

THE GREAT LEGACY  
OF MARXISM LENINISM

# LENIN

ON BOURGEOIS-  
DEMOCRATIC  
REVOLUTION

Peter Chalk  
Sept 76

# V. I. LENIN

ON BOURGEOIS—  
DEMOCRATIC  
REVOLUTION

NOVOSTI PRESS AGENCY PUBLISHING HOUSE  
MOSCOW, 1975

COMPILED BY : A. V. USHAKOV AND  
G. I. VEDERNIKOVA

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В. И. ЛЕНИН  
О БУРЖУАЗНО-ДЕМОКРАТИЧЕСКОЙ РЕВОЛЮЦИИ  
*на английском языке*  
Цена 17 коп.

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INTERNATIONAL  
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIRST  
RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

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The Russian bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905-07 ushered in a new historic epoch—the epoch of political and class struggle. The Nicolas II<sup>1</sup> government never recovered from this blow. The interests of West European capitalists were closely connected with the interests of Russian tsarism, the stronghold of European and Asian reaction, and therefore the revolution weakened the system of imperialism in general.

In the first half of the 19th century, the British workers were the most active in the struggle against political exploitation. By the middle of the century the British labour movement had weakened and the French working class become the vanguard of the revolutionary forces. The Paris Commune of 1871<sup>2</sup> was the highest point of the revolutionary struggle of the French and international proletariat. After the collapse of the Commune, Germany took over as the centre of the revolutionary movement, headed by Marx and Engels, two great leaders of the working class. However, after their death, the opportunists seized the leadership of German Social-Democracy.

At this juncture a pre-revolutionary situation developed in Russia. Russian society was torn by all social and economic contradictions of that period—contradictions between the workers and the capitalists, between the developing capitalist forms and methods on the one hand and the still considerable traces of feudalism on the other, and between the developed industrial regions and the economically-backward outlying areas.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nicolas II*—the last Russian tsar (reigned from 1894 to 1917).

<sup>2</sup> *The Paris Commune*—a dictatorship of the working people; existed from March 18 to May 28, 1871.

Russian capitalism was rapidly developing into imperialism. Industrial enterprises were being built, and the network of railroads was being extended; the concentration of industry and banks intensified, and the struggle for foreign markets became more acute. In the 1900's, monopoly amalgamations appeared in the metallurgical, fuel, textile and other industries. The growing capitalist exploitation meant longer hours for the workers, cuts in wages and more industrial accidents.

Despite the development of imperialism traces of the feudal system remained in the village—feudal landed property rights, primitive subsistence farming, corporal punishment of peasants, and so on. The 85 million peasants—who made up vast majority of the population—were downtrodden, ignorant and deprived of any rights. Despite the abolition, in 1861,<sup>1</sup> of serfdom owners of landed estates still retained a considerable portion of the peasants' land. The peasants suffered greatly from shortage of land and had to pay unbearably heavy taxes. Their debt to the state was steadily growing. In 1875, it amounted to 29 million rubles; by 1900, the sum had risen to 119 million. Crop failures and famines were common occurrences. For example, famine devastated the country in 1901, not long before the revolution. With the development of capitalist relationships in village, the stratification of the peasants into the rich and the poor became more marked. The wealthier peasants, who were known as *kulaks*, appropriated the bulk of the land, livestock and

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<sup>1</sup> By the law passed on February 19, 1861, the peasants whom the landowners had formerly possessed became personally free. Yet, for the right to own land, or rather for their actual freedom, they had to make redemption payments to the national exchequer.

farm implements, and mercilessly exploited their poorer fellow-villagers.

Describing the contrasts in the country's economy, Lenin, the leader of the revolutionary proletariat, wrote that the most backward system of landownership and the most ignorant peasantry existed side by side with an advanced industrial and finance capitalism.<sup>1</sup>

The non-Russian peoples (there were about one hundred nationalities and ethnic groups in tsarist Russia) were particularly oppressed by tsarism. With the development of capitalism, the outlying areas inhabited by non-Russians were being drawn more intensely into an all-Russian economic system, becoming a source of cheap labour and raw materials. The non-Russians were not allowed to serve in government administration. Tsarism suppressed the native culture of national minorities, and instruction in schools was given in the Russian language only. Non-Christians were discriminated against by the tsarist government. Epidemics of cholera and plague were common in the national areas for the health service was badly organised. In Central Asia, for example, there was one doctor per 40,000 of population.

Russia was an absolute monarchy and this, in effect, meant the unrestricted rule of the landowners. The common people were deprived of basic political rights. Nicolas II, who came to the throne in 1894, declared that he intended "to defend the principle of autocracy as unswervingly" as had his father, Alexander III.<sup>2</sup> He lived up to his promise: the police and the gendarmerie mer-

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<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 13, p. 442.

<sup>2</sup> *Alexander III*—Russian tsar; reigned from 1881 to 1894.

cilessly beat and fired on workers and peasants during strikes and demonstrations; thousands of those discontented with the existing political establishment were exiled to out-of-the-way places in Siberia, condemned to penal servitude, or thrown into prisons.

Tsarist Russia was thus a country of capitalist, feudal and national oppression. The triple oppression meant that the condition of the working people was particularly desperate and class antagonisms especially deep and acute. The popular masses were thus led to engage in an uncompromising struggle against the regime. The entire nation was up in arms against the tsar and the landowners, and the workers were fighting the capitalists. This situation determined the extraordinary intensity of the revolutionary struggle at the beginning of the 1900's.

The Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 accelerated the onset of a revolutionary situation in the country. The war was clearly being waged in the interests of the ruling classes (for the division of colonies). And Russia's defeats rendered government policy increasingly unpopular.

"The incompatibility of the autocracy with the interests of social development, with the interests of the entire people... became evident as soon as the people actually had to pay for the autocracy with their lifeblood," wrote Lenin. "Its foolish and criminal colonial adventure," he continued, "has landed the autocracy in an impasse, from which the people can extricate themselves only by their own efforts and only at the cost of destroying tsarism."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 50-51.



On Sunday, January 9, 1905, workers, their wives and children marched from every district of Petersburg, to the tsar's palace to beg Nicolas II to defend them against the factoryowners. The troops, however, following the tsar's orders, fired on the crowd and killed and wounded more than three thousand people. "Bloody Sunday", as this day came to be known, was the last straw that broke people's patience. It was not long before a revolution began.

The first Russian revolution of 1905-07 was a bourgeois revolution since the demands put forward—the overthrow of the autocracy, formation of a democratic republic, abolition of caste privileges, and the destruction of feudal property rights—did not mean the abolition of the capitalist system.

However, this revolution differed fundamentally from the West European revolutions of the 17-19th centuries. For the first time it was the proletariat and not the bourgeoisie that inspired and led the revolution. This and the fact that poorer peasants and other sections of the population took part meant that the First Russian Revolution was democratic and popular. In fact, it was the first popular revolution to take place in the epoch of imperialism.

The number of hired workers in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century stood at 14.2 million. The concentration of the working class at large enterprises was very high. In 1903, 76.6 per cent of the workers were employed at the large factories and plants in European Russia which accounted for seventeen per cent of the total number of the country's enterprises. The Russian proletariat had matured over the years of hard struggle against the autocracy and the capitalists.

In the years of the revolution it proved to be the most revolutionary class.

The 1905-07 revolution was also a popular revolution in that it widely used such methods of struggle as the strike and the general strike, the latter being one of the main weapons of the working class.

The peasantry was another revolutionary force and an ally of the working class. The class interests of the workers and the peasants, their common aims and activities formed the basis for this alliance in the struggle for liberation. Analysing the peasants' militancy Lenin wrote that only through a revolutionary struggle and only under the leadership of the working class could the ruined, landless and oppressed peasants hope to seize the landed estates.

The nationalities question also called for an urgent solution. The national liberation movement of the non-Russian peoples oppressed by tsarism and the struggle of the Russian workers and the peasants became incorporated in a single struggle. The national bourgeoisie sought to assume the leadership of this movement thereby consolidating its economic and political position. However, in the course of the revolution the non-Russian peoples came to understand that it was only the working class that could lead the struggle for national and social liberation. The Leninist nationalities programme and the policies of the working-class party promoted the joint struggle of the working people of the national regions and the Russian working class against the autocracy. The Communists believed that the nationalities question could be solved with the creation of an interim revolutionary government that could democratize the country's life by establishing, among other things,

the full equality of all citizens irrespective of their nationality and by proclaiming the right of nations to self-determination, i.e., the right to decide their own future by themselves and even to secede, if they so desired, from Russia and form independent states.

Anti-government sentiments also spread among the liberal bourgeoisie. Since the traces of feudalism hindered the development of capitalism, the bourgeoisie were discontent with the existing situation. Their discontent was all the more since they had gained a foothold in the country's economy but were prevented by the landowners from participating in affairs of state. Yet, for fear of the workers' and peasants' movement, the bourgeoisie had to seek compromise with the tsar. They did not want a complete victory of the revolution and sought to achieve partial democratic reforms by peaceful means. Dependent on tsarism and disunited politically, the Russian bourgeoisie were not able to act as a progressive force; they could never lead the revolution—although they stubbornly strived for leadership in order to carry out a peaceful revolution that would bring them to power. In an attempt to mislead the workers and the peasants, the liberal bourgeoisie alleged that they were fighting for the interests of the whole nation. Lenin and the Bolsheviks, however, exposed their true aims.

The working class of Russia was able to place itself at the head of the 1905-07 bourgeois-democratic revolution, overthrow autocracy in February 1917 and become the vanguard of the international working class because it had a militant and united Marxist party. Equipped with a scientific revolutionary theory the party was giving day-by-day advice and leadership to the working class.

The Party was founded by Lenin at the Second Congress <sup>1</sup> of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (R.S.D.L.P.) in 1903, not long before the First Russian Revolution. During the revolution its membership greatly increased and it became much stronger politically. Before the revolution the party, according to Lenin, numbered "several hundred revolutionary organisers, several thousand members of local organisations". Some months later, "the hundreds of revolutionary Social-Democrats 'suddenly' grew into thousands; the thousands became the leaders of between two and three million proletarians." <sup>2</sup> The party's influence among the masses also grew considerably.

Yet, although the workers fought hard the 1905-07 revolution failed. The defeat may be explained by reference to the following circumstances:

— the working class did not succeed in forming a close alliance with the peasantry in the struggle against tsarism; the peasants' actions were poorly organised, lacked militancy and were sporadic;

— the working masses of the oppressed nationalities were not unanimous in their opposition to tsarism;

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<sup>1</sup> *The First Congress of Social-Democrats* was held in 1898. It proclaimed the establishment of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. However, it failed to unite separate Social-Democratic organisations into a single party. Members of the Central Committee, elected by the Congress, were soon arrested. At the Second Congress, Social-Democrats divided into Lenin's supporters—the revolutionary Bolsheviks and his opponents—the Menshevik opportunists. Thus 1903 was the year from which the Bolshevik Party began its history. In 1918, the R.S.D.L.P. was renamed the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik), R.C.P.(B.). In 1925, the name was changed to the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik), and from 1952, it has been known as the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the C.P.S.U.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 23, p. 238.

— the army, which was mainly recruited from the peasantry, on the whole, remained loyal to the government, although revolutionary propaganda inspired sporadic revolts among the troops;

— the workers of different regions and different industries did not rise to action simultaneously;

— the activities of the Menshevik opportunists weakened the strength of the workers;

— the liberal bourgeoisie played a counter-revolutionary role by making an open compromise with tsarism;

— foreign capitalists, fearing that they might lose their investments and that the revolution might spread to other countries, made generous financial contributions to the tsarist government;

— the peace concluded with Japan in August 1905 made the position of the autocracy more secure.

Yet, despite the defeat of the 1905-07 revolution, the heroic struggle of the Russian proletariat against tsarism was of international significance. The working class had shattered the foundations of autocracy, thus facilitating victory in the future. The proletariat also gained for itself and the whole nation various political and economic concessions. The tsar had to convene a State Duma<sup>1</sup> which the Leninist party used as a platform for revolutionary agitation. The owners of factories and plants had to raise workers' wages, reduce hours, improve labour conditions and agree to other concessions.

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<sup>1</sup> *The State Duma*—a Russian-style parliament which, however, had no legislative powers. The tsarist government convened four Dumas—in 1906, twice in 1907, and then finally in 1912. The elections to Dumas were not based on equal suffrage and were indirect. The majority of the deputies came from the ruling classes.

Decades of peaceful development would not have given the working class such valuable political experience as did the few years of the revolution. Profound changes in the psychology of the masses took place. The workers saw that they had nothing to hope from the tsar and came to understand the need for an organised struggle against the autocracy under the leadership of a revolutionary party. Lenin wrote that "the first revolution (1905) deeply ploughed the soil, uprooted age-old prejudices, awakened millions of workers... to political life and political struggle..."<sup>1</sup> Thousands of workers whom the revolution had made staunch and loyal soldiers of the proletarian army rose against tsarism and the capitalists in 1917.

The proletariat employed various forms of struggle during the revolutionary period—economic and political strikes, political demonstrations, rallies and so on. For the first time the powerful weapon of the general political strike was used. In 1917, before the socialist revolution<sup>2</sup> took place, the political strike was again used as an important means of raising mass consciousness.

During the First Russian Revolution the working class established mass organisations including the Soviets of Workers' Deputies<sup>3</sup> which were the embryo of revolutionary government and the centres of the uprising. They also were the prototype

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 23, p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> *The Great October Socialist Revolution* in Russia took place on October 25 (November 7, new calendar), 1917. The power of the bourgeoisie was overthrown and the dictatorship of the proletariat established.

<sup>3</sup> *The Soviets of Workers' Deputies*—organs of proletarian power—were elected at industrial enterprises. The first Soviet was organised in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, a big textile centre, in 1905, during a general strike.

of Soviet government established after the 1917 socialist revolution.

Trade unions, strike committees and other workers' organisations, thrown up by the revolution, united broad sections of the working class and were an important means of winning the support of the masses.

In the course of the struggle against the capitalists and the autocracy the class unity and solidarity of the workers grew. The Russian proletariat stirred to action and organised in the united struggle broad sections of the workers in the non-Russian areas of the tsarist Empire.

The heroic struggle of the proletariat in the 1905-07 revolution played an important part in preparing the ground for the second bourgeois-democratic revolution in February 1917<sup>1</sup> and the Great October Socialist Revolution. Lenin wrote later that "without the tremendous class battles and the revolutionary energy displayed by the Russian proletariat during the three years 1905-07, the second revolution could not possibly been so rapid in the sense that its *initial stage* was completed in a few days."<sup>2</sup> Lenin also noted that "without such a 'dress rehearsal' as we had in 1905, the revolutions of 1917—both the bourgeois, February

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<sup>1</sup> *The second bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia* (February 23-27, 1917) resulted in the overthrow of the Nicholas II government and the abdication of the tsar. A Provisional Government, representing the dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie, was set up. At the same time the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies were established. These were revolutionary-democratic organs of workers' and peasants' power. Thus the so-called period of dual power began. It ended in October 1917, when following the Great October Socialist Revolution all power passed to the Soviets.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 297-98.

revolution, and the proletarian, October revolution—would have been impossible.”<sup>1</sup>

The First Russian Revolution had a considerable impact on the workers’ and national liberation movements elsewhere.

The unparalleled heroism of Russia’s proletariat led to increased political activity on the part of the workers in the capitalist countries.

The German proletariat was swift to greet the Russian revolution. Karl Liebknecht,<sup>2</sup> one of the leaders of the German working class, said in his speech in Leipzig on February 12, 1905: “The dawn of freedom is breaking over Russia, bringing freedom also to Prussia, Saxony and Germany. There is every reason for us to take up the banner of the Russian revolution. The Russian revolution is our cause, while reaction is the cause of the tsar and the Prussian government. The German Social-Democrats are conscious of their unity with the Russian proletariat; their freedom is our freedom too.”

The immediate effect of the Russian revolution on Germany was an increase in the number of strikes: 1,212 in 1903; 1,505 in 1904; 2,203 in 1905, and 3,313 in 1906. Not only did the strikers put forward economic demands—rise in wages, reduction of hours, and improvement of labour conditions, but also political demands—reform of labour laws and extension of political rights. The number of strikes was greatest in the industrial areas of Berlin, the Rhineland and Saxony.

It is significant that the strike movement in Germany in 1905 was of a militant character.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 29, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> *Liebknecht, Karl* (1871-1919)—one of the leaders of the Communist Party of Germany.



The biggest strike broke out in the Ruhr in January 1905 in the context of growing protests against "Bloody Sunday." It involved 240,000 miners or 88 per cent of the Ruhr workers and spread to Dortmund, Essen, Bochum, Oberhausen and other cities.

The strike of electric industry workers in Berlin was also an important event. The solidarity campaign spread over the whole country: mass meetings were held in Berlin, Leipzig and other cities at which resolutions of sympathy with the striking workers were adopted. A strike-pay fund was established.

In the summer of 1905, there was growing discontent among the German sailors. The mutiny on the Russian battleship *Potemkin*<sup>1</sup> had repercussions in the Kaiser's navy. In July 1905, during a military parade in the Kiel harbour attended by Kaiser, sailors of the cruiser *Frauenlob* staged an open rebellion. Outraged by the superior attitude of their officers they locked them in their rooms, threw gun-locks overboard, and hoisted the red flag.

The events in Russia encouraged the German workers to struggle for broader election rights. This campaign spread all over Saxony. The mass meetings and demonstrations did not pass without

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<sup>1</sup> The mutiny on the battleship *Potemkin* occurred in June 1905 during a training mission in the Black Sea. Sailors outraged by the order of the senior officer to shoot 30 crew members killed many officers, seized the ship and sailed to Odessa where a general strike was in progress. However, they failed to send out a landing party, or to shell government buildings. Instead they turned the battleship out to sea to face the tsarist squadron. The squadron's crews refused to fire on the mutinous sailors. Shortage of food and coal compelled the *Potemkin* to sail to Romania where it surrendered to the authorities.

clashes with the police. A powerful demonstration in support of the universal suffrage was held in Leipzig in November 1905.

The armed insurrection in Moscow in December 1905<sup>1</sup> gave fresh impetus to the struggle of the German workers for electoral reforms. On January 17, 1906, a hundred thousand workers went on strike in Hamburg demanding political rights. The Hamburg strike coincided with a new wave of the Russian miners' struggle.

Under the impact of the Russian revolution the workers' movement in Austro-Hungary gained momentum. The number of strikes there grew from 264 in 1902, to 324 in 1903; 414 in 1904, and 686 in 1905. News of the shooting of workers in Petersburg on January 9, 1905, sparked off protest rallies, meetings and demonstrations in many places. The Austrian, Czech, Slovak, Ukrainian, Croatian, Serbian, Romanian and Italian workers formed a united front in support of their Russian class brothers.

The First Russian Revolution gave the strike movement in France a new impetus.

"Bloody Sunday" evoked the angry protests of French workers. *L'Humanite*, the French Socialist Party newspaper, raised money to help the victims of the Petersburg shooting. On January 30, a protest meeting was held in Paris. Taking part in the meetings, rallies and demonstrations in support of the Russian revolution were such prominent progressive intellectuals as Jean Leon Jaures, Edouard Vaillant, and Jules Guesde, all three so-

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<sup>1</sup> The armed insurrection in Moscow lasted from December 10 to 17, 1905. It was suppressed by government troops as were the popular risings in other towns—Nizhny Novgorod, Ekaterinoslav, Rostov-on-Don, Novorossiisk, Pyatigorsk, Sochi, Kislovodsk, Tiflis, Kutaisi, Krasnoyarsk and Chita.

cialists; Anatole France, the novelist; Jean Reclus, a scholar, and many others. Following the January events, the Paris trade unions sent a manifesto of solidarity to the Russian people.

The general political strike of the Russian workers<sup>1</sup> which started in October 1905 stirred the popular masses of France to political action. In the autumn of 1905, a political strike at state-owned enterprises broke out. At the end of November, post and telegraph employees demanded the right to set up trade unions and hold strikes.

Mutinies on Russian ships in Toulon had a great impact on the French workers' movement. In mid-November a strike broke out in the Brest naval arsenal which then spread to arsenals in Rochefort, Lorient, Cherbourg, and Toulon.

In May 1906, one hundred and sixty thousand French workers demanding introduction of an 8-hour working day were involved in strike action.

The British workers responded immediately to the Russian revolution by intensifying the class struggle. The October-December events in Russia gave the unemployed the impetus to organise and demand the setting up of public works and the establishment of a central workers' committee to bring pressure upon the government. The resignation of the Conservative cabinet at the end of 1905

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<sup>1</sup> Two million people—workers, employees and intellectuals—were involved in the all-Russia political strike which was organised by the Bolshevik Party. Factories, plants, railroads, post, telegraph and educational establishments stopped work. Large numbers of political meetings and demonstrations were held. Trying to deflect the working people from the struggle, the tsar issued a manifesto on October 17, 1905, promising to convene a State Duma with legislative powers, and proclaiming freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly and so on. Soon after this the strike subsided.

was indirectly connected with the impact of the Russian revolution. With the ascension of the Liberals the mass movement did not subside. Demands for universal suffrage, workers' insurance and an 8-hour day were made more insistently. The strike movement was growing stronger.

The working people of Italy also reacted to events in Russia. Meetings and demonstrations in protest against the tsar's atrocities were held in many Italian cities in January 1905, demanding that the Italian ambassador to Petersburg be recalled. The socialist newspaper *Tribuna* organised protests in front of the Russian embassy. The working class led the struggle. In July, a big railway strike took place. In the autumn of 1905, the workers of Milan and Turin responded to police repressions and the killing of two workers with a general strike. In January 1906, the anniversary of the "Bloody Sunday", a wave of political demonstrations in support of Russian workers swept Italy. The Russian Ambassador cabled to Petersburg on January 10: "On January 8 and 9, the Socialists organised tumultuous meetings in Rome and many other cities to mark the anniversary of the last year's disturbances in Petersburg and to express sympathy with Russian revolutionaries. The authorities took strong measures, mainly against street processions. Meetings were broken up in Turin, Milan and Ancona because of provocative speeches. Young people amassed in the streets of Naples; there were disturbances and arrests were made. Many thousands attended the meeting addressed by Deputy Cabrini near the Colosseum in Rome yesterday. When the crowd was dispersing, there were clashes with the police following the attempts to block the tram traffic. Up to 50 policemen and servicemen were wounded and hurt by

sticks and stones, and 40 demonstrators were detained."

The Russian revolution evoked sympathy in Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Sweden, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

In the United States, a new mass organisation—the Industrial Workers of the World—was founded under the influence of the events in Russia. The Constituent Congress of the IWW in July 1905 expressed solidarity with their Russian comrades and readiness to render them material support. A resolution adopted at a mass meeting in New York on May 1, 1905, called on the American workers to follow the road of the Russian proletariat. Maxim Gorky,<sup>1</sup> then in the USA, engaged in political work for the Bolshevik Party, addressed the meeting on behalf of the Russian people. Jack London later recalled that crowded meetings were held throughout the United States, at which sympathy with the liberation struggle of the Russian comrades was expressed and money collected and later sent to Russia.

The solidarity movement also developed in Argentina and Uruguay.

The First Russian Revolution also stirred the peoples of the East to rise up against those who oppressed them: the foreign imperialists and the local feudal lords. It ushered in an era of national liberation anti-imperialist revolutions. As Lenin wrote: "Following the 1905 movement in Russia, the democratic revolution spread to the whole of Asia—to Turkey, Persia, China. Ferment is growing in British India... World capitalism and the 1905 movement in Russia have finally aroused

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<sup>1</sup> *Gorky, A. M.* (1868-1936)—great Russian proletarian writer.

Asia. Hundreds of millions of the downtrodden and benighted have awakened from medieval stagnation to a new life and are rising to fight for elementary human rights and democracy.”<sup>1</sup>

1905-11 were the years of the bourgeois, anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution in Iran. There was particular unrest from late 1905 onwards. Following mass meetings and demonstrations, a general strike began in Teheran in August 1906. The Shah was compelled to grant a constitution and convene the *Majlis* (parliament).

On the pattern of Russia's Soviets, *enzhumens*—instruments of people's power—were formed in many Iranian towns. Some of them were headed by workers who had been to Russia in search of a living. The *enzhumens* had their own military councils, revolutionary guards (*fedais*) and arsenals.

British imperialists and the Russian government sent money to help the reactionaries in Iran. On June 22, the tsarist troops bombarded the Majlis building where members of the *enzhumens* were in session. The Shah dissolved the Majlis and suspended the Constitution. However, in 1909 an upsurge of the revolutionary movement led to the dethronement of the Shah.

In the autumn of 1911, the Iranian reactionaries assisted by foreign imperialists launched an offensive. British, Russian and Turkish troops occupied many regions of the country. Tabriz fell in December 1911, marking the defeat of the Iranian revolution.

The 1908 revolution in Turkey developed and here also the influence of the Russian revolution was felt. The supreme rule of reaction and savage

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 19, pp. 85-86.

exploitation of the working people led to a revolutionary situation. News from Russia sparked off riots in some provinces, and in the army and navy in 1905-07. For example, in 1906, Turkish soldiers refused to fire at people's demonstrations in Erzerum. On several ships and in the fortress of Skoplje soldiers and sailors rose against their oppressors.

The revolution, however, was rather in the nature of a coup. Military revolts led by the so-called Young Turks, a liberal bourgeoisie movement, were the main forms of struggle. The army revolt in 1908 left the Sultan with no other alternative than to consent to a constitution. In April 1909, power passed into the hands of the Young Turks. Eventually they used this power to fight the people.

The Chinese revolution of 1911-13 was also a national liberation and anti-feudal revolution. However, unlike the Russian revolution, it was led by the bourgeoisie, and not by the proletariat.

In the initial stages of the revolution, two trends developed within the national bourgeoisie: a moderate, liberal and essentially anti-popular trend, and a revolutionary democratic trend, reflecting the aspirations of the popular masses and the progressive bourgeoisie. The first trend was represented by supporters of Yuan Shih-kai. Originally they gave themselves out to be liberal monarchists. At the highest point of the revolution they declared for a republic but reverted to their monarchism again as soon as the popular masses were defeated. The second trend was represented by left-wingers among the national bourgeoisie who were led by Sun Yat-sen, the great defender of Chinese revolutionary democracy. In 1905, he formed a political organisation under the name

*Tungmenghai* (the Chinese Revolutionary League). The League's programme—the overthrow of the Manchus, the establishment of a democratic republic and nationalisation of land—expressed the centuries-old aspirations of the popular masses, and in particular, of the peasants.

The Chinese revolution started with popular risings against the invaders. The revolts in the salt mines were important in the development of events. Tens of thousands of workers joined the revolutionary army and picketing by workers was organised in industrial centres.

Under the pressure of the popular movement the Ching dynasty was overthrown. In 1913, however, the bourgeoisie headed by Yuan Shih-kai seized power. This government compromised with the feudal and monarchic clique and prevented democratic, political and social changes.

In 1905, a large-scale movement against the colonialists developed in India. The working class of that country, which already numbered hundreds of thousands of men and women, entered the political arena: textile workers held large strikes in Bombay, Bengali railwaymen called a general strike, railwaymen in the Punjab refused to transport troops sent to suppress peasant revolts, and so on.

The First Russian Revolution gave new impetus to the liberation movements in Indonesia, Indo-China, the Philippines, the Arab East, Korea and Japan. Sen Katayama,<sup>1</sup> prominent leader of the Japanese and the international working-class movements, wrote that the Japanese Socialists addressed a letter to the Russian POWs in Japan in

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<sup>1</sup> *Sen Katayama* (1859-1933)—founder of the Communist Party of Japan.



which they called on the latter to side unhesitatingly with the Social-Democrats who were fighting for human ideals.

The 1905-07 bourgeois-democratic revolution has shown the correctness of the theories of Marx and Engels. "So far the revolution has justified all the basic theoretical propositions of Marxism, all the essential slogans of Social-Democracy,"<sup>1</sup> wrote Lenin in November 1905. In summarising the experience and lessons of the revolution Lenin developed Marxism further. He analysed the specific features of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the epoch of imperialism showing its causes and likely pattern of further development. Arguing from the experience of the 1905 Russian revolution and the European labour movement Lenin showed that the proletariat had become the leader of the liberation struggle. The idea that the role of the working class and its share in a revolution depend on its numerical strength was thus proved to be false. Lenin also refuted the theory that the peasantry was a solid reactionary mass, and showed the possibility and necessity of winning the peasants from the bourgeoisie and making of them a reserve and an ally of the proletariat. Lenin substantiated the prospect of the bourgeois-democratic revolution developing into the socialist revolution. He explained the significance of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies as centres of struggle and instruments of people's revolutionary power.

In the 70 years that have passed since the first Russian Revolution, the peoples of Russia, led by the Communist Party, have achieved much and won many victories of international significance. They have overthrown the autocracy, accomplished

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 10, p. 32.

a socialist revolution, built socialism and defeated fascism. Now they are working to create a communist society in their country. The 1905-07 revolution was a stage on the road to these great accomplishments. The theoretical conclusions Lenin drew on the experience of this revolution, have been shown to be correct. The First Russian Revolution has much to teach those fighting for democracy, peace and socialism.

A. V. Ushakov, D.Sc. (History), Professor

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V. I. LENIN ON BOURGEOIS-  
DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

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## From: "The Beginning of the Revolution in Russia"

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Events of the greatest historical importance are developing in Russia. The proletariat has risen against tsarism. The proletariat was driven to revolt by the government. There can hardly be any doubt now that the government deliberately allowed the strike movement to develop and a wide demonstration to be started more or less without hindrance in order to bring matters to a point where military force could be used. Its manoeuvre was successful. Thousands of killed and wounded—such is the toll of Bloody Sunday, January 9, in St. Petersburg. The army defeated unarmed workers, women, and children. The army vanquished the enemy by shooting prostrate workers. "We have taught them a good lesson!" the tsar's henchmen and their European flunkies from among the conservative bourgeoisie say with consummate cynicism.

Yes, it was a great lesson, one which the Russian proletariat will not forget. The most uneducated, backward sections of the working class, who naively trusted the tsar and sincerely wished to put peacefully before "the tsar himself" the petition of a tormented people, were all taught a lesson by the troops led by the tsar or his uncle, the Grand Duke Vladimir.

The working class has received a momentous lesson in civil war; the revolutionary education of the proletariat made more progress in one day than it could have made in months and years of drab, humdrum, wretched existence. The slogan

of the heroic St. Petersburg proletariat, "Death or freedom!" is reverberating throughout Russia...

The revolution is spreading. The government is beginning to lose its head. From the policy of bloody repression it is attempting to change over to economic concessions and to save itself by throwing a sop to the workers or promising the nine-hour day. But the lesson of Bloody Sunday cannot be forgotten. The demand of the insurgent St. Petersburg workers—the immediate convocation of a Constituent Assembly<sup>1</sup> on the basis of universal, direct, and equal suffrage by secret ballot—must become the demand of all the striking workers. Immediate overthrow of the government—this was the slogan with which even the St. Petersburg workers who had believed in the tsar answered the massacre of January 9...

Long live the revolutionary proletariat! say we. The general strike is rousing and rallying increasing masses of the working class and the urban poor. The arming of the people is becoming an immediate task of the revolutionary moment.

Only an armed people can be the real bulwark of popular liberty. The sooner the proletariat succeeds in arming, and the longer it holds its fighting positions as striker and revolutionary, the sooner will the army begin to waver; more and more soldiers will at last begin to realise what

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<sup>1</sup> *Constituent Assembly*—a representative body elected on the basis of universal suffrage with the purpose of establishing a form of government and working out a constitution in accordance with the bourgeois legal views on the state. At the beginning of the 20th century the "Constituent Assembly" slogan came to be widely used in Russia's political struggle against autocracy. In 1905 the Bolsheviks considered the convocation of the Constituent Assembly to be directly dependent on the success of the armed uprising and the formation of the provisional revolutionary government.

they are doing and they will join sides with the people against the fiends, against the tyrant, against the murderers of defenceless workers and of their wives and children. No matter what the outcome of the present uprising in St. Petersburg may be, it will, in any case, be the first step to a wider, more conscious, better organised uprising. The government may possibly succeed in putting off the day of reckoning, but the postponement will only make the next step of the revolutionary onset more stupendous. This will only mean that the Social-Democrats will take advantage of this postponement to rally the organised fighters and spread the news about the start made by the St. Petersburg workers. The proletariat will join in the struggle, it will quit mill and factory and will prepare arms for itself. The slogans of the struggle for freedom will be carried more and more widely into the midst of the urban poor and of the millions of peasants. Revolutionary committees will be set up at every factory, in every city district, in every large village. The people in revolt will overthrow all the government institutions of the tsarist autocracy and proclaim the immediate convocation of a Constituent Assembly.

The immediate arming of the workers and of all citizens in general, the preparation and organisation of the revolutionary forces for overthrowing the government authorities and institutions—this is the practical basis on which revolutionaries of every variety can and must unite to strike the common blow. The proletariat must always pursue its own independent path, never weakening its connection with the Social-Democratic Party, always bearing in mind its great, ultimate objective, which is to rid mankind of all exploitation. But this independence of the Social-Democratic

proletarian party will never cause us to forget the importance of a common revolutionary onset at the moment of actual revolution. We Social-Democrats can and must act independently of the bourgeois-democratic revolutionaries and guard the class independence of the proletariat. But we must go hand in hand with them during the uprising, when direct blows are being struck at tsarism, when resistance is offered the troops, when the bastilles<sup>1</sup> of the accursed enemy of the entire Russian people are stormed.

The proletariat of the whole world is now looking eagerly towards the proletariat of Russia. The overthrow of tsarism in Russia, so valiantly begun by our working class, will be the turning-point in the history of all countries; it will facilitate the task of the workers of all nations, in all states, in all parts of the globe. Let, therefore, every Social-Democrat, every class-conscious worker bear in mind the immense tasks of the broad popular struggle that now rest upon his shoulders. Let him not forget that he represents also the needs and interests of the whole peasantry, of all who toil, of all who are exploited, of the whole people against their enemy. The proletarian heroes of St. Petersburg now stand as an example to all.

Long live the revolution!

Long live the insurgent proletariat!

*Vperyod*, No. 4,  
January 31 (18), 1905

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 97-100.

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<sup>1</sup> *Bastille*—a prison in Paris destroyed by the rebels during the great French revolution of 1789-94.

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## From: "The Proletariat and the Peasantry"

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The peasant uprisings have begun. Reports of peasants raiding landed estates and confiscating the landlords' grain and cattle are coming in from various provinces. The tsarist armies, routed by the Japanese in Manchuria,<sup>1</sup> are taking their revenge on the defenceless people, making expeditions against the enemy at home, against the rural poor. The urban working-class movement is acquiring a new ally in the revolutionary peasantry. The attitude of the class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat, the Social-Democrats, towards the peasant movement is becoming a question of immediate practical significance and must be placed on the order of the day in all our Party organisations, in all speeches by propagandists and agitators.

The Social-Democrats have pointed out repeatedly that the peasant movement sets before them a twofold task. Unquestionably we must support this movement and spur it on, inasmuch as it is a revolutionary-democratic movement. At the same time we must unswervingly maintain our class proletarian point of view; we must organise the rural proletariat, like the urban proletariat and together with it, into an independent class party; we must explain to it that its interests are antagonistic to those of the bourgeois peasantry; we must call upon it to fight for the socialist revolution, and point out to it that liberation from op-

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<sup>1</sup> Lenin is referring to the defeat of the Russian army during the imperialist Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05.



pression and poverty lies, not in turning several sections of the peasantry into petty bourgeois, but only in replacing the entire bourgeois system by the socialist system...

...The crux of the matter is that the attitude of the revolutionary proletariat towards the antagonism between the peasants and the landlords cannot, in all the exigencies of the Russian revolution, remain the same in all cases and under all circumstances. Under certain circumstances, in certain situations, this attitude must be one not only of sympathy, but of direct support, and not merely support, but actual "incitement". Under other circumstances, the attitude can and should be neutral... Actually, however, there are three classes, all of which differ in their immediate and ultimate aims: the landlords, the well-to-do peasantry and partly the middle peasantry, and, finally, the proletariat. Actually, the task of the proletariat under these circumstances is necessarily twofold. The entire difficulty of a Social-Democratic agrarian programme and agrarian policy in Russia lies in defining, as clearly and precisely as possible, the conditions under which the proletariat must observe neutrality and the conditions under which support and "incitement" are necessary.

There can be only one solution to this problem: with the peasant bourgeoisie against all manner of serfdom and against the serf-owning landlords; with the urban proletariat against the peasant bourgeoisie and every other bourgeoisie—such is the "line" of the rural proletariat and of its ideologists, the Social-Democrats. In other words: to support the peasantry and urge it on even to the point of seizing any seigniorial "property", no matter how "sacred", *insofar as this peasantry*

acts in a revolutionary-democratic manner; to be wary of the peasantry, to organise separately from it, to be ready to combat it, *insofar as* this peasantry acts in a reactionary or anti-proletarian manner. Or, to put it still differently: aid to the peasant when his struggle with the landlord contributes to the development and strengthening of the democratic forces; neutrality towards the peasant when his struggle with the landlord is merely a matter of squaring accounts between two factions of the landowning class, a matter to which the proletariat and the democrats are indifferent... All opponents of Social-Democracy on the agrarian question fail to take into consideration the fact that in European Russia proper there is an entire stratum of well-to-do peasants (one and a half to two million households out of a total of about ten million). This stratum controls no less than half of all the implements of production and all the property owned by the peasants. It cannot exist without employing seasonal and day labourers. It is certainly hostile to serfdom, to the landlords, and to the bureaucracy, and is capable of becoming democratic, but still more certain is its hostility to the rural proletariat. Any attempt in an agrarian programme or in an agrarian policy to tone down or ignore this class antagonism is a conscious or unconscious departure from the socialist point of view.

Between the rural proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie lies the stratum of the middle peasantry, whose position contains features to be found in both of these antipodes. The common features in the position of all these strata, of the peasantry as a whole, undoubtedly tend to make the entire peasant movement democratic, great as may be the evidences of non-class-consci-

ousness and of reactionary sentiment in particular instances. It is our task never to depart from the class standpoint and to organise the closest possible union between the urban and the rural proletariat. It is our task to clarify for ourselves and for the people the *real* democratic and revolutionary content that lies in the general, albeit vague, striving towards "land and freedom". It is, therefore, our task to lend the most energetic support and impetus to this striving, while at the same time preparing the elements of socialist struggle in the countryside as well.

To determine clearly the practical attitude of the Social-Democratic working-class party towards the peasant movement, the Third Congress of our Party must adopt a resolution calling for support to that movement. The following is the draft of such a resolution formulating the above views, which have repeatedly been amplified in Social-Democratic literature; it must now be discussed in the widest possible circle of Party functionaries:

"The Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, as the party of the class-conscious proletariat, strives to bring about the complete emancipation of all working people from every kind of exploitation, and supports every revolutionary movement against the present social and political system. Therefore, the R.S.D.L.P. strongly supports the present-day peasant movement, among others, and stands for all revolutionary measures capable of improving the condition of the peasantry, not halting at the expropriation of the landed estates to this end. At the same time, as the class party of the proletariat, the R.S.D.L.P. works undeviatingly towards an independent class organisation of the rural proletarians, ever mindful of its obligation to make clear to them the antagonism of their inte-

rests to those of the peasant bourgeoisie, to bring them to understand that only the common struggle of the rural and the urban proletariat against the whole of bourgeois society can lead to the socialist revolution, which alone is capable of really freeing the mass of the rural poor from poverty and exploitation.

"As a practical slogan for agitation among the peasantry, and as a means of instilling the utmost political consciousness into this movement, the R.S.D.L.P. proposes the immediate formation of revolutionary peasant committees<sup>1</sup> for all-round support of all democratic reforms and for their implementation in detail. In these committees as well the R.S.D.L.P. will strive for an independent organisation of the rural proletarians for the purpose of supporting the entire peasantry in all its revolutionary-democratic actions, on the one hand, and, on the other, of safeguarding the true interests of the rural proletariat in its struggle against the peasant bourgeoisie."

*Vperyod*, No. 11,  
March 23 (10), 1905

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 231-236.

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<sup>1</sup> *Peasant committees*—centres of revolutionary power in the countryside; led the struggle of the peasants during the First Russian Revolution of 1905-07.

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## From: "A Revolution of the 1789 or the 1848 Type?"

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An important question in connection with the Russian revolution is the following:

I. Will it go on to the *complete* overthrow of the tsarist government and the establishment of a republic?

II. Or will it limit itself to a curtailment of tsarist power, to a monarchist constitution?

In other words, are we to have a revolution of the 1789<sup>1</sup> type or of the 1848 type?<sup>2</sup> (We say *type* in order to dispose of the preposterous idea that there can be any repetition of the irrevocably vanished social, political, and international situations of 1789 and 1848.)

That a Social-Democrat must want and *work for* the former, of this there can hardly be any doubt . . .

The question is, which type is the more probable ?

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<sup>1</sup> 1789-94 revolution—the Great French Revolution. It was of a popular bourgeois-democratic character. Took more resolute measures than any other revolution in destroying the absolutist system, thus facilitating the development of capitalist relations, progressive for the time.

<sup>2</sup> 1848-49 revolution in Germany—a bourgeois-democratic revolution the primary aim of which was to liquidate the economic and political disunity of Germany, to liberate the oppressed nationalities, to do away with the traces of feudalism—the class-monarchical structure, the ownership of land by big landlords, and feudal service. The revolution was betrayed by the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and defeated.

In favour of type I we have: (1) An immeasurably greater store of resentment and revolutionary feeling among the lower classes in Russia than there was in the Germany of 1848. With us the change is *sharper*; with us there have been *no* intermediate stages... with us despotism is Asiatically virginal. (2) With us a disastrous war increases the likelihood of a *severe* collapse, for it has involved the tsarist government completely. (3) With us the international situation is more favourable, for proletarian Europe will make it impossible for the crowned heads of Europe to help the Russian monarchy. (4) With us the development of class-conscious revolutionary parties, their literature and organisation, is on a much higher level than it was in 1789, 1848, or 1871<sup>1</sup>. (5) With us the various nationalities oppressed by tsarism, such as the Poles and Finns, provide a powerful impulse to the attack on the autocracy. (6) With us the peasantry is in particularly sorry plight; it is incredibly impoverished and has absolutely nothing to lose.

Of course, all these considerations are by far not absolute. Others may be contraposed to them: (1) We have very few survivals of feudalism. (2) The government is more experienced and has greater facilities for detecting the danger of revolution. (3) The spontaneity of a revolutionary outburst is complicated by the war, which creates problems that have no bearing on the revolution. The war demonstrates the weakness of the Russian revolutionary classes, which would not have had the strength to rise without it... (4) Other countries provide no stimulus to a revolution in ours. (5) The national movements towards the dismember-

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<sup>1</sup> Lenin is referring to the Paris Commune of 1871.

ment of Russia are likely to tear the bulk of the Russian big and petty bourgeoisie away from our revolution. (6) The antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie with us is much deeper than it was in 1789, 1848, or 1871; hence, the bourgeoisie will be more fearful of the *proletarian* revolution and will throw itself more readily into the arms of reaction.

Only history, of course, can weigh these pros and cons in the balances. Our task as Social-Democrats is to *drive* the bourgeois revolution onward as far as it will go, without ever losing sight of our *main* task—the independent organisation of the proletariat. . . .

Written in March-April 1905

First published in 1926

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 257-258.

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## Resolution of the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.<sup>1</sup> on the Armed Uprising

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> The Congress was organised and convened by the Bolsheviks under the direction of Lenin. It was held in London between April 12 and 17 (April 25 and May 10), 1905. It was the first Bolshevik congress.

On all the basic issues dealt with by the Third Congress Lenin had written the draft resolutions, which he substantiated in articles. Lenin spoke at the Congress on the question of the armed uprising, on the participation of Social-Democrats in the revolutionary government, on the attitude towards the peasant movement, on the Party Rules, and on a number of other questions.

The Congress outlined Bolshevik tactics designed to achieve the complete victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and its transformation into a socialist revolution. The decisions of the Congress defined the tasks of the proletariat as the leader of the revolution and set out the strategic plan of the party in the bourgeois-democratic revolution: the proletariat in alliance with the peasantry (the liberal bourgeoisie to be excluded from this alliance) should lead the struggle for the victory of the revolution.



4. Whereas the proletariat can play the leading role in this revolution only if it is united in a single and independent political force under the banner of the Social-Democratic Labour Party, which directs its struggle both ideologically and practically; and

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

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

Accordingly, the Congress instructs all Party organisations:

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

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

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

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## Draft Resolution of the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. on the Provisional Revolutionary Government

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

2. Whereas the armed uprising of the people, if completely successful, i.e., if the autocracy is overthrown, will necessarily bring about the establishment of a provisional revolutionary government, which alone is capable of securing complete freedom of agitation and of convening a Constituent Assembly that will really express the supreme will of the people, an Assembly elected on the basis of universal, direct, and equal suffrage by secret ballot; and

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

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

a) that we should spread among the working class the conviction that a provisional revolutionary government is absolutely necessary, and dis-

cuss at workers' meetings the conditions required for the full and prompt realisation of all the immediate political and economic demands of our programme;

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

c) that essential conditions for such participation are strict control of its representatives by the Party, and the constant safeguarding of the independence of the Social-Democratic Party, which strives for the complete socialist revolution, and, consequently, is irreconcilably opposed to all the bourgeois parties;

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

Introduced on April 18 (May 1), 1905

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 396-397.

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# From: "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution"<sup>1</sup>

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## PREFACE

...Revolution undoubtedly teaches with a rapidity and thoroughness which appear incredible in peaceful periods of political development. And, what is particularly important, it teaches not only the leaders, but the masses as well.

There is not the slightest doubt that the revolution will teach Social-Democratism to the masses of the workers in Russia. The revolution will confirm the programme and tactics of Social-Democracy in actual practice by demonstrating the true nature of the various classes of society, by demon-

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<sup>1</sup> Lenin wrote his book *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* in June-July 1905, after the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. and the Menshevik conference that was simultaneously taking place in Geneva had ended. The book was published by the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. in Geneva, where Lenin lived and worked at the time. The book was published for the second time by the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. in Russia, also in 1905, and, separately, by the Moscow Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. in an edition of ten thousand copies.

The publication of Lenin's *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* was an event of great significance in the life of the party.

The book was illegally distributed in Petersburg, Moscow, Kazan, Tiflis, Baku and other Russian cities. It was studied by workers' and party underground circles. The police discovered this book in every corner of the country when arresting revolutionaries and conducting searches.

strating the bourgeois character of our democracy and the real aspirations of the peasantry, who, while being revolutionary in the bourgeois-democratic sense, carry within themselves not the idea of "socialisation",<sup>1</sup> but the seeds of a new class struggle between the peasant bourgeoisie and the rural proletariat. The old illusions of the old Narodism,<sup>2</sup> so clearly visible, for instance, in the draft programme of the "Socialist-Revolutionary Party"<sup>3</sup> on the question of the development of ca-

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<sup>1</sup> *Socialisation of land*—transfer of land into people's property. In Russia, the demand for socialisation of land became famous as the basic principle of the S.R. agrarian programme. (See note 3.) There was nothing socialist in this programme, however, for the liquidation of the private ownership of land alone, as Lenin had proved, could not do away with the domination of capital and the poverty of the people. The agrarian programme of the S.R.'s was progressive in that it advocated the struggle for the liquidation of the ownership of land by big landlords, which demand objectively expressed the interests of the peasants in the period of bourgeois-democratic revolution.

<sup>2</sup> *Narodism*—the ideology of petty-bourgeois peasant Democracy in Russia. A variety of the democratic ideology, its specific features are: 1) socialist aspirations, the hope to bypass capitalism, to prevent capitalism; and 2) propaganda of a radical transformation of agrarian relations. The 1870s saw the development of so-called revolutionary Narodism, which aimed at engaging the peasants in a socialist revolution. Revolutionary terrorists advocated the tactics of individual terrorism. In 1881 they killed tsar Alexander II. In the 1880s the liberal, reformist trend within Narodism became uppermost. Its supporters denied revolutionary struggle and fought persistently against Marxism. They were completely defeated.

<sup>3</sup> *Socialist-Revolutionaries* (S.R.'s)—a petty-bourgeois party in Russia, which was formed at the end of 1901 and the beginning of 1902. The S.R.'s failed to see the class distinctions between proletariat and peasantry, ignored the class differentiations and contradictions within the peasantry, and rejected the leading role of the proletariat in the revolution. The tactics of individual terrorism which the S.R.'s

pitalism in Russia, the question of the democratic character of our "society", and the question of the significance of a complete victory of a peasant uprising—all these illusions will be completely and mercilessly dispelled by the revolution. For the first time, the various classes will be given their real political baptism. These classes will emerge from the revolution with a definite political physiognomy, for they will have revealed themselves not only in the programme and tactical slogans of their ideologists but also in open political action by the masses.

Undoubtedly, the revolution will teach us and will teach the masses of the people. But the question that now confronts a militant political party is: shall we be able to teach the revolution anything? Shall we be able to make use of the correctness of our Social-Democratic doctrine, of our bond with the only thoroughly revolutionary class, the proletariat, to put a proletarian imprint on the revolution, to carry the revolution to a real and decisive victory, not in word but in deed, and to paralyse the instability, half-heartedness, and treachery of the democratic bourgeoisie?

It is to this end that we must direct all our efforts, and the achievement of that end will depend, on the one hand, on the accuracy of our

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advocated as the basic method of struggle against the autocracy caused great harm to the revolutionary movement.

The Bolshevik Party fought hard against the attempts of the S.R.'s to pass themselves off as socialists and gain influence over the peasantry, and explained the harm of S.R. tactics of individual terrorism for the working-class movement. At the same time, insisting on certain conditions, the Bolsheviks concluded temporary agreements with the S.R.'s in the struggle against tsarism.

appraisal of the political situation and the correctness of our tactical slogans, and, on the other hand, on whether these slogans will be backed by the real fighting strength of the masses of the workers. All the usual, regular, and current work of all organisations and groups of our Party, the work of propaganda, agitation, and organisation, is directed towards strengthening and expanding the ties with the masses. Necessary as this work always is it cannot be considered adequate at a time of revolution. In such a contingency the working class feels an instinctive urge for open revolutionary action, and we must learn to set the aims of this action correctly, and then make these aims as widely known and understood as possible. It must not be forgotten that the current pessimism about our ties with the masses very often serves as a screen for bourgeois ideas regarding the proletariat's role in the revolution. Undoubtedly, we still have a great deal to do in educating and organising the working class; but now the gist of the matter is: where should we place the main political emphasis in this work of education and organisation? On the trade unions and legally existing associations, or on an insurrection, on the work of creating a revolutionary army and a revolutionary government? Both serve to educate and organise the working class. Both are, of course, necessary. But in the present revolution the problem amounts to this: which is to be emphasised in the work of educating and organising the working class, the former or the latter?

The outcome of the revolution depends on whether the working class will play the part of a subsidiary to the bourgeoisie, a subsidiary that is powerful in the force of its onslaught against the autocracy, but impotent politically, or whether it

will play the part of leader of the people's revolution....

It is exceptionally important at the present time for Social-Democrats to have correct tactical slogans for leading the masses. There is nothing more dangerous in a revolutionary period than belittling the importance of tactical slogans that are sound in principle...

## 1. AN URGENT POLITICAL QUESTION

At the present revolutionary juncture the question of the convocation of a popular constituent assembly is on the order of the day. Opinions are divided as to how this question should be solved. Three political trends are taking shape. The tsarist government admits the necessity of convening representatives of the people, but under no circumstances does it want to permit their assembly to be popular and constituent. It seems willing to agree, if we are to believe the newspaper reports on the work of the Bulygin Commission,<sup>1</sup> to a consultative assembly, which is to be elected without freedom of agitation, and by a system of restrictive qualifications or one that is restricted to certain social estates. Since it is led by the Social-Democratic Party, the revolutionary proletariat demands complete transfer of power to a con-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Bulygin Commission*—created by imperial ukase in February 1905 and headed by Minister of the Interior A. G. Bulygin. It drafted a bill for the establishment of a State Duma with advisory powers, and the Regulations on the Duma elections. An active boycott of the Bulygin Duma was proclaimed by the Bolsheviks, and the government's attempt to convene the Duma failed under the impact of the First Russian Revolution.



stituent assembly, and for this purpose strives to achieve not only universal suffrage and complete freedom to conduct agitation, but also the immediate overthrow of the tsarist government and its replacement by a provisional revolutionary government. Finally, the liberal bourgeoisie, expressing its wishes through the leaders of the so-called "Constitutional-Democratic Party",<sup>1</sup> does not demand the overthrow of the tsarist government; nor does it advance the slogan of a provisional government, or insist on real guarantees that the elections will be absolutely free and fair and that the assembly of representatives will be genuinely popular and genuinely constituent. As a matter of fact, the liberal bourgeoisie, the only serious social support of the *Osvobozhdeniye*<sup>2</sup> trend, is striving to effect as peaceful a deal as possible between the tsar and the revolutionary people, a deal, moreover, that would give a maximum of power to itself, the bourgeoisie, and a minimum to the revolutionary people—the proletariat and the peasantry.

Such is the political situation at the present time. Such are the three main political trends, cor-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Constitutional-Democratic Party (Cadets)*—was the leading party of the bourgeoisie in Russia. It was founded in October 1905. In an attempt to attract the peasantry to their side the Cadets hypocritically called themselves "the party of the people's freedom", while in actual fact they did not go beyond the demand for constitutional monarchy.

<sup>2</sup> *Osvobozhdeniye* liberals—members of the *Osvobozhdeniye* League—a liberal-monarchist organisation founded in 1904 by the supporters of constitutional monarchy, ready to reach a compromise with the tsarist government. The members of this League formed the nucleus of the Constitutional-Democratic Party (Cadets).

responding to the three main social forces in contemporary Russia. . .

By the Party's tactics we mean the Party's political conduct, or the character, direction, and methods of its political activity. Tactical resolutions are adopted by Party congresses in order to accurately define the political conduct of the Party as a whole with regard to new tasks or in view of a new political situation. Such a new situation has been created by the revolution that has started in Russia, i.e., the complete, decisive, and open break between the overwhelming majority of the people and the tsarist government. The new question concerns the practical methods of convening a genuinely popular and a genuinely constituent assembly (the theoretical question concerning such an assembly was officially settled by Social-Democracy long ago, before all other parties, in its Party programme). Since the people have broken with the government and the masses realise the necessity of setting up a new order, the party which set itself the object of overthrowing the government must necessarily consider what government should replace the old, deposed government. . . .

**6. WHENCE IS THE PROLETARIAT THREATENED  
WITH THE DANGER OF FINDING ITSELF WITH ITS  
HANDS TIED IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE  
INCONSISTENT BOURGEOISIE?**

Marxists are absolutely convinced of the bourgeois character of the Russian revolution. What does that mean? It means that the democratic reforms in the political system, and the social and

economic reforms that have become a necessity for Russia, do not in themselves imply the undermining of capitalism, the undermining of bourgeois rule; on the contrary, they will, for the first time, really clear the ground for a wide and rapid, European, and not Asiatic, development of capitalism; they will, for the first time, make it possible for the bourgeoisie to rule as a class...

... A bourgeois revolution expresses the needs of capitalist development, and, far from destroying the foundations of capitalism, it effects the contrary—it broadens and deepens them. This revolution, therefore, expresses the interests not only of the working class but of the entire bourgeoisie as well. Since the rule of the bourgeoisie over the working class is inevitable under capitalism, it can well be said that a bourgeois revolution expresses the interests not so much of the proletariat as of the bourgeoisie. But it is quite absurd to think that a bourgeois revolution does not at all express proletarian interests. This absurd idea boils down either to the hoary Narodnik theory that a bourgeois revolution runs counter to the interests of the proletariat, and that, therefore, we do not need bourgeois political liberty; or to anarchism which denies any participation of the proletariat in bourgeois politics, in a bourgeois revolution and in bourgeois parliamentarism. From the standpoint of theory this idea disregards the elementary propositions of Marxism concerning the inevitability of capitalist development on the basis of commodity production. Marxism teaches us that at a certain stage of its development a society which is based on commodity production and has commercial intercourse with civilised capitalist nations must inevitably take the road of capitalism. Marxism has irrevocably broken with

the Narodnik and anarchist<sup>1</sup> gibberish that Russia, for instance, can bypass capitalist development, escape from capitalism, or skip it in some way other than that of the class struggle, on the basis and within the framework of this same capitalism. . .

All these principles of Marxism have been proved and explained in minute detail in general and with regard to Russia in particular. And from these principles it follows that the idea of seeking salvation for the working class in anything save the further development of capitalism is *reactionary*. In countries like Russia the working class suffers not so much from capitalism as from the insufficient development of capitalism. The working class is, therefore, *most certainly interested* in the broadest, freest, and most rapid development of capitalism. The removal of all the remnants of the old order which hamper the broad, free, and rapid development of capitalism is of absolute *advantage* to the working class. The bourgeois revolution is precisely an upheaval that most resolutely sweeps away survivals of the past, survivals of the serf-owning system (which include not only the autocracy but the monarchy as well), and most fully guarantees the broadest, freest, and most rapid development of capitalism.

That is why a *bourgeois* revolution is in the *highest degree advantageous to the proletariat*. A bourgeois revolution is *absolutely* necessary in the interests of the proletariat. The more complete, determined, and consistent the bourgeois revolu-

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<sup>1</sup> *Anarchists*—members of a petty-bourgeois political trend, who denied all state power as such. They did not recognise the world historic role of the proletariat and its political party.

tion, the more assured will the proletariat's struggle be against the bourgeoisie and for socialism. Only those who are ignorant of the ABC of scientific socialism can regard this conclusion as new, strange, or paradoxical. And from this conclusion, among other things, follows the thesis that *in a certain sense* a bourgeois revolution is *more advantageous* to the proletariat than to the bourgeoisie. This thesis is unquestionably correct in the following sense: it is to the advantage of the bourgeoisie to rely on certain remnants of the past, as against the proletariat, for instance, on the monarchy, the standing army, etc. It is to the advantage of the bourgeoisie for the bourgeois revolution not to sweep away all remnants of the past too resolutely, but keep some of them, i. e., for this revolution not to be fully consistent, not complete, and not to be determined and relentless. Social-Democrats often express this idea somewhat differently by stating that the bourgeoisie betrays its own self, that the bourgeoisie betrays the cause of liberty, that the bourgeoisie is incapable of being consistently democratic. It is of greater advantage to the bourgeoisie for the necessary changes in the direction of bourgeois democracy to take place more slowly, more gradually, more cautiously, less resolutely, by means of reforms and not by means of revolution; for these changes to spare the "venerable" institutions of the serf-owning system (such as the monarchy) as much as possible; for these changes to develop as little as possible the independent revolutionary activity, initiative, and energy of the common people, i. e., the peasantry and especially the workers, for otherwise it will be easier for the workers, as the French say, "to change the rifle from one shoulder to the other", i. e., to turn against the

bourgeoisie the weapon the bourgeois revolution will supply them with, the liberty the revolution will bring, and the democratic institutions that will spring up on ground cleared of the serf-owning system.

On the other hand, it is more advantageous to the working class for the necessary changes in the direction of bourgeois democracy to take place by way of revolution and not by way of reform, because the way of reform is one of delay, procrastination, the painfully slow decomposition of the putrid parts of the national organism. It is the proletariat and the peasantry that suffer first of all and most of all from that putrefaction. The revolutionary path is one of rapid amputation, which is the least painful to the proletariat, the path of the immediate removal of what is putrescent, the path of least compliance with and consideration for the monarchy and the abominable, vile, rotten, and noxious institutions that go with it. . . .

Marxism teaches the proletarian not to keep aloof from the bourgeois revolution, not to be indifferent to it, not to allow the leadership of the revolution to be assumed by the bourgeoisie but, on the contrary, to take a most energetic part in it, to fight most resolutely for consistent proletarian democratism, for the revolution to be carried to its conclusion. We cannot get out of the bourgeois-democratic boundaries of the Russian revolution, but we can vastly extend these boundaries, and within these boundaries we can and must fight for the interests of the proletariat, for its immediate needs and for conditions that will make it possible to prepare its forces for the future complete victory. . . .

... "The revolution's decisive victory over tsarism" means the establishment of the *revolutiona-*

*ry-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.* Our new-*Iskra*<sup>1</sup> group cannot escape from this conclusion, which *Vperyod*<sup>2</sup> indicated long ago. No other force is capable of gaining a decisive victory over tsarism.

And such a victory will be precisely a dictatorship, i.e., it must inevitably rely on military force, on the arming of the masses, on an insurrection, and not on institutions of one kind or another established in a "lawful" or "peaceful" way. It can be only a dictatorship, for realisation of the changes urgently and absolutely indispensable to the proletariat and the peasantry will evoke desperate resistance from the landlords, the big bourgeoisie, and tsarism. Without a dictatorship it is impossible to break down that resistance and repel counter-revolutionary attempts. But of course it will be a democratic, not a socialist dictatorship. It will be unable (without a series of intermediary stages of revolutionary development) to affect the foundations of capitalism. At best, it may bring about a radical redistribution of landed property in favour of the peasantry, establish consistent and full democracy, including the formation of a republic, eradicate all the oppressive features of Asiatic bondage, not only in rural but also in factory life, lay the foundation for a thorough improvement in the conditions of the workers and for a rise in their standard of living, and—last but not least—carry the revolutionary conflagration in-

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<sup>1</sup> *New-Iskra group*—Mensheviks who started to publish the so-called new *Iskra* newspaper in 1903. The publication of the old *Iskra*, the first All-Russia newspaper of revolutionary Marxism, which came out from 1900 to 1903, was organised by Lenin.

<sup>2</sup> *Vperyod*—illegal Bolshevik newspaper put out in the period from December 1904 to May 1905.

to Europe. Such a victory will not yet by any means transform our bourgeois revolution into a socialist revolution; the democratic revolution will not immediately overstep the bounds of bourgeois social and economic relationships; nevertheless, the significance of such a victory for the future development of Russia and of the whole world will be immense. Nothing will raise the revolutionary energy of the world proletariat so much, nothing will shorten the path leading to its complete victory to such an extent, as this decisive victory of the revolution that has now started in Russia. . . .

## **12. WILL THE SWEEP OF THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION BE DIMINISHED IF THE BOURGEOISIE RECOILS FROM IT?**

*. . . The proletariat must carry the democratic revolution to completion, allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush the autocracy's resistance by force and paralyse the bourgeoisie's instability. The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution, allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population, so as to crush the bourgeoisie's resistance by force and paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. Such are the tasks of the proletariat, so narrowly presented by the new-Iskra group in all their arguments and resolutions on the sweep of the revolution. . . .*

The depth of the rift among present-day Social-Democrats on the question of the path to be chosen can at once be seen by comparing the Caucasian resolution of the new-Iskra supporters with the resolution of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. The Con-



gress resolution says: the bourgeoisie is inconsistent and will without fail try to deprive us of the gains of the revolution. Therefore, make more energetic preparations for the fight, comrades and workers! Arm yourselves, win the peasantry over to your side! We shall not, without a struggle, surrender our revolutionary gains to the self-seeking bourgeoisie. The resolution of the Caucasian new-*Iskra* supporters says: the bourgeoisie is inconsistent and may recoil from the revolution. Therefore, comrades and workers, please do not think of joining a provisional government, for, if you do, the bourgeoisie will certainly recoil, and the sweep of the revolution will thereby be diminished!

One side says: advance the revolution to its consummation despite resistance or passivity on the part of the inconsistent bourgeoisie.

The other side says: do not hink of independently advancing the revolution to completion, for if you do, the inconsistent bourgeoisie will recoil from it.

Are these not two diametrically opposite paths? Is it not obvious that one set of tactics absolutely excludes the other, that the first tactics is the only correct tactics of revolutionary Social-Democracy, while the second is in fact purely *Osvobozhdeniye* tactics?

### 13. CONCLUSION. DARE WE WIN?

...Revolutions are the locomotives of history, said Marx.<sup>1</sup> Revolutions are festivals of the oppres-

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<sup>1</sup> See K. Marx, *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*.

sed and the exploited. At no other time are the mass of the people in a position to come forward so actively as creators of a new social order, as at a time of revolution. At such times the people are capable of performing miracles, if judged by the limited, philistine yardstick of gradualist progress. But it is essential that leaders of the revolutionary parties, too, should advance their aims more comprehensively and boldly at such a time, so that their slogans shall always be in advance of the revolutionary initiative of the masses, serve as a beacon, reveal to them our democratic and socialist ideal in all its magnitude and splendour, and show them the shortest and most direct route to complete, absolute, and decisive victory. Let us leave to the opportunists of the *Osvobozhdeniye* bourgeoisie the task of inventing roundabout, circuitous paths of compromise, out of fear of the revolution and of the direct path. If we are forcibly compelled to drag ourselves along such paths we shall be able to fulfil our duty in petty, everyday work also. But first let the choice of path be decided in ruthless struggle. We shall be traitors, betrayers of the revolution, if we do not use this festive energy of the masses and their revolutionary ardour to wage a ruthless and self-sacrificing struggle for the direct and decisive path. Let the bourgeois opportunists contemplate the future reaction with craven fear. The workers will not be intimidated either by the thought that reaction intends to be terrible, or that the bourgeoisie proposes to recoil. The workers do not expect to make deals; they are not asking for petty concessions. What they are striving towards is ruthlessly to crush the reactionary forces, i. e., to set up a *revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry*.

Of course, in stormy times greater dangers threaten the ship of our Party than in periods of the smooth "sailing" of liberal progress, which means the painfully steady sucking of the working class's life-blood by its exploiters. Of course, the tasks of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship are infinitely more difficult and more complex than the tasks of an "extreme opposition", or of an exclusively parliamentary struggle. But whoever is consciously capable of preferring smooth sailing and the course of safe "opposition" in the present revolutionary situation had better abandon Social-Democratic work for a while, had better wait until the revolution is over, until the festive days have passed, when humdrum, everyday life starts again, and his narrow routine standards no longer strike such an abominably discordant note, or constitute such an ugly distortion of the tasks of the advanced class.

At the head of the whole people, and particularly of the peasantry—for complete freedom, for a consistent democratic revolution, for a republic! At the head of all the toilers and the exploited—for socialism! Such in practice must be the policy of the revolutionary proletariat, such is the class slogan which must permeate and determine the solution of every tactical problem, every practical step of the workers' party during the revolution.

Written in June-July 1905.

First published as a pamphlet in Geneva, in July 1905, by the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 17-19, 21-23, 48-49, 52, 56-57, 100, 103-104, 113-114.

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## From: "The Revolutionary Army and the Revolutionary Government"

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The uprising in Odessa<sup>1</sup> and the siding of the armoured cruiser *Potemkin* with the revolution marked a further big step forward in the development of the revolutionary movement against the autocracy. Events have confirmed with amazing rapidity the timeliness of the calls to insurrection and to the formation of a provisional revolutionary government, which were addressed to the people by the class-conscious spokesmen of the proletariat as represented by the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. The new outbreak of the revolutionary conflagration throws light on the practical significance of these calls and makes us determine more precisely the tasks of the revolutionary fighters in the present situation in Russia.

The armed uprising of the people is maturing and is organising itself before our very eyes under the impact of the spontaneous course of events. It was not so very long ago that the only manifestation of the people's struggle against the autocracy was *revolts*—unconscious, unorganised, spontaneous, sometimes wild outbreaks. But the labour movement, as the movement of the most advanced class, the proletariat, rapidly outgrew this initial stage. The goal-conscious propaganda and agitation carried on by the Social-Democrats had their effect. Disturbances gave way to organised strike struggles and *political demonstrations* against the

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<sup>1</sup> *Odessa*—a port on the Black Sea coast.

autocracy. . . . The criminal and ignominious war into which the autocracy has plunged the people filled the cup of their endurance to overflowing. The crowds began to offer armed resistance to the tsarist troops. Real *street fighting, barricade battles*, started between the people and the troops. Quite recently the Caucasus,<sup>1</sup> Lodz,<sup>2</sup> Odessa, and Libau<sup>3</sup> have shown us examples of proletarian heroism and popular enthusiasm. The struggle grew into an insurrection. Even the tsar's troops gradually began to see that they were being made to play the shameful role of executioners of freedom, of henchmen of the police. And the army began to waver. At first isolated cases of insubordination, outbreaks among reservists, protests from officers, propaganda among the soldiers, refusal of some companies and regiments to shoot at their own brothers, the workers. Then—the *siding of part of the army with the uprising*.

The tremendous significance of the recent events in Odessa lies precisely in the fact that, for the first time, an important unit of the armed force of tsarism—a battleship—has openly gone over to the side of the revolution. The government made frantic efforts and resorted to all possible tricks to conceal this event from the people, to stifle the mutiny of the sailors from the outset. But to no avail. The warships sent against the revolutionary armoured cruiser "*Potemkin*" refused to fight

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<sup>1</sup> *The Caucasus*—a mountainous region between the Caspian and the Black Sea, an outlying area of tsarist Russia inhabited by non-Russians.

<sup>2</sup> *Lodz*—a Polish town; at the time Poland was part of tsarist Russia.

<sup>3</sup> *Libau* (now Liepaja)—a port on the Baltic Sea coast, in Latvia, an outlying area of tsarist Russia, inhabited by non-Russians.

against their comrades. By spreading throughout Europe the report that the *Potemkin* had surrendered and that the tsar had ordered the revolutionary armoured cruiser to be sunk, the autocratic government only completed its disgrace in the eyes of the entire world. The squadron has returned to Sevastopol,<sup>1</sup> and the government is hastening to disband the crews and to disarm the warships; reports are current of wholesale resignations of officers of the Black Sea Fleet; a fresh mutiny broke out on the armoured cruiser *Georgi Pobedonosts*, which had surrendered. The sailors are also rising in Libau and in Kronstadt;<sup>2</sup> clashes with the troops are becoming more frequent; sailors and workers are fighting the troops on the barricades (in Libau). The foreign press reports mutinies on a number of other warships (the *Minin*, the *Alexander II*, and others). The tsarist government finds itself *without a navy*. The most that it has been able to achieve so far is to hold back the fleet from actively going over to the side of the revolution. Meanwhile, the armoured cruiser *Potemkin* remains an unconquered territory of the revolution, and whatever its fate may be, the undoubted fact and the point of highest significance is that here we have the attempt to form the *nucleus of a revolutionary army*.

No reprisals, no partial victories over the revolution can diminish the importance of this event. The first step has been taken. The Rubicon has been crossed. The siding of the army with the revolution has impressed itself as a fact upon the whole of Russia and the entire world. The events in the Black Sea Fleet will inevitably be followed

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<sup>1</sup> *Sevastopol*—a Russian port on the Black Sea coast.

<sup>2</sup> *Kronstadt*—a military port in the Baltic.

by further and still more energetic attempts to form a revolutionary army. It is our task now to give the utmost support to these efforts, to explain to the broadest masses of the proletariat and the peasantry the nation-wide significance of a revolutionary army in the struggle for freedom, to assist various units of this army to unfurl the popular *banner of freedom*, the banner capable of attracting the masses and rallying the forces that will crush the tsarist autocracy. . . .

The revolutionary army and the revolutionary government are two sides of the same medal. They are two institutions equally necessary for the success of the uprising and for the consolidation of its results. They are two slogans which must be advanced and explained as the only consistent revolutionary slogans. There are many people to-day who call themselves democrats; however, many are called, but few are chosen. There are many spokesmen of the "Constitutional-Democratic Party"; but in so-called "society", in the would-be democratic Zemstvos,<sup>1</sup> there are few *true* democrats, men who are sincerely in favour of the complete sovereignty of the people and are capable of waging a life-and-death struggle against the ene-

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<sup>1</sup> *Zemstvo*—the name given to the local government bodies established in 1864. This was an attempt on the part of the tsarist government to adapt the autocracy to the requirements of the country's capitalist development. Zemstvos were dominated by the big landowners, bourgeoisie and liberal intelligentsia. The tsarist government made every attempt to limit the powers and the activities of Zemstvos. The liberal-bourgeois members of these bodies were thus in opposition to the tsarist government, though theirs was peaceful, legal opposition. The members of Zemstvo assemblies were consistently hostile towards the revolutionary movement, and tried to compromise with the tsarist government on the basis of small-scale reforms.

mies of that sovereignty, the defenders of the tsarist autocracy.

The working class is free of the cowardice, the hypocritical half-heartedness that is characteristic of the bourgeoisie as a class. The working class can and must be fully and consistently democratic. The working class has proved its right to the role of vanguard in the democratic revolution by the blood it has shed on the streets of St. Petersburg, Riga, Libau, Warsaw, Lodz, Odessa, Baku, and many other cities. It must prove equal to this great role at the present decisive moment too. While never for a moment forgetting their socialist goal, their class and Party independence, the class-conscious representatives of the proletariat, the members of the R.S.D.L.P., must come forward before the whole of the people with the advanced democratic slogans. For us, for the proletariat, the democratic revolution is only the first step on the road to the complete emancipation of labour from all exploitation, to the great socialist goal. All the more quickly, therefore, must we pass this first stage; all the more decisively must we settle accounts with the enemies of the people's freedom; all the louder must we proclaim the slogans of consistent democracy: a revolutionary army and a revolutionary government.

*Proletary*, No. 7,  
July 10 (June 27), 1905

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 560-562, 568.



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From: "While the Proletariat  
is Doing the Fighting the Bourgeoisie  
is Stealing Towards Power"

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During the armed clashes between the people and the forces of autocracy, the liberal bourgeois lie low; they are against violence either from above or from below, and are opposed both to the authorities' acts of despotism and to mob anarchy. It is only when the fighting is over that they appear on the scene, their political decisions clearly reflecting the change in the political situation brought about by the fighting. After January 9 the liberal bourgeoisie turned "pink"; it has now begun to go "red" following the Odessa events, which (in connection with events in the Caucasus, Poland, etc.) point to a steep rise in the people's insurrection against the autocracy during six months of revolution.

Highly instructive in this respect are three recent liberal congresses. . . .

So our liberal bourgeoisie has beyond doubt taken a step to the left. The revolution marches on—the bourgeois democrats hobble along in the rear. The true nature of this democracy, as *bourgeois* democracy, representing the propertied classes' interests and inconsistently and self-interestedly defending the cause of freedom, is being revealed ever more clearly, even though bourgeois democracy is going "red" and sometimes attempts to use "almost revolutionary" language.

Indeed, postponement of a decision on the boy-

cott of the Bulygin constitution<sup>1</sup> can denote nothing but a desire to go on haggling with the autocracy, a lack of self-confidence within the majority which seemed to emerge in favour of a boycott, and a tacit admission that, while asking for nothing short of a constitution, the landowners and the merchants would, probably, agree to something less. Even if a congress of liberal bourgeois does not venture to break at once with the autocracy and the Bulygin farce, what can be expected of that congress of all and sundry bourgeois which is to be styled the Bulygin "Duma" and will be elected (if ever elected it will be!) under every kind of pressure from the autocratic government?

That is exactly how the autocratic government looks upon this act of the liberals, which it considers merely an episode in the bourgeoisie's chaffering. On the one hand, the autocracy, in view of the liberals' discontent, is "adding to" its promises—the Bulygin scheme, according to reports in the foreign press, is to include a number of new "liberal" changes. On the other hand, the autocracy is replying to Zemstvo discontent with a new threat: characteristic in this respect is a *Times* report, which says that Bulygin<sup>2</sup> and Goremykin<sup>3</sup> propose, as a measure against Zemstvo "radical-

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<sup>1</sup> See note 1 on p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Bulygin A. G.* (1851-1919)—an important tsarist official, Minister of the Interior from January to October 1905. He was one of those responsible for the convocation of a State Duma with no legislative powers.

<sup>3</sup> *Goremykin I. L.* (1839-1917)—a politician. In the period 1895-99, Minister of the Interior, in 1906—Chairman of the Council of Ministers. On his initiative the First State Duma was dissolved. From 1906 to 1914 he was a member of the State Council, and from 1914 to 1915—Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

ism", to stir up the peasants against "the quality" by promising them extra land in the name of the tsar, and holding a "people's" plebiscite . . . on the question of whether or not the elections should be held on a social-estate basis. This report is, of course, just a rumour set afloat, probably with a definite purpose, but there can be no doubt that the government is not afraid to resort to the grossest, most brutal, and most unbridled demagoguery; nor is it afraid of an uprising by "masses on the rampage" and the dregs of society, while the liberals are afraid of the people rising up against their oppressors, against the heroes of plunder, looting, and bashi-bazouk atrocities. The government has long been shedding blood in a way and on a scale that have no precedent, yet the liberals respond by saying they want to prevent bloodshed! After a reply of this kind, is not any hired thug entitled to despise them as bourgeois hagglers? After this, is it not ridiculous to adopt a resolution calling for an appeal to the people and recognising "peaceful resistance" to violence and arbitrary acts? The government is distributing arms right and left, and bribing all comers to beat up and massacre Jews, "democrats", Armenians, Poles, and so on. But our "democrats" still think that campaigning for "peaceful resistance" is a "revolutionary" step! . . .

Oh, those florid liberal phrases! How many were uttered at the Congress by Mr. Petrunkevich,<sup>1</sup> leader of the "Constitutional-Democratic" Party! . . .

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<sup>1</sup> *Petrunkevich I. I.* (1844-1928)—a politician; from the 1860s participated in the liberal movement conducted by the members of Zemstvo assemblies; one of the founders of the Constitutional-Democratic Party (Cadets) and editor-in-chief of its leading paper *Rech*.

The liberal bourgeoisie is turning to the people. That is true. It has been forced to do so, for without the people it is powerless to fight the autocracy. But it is also afraid of the revolutionary people; it does not turn to the latter as a representative of their interests, or as a new and ardent comrade-in-arms, but as a chafferer, a stockjobber, who dashes from one belligerent to the other. To-day it is with the tsar and implores him on behalf of the "people" to grant a monarchist constitution, at the same time cravenly renouncing the people, "unrest", "sedition", and revolution. On the morrow it threatens the tsar at its congress, threatens him with a monarchist constitution, and with peaceable resistance to his bayonets. And yet, gentlemen, you are surprised that the tsar's servants have taken the measure of your craven, petty, double-dealing souls. You are afraid to remain without a tsar, but the tsar is not afraid to remain without you. You are afraid of a decisive struggle; the tsar is not afraid of that, but wants it; he is himself provoking and commencing the struggle; he wants a test of strength before he yields. It is quite natural for the tsar to despise you. It is quite natural for his contempt to be conveyed to you by his lackeys, the Suvorins,<sup>1</sup> who patronisingly pat your Mr. Petrunkevich on the back. You deserve this contempt, for you are not fighting on the people's side, but are only stealing towards power behind the backs of the revolutionary people....

Quite a skilful calculation! One has sometimes to say of the revolutionary people that which the

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<sup>1</sup> *Suvorin A. S.* (1834-1912)—reactionary journalist and publisher. From 1876 to 1912 was the owner and publisher of the notorious bourgeois newspaper *Novoye Vremya* (New Times)—mouthpiece of the nobility and government officials.

Romans said of Hannibal:<sup>1</sup> "You know how to win victories, but you don't know how to profit by them." A victorious rising will not yet be a victory of the people unless it leads to a revolutionary upheaval, to the complete overthrow of the autocracy, to the ousting of the inconsistent and selfish bourgeoisie, and to a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. . .

*Proletary*, No. 10,  
August 2 (July 20), 1905

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 169, 171-172,  
174, 175-177.

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<sup>1</sup> *Hannibal, Barca* (247-183 B.C.)—Carthaginian military leader. Won several victories over the Romans, especially significant of those being the one of Cannes in 216 B.C., but did not dare to assault Rome. Though Hannibal did not suffer a single defeat, he failed to use his victories to his advantage and returned to Carthage.

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## From: "The All-Russia Political Strike"

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The barometer indicates a storm—that is what is stated in today's foreign newspapers, which carry telegraphic dispatches on the mighty growth of the *all-Russia political strike*.

Nor is it only the barometer that indicates a storm: everything has been dislodged by the mighty whirlwind of a concerted proletarian onslaught....

...Our indications and predictions on the political mass strike's enormous importance to the armed uprising have been strikingly borne out. The *all-Russia political strike* has this time really involved the whole country, uniting *all the peoples* of the accursed Russian "Empire" in the heroic rising of a class that is the most oppressed and the most advanced. Proletarians of all nations of this empire of oppression and violence are now mustering in a great army—an army of liberty and an army of socialism. Moscow and St. Petersburg share the honour of having taken revolutionary proletarian initiative. Both capitals have gone on strike. Finland is striking. Headed by Riga, the Baltic provinces have joined the movement. Heroic Poland has again joined the ranks of the strikers, as if in mockery of the impotent rage of her enemies, who imagined that they could crush her with their blows and have, instead, only welded her revolutionary forces more closely together. The Crimea is rising (Simferopol), and also the South. In

Ekaterinoslav barricades are being erected, and blood is being shed. The Volga region (Saratov, Simbirsk, Nizhni-Novgorod) is on strike, and the strike is spreading both to the central agricultural provinces (Voronezh) and to the industrial Centre (Yaroslavl)....

The uprising is drawing near, is evolving from the all-Russia political strike before our very eyes. The appointment of a buffoon-minister, who assures the workers that a popular constituent assembly is impossible "at present" clearly shows the growth of the revolutionary forces, and the decline of the forces of the tsar's government. The autocracy is *no longer* strong enough to come out against the revolution openly. The revolution is *not yet* strong enough to deal the enemy a decisive blow. This fluctuation of almost evenly balanced forces inevitably engenders confusion among the authorities, makes for transitions from repression to concession, to laws providing for freedom of the press and freedom of assembly.

Forward, then, to a new, still more widespread and persistent struggle—the enemy must not be given a chance to pull himself together! The proletariat has already performed wonders for the victory of the revolution. The all-Russia political strike has brought this victory tremendously closer, causing the enemy to toss about on his death-bed. However, we are very far indeed from having done everything that we can and must do for final victory. The struggle is approaching, but has not yet reached its real climax. At this very moment the working class is rising, mobilising and arming, on a scale hitherto unparalleled. And it will finally sweep away the abhorrent autocracy, send all the buffoons of ministers packing, set up

*its own* provisional revolutionary government, and show all the peoples of Russia how "possible" and necessary it is, just "at present", to convoke a truly popular and truly constituent assembly.

*Proletary*, No. 23,  
October 31 (18), 1905

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 392-395.



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## From: "Our Tasks and the Soviet of Workers' Deputies"

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### A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

... It seems to me that Comrade Radin<sup>1</sup> is wrong in raising the question, in No. 5 of *Novaya Zhizn*<sup>2</sup> (I have seen only five issues of the virtual Central Organ of our R.S.D.L.P.): the Soviet of Workers' Deputies or the Party? I think that it is wrong to put the question in this way and that the decision must *certainly* be: *both* the Soviet of Workers' Deputies *and* the Party. The only question—and a highly important one—is how to divide, and how to combine, the tasks of the Soviet and those of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

I think it would be inadvisable for the Soviet to adhere wholly to any one party. As this opinion will probably surprise the reader, I shall proceed straightway to explain my views (stating again and most emphatically that it is the opinion of an onlooker).

The Soviet of Workers' Deputies came into being through the general strike, in connection with

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<sup>1</sup>*Radin B.* (Knunyants B. M.) (1878-1911)—a professional revolutionary and Bolshevik. He was several times arrested by tsarist authorities for his revolutionary activity. Died in a Baku prison.

<sup>2</sup> *Novaya Zhizn* (New Life)—the first legal Bolshevik newspaper, published daily from October 27 (November 9) to December 3 (16), 1905, in St. Petersburg. Lenin took up the editorship of the paper on his return to Russia early in November 1905. The paper acted as the Central Organ of the R.S.D.L.P.

the strike, and for its aims. Who led the strike and brought it to a victorious close? The *whole* proletariat, which includes non-Social-Democrats—fortunately a minority. What were the aims of the strike? They were both economic and political. The economic aims concerned the *whole* proletariat, all workers, and partly even all working people, not the wage-workers alone. The political aims concerned all the people, or rather all the peoples, of Russia. These aims were to free all the peoples of Russia from the yoke of the autocracy, survivals of serfdom, a rightless status, and police tyranny.

Let us go further. Should the proletariat continue its economic struggle? By all means; there is no disagreement over this point among Social-Democrats, nor could there be any. Should this struggle be conducted only by the Social-Democrats or only under the Social-Democratic banner? I do not think so. . . .

The political struggle has just reached a stage of development where the forces of revolution and counter-revolution are roughly equal and where the tsar's government is *already* powerless to suppress the revolution, while the revolution is not *yet* strong enough to sweep away the Black-Hundred government. The decay of the tsar's government is complete. But even as it rots alive, it is contaminating Russia with the poison of its putrefaction. It is absolutely necessary, in contrast to the decay of the tsarist, counter-revolutionary forces, to *organise* the revolutionary forces at once, immediately, without the slightest delay. This organisation has been making splendid progress, particularly of late. This is evident from the formation of contingents of a revolutionary army (defence squads, etc.), the rapid development of Social-Democratic mass organisations of the proletariat, the

establishment of peasants' committees by the revolutionary peasantry, and the first free meetings of our proletarian brothers in sailor's or soldier's uniform, who are paving for themselves a strenuous and difficult but true and bright way to freedom and to socialism.

What is lacking now is the unification of all the genuinely revolutionary forces, of all the forces that are already operating in revolutionary fashion. What is lacking is an all-Russian political centre, a fresh, living centre that is strong because it has struck deep roots in the people, a centre that enjoys the absolute confidence of the masses, that possesses tireless revolutionary energy and is closely linked with the organised revolutionary and socialist parties. Such a centre can be established only by the revolutionary proletariat, which has brilliantly carried through a political strike, which is now organising an armed uprising of the whole people, and which has won half freedom for Russia and will yet win full freedom for her.

The question may be asked: Why cannot the Soviet of Workers' Deputies become the embryo of such a centre? Is it because there are not only Social-Democrats in the Soviet? But this is an advantage, not a disadvantage. We have been speaking all the time of the need of a militant alliance of Social-Democrats and revolutionary bourgeois democrats. . . .

To my mind, the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, as a revolutionary centre providing political leadership, is not too broad an organisation but, on the contrary, a much too narrow one. The Soviet must proclaim itself the provisional revolutionary government, or form such a government, and must by all means enlist to this end the participation of new deputies not only from the workers, but, first

of all, from the sailors and soldiers, who are everywhere seeking freedom; secondly, from the revolutionary peasantry, and thirdly, from the revolutionary bourgeois intelligentsia. The Soviet must select a strong nucleus for the provisional revolutionary government and reinforce it with representatives of all revolutionary parties and all revolutionary (but, of course, only revolutionary and not liberal) democrats. We are not afraid of so broad and mixed a composition—indeed, we want it, for unless the proletariat and the peasantry unite and unless the Social-Democrats and revolutionary democrats form a fighting alliance, the great Russian revolution cannot be fully successful. It will be a temporary alliance that is to fulfil clearly defined immediate practical tasks, while the more important interests of the socialist proletariat, its fundamental interests and ultimate goals, will be steadfastly upheld by the independent and consistently principled Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. . . .

The objection may be raised that it is hardly possible to advance for such a government a programme complete enough to ensure victory for the revolution and broad enough to make possible a fighting alliance free from all reservations, vagueness, reticence or hypocrisy. I shall answer: such a programme has already been advanced in full by reality. It is already recognised in principle by all the politically-conscious elements of absolutely all the classes and sections of the population, including even Orthodox priests. The complete realisation of political freedom, which the tsar has promised so hypocritically, should come first in this programme. The repeal of all legislation restricting freedom of speech, conscience, assembly, the press, association and strikes, and the abolition of

all institutions limiting these liberties, should be immediate and real, they should be guaranteed and actually put into practice. The programme should provide for the convocation of a national constituent assembly that would enjoy the support of a free and armed people and have full authority and strength to establish a new order in Russia. It should provide for the arming of the people. The necessity of arming the people is realised by all. What remains to be done is to complete and unify the work already begun and being carried on everywhere. The programme of the provisional revolutionary government should also provide for the immediate granting of real and full freedom to the nationalities oppressed by the tsarist monster. A free Russia has been born. The proletariat is at its post. It will not allow heroic Poland to be crushed again. It will itself go into action; it will fight both for a free Russia and a free Poland, not only by peaceful strikes, but by force of arms as well. The programme should provide for the eight-hour working day, which the workers are already "seizing", and for other urgent measures to curb capitalist exploitation. Lastly, the programme must necessarily include transfer of all the land to the peasants, support for every revolutionary measure that the peasantry is carrying out to take away all the land. . . . It is now obvious to us that there exist the elements of a revolutionary army, which will back this cause, and that all who are fair-minded and alert and politically-conscious in every class of the population will turn away completely from tsarism when the new government declares a decisive war on the dying semi-feudal, police state of Russia. . . .

Citizens, everyone but the Black Hundreds has turned away from the tsarist government. Rally,

then, behind the revolutionary government, stop paying any duties or taxes, and bend all your energies to organise and arm a free people's militia force. Russia will have genuine freedom only insofar as the revolutionary people gain the upper hand over the forces of the Black-Hundred government. There are not, and cannot be, any neutrals in a civil war. The white-flag party is sheer cowardly hypocrisy. Whoever shies away from the struggle bolsters up Black-Hundred rule. Who is not for the revolution is against the revolution. Who is not a revolutionary is one of the Black Hundreds.

We undertake to rally and train forces for an uprising of the people. Let there not be a trace left of the institutions of tsarist power in Russia by the anniversary of that great day, the Ninth of January. May the spring holiday of the world proletariat find Russia already a free country, with a freely convened constituent assembly of the whole people!

Written on November 2-4 (15-17), 1905

First published on November 5, 1940,  
in *Pravda*, No. 308

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 19-21, 23-28.

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## From: "The Proletariat and the Peasantry"

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The Congress of the Peasant Union<sup>1</sup> now in session in Moscow once again raises the vital question of the attitude of Social-Democrats to the peasant movement. It has always been a vital question for Russian Marxists when determining their programme and tactics. In the very first draft Programme of the Russian Social-Democrats, printed abroad in 1884 by the Emancipation of Labour group,<sup>2</sup> most serious attention was devoted to the peasant question.

Since then there has not been a single major

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<sup>1</sup> *All-Russian Peasant Union*—a revolutionary-democratic organisation founded in 1905. Its programme and tactics were elaborated at its first and second congresses, held in Moscow in August and November 1905. The Union demanded political freedom and the immediate convocation of a constituent assembly. It adopted the tactics of boycotting the First State Duma. Its agrarian programme provided for the abolition of private landownership and for transfer of the lands belonging to monasteries, the Church, the Crown and the government to the peasants without compensation. The Union's policy, however, was inconsistent and erratic; while demanding abolition of the landed estates, it agreed to partial compensation of the landlords. Subject to police reprisals from the first, it had ceased to exist by the end of 1906.

<sup>2</sup> *The Emancipation of Labour group*—the first Russian Marxist group founded by G. V. Plekhanov in 1883 in Geneva. Beside Plekhanov the group included P. V. Axelrod, L. G. Deutsch, V. I. Zasulich, and V. N. Ignatov. The Emancipation of Labour group did much to spread Marxism in Russia. The members of the group translated into Russian, published abroad and distributed in Russia works by Marx and Engels.

Marxist work dealing with general questions, or a single Social-Democratic periodical, which has not repeated or developed Marxist views and slogans, or applied them to particular cases.

Today the question of the peasant movement has become vital not only in the theoretical but also in the most direct practical sense. We now have to transform our general slogans into direct appeals by the revolutionary proletariat to the revolutionary peasantry. The time has now come when the peasantry is coming forward as a conscious maker of a new way of life in Russia. And the course and outcome of the great Russian revolution depend in tremendous measure on the growth of the peasants' political consciousness.

What does the peasantry expect of the revolution? What can the revolution give the peasantry? Anyone active in the political sphere, and especially every class-conscious worker who goes in for politics, not in the sense vulgarised by bourgeois politicians, but in the best sense of the word, must answer these two questions.

The peasantry wants land and freedom. There can be no two opinions on this score. All class-conscious workers support the revolutionary peasantry with all their might. All class-conscious workers want and are fighting for the peasantry to receive all the land and full freedom. "All the land" means not putting up with any partial concessions and hand-outs; it means reckoning, not on a compromise between the peasantry and the landlords, but on abolition of landed estates. And the party of the class-conscious proletariat, the Social-Democrats, have most vigorously proclaimed this view: at its Third Congress held last May, the R.S.D.L.P. adopted a resolution directly declaring for support of the peasants' revolutionary de-



mands, *including confiscation of all privately-owned estates.* This resolution clearly shows that the party of the class-conscious workers supports the peasants' demand for all the land. And in *this* respect the content of the resolution adopted at the conference of the other half of our Party fully coincides with that of the resolution passed by the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.

"Full freedom" means election of officials and other office-holders who administer public and state affairs. "Full freedom" means the complete abolition of a state administration that is not wholly and exclusively responsible to the people, that is not elected by, accountable to, and subject to recall by, the people. "Full freedom" means that it is not the people who should be subordinated to officials, but the officials who should be subordinated to the people.

Of course, not all peasants fighting for land and freedom are fully aware of what their struggle implies, and go so far as to demand a republic. But for all that, the democratic trend of the peasants' demands is beyond all doubt. Hence the peasantry can be certain that the proletariat will support these demands. The peasants must know that the red banner which has been raised in the towns is the banner of struggle for the immediate and vital demands, not only of the industrial and agricultural workers, but also of the millions and tens of millions of small tillers of the soil.

Survivals of serfdom in every possible shape and form are to this day a cruel burden on the whole mass of the peasantry, and the proletarians under their red banner have declared war on this burden.

But the red banner means more than proleta-

rian support of the peasants' demands. It also means the independent demands of the proletariat. It means struggle, not only for land and freedom, but also against all exploitation of man by man, struggle against the poverty of the masses of the people, against the rule of capital. And it is here that we are faced with the second question: what can the revolution give the peasantry? Many sincere friends of the peasants (the Socialist-Revolutionaries,<sup>1</sup> for instance, among them) ignore this question, do not realise its importance. They think it is sufficient to raise and settle the question of what the peasants want, to get the answer: land and freedom. This is a great mistake. Full freedom, election of all officials all the way to the head of the state, will not do away with the rule of capital, will not abolish the wealth of the few and the poverty of the masses. Complete abolition of private landownership, too, will not do away either with the rule of capital or with the poverty of the masses. Even on land belonging to the whole nation, only those with capital of their own, only those who have the implements, livestock, machines, stocks of seed, money in general, etc., will be able to farm independently. As for those who have nothing but their hands to work with, they will inevitably remain slaves of capital even in a democratic republic, even when the land belongs to the whole nation. The idea that "socialisation" of land can be effected without socialisation of capital, the idea that equalised land tenure is possible while capital and commodity economy exist, is a delusion. . .

. . . We are waging, besides the struggle for freedom and land, a fight for socialism. The fight

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<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 44.

for socialism is a fight against the rule of capital. It is being carried on first and foremost by the wage-workers, who are directly and wholly dependent on capital. As for the small farmers, some of them own capital themselves, and often themselves exploit workers. Hence not all small peasants join the ranks of fighters for socialism; only those do so who resolutely and consciously side with the workers against capital, with public property against private property.

That is why the Social-Democrats say they are fighting together with the entire peasantry against the landlords and officials, besides which they—the town and village proletarians together—are fighting against capital. The struggle for land and freedom is a democratic struggle. The struggle to abolish the rule of capital is a socialist struggle.

Let us, then, send our warm greetings to the Peasant Union, which has decided to stand together and fight staunchly, selflessly and unswervingly for full freedom and for all the land. These peasants are true democrats. We must explain to them patiently and steadily where their views on the tasks of democracy and socialism are wrong, regarding them as allies with whom we are united by the great common struggle. These peasants are truly revolutionary democrats with whom we must and shall carry on the fight for the complete victory of the present revolution. We are fully in sympathy with the plan to call a general strike and the decision to rise together the next time, with the town workers and all the peasant poor acting in unison. All class-conscious workers will make every effort to help carry out this plan. Yet no alliance, even with the most honest and determined revolutionary democrats, will ever make the proletarians forget their still greater and more im-

portant goal, the fight for socialism, for the complete abolition of the rule of capital, for the emancipation of all working people from every kind of exploitation. Forward, workers and peasants, in the common struggle for land and freedom! Forward, proletarians, united by international Social-Democracy, in the fight for socialism!

*Novaya Zhizn*, No. 11,  
November 12, 1905

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 40-43.

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## From: "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising"

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The principal forms of the December movement in Moscow were the peaceful strike and demonstrations, and these were the only forms of struggle in which the vast majority of the workers took an active part. Yet, the December action in Moscow vividly demonstrated that the general strike, as an independent and predominant form of struggle, is out of date, that the movement is breaking out of these narrow bounds with elemental and irresistible force and giving rise to the highest form of struggle—an uprising.

In calling the strike, all the revolutionary parties, all the Moscow unions recognised and even intuitively felt that it must inevitably grow into an uprising. . .

The strike was growing into an uprising, primarily as a result of the pressure of the objective conditions created after October. A general strike could no longer take the government unawares: it had already organised the forces of counter-revolution, and they were ready for military action. The whole course of the Russian revolution after October, and the sequence of events in Moscow in the December days, strikingly confirmed one of Marx's profound propositions: revolution progresses by giving rise to a strong and united counter-revolution, i.e., it compels the enemy to resort to more and more extreme measures of defence and in this way devises ever more powerful means of attack. . .

From a strike and demonstrations to isolated barricades. From isolated barricades to the mass erection of barricades and street fighting against the troops. Over the heads of the organisations, the mass proletarian struggle developed from a strike to an uprising. This is the greatest historic gain the Russian revolution achieved in December 1905; and like all preceding gains it was purchased at the price of enormous sacrifices. The movement was raised from a general political strike to a higher stage. It compelled the reaction to go *to the limit* in its resistance, and so brought vastly nearer the moment when the revolution will also go to the limit in applying the means of attack. The reaction *cannot* go further than the shelling of barricades, buildings and crowds. But the revolution can go very much further than the Moscow volunteer fighting units, it can go very, very much further in breadth and depth. And the revolution has advanced far since December. The base of the revolutionary crisis has become immeasurably broader—the blade must now be sharpened to a keener edge.

The proletariat sensed sooner than its leaders the change in the objective conditions of the struggle and the need for a transition from the strike to an uprising. As is always the case, practice marched ahead of theory. A peaceful strike and demonstrations immediately ceased to satisfy the workers; they asked: What is to be done next? And they demanded more resolute action. The instructions to set up barricades reached the districts exceedingly late, when barricades were already being erected in the centre of the city. The workers set to work in large numbers, but *even this did not satisfy them*; they wanted to know: what is to be done next?—they demanded active measu-

res. In December, we, the leaders of the Social-Democratic proletariat, were like a commander-in-chief who has deployed his troops in such an absurd way that most of them took no active part in the battle. The masses of the workers demanded, but failed to receive, instructions for resolute mass action.

Thus, nothing could be more short-sighted than Plekhanov's<sup>1</sup> view, seized upon by all the opportunists, that the strike was untimely and should not have been started, and that "they should not have taken to arms." On the contrary, we should have taken to arms more resolutely, energetically and aggressively; we should have explained to the masses that it was impossible to confine things to a peaceful strike and that a fearless and relentless armed fight was necessary. And now we must at last openly and publicly admit that political strikes are inadequate; we must carry on the widest agitation among the masses in favour of an armed uprising and make no attempt to obscure this question by talk about "preliminary stages", or to befog it in any way. We would be deceiving both ourselves and the people if we concealed from the

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<sup>1</sup> *Plekhanov G. V.* (1856-1918) an outstanding leader of both the Russian and the international working-class movements, the first propagator of Marxism in Russia. In 1883 he founded, in Geneva, the first Russian Marxist organisation—the Emancipation of Labour group.

Plekhanov was the author of many works on philosophy, the history of social and political ideas, the questions of the theory of art and literature, which were of great importance for the defence of materialism. These works made a significant contribution to socialist thought.

After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. Plekhanov assumed a conciliatory position towards opportunism and later sided with the Mensheviks. In the period of the 1905-07 revolution he had serious differences with the Bolsheviks on the major questions of tactics.

masses the necessity of a desperate, bloody war of extermination, as the immediate task of the coming revolutionary action.

Such is the first lesson of the December events. Another lesson concerns the character of the uprising, the methods by which it is conducted, and the conditions which lead to the troops coming over to the side of the people. An extremely biased view on this latter point prevails in the Right wing of our Party. It is alleged that there is no possibility of fighting modern troops; the troops must become revolutionary. Of course, unless the revolution assumes a mass character and affects the troops, there can be no question of serious struggle. That we must work among the troops goes without saying. But we must not imagine that they will come over to our side at one stroke, as a result of persuasion or their own convictions. The Moscow uprising clearly demonstrated how stereotyped and lifeless this view is. As a matter of fact, the wavering of the troops, which is inevitable in every truly popular movement, leads to a real *fight for the troops* whenever the revolutionary struggle becomes acute. The Moscow uprising was precisely an example of the desperate, frantic struggle for the troops that takes place between the reaction and the revolution. Dubasov<sup>1</sup> himself declared that of the fifteen thousand men of the Moscow garrison, only five thousand were reliable. The government restrained the waverers by the most diverse and desperate measures: they appealed to them, flattered them, bribed them, presented them with watches, money, etc.; they doped them with vodka, they lied to them, threatened them, confined them to barracks and disarm-

<sup>1</sup> Dubasov F. V. (1845-1912)—General-Governor of Moscow, who suppressed the armed uprising of 1905.



ed them, and those who were suspected of being least reliable were removed by treachery and violence. And we must have the courage to confess, openly and unreservedly, that in this respect we lagged behind the government. We failed to utilise the forces at our disposal for such an active, bold, resourceful and aggressive fight for the wavering troops as that which the government waged and won. We have carried on work in the army and we will redouble our efforts in the future ideologically to "win over" the troops. But we shall prove to be miserable pedants if we forget that at a time of uprising there must also be a physical struggle for the troops.

In the December days, the Moscow proletariat taught us magnificent lessons in ideologically "winning over" the troops, as, for example, on December 8 in Strastnaya Square, when the crowd surrounded the Cossacks, mingled and fraternised with them, and persuaded them to turn back. Or on December 10, in Presnya District, when two working girls, carrying a red flag in a crowd of 10,000 people, rushed out to meet the Cossacks crying: "Kill us! We will not surrender the flag alive!" And the Cossacks were disconcerted and galloped away, amidst the shouts from the crowd: "Hurrah for the Cossacks!" These examples of courage and heroism should be impressed forever on the mind of the proletariat. . .

The December events confirmed another of Marx's profound propositions, which the opportunists have forgotten, namely, that insurrection is an art and that the principal rule of this art is the waging of a desperately bold and irrevocably determined *offensive*. We have not sufficiently assimilated this truth. We ourselves have not sufficiently learned, nor have we taught the

masses, this art, this rule to attack at all costs. We must make up for this omission with all our energy. It is not enough to take sides on the question of political slogans; it is also necessary to take sides on the question of an armed uprising. Those who are opposed to it, those who do not prepare for it, must be ruthlessly dismissed from the ranks of the supporters of the revolution, sent packing to its enemies, to the traitors or cowards; for the day is approaching when the force of events and the conditions of the struggle will compel us to distinguish between enemies and friends according to this principle. It is not passivity that we should preach, not mere "waiting" until the troops "come over". No! We must proclaim from the house-tops the need for a bold offensive and armed attack, the necessity at such times of exterminating the persons in command of the enemy, and of a most energetic fight for the wavering troops.

The third great lesson taught by Moscow concerns the tactics and organisation of the forces for an uprising. Military tactics depend on the level of military technique. This plain truth Engels demonstrated and brought home to all Marxists. Military technique today is not what it was in the middle of the nineteenth century. It would be folly to contend against artillery in crowds and defend barricades with revolvers. Kautsky<sup>1</sup> was right when he wrote that it is high time now, after Moscow, to review Engels' conclusions, and that

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<sup>1</sup> *Kautsky, Karl* (1854-1938)—one of the leaders of German Social-Democracy. At first he espoused Marxist views, but later betrayed Marxism becoming an ideologist of the most dangerous and harmful variety of opportunism—centrism (Kautskynianism). He was editor-in-chief of *Neue Zeit*, the theoretical magazine of German Social-Democracy.

Moscow had inaugurated "*new barricade tactics*". These tactics are the tactics of guerrilla warfare. The organisation required for such tactics is that of mobile and exceedingly small units, units of ten, three or even two persons. We often meet Social-Democrats now who scoff whenever units of five or three are mentioned. But scoffing is only a cheap way of ignoring the *new* question of tactics and organisation raised by street fighting under the conditions imposed by modern military technique. Study carefully the story of the Moscow uprising, gentlemen, and you will understand what connection exists between "units of five" and the question of "*new barricade tactics*".

Moscow advanced these tactics, but failed to develop them far enough, to apply them to any considerable extent, to a really mass extent. There were too few volunteer fighting squads, the slogan of bold attack was not issued to the masses of the workers and they did not apply it; the guerrilla detachments were too uniform in character, their arms and methods were inadequate, their ability to lead the crowd was almost undeveloped. We must make up for all this and we shall do so by learning from the experience of Moscow, by spreading this experience among the masses and by stimulating their creative efforts to develop it still further. And the guerrilla warfare and mass terror that have been taking place throughout Russia practically without a break since December, will undoubtedly help the masses to learn the correct tactics of an uprising. Social-Democracy must recognise this mass terror and incorporate it into its tactics, organising and controlling it of course, subordinating it to the interests and conditions of the working-class movement and the general revolutionary struggle, while eliminating and ruthlessly

lopping off the "hooligan" perversion of this guerilla warfare which was so splendidly and ruthlessly dealt with by our Moscow comrades during the uprising and by the Letts during the days of the famous Lettish republics.

There have been new advances in military technique in the very recent period. The Japanese War produced the hand grenade. The small-arms factories have placed automatic rifles on the market. Both these weapons are already being successfully used in the Russian revolution, but to a degree that is far from adequate. We can and must take advantage of improvements in technique, teach the workers' detachments to make bombs in large quantities, help them and our fighting squads to obtain supplies of explosives, fuses and automatic rifles. If the mass of the workers takes part in uprisings in the towns, if mass attacks are launched on the enemy, if a determined and skilful fight is waged for the troops, who after the Duma, after Sveaborg and Kronstadt<sup>1</sup> are wavering more than ever—and if we ensure participation of the rural areas in the general struggle—victory will be ours in the next all-Russian armed uprising.

Let us, then, develop our work more extensively and set our tasks more boldly, while mastering the lessons of the great days of the Russian revolution. The basis of our work is a correct estimate of class interests and of the requirements of the nation's development at the present juncture. We are rallying, and shall continue to rally, an increasing section of the proletariat, the peasantry and the army under the slogan of overthrowing the tsarist regime and convening a constituent as-

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<sup>1</sup> Lenin is referring to the armed uprising of sailors and soldiers in the Sveaborg and Kronstadt fortresses in the Baltic in 1906.

sembly by a revolutionary government. As hitherto, the basis and chief content of our work is to develop the political understanding of the masses. But let us not forget that, in addition to this general, constant and fundamental task, times like the present in Russia impose other, particular and special tasks. Let us not become pedants and philistines, let us not evade these special tasks of the moment, these special tasks of the given forms of struggle, by meaningless references to our permanent duties, which remain unchanged at all times and in all circumstances.

Let us remember that a great mass struggle is approaching. It will be an armed uprising. It must, as far as possible, be simultaneous. The masses must know that they are entering upon an armed, bloody and desperate struggle. Contempt for death must become widespread among them and will ensure victory. The onslaught on the enemy must be pressed with the greatest vigour; attack, not defence, must be the slogan of the masses; the ruthless extermination of the enemy will be their task; the organisation of the struggle will become mobile and flexible; the wavering elements among the troops will be drawn into active participation. And in this momentous struggle, the party of the class-conscious proletariat must discharge its duty to the full.

*Proletary*, No. 2,  
August 29, 1906

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 11, pp. 171-178.

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## From: "‘Left-Wing’ Communism — an Infantile Disorder"<sup>1</sup>

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### VII SHOULD WE PARTICIPATE IN BOURGEOIS PARLIAMENTS?

Even if only a fairly large *minority* of the industrial workers, and not "millions" and "legions", follow the lead of the Catholic clergy—and a similar minority of rural workers follow the landowners and kulaks (Grossbauern)—it *undoubtedly* signifies that parliamentarianism in Germany has *not yet* politically outlived itself, that participation in parliamentary elections and in the struggle on the parliamentary rostrum is *obligatory* on the party of the revolutionary proletariat *specifically* for the purpose of educating the backward strata of *its own class*, and for the purpose of awakening and enlightening the undeveloped, down-trodden and ignorant rural *masses*. Whilst you lack the strength to do away with bourgeois parliaments and every other type of reactionary institution, you *must* work within them because *it is there* that you will still find workers who are duped by the priests and stultified by the conditions of rural life; otherwise you risk turning into nothing but windbags. . .

. . . We Bolsheviks participated in the most counter-revolutionary parliaments, and experience has shown that this participation was not only useful

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<sup>1</sup> Lenin had written this book for the opening of the Second Congress of Comintern. At this Congress a copy of the book was presented to every delegate. It acquainted the members of young communist parties with Bolshevik experience, their tactics and strategy.

but indispensable to the party of the revolutionary proletariat, after the first bourgeois revolution in Russia (1905), so as to pave the way for the second bourgeois revolution (February 1917), and then for the socialist revolution (October 1917)... If a parliament becomes an organ and a "centre" (in reality it never has been and never can be a "centre", but that is by the way) of counter-revolution, while the workers are building up the instruments of their power in the form of the Soviets, then it follows that the workers must prepare—ideologically, politically and technically—for the struggle of the Soviets against parliament, for the dispersal of parliament by the Soviets. But it does not at all follow that this dispersal is hindered, or is not facilitated, by the presence of a Soviet opposition *within* the counter-revolutionary parliament... Russian experience has provided us with one successful and correct instance (1905),<sup>1</sup> and another that was incorrect (1906),<sup>2</sup> of the use of a boycott by the Bolsheviks. Analysing the first case, we see that we succeeded in *preventing* a reactionary government from *convening* a reactionary parliament in a situation in which extra-parliamentary revolutionary mass action (strikes in particular) was developing at great speed, when not a single section of the proletariat and the peasantry could support the reactionary government in any way, and when the revolutionary proletariat was gaining influence over the backward masses through the strike struggle and through the agrarian movement. It is quite obvious

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<sup>1</sup> Lenin is referring to the Bulygin Duma, which was boycotted by the Bolsheviks, because of the revolutionary situation in the country.

<sup>2</sup> Lenin is referring to the boycott of the First State Duma of 1906.

that *this* experience is not applicable to present-day European conditions. It is likewise quite obvious—and the foregoing arguments bear this out—that the advocacy, even if with reservations, by the Dutch and the other “Lefts” of refusal to participate in parliaments is fundamentally wrong and detrimental to the cause of the revolutionary proletariat. . . . It is because, in Western Europe, the backward masses of the workers and—to an even greater degree—of the small peasants are much more imbued with bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices than they were in Russia; because of that, it is *only* from within such institutions as bourgeois parliaments that Communists can (and must) wage a long and persistent struggle, undaunted by any difficulties, to expose, dispel and overcome these prejudices. . . .

Written in April-May 1920

Published in pamphlet form,  
in Petrograd,  
in June 1920

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 58-59, 61-65.



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## Draft Agrarian Programme Suggested by V. I. Lenin to the Fourth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.<sup>1</sup>

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With a view to eradicating the survivals of the serf-owning system, which are a direct and heavy burden upon the peasants, and for the purpose of facilitating the free development of the class struggle in the countryside, the Party demands:

(1) the confiscation of all church, monastery, crown, state, and landlord estates;

(2) the establishment of peasant committees for the purpose of immediately abolishing all traces of landlord power and privilege, and of actual disposal of the confiscated lands, pending the establishment of a new agrarian system by a constituent assembly of the whole people;

(3) the abolition of all taxes and services at pre-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Fourth (Unity) Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.* was held between April 10-25 (April 23-May 8), 1906 in Stockholm. At this Congress formal unity between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks was achieved. This, however, did not mean actual unity, for the Mensheviks continued their opportunist policies which made a split inevitable.

The basic questions on the Congress's agenda were the following: agrarian, the evaluation of the current situation, and the class aims of the proletariat, the attitude towards the State Duma and organisational issues. There were sharp disagreements between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks on all these questions. Lenin addressed the Congress with reports and speeches on the agrarian question, the current situation, on the tactics to be adopted towards the State Duma elections, the armed uprising, etc.

sent exacted from the peasantry, as the tax-paying social estate;

(4) the repeal of all laws that restrict the peasants in disposing of their land;

(5) the authorisation of the courts elected by the people to reduce exorbitant rents and to annul all contracts that entail an element of bondage.

If, however, the decisive victory of the present revolution in Russia brings about the complete sovereignty of the people, i.e., establishes a republic and a fully democratic state system, the Party will seek the abolition of private ownership of land and the transfer of all the land to the whole people as common property.

Furthermore, the object of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in all circumstances, and whatever the situation of democratic agrarian reform, is steadily to strive for the independent class organisation of the rural proletariat; to explain that its interests are irreconcilably opposed to those of the peasant bourgeoisie; to warn it against being tempted by small-scale ownership, which cannot, so long as commodity production exists, abolish poverty among the masses; and lastly, to urge the necessity for a complete socialist revolution as the only means of abolishing all poverty and all exploitation.

Written in the second half  
of March 1906

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 194-195.

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## From: "The Awakening of Asia"

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Was it so long ago that China was considered typical of the lands that had been standing still for centuries? Today China is a land of seething political activity, the scene of a virile social movement and of a democratic upsurge. Following the 1905 movement in Russia, the democratic revolution spread to the whole of Asia—to Turkey, Persia, China. Ferment is growing in British India.

A significant development is the spread of the revolutionary democratic movement to the Dutch East Indies, to Java and the other Dutch colonies, with a population of some forty million. . . .

World capitalism and the 1905 movement in Russia have finally aroused Asia. Hundreds of millions of the down-trodden and benighted have awakened from medieval stagnation to a new life and are rising to fight for elementary human rights and democracy.

The workers of the advanced countries follow with interest and inspiration this powerful growth of the liberation movement, in all its various forms, in every part of the world. The bourgeoisie of Europe, scared by the might of the working-class movement, is embracing reaction, militarism, clericalism and obscurantism. But the proletariat of the European countries and the young democracy of Asia, fully confident of its strength and with abiding faith in the masses, are advancing to take the place of this decadent and moribund bourgeoisie.

The awakening of Asia and the beginning of the struggle for power by the advanced proletariat of

Europe are a symbol of the new phase in world history that began early this century.

*Pravda*, No. 103, May 7, 1913

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 19, pp. 85-86.

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## From: "The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution 1905-1907"

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The two years of revolution, from the autumn of 1905 to the autumn of 1907, have furnished a vast amount of experience of historical value concerning the peasant movement in Russia and the character and significance of the peasants' struggle for land. Decades of so-called "peaceful" evolution (i.e., when millions of people peacefully allow themselves to be fleeced by the upper ten thousand) can never furnish such a wealth of material for explaining the inner workings of our social system as has been furnished in these two years both by the direct struggle of the peasant masses against the landlords and by the demands of the peasants, expressed with at least some degree of freedom, at assemblies of representatives of the people. Therefore, the revision of the agrarian programme of the Russian Social-Democrats in the light of the experience of these two years is absolutely necessary, particularly in view of the fact that the present agrarian programme of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party was adopted at the Stockholm Congress in April 1906, i.e., on the eve of the first public appearance of representatives of the peasantry from all over Russia with a peasant agrarian programme, in opposition to the programme of the government and to that of the liberal bourgeoisie. . . .

## CONCLUSION

The agrarian question is the basis of the bourgeois revolution in Russia and determines the specific national character of this revolution.

The essence of this question is the struggle of the peasantry to abolish landlordism and the survivals of serfdom in the agricultural system of Russia, and, consequently, also in all her social and political institutions.

Ten and a half million peasant households in European Russia own 75,000,000 dessiatins of land. Thirty thousand, chiefly noble, but partly also upstart, landlords each own over 500 dessiatins—altogether 70,000,000 dessiatins. Such is the main background of the picture. Such are the main reasons for the predominance of feudal landlords in the agricultural system of Russia and, consequently, in the Russian state generally, and in the whole of Russian life. The owners of the latifundia are feudal landlords in the economic sense of the term: the basis of their landownership was created by the history of serfdom, by the history of land-grabbing by the nobility through the centuries. The basis of their present methods of farming is the labour-service system, i.e., a direct survival of the *corvée*, cultivation of the land with the implements of the peasants and by the virtual enslavement of the small tillers in an endless variety of ways: winter hiring, annual leases, half-share *métayage*, leases based on labour rent, bondage for debt, bondage for cut-off lands, for the use of forests, meadows, water, and so on and so forth, *ad infinitum*. Capitalist development in Russia has made such strides during the last half-century that the preservation of serfdom in

agriculture has become *absolutely* impossible, and its abolition has assumed the forms of a violent crisis, of a nation-wide revolution. But the abolition of serfdom in a bourgeois country is possible in two ways.

Serfdom may be abolished by the feudal-landlord economies slowly evolving into Junker-bourgeois economies, by the mass of the peasants being turned into landless husbandmen and Knechts, by forcibly keeping the masses down to a pauper standard of living, by the rise of small groups of Grossbauern, of rich bourgeois peasants, who inevitably spring up under capitalism from among the peasantry. That is the path that the Black-Hundred landlords,<sup>1</sup> and Stolypin,<sup>2</sup> their minister, have chosen. They have realised that the path for the development of Russia *cannot* be cleared unless the rusty medieval forms of landownership are forcibly broken up. And they have boldly set out to break them up *in the interests of the landlords*. They have thrown overboard the sympathy for the semi-feudal village commune which until recently was widespread among the bureaucracy

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<sup>1</sup> *Black Hundreds*—members of counter-revolutionary monarchist groupings such as the Union of the Russian People, the Council of the United Nobility, etc., or people who shared the same views.

<sup>2</sup> *Stolypin P. A.* (1862-1911)—politician. In 1906 became Minister of the Interior, later Chairman of the Council of Ministers. Responsible for repression of revolutionaries. It was on his initiative that in 1907 the laws on elections to the State Duma were changed and that, between 1906 and 1916, the agrarian reforms known as Stolypin Reforms were carried out. The purpose of these reforms was to create a kulak class in the countryside that would serve as a support for the autocracy. Stolypin was shot in 1911 in Kiev by a police agent and died.

and the landlords. They have evaded all the "constitutional" laws in order to break up the village communes by force. They have given the kulaks *carte blanche*<sup>1</sup> to rob the peasant masses, to break up the old system of landownership, to ruin thousands of peasant farms; they have handed over the medieval village to be "sacked and plundered" by the possessors of money. They *cannot* act otherwise if they are to preserve their class rule, for they have realised the necessity of adapting themselves to capitalist development and not fighting against it. And in order to preserve their rule they can find no other allies *against* the mass of the peasants than the "upstarts", the Razuvayevs and Kolupayevs.<sup>1</sup> They have no alternative but to shout to these Kolupayevs: *Enrichissez-vous!*—enrich yourselves! We shall make it possible for you to gain a hundred rubles for every ruble, if you will help us to save the basis of our rule under the new conditions. That path of development, if it is to be pursued successfully, calls for wholesale, systematic, unbridled *violence* against the peasant masses and against the proletariat. And the landlord counter-revolution is hastening to organise that violence all along the line.

The other path of development we have called the American path of development of capitalism, in contrast to the former, the Prussian path. It, too, involves the forcible break-up of the old system of landownership; only the obtuse philistines of Russian liberalism can dream of the possibility of a

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<sup>1</sup> *Razuvayevs and Kolupayevs*—rich peasants (kulaks), characters in Saltykov-Shchedrin, great Russian satirist and revolutionary Democrat (1826-89).



painless, peaceful outcome of the exceedingly acute crisis in Russia.

But this essential and inevitable break-up may be carried out in the interests of the peasant masses and not of the landlord gang. A mass of free farmers may serve as a basis for the development of capitalism without any landlord economy whatsoever, since, *taken as a whole*, the latter form of economy is economically reactionary, whereas the elements of free farming have been *created* among the peasantry by the preceding economic history of the country. Capitalist development along such a path *should* proceed far more broadly, freely, and swiftly owing to the tremendous growth of the home market and of the rise in the standard of living, the energy, initiative, and culture of the *entire* population. And Russia's vast lands available for colonisation, the utilisation of which is greatly hampered by the feudal oppression of the mass of the peasantry in Russia proper, as well as by the feudal-bureaucratic handling of the agrarian policy—these lands will provide the economic foundation for a huge expansion of agriculture and for increased production in both depth and breadth.

Such a path of development requires not only the abolition of landlordism. For the rule of the feudal landlords through the centuries has left its imprint on *all* forms of landownership in the country, on the peasant allotments as well as upon the holdings of the settlers in the relatively free borderlands: the whole colonisation policy of the autocracy is permeated with the Asiatic interference of a hidebound bureaucracy, which hindered the settlers from establishing themselves freely, introduced terrible confusion into the new agrarian relationships, and infected the border regions with the

poison of the feudal bureaucracy of central Russia.<sup>1</sup> Not only is landlordism in Russia medieval, but so also is the peasant allotment system. The latter is incredibly complicated. It splits the peasantry up into thousands of small units, medieval groups, social categories. It reflects the age-old history of arrogant interference in the peasants' agrarian relationships both by the central government and the local authorities. It drives the peasants, as into a ghetto, into petty medieval associations of a fiscal, tax-levying nature, into associations for the ownership of allotment land, i.e., into the village communes. And Russia's economic development is *in actual fact* tearing the peasantry out of this medieval environment—on the one hand, by causing allotments to be rented out and abandoned, and, on the other hand, by creating a system of farming by the free farmers of the future (or by the future. Grossbauern of a Junker Russia) *out of the fragments* of the most diverse forms of landownership: privately owned allotments, rented allotments, purchased property, land rented from the landlord, land rented from the state, and so on.

In order to establish *really* free farming in Russia, it is necessary to "unfence" *all* the land, landlord as well as allotment land. The *whole* system of medieval landownership must be broken up and all lands must be made equal for free farmers upon a free soil. The greatest possible facilities must be created for the exchange of holdings, for the free choice of settlements, for rounding off holdings, for the creation of new, free associations, instead of

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. A. Kaufman, in his *Migration and Colonisation* (St. Petersburg, 1905), gives an outline of the history of Russian colonisation policy. Like a good "liberal", he is excessively deferent to the feudal landlord bureaucracy.

the rusty, tax-levying village communes.<sup>1</sup> The whole land must be "cleared" of all medieval lumber.

The expression of this economic necessity is the nationalisation of the land, the abolition of private ownership of the land, and the transfer of *all* the land to the state, which will mark a complete break with the feudal relations in the countryside. It is this economic necessity that has turned the *mass* of Russian peasants into supporters of land nationalisation. The mass of small owner cultivators declared in favour of nationalisation at the congresses of the Peasant Union in 1905, in the First Duma in 1906, and in the Second Duma in 1907, i.e., during the whole of the first period of the revolution. They did so not because the "village commune" had imbued them with certain special "rudiments", certain special, non-bourgeois "labour principles". On the contrary, they did so because life required of them that they should seek *emancipation* from the medieval village commune and from the medieval allotment system. They did so not because they wanted or were able to build a socialist agriculture, but because they have been wanting and have been able to build a really bourgeois small-scale farming, i.e., farming freed as much as possible from *all* the traditions of serfdom.

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<sup>1</sup> *Village communes*—a form of joint ownership of land by the peasants which existed in Russia. Crop rotation was practised, and forests and pastures were not distributed among the peasants. The village commune was based on mutual responsibility and systematic redistribution of land; the absence of the right to refuse to take the land, and the prohibition to sell or buy the land of the village commune. Landowners and the tsarist government used the village commune to intensify the oppression of the peasants.

Thus, it was neither chance nor the influence of this or that doctrine (as some short-sighted people think) that determined this peculiar attitude towards private ownership of the land on the part of the classes that are fighting in the Russian revolution. This peculiar attitude is to be explained by the conditions of the development of capitalism in Russia and by the requirements of capitalism at this stage of its development. All the Black-Hundred landlords, all the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie (including the Octobrists *and the Cadets*) stand for private ownership of the land. The whole of the peasantry and the proletariat are opposed to the private ownership of the land. The reformative path of creating a Junker-bourgeois Russia presupposes the preservation of the foundations of the old system of landownership and their slow adaptation to capitalism, which would be painful for the mass of the population. The revolutionary path of really overthrowing the old order inevitably requires, as its economic basis, the destruction of all the old forms of landownership, together with all the old political institutions of Russia. The experience of the first period of the Russian revolution has conclusively proved that it can be victorious only as a peasant agrarian revolution, and that the latter cannot completely fulfil its historical mission unless the land is nationalised.

Social-Democracy, as the party of the international proletariat, the party which has set itself world-wide socialist aims, cannot, of course, identify itself with any epoch of any bourgeois revolution, nor can it tie its destiny to this or that outcome of this or that bourgeois revolution. Whatever the outcome, we must remain an independent, purely proletarian party, which steadfastly leads

the working masses to their great socialist goal. We cannot, therefore, undertake to guarantee that any of the gains of the bourgeois revolution will be permanent, because impermanence and inherent contradiction are immanent features of *all* the gains of the bourgeois revolution as such... We have but one task: to rally the proletariat for the socialist revolution, to support every fight against the old order in the most resolute way, to fight for the best possible conditions for the proletariat in the developing bourgeois society. From this it inevitably follows that our Social-Democratic programme in the Russian bourgeois revolution can *only* be nationalisation of the land. Like every other *part* of our programme, we must connect it with definite forms and a definite stage of political reform, because the scope of the political revolution and that of the agrarian revolution cannot but be the same. Like every other part of our programme, we must keep it strictly free from petty-bourgeois illusions, from intellectualist-bureaucratic chatter about "norms", from reactionary talk about strengthening the village communes, or about equalised land tenure. The interests of the proletariat do not demand that a special slogan, a special "plan" or "system" shall be invented for this or that bourgeois revolution, they only demand that the objective conditions for this revolution shall be *consistently* expressed and that these objective, economically unavoidable conditions be stripped of illusions and utopias. Nationalisation of the land is not only the sole means for completely eliminating medievalism in agriculture, but also the best form of agrarian relationships conceivable under capitalism.

Three circumstances have temporarily deflected the Russian Social-Democrats from this correct

agrarian programme. First, P. Maslov,<sup>1</sup> the initiator of "municipalisation" in Russia, "revised" the theory of Marx, repudiated the theory of absolute rent, and revived the semi-decayed bourgeois doctrines about the law of diminishing returns, its connection with the theory of rent, etc. To repudiate absolute rent is to deny that private landownership has any economic significance under capitalism, and, consequently, this inevitably led to the distortion of Marxist views on nationalisation. Secondly, not having before them visible evidence that the peasant revolution had *begun*, Russian Social-Democrats could not but regard its possibility with caution, because the possible victory of the revolution requires a number of especially favourable conditions and an especially favourable development of revolutionary consciousness, energy, and initiative on the part of the masses. Having no *experience* to go on, and holding that it is impossible to invent *bourgeois* movements, the Russian Marxists naturally could not, *before the revolution*, present a correct agrarian programme. But even *after* the revolution had begun, they committed the following mistake: instead of *applying* the theory of Marx to the special conditions prevailing in Russia (Marx and Engels always taught that their theory was not a dogma, but a *guide to action*), they uncritically repeated the conclusions drawn from the application of Marx's theory to

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<sup>1</sup> *Maslov P.* — an economist, Menshevik, author of a series of works on the agrarian question, in which he made an attempt to revise Marxism; he put forward the programme of the "municipalisation" of land, i.e., the transfer of land by the government to the bodies of local self-government (municipalities). This programme of reform did not call upon the peasants to completely abolish the ownership of land by the landlords.

foreign conditions, to a *different* epoch. The German Social-Democrats, for instance, have quite naturally abandoned all the old programmes of Marx containing the demand for the nationalisation of the land, because Germany has taken final shape as a Junker-bourgeois country, and all movements there based on the bourgeois order have become completely obsolete, and there is not, nor can there be, any people's movement for nationalisation. The preponderance of Junker-bourgeois elements has *actually transformed* the plans for nationalisation into a plaything, or even into an instrument of the Junkers for robbing the masses. The Germans are right in refusing even to talk about nationalisation. But to apply this conclusion to Russia (as is done in effect by those of our Mensheviks who do not see the connection between municipalisation and Maslov's revision of the theory of Marx) is to reveal an inability to think of the tasks each Social-Democratic party has to perform in special periods of its historical development.

Thirdly, the municipalisation programme obviously reflects the erroneous tactical line of Menshevism in the Russian bourgeois revolution, namely, a failure to understand that only "an alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry"<sup>1</sup> can ensure the victory of this revolution, a failure to understand the leading role the proletariat plays in the bourgeois revolution, a striving to push the proletariat aside, to adapt it to a half-way outcome of the revolution, to convert it from a leader into an auxiliary (actually into a drudge and servant) of the liberal bourgeoisie. "Never enthusing, adapt-

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<sup>1</sup> That is how Kautsky expressed it in the *second* edition of his pamphlet *Social Revolution*.

tion using, forward then slowly, ye workers so lowly"—these words of Nartsis Tuporylov against the "Economists" (=the first opportunists in the R.S.D.L.P.), fully express the *spirit* of our present agrarian programme.

Combating the "enthusiasm" of petty-bourgeois socialism should lead not to the contraction, but to the expansion of the scope of the revolution and its aims as determined by the proletariat. It is not "regionalism" that we should encourage, no matter how strong it may be among the backward strata of the petty bourgeoisie or the privileged peasantry (Cossacks), not the exclusiveness of various nationalities—no, we should make the peasantry see how important unity is if victory is to be achieved, we should advance slogans that will widen the movement, not narrow it, and that will place the responsibility for the *incomplete* bourgeois revolution on the backwardness of the bourgeoisie and not on the lack of understanding of the proletariat. We should not "adapt" our programme to "local" democracy; we should not invent a rural "municipal socialism", which is absurd and impossible under an undemocratic central government; we should not adjust petty-bourgeois socialist reformism to the bourgeois revolution, but concentrate the attention of the masses on the actual conditions for the victory of the revolution as a bourgeois revolution, on the need for achieving not only local, but "central" democracy, i. e., the democratisation of the central government of the state—and not merely democracy in general, but the absolutely fullest, highest forms of democracy, for otherwise the peasant agrarian revolution in Russia will become *utopian* in the scientific sense of the term.

And let it not be thought that at the present mo-



ment of history, when the Black-Hundred die-hards are howling and raging in the Third Duma, when the *nec plus ultra* of rampant counter-revolution has been reached and reaction is perpetrating savage acts of political vengeance upon the revolutionaries in general and the Social-Democratic deputies in the Second Duma in particular—let it not be thought that this moment is “unsuitable” for “broad” agrarian programmes. Such a thought would be akin to the backsliding, despondency, disintegration, and decadence which have spread among wide sections of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals who belong to the Social-Democratic Party, or sympathise with this Party in Russia. The proletariat can only gain by having this rubbish swept clean out of the ranks of the workers’ party. Yes, the more savagely reaction rages, the more does it actually retard the inevitable economic development, the more successfully does it prepare the wider upsurge of the democratic movement. And we must take advantage of the temporary lulls in mass action in order critically to study the experience of the great revolution, verify this experience, purge it of dross, and pass it on to the masses as a guide for the impending struggle.

November-December 1907

First published in 1908  
in book form by *Zerno* Publishers  
(confiscated); published for the second time  
in 1917 in Petrograd by *Zhizn i Znaniye* Publishers

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 13, pp. 219, 421-429.

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## From: "L. N. Tolstoy"<sup>1</sup>

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One of the principal distinguishing features of our revolution is that it was a *peasant* bourgeois revolution in the era of the very advanced development of capitalism throughout the world and of its comparatively advanced development in Russia. It was a bourgeois revolution because its immediate aim was to overthrow the tsarist autocracy, the tsarist monarchy, and to abolish land-lordism, but not to overthrow the domination of the bourgeoisie. The peasantry in particular was not aware of the latter aim, it was not aware of the distinction between this aim and the closer and more immediate aims of the struggle. It was a peasant bourgeois revolution because the objective conditions put in the forefront the problem of changing the basic conditions of life for the peasantry, of breaking up the old, medieval system of landownership, of "clearing the ground" for capitalism; the objective conditions were responsible for the appearance of the peasant masses on the arena of more or less independent historic action.

*Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 18,  
November 16 (29), 1910

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 16, p. 324.

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<sup>1</sup> *Tolstoy L. N.* (1828-1910) — great Russian writer. Lenin said that the sum total of his views, taken as a whole, expressed the specific features of the first Russian revolution which was "a *peasant* bourgeois revolution". (Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 15, p. 206).

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## From: "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution"<sup>1</sup>

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My young friends and comrades,

Today is the twelfth anniversary of "Bloody Sunday", which is rightly regarded as the beginning of the Russian revolution.

Thousands of workers—not Social-Democrats, but loyal God-fearing subjects—led by the priest Gapon,<sup>2</sup> streamed from all parts of the capital to its centre, to the square in front of the Winter Palace, to submit a petition to the tsar. The workers carried icons. In a letter to the tsar, their then leader, Gapon, had guaranteed his personal safety and asked him to appear before the people.

Troops were called out. Uhlans and Cossacks attacked the crowd with drawn swords. They fired on the unarmed workers, who on their bended knees implored the Cossacks to allow them to go to the tsar. Over one thousand were killed and over two thousand wounded on that day, according to police reports. The indignation of the workers was indescribable.

Such is the general picture of January 22, 1905—"Bloody Sunday"...

It is in this awakening of tremendous masses

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<sup>1</sup> Lenin read his *Lecture on the 1905 Revolution* at a meeting of Swiss socialist youth on January 9 (22), 1917.

<sup>2</sup> Gapon G. A. (1870-1906) — a priest, had close ties with the police since 1902. In 1903-04 formed an organisation among the workers of Petersburg, the aim being to divert their attention from the revolutionary struggle. He was the initiator of the march of the workers to the tsar on January 9, 1905, when the soldiers opened fire on the workers. In 1906 he was exposed as a police agent, and hanged by a group of workers.

of the people to political consciousness and revolutionary struggle that the historic significance of January 22, 1905 lies.

"There is not yet a revolutionary people in Russia," wrote Mr. Pyotr Struve,<sup>1</sup> then leader of the Russian liberals and publisher abroad of an illegal, uncensored organ, *two days* before "Bloody Sunday". The idea that an illiterate peasant country could produce a revolutionary people seemed utterly absurd to this "highly educated", supercilious and extremely stupid leader of the bourgeois reformists. So deep was the conviction of the reformists of those days—as of the reformists of today—that a real revolution was impossible!

Prior to January 22 (or January 9, old style), 1905, the revolutionary party of Russia consisted of a small group of people, and the reformists of those days (exactly like the reformists of today) derisively called us a "sect". Several hundred revolutionary organisers, several thousand members of local organisations, half a dozen revolutionary papers appearing not more frequently than once a month, published mainly abroad and smuggled into Russia with incredible difficulty and at the cost of many sacrifices—such were the revolutionary parties in Russia, and the revolutionary Social-Democracy in particular, prior to January 22, 1905. This circumstance gave the narrow-minded and overbearing reformists formal justification for their claim that there was not yet a revolutionary people in Russia.

<sup>1</sup> *Struve P. B.* (1870-1944) — one of the leaders of the Constitutional-Democratic Party (Cadets). He was an active supporter of the imperialist policies of the bourgeoisie. After the 1917 October Revolution he, as an active counter-revolutionary, participated in the struggle against Soviet power. Emigrated to Paris where he was editor-in-chief of the monarchist newspaper *Renaissance*.

Within a few months, however, the picture changed completely. The hundreds of revolutionary Social-Democrats "suddenly" grew into thousands; the thousands became the leaders of between two and three million proletarians. The proletarian struggle produced widespread ferment, often revolutionary movements among the peasant masses, fifty to a hundred million strong; the peasant movement had its reverberations in the army and led to soldiers' revolts, to armed clashes between one section of the army and another. In this manner a colossal country, with a population of 130,000,000, went into the revolution; in this way, dormant Russia was transformed into a Russia of a revolutionary proletariat and a revolutionary people.

It is necessary to study this transformation, understand why it was possible, its methods and ways, so to speak.

The principal factor in this transformation was the *mass strike*. The peculiarity of the Russian revolution is that it was a *bourgeois-democratic* revolution in its social content, but a *proletarian* revolution in its methods of struggle. It was a bourgeois-democratic revolution since its immediate aim, which it could achieve directly and with its own forces, was a democratic republic, the eight-hour day and confiscation of the immense estates of the nobility—all the measures the French bourgeois revolution in 1792-93 had almost completely achieved.

At the same time, the Russian revolution was also a proletarian revolution, not only in the sense that the proletariat was the leading force, the vanguard of the movement, but also in the sense that a specifically proletarian weapon of struggle—the strike—was the principal means of

bringing the masses into motion and the most characteristic phenomenon in the wave-like rise of decisive events.

The Russian revolution was the *first*, though certainly not the last, great revolution in history in which the mass political strike played an extraordinarily important part. It may even be said that the events of the Russian revolution and the sequence of its political forms cannot be understood without a study of the *strike statistics* to disclose the *basis* of these events and this sequence of forms.

I know perfectly well that dry statistics are hardly suitable in a lecture and are likely to bore the hearer. Nevertheless, I cannot refrain from quoting a few figures, in order that you may be able to appreciate the real objective basis of the whole movement. The average annual number of strikers in Russia during the ten years preceding the revolution was 43,000, which means 430,000 for the decade. In January 1905, the first month of the revolution, the number of strikers was 440,000. In other words, there were *more* strikers *in one month* than in the whole of the preceding decade!

In no capitalist country in the world, not even in the most advanced countries like England, the United States of America, or Germany, has there been anything to match the tremendous Russian strike movement of 1905. The total number of strikers was 2,800,000, more than two times the number of factory workers in the country! This, of course, does not prove that the urban factory workers of Russia were more educated, or stronger, or more adapted to the struggle than their brothers in Western Europe. The very opposite is true.

But it does show how great the dormant energy of the proletariat can be. It shows that in a revolutionary epoch—I say this without the slightest exaggeration, on the basis of the most accurate data of Russian history—the proletariat *can generate fighting energy a hundred times greater* than in ordinary, peaceful times. It shows that up to 1905 mankind did not yet know what a great, a tremendous exertion of effort the proletariat is, and will be, capable of in a fight for really great aims, and one waged in a really revolutionary manner!

The history of the Russian revolution shows that it was the vanguard, the finest elements of the wage-workers, that fought with the greatest tenacity and the greatest devotion. The larger the mills and factories involved, the more stubborn were the strikes, and the more often did they recur during the year. The bigger the city, the more important was the part the proletariat played in the struggle. Three big cities, St. Petersburg, Riga and Warsaw, which have the largest and most class-conscious working-class element, show an immeasurably greater number of strikers, in relation to all workers, than any other city, and, of course, much greater than the rural districts.

In Russia—as probably in other capitalist countries—the metalworkers represent the vanguard of the proletariat. In this connection we note the following instructive fact: taking all industries, the number of persons involved in strikes in 1905 was 160 per hundred workers employed, but in the *metal industry* the number was 320 per hundred! It is estimated that in consequence of the 1905 strikes every Russian factory worker lost an average of ten rubles in wages—approximately 26

francs at the pre-war rate of exchange—sacrificing this money, as it were, for the sake of the struggle. But if we take the metalworkers, we find that the loss in wages was *three times as great!* The finest elements of the working class marched in the forefront, giving leadership to the hesitant, rousing the dormant and encouraging the weak.

A distinctive feature was the manner in which economic strikes were interwoven with political strikes during the revolution. There can be no doubt that only this very close link-up of the two forms of strike gave the movement its great power. The broad masses of the exploited could not have been drawn into the revolutionary movement had they not been given daily examples of how the wage-workers in the various industries were forcing the capitalists to grant immediate, direct improvements in their conditions. This struggle imbued the masses of the Russian people with a new spirit. Only then did the old serf-ridden, sluggish, patriarchal, pious and obedient Russia cast out the old Adam; only then did the Russian people obtain a really democratic and really revolutionary education.

When the bourgeois gentry and their uncritical echoers, the social-reformists, talk priggishly about the “education” of the masses, they usually mean something schoolmasterly, pedantic, something that demoralises the masses and instils in them bourgeois prejudices.

The real education of the masses can never be separated from their independent political, and especially revolutionary, struggle. Only struggle educates the exploited class. Only struggle discloses to it the magnitude of its own power, widens its horizon, enhances its abilities, clarifies its mind, forges its will. That is why even reactionaries had



to admit that the year 1905, the year of struggle, the "mad year", definitely buried patriarchal Russia.

Let us examine more closely the relation, in the 1905 strike struggles, between the metalworkers and the textile workers. The metalworkers are the best paid, the most class-conscious and best educated proletarians. The textile workers, who in 1905 were two and a half times more numerous than the metalworkers, are the most backward and the worst paid body of workers in Russia, and in very many cases have not yet definitely severed connections with their peasant kinsmen in the village. This brings us to a very important circumstance.

Throughout the whole of 1905, the metalworkers' strikes show a preponderance of political over economic strikes, though this preponderance was far greater toward the end of the year than at the beginning. Among the textile workers, on the other hand, we observe an overwhelming preponderance of economic strikes at the beginning of 1905, and it is only at the end of the year that we get a preponderance of political strikes. From this it follows quite obviously that the economic struggle, the struggle for immediate and direct improvement of conditions, is alone capable of rousing the most backward strata of the exploited masses, gives them a real education and transforms them—during a revolutionary period—into an army of political fighters within the space of a few months.

Of course, for this to happen, it was necessary for the vanguard of the workers not to regard the class struggle as a struggle in the interests of a thin upper stratum—a conception the reformists all too often try to instil—but for the proletariat

to come forward as the real vanguard of the majority of the exploited and draw that majority into the struggle, as was the case in Russia in 1905, and as must be, and certainly will be, the case in the impending proletarian revolution in Europe.

The beginning of 1905 brought the first great wave of strikes that swept the entire country. As early as the spring of that year we see the rise of the first big, not only economic, but also political *peasant movement* in Russia. The importance of this historical turning-point will be appreciated if it is borne in mind that the Russian peasantry was liberated from the severest form of serfdom only in 1861, that the majority of the peasants are illiterate, that they live in indescribable poverty, oppressed by the landlords, deluded by the priests and isolated from each other by vast distances and an almost complete absence of roads.

Russia witnessed the first revolutionary movement against tsarism in 1825,<sup>1</sup> a movement represented almost exclusively by noblemen. Thereafter and up to 1881, when Alexander II<sup>2</sup> was assassinated by the terrorists, the movement was led by middle-class intellectuals. They displayed supreme self-sacrifice and astonished the whole world by the heroism of their terrorist methods of struggle. Their sacrifices were certainly not in vain. They doubtlessly contributed—directly or indirectly—to the subsequent revolutionary education of the Russian people. But they did not, and could

<sup>1</sup> On December 14, 1825, in St. Petersburg officers from the nobility—the first Russian revolutionaries—rose in arms against the tsarist government. They have come to be known in history as the Decembrists. They aimed at overthrowing autocracy and abolishing serfdom.

<sup>2</sup> *Alexander II* — Russian tsar who reigned from 1855 to 1881.

not, achieve their immediate aim of generating a people's revolution.

That was achieved only by the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. Only the waves of mass strikes that swept over the whole country, strikes connected with the severe lessons of the imperialist Russo-Japanese War, roused the broad masses of peasants from their lethargy. The word "striker" acquired an entirely new meaning among the peasants: it signified a rebel, a revolutionary, a term previously expressed by the word "student". But the "student" belonged to the middle class, to the "learned", to the "gentry", and was therefore alien to the people. The "striker", on the other hand, was of the people; he belonged to the exploited class. Deported from St. Petersburg, he often returned to the village where he told his fellow-villagers of the conflagration which was spreading to all the cities and would destroy both the capitalists and the nobility. A new type appeared in the Russian village—the class-conscious young peasant. He associated with "strikers", he read newspapers, he told the peasants about events in the cities, explained to his fellow-villagers the meaning of political demands, and urged them to fight the landowning nobility, the priests and the government officials.

The peasants would gather in groups to discuss their conditions, and gradually they were drawn into the struggle. Large crowds attacked the big estates, set fire to the manor-houses and appropriated supplies, seized grain and other food-stuffs, killed policemen and demanded transfer to the people of the huge estates.

In the spring of 1905, the peasant movement was only just beginning, involving only a minority, approximately one-seventh, of the uyezds.

But the combination of the proletarian mass strikes in the cities with the peasant movement in the rural areas was sufficient to shake the "firmest" and last prop of tsarism. I refer to the *army*.

There began a series of *mutinies* in the navy and the army. During the revolution, every fresh wave of strikes and of the peasant movement was accompanied by mutinies in all parts of Russia. The most well-known of these is the mutiny on the Black Sea cruiser *Prince Potemkin*, which was seized by the mutineers and took part in the revolution in Odessa. After the defeat of the revolution and unsuccessful attempts to seize other ports (Feodosia in the Crimea, for instance), it surrendered to the Rumanian authorities in Constantza...

...The revolutionary ferment among the people could not but spread to the armed forces. It is indicative that the leaders of the movement came from *those elements* in the army and the navy who had been recruited mainly from among the industrial workers and of whom more technical training was required, for instance, the sappers. The broad masses, however, were still too naïve, their mood was too passive, too good-natured, too Christian. They flared up rather quickly; any instance of injustice, excessively harsh treatment by the officers, bad food, etc., could lead to revolt. But what they lacked was persistence, a clear perception of aim, a clear understanding that only the most vigorous continuation of the armed struggle, only a victory over all the military and civil authorities, only the overthrow of the government and the seizure of power throughout the country could guarantee the success of the revolution.

The broad masses of sailors and soldiers were easily roused to revolt. But with equal light-heart-

edness they foolishly released arrested officers. They allowed the officers to pacify them by promises and persuasion; in this way the officers gained precious time, brought in reinforcements, broke the strength of the rebels, and then followed the most brutal suppression of the movement and the execution of its leaders.

A comparison of these 1905 mutinies with the Decembrist uprising of 1825<sup>1</sup> is particularly interesting. In 1825 the leaders of the political movement were almost exclusively officers, and officers drawn from the nobility. They had become infected, through contact, with the democratic ideas of Europe during the Napoleonic wars. The mass of the soldiers, who at that time were still serfs, remained passive.

The history of 1905 presents a totally different picture. With few exceptions, the mood of the officers was either bourgeois-liberal, reformist, or frankly counter-revolutionary. The workers and peasants in military uniform were the soul of the mutinies. The movement spread to all sections of the people, and for the first time in Russia's history involved the majority of the exploited. But what it lacked was, on the one hand, persistence and determination among the masses—they were too much afflicted with the malady of trustfulness—and, on the other, organisation of revolutionary Social-Democratic workers in military uniform—they lacked the ability to take the leadership into their own hands, march at the head of the revolutionary army and launch an offensive against the government.

I might remark, incidentally, that these two shortcomings will—more slowly, perhaps, than

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<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 118.

we would like, but surely—be eliminated not only by the general development of capitalism, but also by the present war. . .

At any rate, the history of the Russian revolution, like the history of the Paris Commune of 1871, teaches us the incontrovertible lesson that militarism can never and under no circumstances be defeated and destroyed, except by a victorious struggle of one section of the national army against the other section. It is not sufficient simply to denounce, revile and “repudiate” militarism, to criticise and prove that it is harmful; it is foolish peacefully to refuse to perform military service. The task is to keep the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat tense and train its best elements, not only in a general way, but concretely, so that when popular ferment reaches the highest pitch, they will put themselves at the head of the revolutionary army.

The day-to-day experience of any capitalist country teaches us the same lesson. Every “minor” crisis that such a country experiences discloses to us in miniature the elements, the rudiments, of the battles that will inevitably take place on a large scale during a big crisis. What else, for instance, is a strike if not a minor crisis of capitalist society? Was not the Prussian Minister for Internal Affairs, Herr von Puttkammer, right when he coined the famous phrase: “In every strike there lurks the hydra of revolution”? Does not the calling out of troops during strikes in all, even the most peaceful, the most “democratic”—save the mark—capitalist countries show *how* things will shape out in a really *big* crisis?

But to return to the history of the Russian revolution.

I have tried to show you how the workers’

strikes stirred up the whole country and the broadest, most backward strata of the exploited, how the peasant movement began, and how it was accompanied by mutiny in the armed forces.

The movement reached its zenith in the autumn of 1905. On August 19 (6), the tsar issued a manifesto on the introduction of popular representation. The so-called Bulygin Duma was to be created on the basis of a suffrage embracing a ridiculously small number of voters, and this peculiar "parliament" was to have no legislative powers whatever, only *advisory*, consultative powers!

The bourgeoisie, the liberals, the opportunists were ready to grasp with both hands this "gift" of the frightened tsar. Like all reformists, our reformists of 1905 could not understand that historic situations arise when reforms, and particularly promises of reforms, pursue only one aim: to allay the unrest of the people, force the revolutionary class to cease, or at least slacken, its struggle.

The Russian revolutionary Social-Democracy was well aware of the real nature of this grant of an illusory constitution in August 1905. That is why, without a moment's hesitation, it issued the slogans: "Down with the advisory Duma! Boycott the Duma! Down with the tsarist government! Continue the revolutionary struggle to overthrow it! Not the tsar, but a provisional revolutionary government must convene Russia's first real, popular representative assembly!"

History proved that the revolutionary Social-Democrats were right, for the *Bulygin Duma* was never convened. It was swept away by the revolutionary storm before it could be convened. And this storm forced the tsar to promulgate a new

electoral law, which provided for a considerable increase in the number of voters, and to recognise the legislative character of the Duma.

October and December 1905 marked the highest point in the rising tide of the Russian revolution. All the well-springs of the people's revolutionary strength flowed in a wider stream than ever before. The number of strikers—which in January 1905, as I have already told you, was 440,000—reached over half a million in October 1905 (in a single month!). To this number, which applies *only* to factory workers, must be added several hundred thousand railway workers, postal and telegraph employees, etc.

The general railway strike stopped all rail traffic and paralysed the power of the government in the most effective manner. The doors of the universities were flung wide open, and the lecture halls, which in peace time were used solely to befuddle youthful minds with pedantic professorial wisdom and to turn the students into docile servants of the bourgeoisie and tsarism, now became the scene of public meetings at which thousands of workers, artisans and office workers openly and freely discussed political issues.

Freedom of the press was won. The censorship was simply ignored. No publisher dared send the obligatory censor-copy to the authorities, and the authorities did not dare take any measure against this. For the first time in Russian history, revolutionary newspapers appeared freely in St. Petersburg and other towns. In St. Petersburg alone, three Social-Democratic daily papers were published, with circulations ranging from 50,000 to 100,000.

The proletariat marched at the head of the movement. It set out to win the eight-hour day



by revolutionary action. "*An Eight-Hour Day and Arms!*" was the fighting slogan of the St. Petersburg proletariat. That the fate of the revolution could, and would, be decided only by armed struggle was becoming obvious to an ever-increasing mass of workers.

In the fire of battle, a peculiar mass organisation was formed, the famous *Soviets of Workers' Deputies*, comprising delegates from all factories. In several cities these *Soviets of Workers' Deputies* began more and more to play the part of a provisional revolutionary government, the part of organs and leaders of the uprising. Attempts were made to organise Soviets of Soldiers' and Sailors' Deputies and to combine them with the Soviets of Workers' Deputies.

For a time several cities in Russia became something in the nature of small local "republics". The government authorities were deposed and the Soviet of Workers' Deputies actually functioned as the new government. Unfortunately, these periods were all too brief, the "victories" were too weak, too isolated.

The peasant movement in the autumn of 1905 reached still greater dimensions. *Over one-third* of all the uyezds were affected by the so-called "peasant disorders" and regular peasant uprisings. The peasants burned down no less than two thousand estates and distributed among themselves the food stocks of which the predatory nobility had robbed the people.

Unfortunately, this work was not thorough enough! Unfortunately, the peasants destroyed only one-fifteenth of the total number of landed estates, only one-fifteenth part of what they *should have* destroyed in order to wipe the shame of large feudal landownership from the face of

the Russian earth. Unfortunately, the peasants were too scattered, too isolated from each other, in their actions; they were not organised enough, not aggressive enough, and therein lies one of the fundamental reasons for the defeat of the revolution.

A movement for national liberation flared up among the oppressed peoples of Russia. *Over one-half, almost three-fifths (to be exact, 57 per cent)* of the population of Russia is subject to national oppression; they are not even free to use their native language, they are forcibly Russified. The Moslems, for instance, who number tens of millions, were quick to organise a Moslem League—this was a time of rapid growth of all manner of organisations.

The following instance will give the audience, particularly the youth, an example of how at that time the movement for national liberation in Russia rose in conjunction with the labour movement.

In December 1905, Polish children in hundreds of schools burned all Russian books, pictures and portraits of the tsar, and attacked and drove out the Russian teachers and their Russian school-fellows, shouting: "Get out! Go back to Russia!" The Polish secondary school pupils put forward, among others, the following demands: (1) all secondary schools must be under the control of a Soviet of Workers' Deputies; (2) joint pupils' and workers' meetings to be held in school premises; (3) secondary school pupils to be allowed to wear red blouses as a token of adherence to the future proletarian republic.

The higher the tide of the movement rose, the more vigorously and decisively did the reaction arm itself to fight the revolution. The Russian Revolution of 1905 confirmed the truth of what Karl

Kautsky wrote in 1902 in his book *Social Revolution* (he was still, incidentally, a revolutionary Marxist and not, as at present, a champion of social-patriotism and opportunism). This is what he wrote:

“...The impending revolution ... will be less like a spontaneous uprising against the government and more like a protracted *civil war*.”

That is how it was, and undoubtedly that is how it will be in the coming European revolution!

Tsarism vented its hatred particularly upon the Jews. On the one hand, the Jews furnished a particularly high percentage (compared with the total Jewish population) of leaders of the revolutionary movement. And now, too, it should be noted to the credit of the Jews, they furnish a relatively high percentage of internationalists, compared with other nations. On the other hand, tsarism adroitly exploited the basest anti-Jewish prejudices of the most ignorant strata of the population in order to organise, if not to lead directly, *pogroms*—over 4,000 were killed and more than 10,000 mutilated in 100 towns. These atrocious massacres of peaceful Jews, their wives and children roused disgust throughout the civilised world. I have in mind, of course, the disgust of the truly democratic elements of the civilised world, and these are *exclusively* the socialist workers, the proletarians.

Even in the freest, even in the republican countries of Western Europe, the bourgeoisie manages very well to combine its hypocritical phrases about “Russian atrocities” with the most shameless financial transactions, particularly with financial support of tsarism and imperialist exploitation of Russia through export of capital, etc.

The climax of the 1905 Revolution came in the December uprising in Moscow. For nine days a small number of rebels, of organised and armed workers—there were not more than *eight thousand*—fought against the tsar's government, which dared not trust the Moscow garrison. In fact, it had to keep it locked up, and was able to quell the rebellion only by bringing in the Semenovskiy Regiment from St. Petersburg.

The bourgeoisie likes to describe the Moscow uprising as something artificial, and to treat it with ridicule. For instance, in German so-called "scientific" literature, Herr Professor Max Weber, in his lengthy survey of Russia's political development, refers to the Moscow uprising as a "putsch". "The Lenin group," says this "highly learned" Herr Professor, "and a section of the Socialist-Revolutionaries had long prepared for this *senseless* uprising."

To properly assess this piece of professorial wisdom of the cowardly bourgeoisie, one need only recall the strike statistics. In January 1905, only 123,000 were involved in purely political strikes, in October the figure was 330,000, and *in December the maximum was reached—370,000* taking part in purely political strikes in a single month! Let us recall, too, the progress of the revolution, the peasant and soldier uprisings, and we shall see that the bourgeois "scientific" view of the December uprising is not only absurd. It is a subterfuge resorted to by the representatives of the cowardly bourgeoisie, which sees in the proletariat its most dangerous class enemy.

In reality, the inexorable trend of the Russian revolution was towards an armed, decisive battle between the tsarist government and the vanguard of the class-conscious proletariat.

I have already pointed out, in my previous remarks, wherein lay the weakness of the Russian revolution that led to its temporary defeat.

The suppression of the December uprising marked the beginning of the ebb of the revolution. But in this period, too, extremely interesting moments are to be observed. Suffice it to recall that twice the foremost militant elements of the working class tried to check the retreat of the revolution and to prepare a new offensive.

But my time has nearly expired, and I do not want to abuse the patience of my audience. I think, however, that I have outlined the most important aspects of the revolution—its class character, its driving forces and its methods of struggle—as fully as so big a subject can be dealt with in a brief lecture.

A few brief remarks concerning the world significance of the Russian revolution.

Geographically, economically and historically, Russia belongs not only to Europe, but also to Asia. That is why the Russian revolution succeeded not only in finally awakening Europe's biggest and most backward country and in creating a revolutionary people led by a revolutionary proletariat.

It achieved more than that. The Russian revolution engendered a movement throughout the whole of Asia. The revolutions in Turkey, Persia and China prove that the mighty uprising of 1905 left a deep imprint, and that its influence, expressed in the forward movement of *hundreds and hundreds* of millions, is ineradicable.

In an indirect way, the Russian revolution influenced also the countries of the West. One must not forget that news of the tsar's constitutional manifesto, on reaching Vienna on October 30,

1905, played a decisive part in the final victory of universal suffrage in Austria.

A telegram bearing the news was placed on the speaker's rostrum at the Congress of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party just as Comrade Ellenbogen—at that time he was not yet a social-patriot, but a comrade—was delivering his report on the political strike. The discussion was immediately adjourned. "Our place is in the streets!"—was the cry that resounded through the hall where the delegates of the Austrian Social-Democracy were assembled. And the following days witnessed the biggest street demonstrations in Vienna and barricades in Prague. The battle for universal suffrage in Austria was won.

We very often meet West-Europeans who talk of the Russian revolution as if events, the course and methods of struggle in that backward country have very little resemblance to West-European patterns, and, therefore, can hardly have any practical significance.

Nothing could be more erroneous.

The forms and occasions for the impending battles in the coming European revolution will doubtlessly differ in many respects from the forms of the Russian revolution.

Nevertheless, the Russian revolution—precisely because of its proletarian character, in that particular sense of which I have spoken—is the *prologue* to the coming European revolution. Undoubtedly, this coming revolution can only be a proletarian revolution, and in an even more profound sense of the word: a proletarian, socialist revolution also in its content. This coming revolution will show to an even greater degree, on the one hand, that only stern battles, only civil wars, can free humanity from the yoke of capital, and, on

the other hand, that only class-conscious proletarians can and will give leadership to the vast majority of the exploited.

We must not be deceived by the present grave-like stillness in Europe. Europe is pregnant with revolution. The monstrous horrors of the imperialist war, the suffering caused by the high cost of living everywhere engender a revolutionary mood; and the ruling classes, the bourgeoisie, and its servitors, the governments, are more and more moving into a blind alley from which they can never extricate themselves without tremendous upheavals.

Just as in Russia in 1905, a popular uprising against the tsarist government began under the leadership of the proletariat with the aim of achieving a democratic republic, so, in Europe, the coming years, precisely because of this predatory war, will lead to popular uprisings under the leadership of the proletariat against the power of finance capital, against the big banks, against the capitalists; and these upheavals cannot end otherwise than with the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, with the victory of socialism.

We of the older generation may not live to see the decisive battles of this coming revolution. But I can, I believe, express the confident hope that the youth which is working so splendidly in the socialist movement of Switzerland, and of the whole world, will be fortunate enough not only to fight, but also to win, in the coming proletarian revolution.

Written in German before

January 9 (22), 1917

First published in *Pravda*,

No. 18, January 22, 1925

*Coll. Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 236-253.