. By his side are judges, men who have gone through the hard grind of the school of bureaucracy, genuine functionaries who have grown grey in the service and are filled with a consciousness of the importance of the duty they have to fulfill – to try representatives of the authorities whom the street is not worthy to try. Would not this scene dampen the ardour of the most eloquent lawyer? Would it not remind him of the ancient aphorism: "neither cast ye your pearls before..."?"

And so it happened that the case was rushed through at express speed, as if all concerned were eager to get it off their hands as quickly as possible,⁵ as if they feared to rake too thoroughly in the muck; one may get accustomed to living near a cesspool and not notice the foul odours emanating from it, but as soon as an attempt is made to cleanse it, the stench assails the nostrils, not only of the inhabitants of the particular street, but also of those of the neighbouring streets.

Just think of the number of questions that naturally arise and that no one has taken the trouble to clear up! Why did Vozdukhov go to

the Governor? The indictment – the document which embodied the effort of the prosecuting authorities to disclose the crime – not only failed to reply to this question, but deliberately obscured it with the statement that Vozdukhov “was detained in a state of intoxication in the courtyard of the Governor’s house by policeman Shelemetyev.” It even gives ground for the assumption that Vozdukhov was brawling – and where do you think? In the courtyard of the Governor’s house! In actuality, Vozdukhov *drove up to the Governor’s house in a cab in order to lodge a complaint* – this fact was established. What did he go to complain about? Ptitsyn, the superintendent of the Governor’s house, stated that Vozdukhov had complained about the refusal of a steamship booking office to sell him a ticket (?). The witness Mukhanov, formerly inspector of the station in which Vozdukhov was assaulted (and now governor of the provincial prison in Vladimir), stated that he had heard from Vozdukhov’s wife that she and her husband had been drinking and that *in Nizhni they had been beaten up in the river police-station and in the Rozhdestvensky police-station, and that Vozdukhov had gone to the Governor to complain about this*. Notwithstanding the fact that the witnesses obviously contradicted each other, the court did not make the slightest attempt to clear up the matter. On the contrary, one has every reason to conclude that the court *did not wish* to clear up the matter. Vozdukhov’s wife gave evidence at the trial, but no one took the trouble to ask her whether she and her husband had really been assaulted in several Nizhni police-stations, under what circumstances they had been arrested, in what premises they had been assaulted, and by whom, whether her husband had really wished to complain to the Governor, and whether he had mentioned his intention to any one else. Most likely the witness Ptitsyn, an official in the Governor’s office, was not inclined to accept complaints from Vozdukhov – who was not drunk, but whom, nevertheless, it was necessary to make sober! – against the police and ordered the *intoxicated* police-man Shelemetyev to take the complainant to the police-station to be sobered up. But this interesting witness was not cross-examined. The cabby, Krainov, who had driven Vozdukhov to the Governor’s house and subsequently to the police-station, was not questioned as to whether Vozdukhov had told him why he was going to the Governor, as to what he had said to Ptitsyn, and whether anybody else had heard the conversation. The court was satisfied merely to hear the brief written affidavit of Krainov (who did not appear in court) which testified that Vozdukhov had not been drunk, but only slightly intoxicated, and the assistant prosecutor had not even

taken the trouble to subpoena this important witness. If we bear in mind that Vozdukhov, a sergeant in the army reserve and consequently a man of experience who must have known something about law and order, had said even after the last fatal blows, "I am going to lodge a complaint," it appears more than likely that he went to the Governor to lodge a complaint against the police, that Ptitsyn lied to shield the police and that the servile judges and the servile prosecutor did not wish to bring this delicate story to light.

Further, why was Vozdukhov beaten? Again the indictment presents the case in a manner most favourable ... to the accused. The "motive for the torture," it is alleged, was the cutting of Shelemetyev's hand when he pushed Vozdukhov into the soldiers' lock-up. The question arises, why was Vozdukhov, who spoke calmly both with Shelemetyev and with Panov, pushed (assuming that it was really necessary to *push* him!), not into the common cell, but first into the soldiers' lock-up? He had been brought to the station to be sobered up – there were already a number of drunkards in the common cell, and later on Vozdukhov was put into the common cell; why, then, did Shelemetyev, after "introducing" him to Panov, push him into the *soldiers' lock-up*? Evidently for the purpose of beating him. In the common cell there were a number of people, whereas in the soldiers' lock-up Vozdukhov would be alone, and Shelemetyev could call to his aid his comrades and Mr. Panov, who was "in charge" of Police-Station No. 1 at the time. Consequently, the torture was inflicted, not for some chance reason, but deliberately and with forethought. We can assume one of two things – either that all who are taken to the police-station for sobering up (even when they behave themselves decently and quietly) are first put into the soldiers' lock-up to be "taught a lesson," or that Vozdukhov was put in there *precisely for the reason that he had gone to the Governor to lodge a complaint against the police*. The newspaper reports of the trial are so brief that one hesitates to express oneself categorically in favour of the second hypothesis (which is not at all improbable); but the preliminary investigation and the court examination could have cleared this point up beyond any doubt. It stands to reason that the court did not pay any attention whatever to this. I say "it stands to reason," because the indifference of the court reflects not only bureaucratic formalism, but the simple point of view of the Russian man in the street. "What is there to make a fuss about? A drunken muzhik was killed in a police-station! Worse things than that happen!" And the man in the street begins to relate scores of incomparably more revolting cases, in

which the culprits have gone scot-free. The remarks of the man in the street are absolutely just; nevertheless, his attitude is absolutely wrong and by his arguments he merely reveals his extreme, philistine short-sightedness. Are not incomparably more revolting cases of police tyranny possible in our country only because this tyranny is the common, everyday practice in every police-station? And is not our indignation impotent against these exceptional cases because we, with customary indifference, tolerate the “normal” cases; because our indifference remains unperturbed, even when a customary practice like an assault upon a drunken (or allegedly drunken) “muzhik” in a police-station rouses the protest of this very muzhik (who ought to be accustomed to this sort of thing), of this very muzhik, who paid with his life for his most impertinent attempt to submit a humble petition to the Governor?

There is another reason why we must not ignore this all too common case. It has long been held that the preventive significance of punishment is not in its severity, but in its inevitableness. What is important is not that a crime shall be severely punished, but that *not a single* crime shall pass undiscovered. From this aspect, too, the present case is of interest. Illegal and savage assault is committed in police-stations in the Russian Empire – it may be said without exaggeration-daily and hourly,⁶ and only rare and very exceptional cases are brought up in court. This is not in the least surprising, since the criminals are the very police who in Russia are charged with the duty of disclosing crime. These circumstances compel us to devote all the greater, if unusual, attention to those cases in which the courts are constrained to raise the curtain that conceals such habitual facts.

Note, for example, how the police perpetrate their assault. Five or six of them together set upon their victim with brutal cruelty, many of them are drunk, all are armed with swords. But not one of them ever strikes the victim with his sword. They are men of experience and they know how to beat a man up. A sword blow leaves a mark of guilt, but try and prove that bruises made by fists were inflicted by the police! “Arrested during a brawl in which he was beaten up,” – and your case isn’t worth a straw. Even in the present instance, when the man, as it happened, was beaten to death (“the devil tempted him to die, a hefty muzhik like that! Who would have thought it!”), the prosecution was obliged to bring witnesses to testify that “Vozdukhov was absolutely sound in health before he was taken to the police-station.” Apparently, the murderers, who maintained throughout the trial that they had not beaten the man, stated that they had brought

him to the station in a battered condition. It is an extremely difficult matter to get witnesses to give evidence in a case like this. By a happy chance, the window between the common cell and the soldiers' lock-up was not completely curtained off. True, instead of glass the panes consisted of sheets of tin with holes punched through, and on the side of the soldiers' lock-up these holes were covered up by a leather curtain. By poking a finger through a hole, one could raise the curtain and see what was going on in the soldiers' lock-up. Only through this circumstance was it possible at the trial to obtain a picture of the scene of the "lesson." But such negligence as improperly curtained windows could exist only in the past century. In the twentieth century, the little window between the common cell and soldiers' lock-up in the Kremlin district Police-Station No. 1 in Nizhni-Novgorod is no doubt blocked up.... And since there are no witnesses, woe betide the poor fellow who finds himself in the soldiers' lock-up!

In no country in the world is there such a multitude of laws as in Russia. We have laws for everything. There are special regulations governing detention in custody, which specifically state that detention is legally permissible only in special premises, subject to special supervision. As you see, the law is observed. In the police-station, there is a special "common cell." But *before* a man is put into the common cell, it is "customary" to "shove" him into the soldiers' lock-up. Although the role of the soldiers' lock-up as a real torture chamber was perfectly clear throughout the trial, the judicial authorities did not even think of paying the matter the slightest attention. Surely, the prosecuting attorney cannot be expected to expose the excesses of our brutal police and to take measures against them!

We have referred to the question of witnesses in a case of this kind. At best, such witnesses can only be persons in the hands of the police. Only under the most exceptional circumstances would it be possible for an outsider to witness a police "lesson" given in a police-station. But it is possible for the police to influence the witnesses that are in their hands. And this is what happened in the present case. The witness Frolov, who at the time of the murder was in the common cell, stated during the preliminary investigation that Vozdukhov had been assaulted by the policemen and the sergeant; later he withdrew his testimony against Sergeant Panov; at the trial, however, he stated that none of the policemen had struck Vozdukhov, that he had been persuaded to give evidence against the police by Semakhin and Barinov (two other men in the common cell who were the principal witnesses for the prosecution), and that the police had not persuaded or

prompted him to say this. The witnesses Fadeyev and Antonova stated that no one had laid a finger on Vozdukhov in the soldiers' lock-up, that everything had been quiet there and no quarrelling had taken place.

As is to be seen, quite the usual thing happened. And the judicial authorities behaved with customary indifference. There is a law that provides severe penalties for perjury. A prosecution instituted against the two perjurers would throw further light on the outrages the police perpetrate against those who have the misfortune to fall into their hands and are almost completely defenceless (hundreds of thousands of the "common" people meet with such misfortune every day). But all that the court is concerned about is applying this or that article of the Penal Code; it is not in the least concerned about that defencelessness. This detail in the trial, like all the others, showed clearly how strong and all-entangling is the net, how persistent the canker, which can only be removed by abolishing the whole system of police tyranny and denial of the people's rights.

About thirty-five years ago, F. M. Reshetnikov, a well-known Russian writer, met with an unpleasant adventure. One evening he went to the Assembly of Nobles in St. Petersburg under the mistaken impression that a concert was to be given there. The policeman at the door barred his way and shouted at him: "What's the shoving? Who are you?" "A factory hand," roughly replied Reshetnikov, stung to anger by this affront. What followed this reply, as related by Gleb Uspensky, was that Reshetnikov spent the night in the police-station, from which he emerged bruised and battered, bereft of his money and his ring. "I report this matter to Your Excellency," wrote Reshetnikov in a petition to the St. Petersburg Chief of Police. "I seek no compensation. May I only humbly trouble you with the request that the police officers and their subordinates *shall not beat the people....* As it is, the people have only sufferings in store for them."⁷

The modest request which a Russian writer was bold enough to make to the chief of police of the capital so long ago has not yet been fulfilled and it *cannot be fulfilled* so long as the present political system lasts. At the present time, however, every honest man who is tormented by the contemplation of this brutality and violence turns towards the great new movement among the people that is mustering its forces in order to wipe all brutality from the face of the land of Russia and to achieve mankind's finest ideals. During recent decades, hatred for the police has grown immensely and has become deep-rooted in the hearts of the masses of the common people. The development of urban life,

the growth of industry, the spread of literacy, have all served to imbue even the uneducated masses with aspirations for a better life and a consciousness of their human dignity; the police, however, have remained as tyrannical and brutal as ever. To their bestiality we now see added a greater subtlety in the detection and persecution of the new, most dangerous enemy, i.e., everything that brings to the masses of the people a ray of consciousness of their rights and confidence in their strength. Fertilised by this consciousness and this confidence, popular hatred will find vent, not in savage vengeance, but in the struggle for liberty.

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Notes

1. In passing, we shall adduce another fact indicating the punishments imposed by our courts for various crimes. A few days after the Vozdukhov murder trial, the Moscow District Military Tribunal tried a private in the local artillery brigade for stealing fifty pairs of trousers and a few pairs of boots, while on guard duty in the storeroom. The sentence was four years' *penal servitude*. A human life entrusted to the police is equal in value to fifty pairs of trousers and a few pairs of boots entrusted to a sentry. In this peculiar "equation" the whole of our police state system is reflected as the sun is reflected in a drop of water. The individual against state power is nothing. Discipline within the state power is everything... pardon me, "everything" only for the small fry. A petty thief is sentenced to penal servitude, but the big thieves, the magnates, cabinet ministers, bank directors, builders of railways, engineers, contractors, etc., who plunder the Treasury of property valued at tens and hundreds of thousands of rubles are punished only on very rare occasions, and at the worst are banished to remote provinces where they may live at ease on their loot (the bank thieves in Western Siberia), and from where it is easy to escape across the frontier (Colonel of Gendarmes Meranville de Saint-Clair). – *Lenin*

2. *Derzhimorda* – the name of the policeman in N. V. Gogol's comedy *The Inspector-General*; a boorish, insolent oppressor, a man of violence.

3. In Russia, instead of exposing the outrage in all its horror before the court and the public, they prefer to hush up the case in court and

do nothing more than send out circular letters and orders full of pompous but meaningless phrases. For instance, a few days ago the Orel Chief of Police issued an order which, confirming previous orders, instructs the local police inspectors to impress upon subordinates, personally and through their assistants, that they must refrain from roughness and violence in handling drunkards in the streets and when taking them to the police-station to sober up. The order further specifies that police officers must explain to their subordinates that it is the duty of the police to protect drunkards who cannot be left alone with obvious danger to themselves; that subordinate police officers, whom the law has placed in the position of first protectors and guardians of citizens, must, therefore, in taking drunkards into custody, not only refrain from treating them roughly and inhumanly, but must do all they can to protect them until they have become sober. The order warns subordinate police officials that only by such conscientious and lawful exercise of their duties will they earn the confidence and respect of the population, and that if, on the contrary, police officials treat drunkards harshly and cruelly, or resort to violent conduct incompatible with the duty of a police officer, who should serve as a model of respectability and good morals, they will be punished with all the vigour of the law and any subordinate police officer guilty of such conduct will be rigorously prosecuted. A capital idea for a cartoon in a satirical journal – a police sergeant, acquitted of the charge of murder, reading an order that he must serve as a model of respectability and good morals! – *Lenin*

4. In their polemics in the legal press against the reactionaries, the liberal advocates of trial by jury often categorically deny its political significance and endeavour to show that they favour participation of public representatives in the courts for reasons other than political. This may partly be explained by the lack of ability on the part of our jurists to think politically to a logical conclusion, notwithstanding their specialisation in “political” science. But, chiefly, it is to be explained by the necessity to speak in Aesopean language, by the impossibility openly to declare their sympathies for a constitution. – *Lenin*

5. No one, however, thought of bringing the case to trial quickly. Despite the fact that the case was remarkably clear and simple, it was not tried until January 23, 1901, although the crime had been committed on April 20, 1899. A *speedy*, just, and merciful trial! – *Lenin*

6. These lines were already written when the press brought another confirmation of the correctness of this assertion. At the other end of Russia, in Odessa – a city enjoying the status of a capital – a magistrate acquitted a certain M. Klinkov who had been charged by Station Sergeant Sadukov with disorderly conduct while under arrest in the police-station. At the trial, the accused and his four witnesses testified to the following: Sadukov arrested M. Klinkov, who was in a state of drunkenness, and took him to the police-station. When he became sober, Klinkov demanded to be released, upon which a policeman grabbed him by the collar and began to punch him. Three other police-men arrived on the scene, and the four of them fell upon him, striking him in the face, on the head, the chest, and the sides. Under the rain of blows and covered with blood, Klinkov fell to the floor, whereupon the policemen assaulted him with even greater fury. According to the evidence of Klinkov and his witnesses, this torture was inflicted at the instigation and with the encouragement of Sadukov. As a result of the blows he received, Klinkov lost consciousness. On reviving, he was released from the police-station. Immediately on his release he went to be examined by a physician. The magistrate advised Klinkov to lodge a complaint with the prosecutor against Sadukov and the policemen, to which Klinkov replied that he had already done so and that he would bring twenty witnesses.

One need not be a prophet to foretell that M. Klinkov will fail to get the policemen brought to trial and punished for torture. They did not actually beat him to death; but if, contrary to expectation, they are prosecuted, they are sure to get off lightly. – *Lenin*

7. Lenin quotes from Gleb Uspensky's "Fyodor Mikhailovich Reshetnikov."