N. GENERAL PICTURE OF THE STRUGGLE AT THE CONGRESS.
THE REVOLUTIONARY AND OPPORTUNIST WINGS
OF THE PARTY

We must now sum up, so that we may, on the basis of the entire Congress material, answer the following question: what elements, groups and shades went to make up the final majority and minority which were destined for a time to become the main division in the Party? We must sum up all the material relating to the shades of opinion on matters of principle, theory and tactics which the minutes of the Congress provide in such abundance. Without a general "summary," without a general picture of the Congress as a whole, and of all the principal groupings during the voting, this material is too disjointed, too disconnected, so that at first sight some groupings seem to be casual, especially to one who does not take the trouble to make an independent and comprehensive study of the minutes of the Congress (and how many readers have taken that trouble?).

In English parliamentary reports we often meet the characteristic word "division." The House "divided" into such and such a majority and minority—it is said when an issue is voted. The "division" of our Social-Democratic House on the various issues discussed at the Congress presents a picture of the struggle inside the Party, of its shades of opinions and groups, that for its completeness and accuracy is unique and invaluable. To make the picture more graphic, to obtain a real picture instead of a heap of disconnected, disjointed and isolated facts and incidents, to put a stop to the endless and senseless controversies over separate divisions (who voted for whom and who supported whom?), I have decided to try to depict all the basic types of "divisions" at our Congress in the form of a diagram. This will probably seem strange to a great many people, but I doubt whether any other method can be found that would really generalize and summarize the results in the most complete and accurate manner possible. Whether a particular delegate voted for or against a given motion can be determined with absolute accuracy in cases when a roll-call vote was taken; and in certain important cases, even when no roll-call vote was taken, it can be determined from the minutes with a very high degree of probability, with a sufficient degree of approximation to the truth. If we take into account all the roll-call votes and all the other votes on issues of any importance (as judged, for example, by the thoroughness and warmth of the debates), we shall obtain a picture of the struggle within our Party that will be as objective as the material at our disposal permits. In doing so, instead of trying to give a photograph, i.e., an image of each vote separately, we shall try to give a picture, i.e., to present all the main types of voting, ignoring relatively unimportant exceptions and variations which would only confuse matters. In any case, anybody will be able with the aid of the minutes to check every
detail of our picture, to supplement it with any particular vote he likes, in a word, to criticize it not only by arguments, doubts and references to isolated cases, but by drawing a different picture on the basis of the same material.

In marking on the diagram every delegate who took part in the voting, we shall indicate by special shading the four main groups which we have traced in detail throughout the course of the debates at the Congress, viz., 1) the Iskra-ites of the majority; 2) the Iskra-ites of the minority; 3) the "Centre," and 4) the anti-Iskra-ites. We have seen the difference in shades of principle between these groups in a host of instances, and if anyone does not like the names of the groups, which remind lovers of zigzags too much of the Iskra organization and the Iskra trend, let us remark that it is not the name that matters. Now that we have traced the shades through all the debates at the Congress it is easy to substitute for the already established and familiar Party appellations (which jar on the ears of some) a description of the essence of the differences between the groups. Were this substitution made, we would obtain the following names for these same four groups: 1) consistent revolutionary Social-Democrats; 2) minor opportunists; 3) middling opportunists; and 4) major opportunists (major according to our Russian standards).

We shall now proceed to give a detailed explanation of the types of vote which have been "snapped" on this diagram (see diagram: General Picture of the Struggle at the Congress).

The first type of vote (A) covers cases when the "Centre" joined with the Iskra-ites against the anti-Iskra-ites or a part of them. It includes the vote on the program as a whole (Comrade Akimov alone abstained, all the others voted for); the vote on the resolution condemning federation in principle (all voted for, except the five Bundists); the vote on § 2 of the Bund rules (the five Bundists voted against us; five abstained, viz.: Martynov, Akimov, Brouckère and Makhov, the latter with two votes, the rest were with us); it is this vote that is represented in diagram A. Further, the three votes on the question of endorsing the Iskra as the central organ of the Party were also of this type: the editors (five votes) abstained; in all the three divisions two voted against (Akimov and Brouckère) and, in addition, when the vote on the motives for endorsing the Iskra was taken, the five Bundists and Comrade Martynov abstained.*

This type of vote provides an answer to a very interesting and important question, namely, when did the Congress "Centre" vote with the Iskra-ites?

* Why was the vote on § 2 of the Bund rules taken as an illustration in the diagram? Because the votes on the question of endorsing the Iskra were less complete, while the votes on the program and on the question of federation refer to political decisions of a less clearly defined character. Speaking generally, the choice of any other one of a number of votes of the same type will not in the least affect the main features of the picture, as anyone may easily see by making the corresponding changes.
ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

GENERAL PICTURE OF THE STRUGGLE AT THE CONGRESS

The plus and minus signs indicate the total number of votes cast for and against on a particular issue. The figures below the strips indicate the number of votes cast by each of the four groups. The character of the divisions covered by each of the types A to E is explained in the text.
Either when the anti-"Iskra"-ites, too, were with us, with a few exceptions (adoption of the program, or endorsement of the Iskra without the motives stated), or else when it involved the sort of statement which was not in itself a direct committal to a definite political position (recognition of the organizing work of the Iskra was not in itself a committal to carry out its organizational policy in relation to particular groups; rejection of the principle of federation did not preclude abstention from voting on a specific scheme of federation, as we have seen in the case of Comrade Makhov). We have already seen, when speaking of the significance of the groupings at the Congress in general, how falsely this matter is put in the official account of the official Iskra, which (through the mouth of Comrade Martov) slurs and glosses over the difference between the Iskra-ites and the "Centre," between the consistent revolutionary Social-Democrats and the opportunists, by citing cases when the anti-"Iskra"-ites, too, sided with us! Even the most "Right-wing" of the opportunists in the German and French Social-Democratic parties never vote against such points as the adoption of the program as a whole.

The second type of division (B) covers the cases when the Iskra-ites, consistent and inconsistent, voted together against all the anti-Iskra-ites and the entire "Centre." These were mostly cases that involved giving effect to definite and specific plans of the Iskra policy, of endorsing the Iskra in fact and not only in word. They include the Organization Committee episode;* the question whether the position of the Bund in the Party should be the first item on the agenda; the dissolution of the Yuzhny Rabochy group; the two votes on the agrarian program, and, sixthly and lastly, the vote against the Foreign Union of Russian Social-Democrats (Rabocheye Dyelo), that is, the recognition of the League as the only Party organization abroad. In cases like these the old, pre-Party, circle spirit, the interests of the opportunist organizations or groups, the narrow conception of Marxism, were at issue with the strictly consistent principles of the policy of revolutionary Social-Democracy, the Iskra-ites of the minority still sided with us in a number of cases, in a number of exceedingly important votes (important from the standpoint of the Organization Committee, Yuzhny

* It is this vote that is depicted in Diagram B: the Iskra-ites secured thirty-two votes; the Bundist resolution sixteen. It should be pointed out that not one of the votes of this type was by roll-call. The way the individual delegates voted can only be established—although to a very high degree of probability—by two sets of evidence: 1) in the debate the speakers of both groups of Iskra-ites spoke in favour, those of the anti-Iskra-ites and the Centre against; 2) the number of votes cast in favour was always very close to thirty-three. Nor should it be forgotten that when analysing the debates at the Congress we pointed out, quite apart from the voting, a number of cases when the "Centre" sided with the anti-Iskra-ites (the opportunists) against us. Some of these issues were: the absolute value of democratic demands, whether we should support the opposition elements, restriction of centralism, etc.
Rabochy and Rabocheye Dyelo)... until their own circle spirit and their own inconsistencies came on the carpet. The "divisions" of this type make it quite clear that on a number of issues involving the practical application of our principles, the Centre joined forces with the anti-"Iskra"-ites, displaying a much greater kinship with them than with us, a greater inclination in practice towards the opportunist than towards the revolutionary wing of Social-Democracy. Those who were Iskra-ites in name but were ashamed to be Iskra-ites revealed their true nature; and the struggle that inevitably ensued caused no little irritation which obscured from the least thoughtful and most impressionable the significance of the shades of principle revealed in the course of the struggle. But now that the ardour of battle has somewhat abated and the minutes remain as an unbiased extract of a series of heated battles, only those who will not see can fail to perceive that the alliance of the Makhovs and Egorovs with the Akimovs and Liebers was not, and could not be, casual.

The distinguishing feature of the third type of vote at the Congress, represented by the three remaining parts of the diagram (C, D and E), is that a small section of the "Iskra"-ites broke away and went over to the anti-"Iskra"-ites, who accordingly gained the victory (as long as they remained at the Congress). In order to trace with the fullest accuracy the development of this coalition of the Iskra-ite minority with the anti-Iskra-ites, we have reproduced all the three main types of roll-call votes of this kind. C is the vote on the equality of languages (the last of the three roll-call votes on this question is given, it being the most complete). All the anti-Iskra-ites and the whole Centre stood solid against us, whereas a part of the majority and a part of the minority separated from the Iskra-ites. It was not yet clear which of the "Iskra"-ites were capable of forming a definite and lasting coalition with the opportunist "Right-wing" of the Congress. Next comes type D—the vote on paragraph one of the Rules (of the two votes, we have taken the one which was more clear cut, that is, in which there were no abstentions). The coalition becomes more distinct and more lasting, all the Iskra-ites of the minority are now on the side of Akimov and Lieber, but only a very small number of Iskra-ites of the majority, these counterbalancing three of the "Centre" and one anti-Iskra-ite who had come over to our side. A mere glance at the diagram will show which elements shifted from side to side casually and temporarily and which were drawn with irresistible force towards a lasting coalition with the Akimovs. The last vote (E—elections to the central organ, the Central Committee and the Party Council), which in fact represents the final division into a majority and a minority, clearly reveals the complete fusion of the Iskra-ite minority with the entire "Centre" and the remnants of the anti-Iskra-ites. By this time, of the eight anti-Iskra-ites, only Comrade Brouckère remained at the Congress (Comrade Akimov had already explained his mistake to him and he had taken his proper place in the ranks of the Martovites). The withdrawal of the seven most
“Right” of the opportunists decided the issue of the elections against Martov. *

And now, with the aid of the objective evidence of votes of every type, let us sum up the results of the Congress.

There has been much talk to the effect that the majority at our Congress was “casual.” The diagram clearly shows that in one sense, but in that one only, the majority may be called casual, viz., in the sense that the withdrawal of the seven most opportunist delegates of the “Right” was casual. Only to the extent that this withdrawal was casual (and no more) was our majority casual. A mere glance at the diagram will show better than any long argument on whose side these seven would have been, were bound to have been. ** But the question arises: how far was the withdrawal of the seven really casual? That is a question which those who talk freely about the “casual” character of the majority do not like to ask themselves. They find it an unpleasant question. Was it a casual thing that the most arrant representatives of the Right wing, and not of the Left wing, of our Party were the ones to withdraw? Was it a casual thing that it was opportunists who withdrew, and not consistent revolutionary Social-Democrats? Is there no connection between this “casual” withdrawal and the struggle against the opportunist wing which was waged all through the Congress and which stands out so clearly in our diagram?

One has only to ask these questions, which are so unpleasant to the minority, to realize what fact all this talk about the casual character of the majority is intended to conceal. It is the unquestionable and incontrovertible fact that the minority was composed of those members of our Party who were most inclined to gravitate towards opportunism. The minority was composed of the elements in our Party who were the least stable in theory and the least consistent in matters of principle. It was from the Right wing of the Party that the minority was formed. The division into a majority and a minority is a direct and inevitable continuation of that division of the Social-Democrats into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing, into a Mountain and a Gironde, which did not appear only yesterday, nor in the Russian Workers’ Party alone, and which no doubt will not disappear to-morrow.

* The seven opportunists who withdrew from the Second Congress were the five Bundists (the Bund withdrew from the Party after the principle of federation had been rejected by the Congress) and two Rabocheye Dyelo delegates, Comrade Martynov and Comrade Akimov. These latter left the Congress after the Iskra-ite League had been recognized as the only Party organization abroad, i.e., after the Rabocheye Dyelo-ite Foreign “Union” of Russian Social-Democrats had been dissolved. (Lenin’s footnote to the 1908 edition.—Ed.)

** We shall see later that after the Congress both Comrade Akimov and the Voronezh Committee, which has the closest kinship with Comrade Akimov, explicitly expressed their sympathy with the “minority.”
This fact is of cardinal importance for an elucidation of the causes and the various stages of our disagreements. Whoever tries to evade the fact by denying or glossing over the struggle at the Congress and the shades of principle that emerged there, simply testifies to his own intellectual and political poverty. But in order to disprove the fact, it would have to be shown, in the first place, that the general picture of the votes and "divisions" at our Party Congress was different from the one I have drawn; and, in the second place, that it was the most consistent revolutionary Social-Democrats, those who in Russia have adopted the name of Iskra-ites, who were wrong in substance on all those issues over which the Congress "divided."

The fact that the minority consisted of the most opportunist, the most unstable and least consistent elements of the Party incidentally provides an answer to those numerous perplexities and objections that are addressed to the majority by people who are imperfectly acquainted with the matter, or have not given it sufficient thought. Is it not shallow, we are told, to account for the disagreement by a minor mistake of Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod? Yes, gentlemen, Comrade Martov's mistake was a minor one (and I said so even at the Congress, in the heat of the struggle); but this minor mistake might cause (and did cause) a lot of harm owing to the fact that Comrade Martov was pulled over to the side of delegates who had made numbers of mistakes and had manifested a tendency to opportunism and inconsistency of principle on numbers of questions. That Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod should have displayed instability was an individual and unimportant fact; it was not an individual fact, however, but a Party fact, and a not altogether unimportant one, that a very considerable minority had been formed of all the least stable elements, of all who either rejected Iskra's trend altogether and openly opposed it, or paid lip-service to it but actually sided time and again with the anti-Iskra-ites.

Is it not absurd to account for the disagreement by the prevalence of an inveterate circle spirit and revolutionary philistinism in the small circle comprised by the old Iskra editorial board? No, it is not absurd, because all those in our Party who all through the Congress had fought for every kind of circle, all those who were generally incapable of rising above revolutionary philistinism, all those who spoke of the "historical" character of the philistine and circle spirit to justify and preserve that evil, rose up in support of this particular circle. The fact that narrow circle interests prevailed over the Party spirit in the one little circle of the Iskra editorial board may, perhaps, be regarded as casual; but it was not casual that in staunch support of this circle rose up the Akimovs and Brouckères, who attached no less (if not more) value to the "historical continuity" of the celebrated Voronezh Committee and the notorious St. Petersburg "Workers" Organization.*

* The Voronezh Committee, which was controlled by "Economists," had taken up a hostile attitude towards the Iskra, the Organization Committee and
the Egorovs, who lamented the "murder" of *Rabocheye Dyelo* as bitterly as the "murder" of the old editorial board (if not more so), the Makhovs, etc., etc. You can tell a man by his friends—the proverb says. And you can tell a man's political complexion by his political allies, by the people who vote for him.

The minor mistake committed by Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod was, and might have remained, a minor one as long as it did not serve as the starting point for a durable alliance between them and the whole opportunist wing of our Party, as long as it did not lead, as a result of this alliance, to a recrudescence of opportunism, to the exaction of revenge by all whom *Iskra* had fought and who were now overjoyed at a chance of *venting their spleen* on the consistent adherents of revolutionary Social-Democracy. And, in fact, as a result of the post-congress events, we are now witnessing a recrudescence of opportunism in the new *Iskra*, the exaction of revenge by the Akimovs and Brouckères (see the leaflet issued by the Voronezh Committee),* and the glee of the Martynovs, who have at last (at last!) been allowed, in the detested *Iskra*, to have a kick at the detested "enemy" for all former grievances.

Taken by itself, there was nothing dreadful, nor crucial, nor even anything abnormal in the fact that the Congress (and the Party) had divided into a Left and a Right, a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing. On the contrary, the whole past decade in the history of the Russian (and not only of the Russian) Social-Democratic movement has been leading inevitably and inexorably to such a division. The fact that it was a number of very minor mistakes of the Right wing, of (relatively) very unimportant dissensions, that caused the division (which seems shocking to the superficial observer and to the philistine mind), marked a big step forward for our Party as a whole. Formerly we used to differ over major issues, such as might even at times justify a split; now we have reached agreement on all major and important points, and are only divided by shades, about which we may and should argue, but over which it would be absurd and childish to part company (as Comrade Plekhanov has quite rightly said in his interesting article "What Should Not Be Done?" to which we shall revert). *Now* that the anarchist behaviour of the minority after the Congress has almost led to a split in the Party, one may often hear wiseacres saying: "Was it worth while fighting at the Congress over such trifles as the Organization Committee episode, the dissolution of the Yuzhny Rabochy group or the *Rabocheye Dyelo*, or § 1, or the dissolution of the old editorial

the Second Congress they were arranging. It was therefore not invited to send delegates to the Congress.

The "workers'" organization of the St. Petersburg League was formed in the autumn of 1902 by "Economists" who had broken away from the St. Petersburg "League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class." Brouckère (Lydia Makhnovets) was the delegate from this organization at the Second Congress.—Ed.

* See this volume pp. 342-43.—Ed.
board, etc.? Those who argue in this way are in fact introducing the circle view into Party affairs: a struggle of shades in the Party is inevitable and essential as long as it does not lead to anarchy and splits, as long as it is confined within bounds approved by the common consent of all comrades and Party members. And our struggle against the Right wing of the Party at the Congress, against Akimov and Axelrod, Martynov and Martov, never exceeded those bounds. It is enough to recall, at least, that when Comrades Martynov and Akimov were about to leave the Congress we were all prepared to do everything to obliterate the idea of an “insult”; we all adopted (by thirty-two votes) Trotsky’s motion to invite these comrades to regard the explanations as satisfactory and to withdraw their statement.

[Chapters 0 and P have been omitted in the present edition since they are devoted to a description of the post-congress struggle over the personal composition of the centres, i.e., something which appertains least of all to the realm of principle and most of all to that of squabbling.]

Q. THE NEW ISKRA. OPPORTUNISM IN QUESTIONS OF ORGANIZATION

As the basis for our analysis of the principles of the new Iskra we should unquestionably take the two articles of Comrade Axelrod.* We have already shown at length what is the concrete meaning** of some of his favourite catchwords. We must now try to abstract ourselves from their concrete meaning and study more closely the line of thought that forced the “minority” (on any small or minor occasion) to arrive at these particular slogans rather than at any other, must examine the principles behind these slogans, irrespective of their origin, of the question of “co-option.” Concessions are all the fashion nowadays, so let us make a concession to Comrade Axelrod and take his theory “seriously.”

Comrade Axelrod’s main thesis (the Iskra, No. 57) is that “from the very outset our movement harboured two opposite tendencies, the mutual antagonism of which could not fail to develop and to affect the movement parallel with its own development.” To be precise: “in principle, the proletarian aim of the movement (in Russia) is the same as that of the Social-Democratic movement in the West.” But in our country the influence is exercised on the worker masses “by a social element alien to them,” namely, the radical intelligentsia. Comrade Axelrod thus establishes an antagonism between the proletarian and the radical-intellectual trends in our Party.

* The articles in question were included in the symposium “Iskra for Two Years,” Part II, p. 122, et seq. (St. Petersburg 1906).

** This “concrete meaning” refers to the Congress and post-Congress struggle over the personal composition of the centres the description of which has been omitted in the present edition.
In this Comrade Axelrod is undoubtedly right. The existence of such an antagonism (and not in the Russian Social-Democratic Party alone) is beyond question. What is more, everyone knows that it is this antagonism that very largely accounts for the division of the present-day Social-Democratic movement into the revolutionary (also known as the orthodox) and the opportunist (revisionist, ministerialist, reformist) wing, which has become fully apparent in Russia, too, during the past ten years of our movement. Everyone also knows that the proletarian trend of the movement is expressed by orthodox Social-Democracy, while the trend of the democratic intelligentsia is expressed by opportunist Social-Democracy.

But, having squarely faced this piece of common knowledge, Comrade Axelrod then begins to shy and back away from it. He does not make the slightest attempt to analyse the way in which this division has manifested itself in the history of the Russian Social-Democratic movement in general, and at our Party Congress in particular, although it is about the Congress that Comrade Axelrod is writing! Like all the other editors of the new Iskra, Comrade Axelrod displays a mortal fear of the minutes of this Congress. This should not surprise us after what has been said, but in a "theoretician" who claims to be investigating the different trends in our movement it is certainly a queer case of truth-shyness. Backing away, because of this malady, from the latest and most accurate material on the trends in our movement, Comrade Axelrod seeks salvation in the sphere of pleasant daydreaming. He writes: "Has not legal or semi-Marxism provided our liberals with a literary leader?* Why should not prankish history provide revolutionary bourgeois democracy with a leader from the school of orthodox, revolutionary Marxism?" All we can say about this daydream which Comrade Axelrod finds so pleasant is that if history does sometimes play prankish tricks, that is no excuse for prankish thoughts in people who undertake to analyse history. When the liberal peeped out from under the cloak of the leader of semi-Marxism, those who wished (and were able) to trace back his "trends" did not allude to possible prankish tricks of history, but to tens and hundreds of instances of the mentality and logic of that leader and to those peculiarities of his literary make-up which were stamped with the reflection of Marxism in bourgeois literature. And if, after having undertaken to analyse "the general revolutionary and the proletarian trends in our movement "Comrade Axelrod could produce nothing/absolutely nothing, in proof or evidence that certain representatives of that orthodox wing of the Party which he detests so much have such-and-such tendencies, he thereby issued a formal certificate of his own bankruptcy. Comrade Axelrod's case must be very weak indeed if all he can do is to allude to possible pranks of history.

Comrade Axelrod's other allusion—to the "Jacobins"—is still more revealing. Comrade Axelrod is probably aware that the division of the

* The reference is to Struve.—Ed.
present-day Social-Democratic movement into revolutionary and opportunist has long since given rise—and not only in Russia—to "historical parallels with the era of the Great French Revolution." Comrade Axelrod is probably aware that the Girondists of the present-day Social-Democratic movement are always resorting to the terms "Jacobinism," "Blanquism" and so on to describe their opponents. Let us then not imitate Comrade Axelrod in his truth-shyness, let us consult the minutes of our Congress and see whether they offer any material for an analysis and examination of the trends we are discussing and the parallels we are dissecting.

First example: the debate on the program at the Party Congress. Comrade Akimov ("fully agreeing" with Comrade Martynov) says: "the clause on the capture of political power (the dictatorship of the proletariat) has been formulated in such a way—as compared with the programs of all other Social-Democratic parties—that it may be interpreted, and has actually been interpreted by Plekhanov, to mean that the role of the leaders of the organization will relegate to the background the class it is leading and separate the former from the latter. Consequently, the formulation of our political tasks is exactly the same as that of the "Narodnaya Volya." (Minutes, p. 124.) Comrade Plekhanov and other Iskra-ites reply to Comrade Akimov and accuse him of opportunism. Does not Comrade Axelrod find that this dispute shows (in actual fact, and not in the imaginary pranks of history) the antagonism between the modern Jacobins and the modern Girondists in the Social-Democratic movement? And was it not because he found himself in the company of the Girondists of the Social-Democratic movement (owing to the mistakes he committed) that Comrade Axelrod began talking about Jacobins?

Second example: Comrade Posadovsky asserts that there is a "grave difference of opinion" over the "fundamental question" of the "absolute value of democratic principles" (p. 169). Like Plekhanov, he denies their absolute value. The leaders of the "Centre," or the Marsh (Egorov), and of the anti-Iskra-ites (Goldblatt) vigorously oppose this view and accuse Plekhanov of "imitating bourgeois tactics" (p. 170). This is exactly Comrade Axelrod's idea of a connection between orthodoxy and the bourgeois trends, the only difference being that in Axelrod's case it is vague and general, whereas Goldblatt linked it up with definite issues. Again we ask: does not Comrade Axelrod find that this dispute, too, obviously shows, at our Party Congress, the antagonism between the Jacobins and the Girondists in the present-day Social-Democratic movement? Is it not because he finds himself in the company of the Girondists that Comrade Axelrod raises this outcry against the Jacobins?

Third example: the debate on §1 of the Rules. Who is it that defends "the proletarian trend in our movement"? Who is it that insists that the worker is not afraid of organization, that the proletarian has no sympathy for anarchy, and that he values the prompting to organize? Who is it that warns us against the bourgeois intelligentsia and says that they are
permeated through and through with opportunism? The Jacobins of the Social-Democratic movement. And who is it that tries to smuggle radical intellectuals into the Party? Who is it that is concerned about professors, high school students, freelances, the radical youth? The Girondist Axelrod and the Girondist Lieber.

How clumsily Comrade Axelrod defends himself against the "false accusation of opportunism" that was openly levelled at the majority of the "Emancipation of Labour" Group at our Party Congress. He defends himself in a manner that confirms the charge, for he keeps reiterating the hackneyed Bernsteinian song about Jacobinism, Blanquism and so on! He shouts about the menace of the radical intellectuals in order to drown his own speeches at the Party Congress which were full of concern for these intellectuals.

These "dreadful words"—Jacobinism and the rest—are expressive of nothing but opportunism. A Jacobin who maintains an inseparable bond with the organization of the proletariat, a proletariat conscious of its class interests, is a revolutionary Social-Democrat. A Girondist who yearns for professors and high school students, who is afraid of the dictatorship of the proletariat and who sighs about the absolute value of democratic demands is an opportunist. It is only opportunists who can still detect a danger in secret organizations today, when the idea of narrowing down the political struggle to a secret conspiracy has been rejected thousands of times in written publications and has long been rejected and swept aside by the realities of life, and when the cardinal importance of mass political agitation has been elucidated and reiterated to the point of nausea. The real basis of this fear of conspiracy, of Blanquism, is not any feature to be found in the practical movement (as Bernstein and Co. have long, and vainly, been trying to show), but the Girondist timidity of the bourgeois intellectual whose mentality is so often revealed among the Social-Democrats of today. Nothing could be more comical than these efforts of the new Iskra to utter a new word of warning (which has been uttered hundreds of times before) against the tactics of the French conspirator revolutionaries of the 'forties and 'sixties (No. 62, editorial). In the next issue of the Iskra, the Girondists of the present-day Social-Democratic movement will probably name a group of French conspirators of the 'forties for whom the importance of political agitation among the working masses, the importance of the labour press as the principal means by which the party influences the class, was a rudimentary truth they had learned and assimilated long ago.

However, the tendency of the new Iskra to repeat the ABC and go back to rudiments while pretending to be uttering something new is not without its cause; it is an inevitable consequence of the situation Axelrod and Martov find themselves in, now that they have landed in the opportunist wing of our Party. There is nothing for it. They have to go on repeating opportunist phrases, they have to go back and try to find in the remote
past some sort of justification for their position, which is indefensible from the point of view of the struggle at the Congress and of the shades and divisions in the Party that emerged there. To the profound Akimovist remarks about Jacobinism and Blanquism, Comrade Axelrod adds Akimovist lamentations to the effect that the “politicians” as well, and not only the “Economists” were “one-sided,” excessively “infatuated,” and so on and so forth. Reading the high-flown disquisitions on this subject in the new Iskra, which conceitedly claims to be above one-sidedness and infatuation, one asks in perplexity: whose portrait are they painting? where do they hear this talk? Who does not know that the division of the Russian Social-Democrats into Economists and politicians has long been obsolete? Go through the files of the Iskra for the last year or two before the Party Congress and you will find that the fight against “Economism” subsided and came to an end altogether as far back as 1902; you will find, for example, that in July 1903 (No. 43), the “times of Economism” are spoken of as being “definitely over.” Economism is considered to be “dead and buried,” and the infatuation of the politicians is regarded as clear atavism. Why, then, do the new editors of the Iskra revert to this dead and buried division? Do you think that we fought the Akimovs at the Congress because of the mistakes they made in the Rabocheye Dyelo two years ago? If we had, we would have been sheer idiots. But everyone knows that we did not, that it was not for their old, dead and buried mistakes in the Rabocheye Dyelo that we fought the Akimovs at the Congress, but for the new mistakes they committed in their arguments and in the way they voted at the Congress. It was not by their stand on the Rabocheye Dyelo that we judged which mistakes had really been abandoned and which still lived and called for controversy, but by their stand at the Congress. By the time of the Congress the old division into Economists and politicians no longer existed; but various opportunist trends continued to exist. They found expression in the debates and voting on a number of issues, and finally led to a new division of the Party into a “majority” and a “minority.” The whole point is that the new editors of the Iskra are for obvious reasons trying to gloss over the connection that exists between this new division and contemporary opportunism in our Party, and are, consequently, compelled to go back from the new division to the old one. Their inability to explain the political origin of the new division (or their desire, in order to prove how accommodating they are, to cast a veil* over its origin) compels them to keep harping on a division

* See Plekhanov’s article on “Economism” in the Iskra, No. 53. The subtitle of the article appears to contain a slight misprint. Instead of “Reflections on the Second Party Congress,” it should apparently read, “On the League Congress,” or even “On Co-option.” However appropriate concessions to personal claims may be under certain circumstances, it is quite inadmissible (from the Party, not the philistine standpoint) to confuse the issues that are agitating the Party and to substitute for the new mistake of Martov and Axelrod, who have begun
that has long been obsolete. Everyone knows that the new division is based on a difference of opinion over questions of organization, which began with the controversy over principles of organization (§ 1 of the Rules) and ended up with a "practice" worthy of anarchists. The old division into Economists and politicians was based mainly on a difference of opinion over questions of tactics.

In its efforts to justify this retreat from the more complex, truly modern and burning issues of Party life to issues that have long been settled and are now being dug up artificially, the new Iskra resorts to an amusing display of profundity for which there can be no other name than khnostism. Started by Comrade Axelrod, there runs like a crimson thread through all the writing of the new Iskra the profound "thought" that content is more important than form, that program and tactics are more important than organization, that "the virility of an organization is in direct proportion to the volume and importance of the content it puts into the movement," that centralism is not an "end in itself," not an "all-saving talisman," etc., etc. Great and profound truths! A program is indeed more important than tactics, and tactics are more important than organization. The alphabet is more important than etymology, and etymology more important than syntax—but what would we say of people who, having failed in an examination in syntax, went about pluming and priding themselves on having been kept over in a lower class for another year? Comrade Axelrod argued about principles of organization (§ 1) like an opportunist, and behaved inside the organization like an anarchist—and now he is trying to lend profundity to Social-Democracy. Sour grapes! What is organization, properly speaking? Why, it is only a form. What is centralism? After all, it is not a talisman. What is syntax? Why, it is less important than etymology; it is only a form of combining the elements of etymology. . . . "Will not Comrade Alexandrov agree with us," the new editors of the Iskra triumphantly ask, "when we say that the Congress did much more for the centralization of Party work by drawing up a Party program than by adopting rules, however perfect the latter may seem?" (No. 56, Supplement.) It is to be hoped that this classical utterance will acquire a historic fame no less wide and no less lasting than Comrade Krichevsky's celebrated remark to the effect that Social-Democracy, like mankind, always sets itself achievable tasks. The profundity of the new Iskra is of exactly the same alloy. Why was Comrade Krichevsky's phrase held up to derision? Because he tried to justify the mistake of a section of the Social-Democrats in matters of tactics—their inability to set correct political aims—by a commonplace to swing from orthodoxy to opportunism, the old mistake (never recalled today by anyone except the new Iskra) of the Martynovs and the Akimovs, who may now be prepared, for all one knows, to swing from opportunism to orthodoxy on many questions of program and tactics.
which he wanted to palm off as philosophy. In exactly the same way the new *Iskra* tries to justify the mistake of a section of the Social-Democrats in matters of organization, to justify the instability of the intellectual displayed by certain comrades—which has led them to the point of anarchist phrasemongering—by the commonplace that a program is more important than rules, and that questions of program are more important than questions of organization! What is this but khvostism? What is this but pluming oneself on having been left over in a lower class for another year?

The adoption of a program contributes more to the centralization of the work than the adoption of rules. How this commonplace, palmed off as philosophy, smacks of the mentality of the radical intellectual, who has much more in common with bourgeois decadence than with Social-Democracy! Why, the word centralization is used in this famous phrase quite symbolically. If the authors of the phrase are unable or disinclined to think, they might at least have recalled the simple fact that though we and the Bundists together adopted a program, this did not even save us from a split, let alone lead to the centralization of our common work.

Unity on questions of program and tactics is an essential but by no means a sufficient condition for Party unity and for the centralization of Party work (good God, what rudimentary things one has to keep repeating nowadays, when all concepts have been confused!). That requires, in addition, unity of organization, which, in a party that has grown to be anything more than a mere family circle, is inconceivable without formal rules, without the subordination of the minority to the majority, of the part to the whole. As long as there was no unity on the fundamental questions of program and tactics, we bluntly admitted that we were living in a period of disunity and the circle spirit; we bluntly declared that before we could unite, lines of demarcation must be drawn; we did not even talk of the forms of a joint organization, but exclusively discussed the new (at that time they really were new) questions of how to fight opportunism on program and tactics. When, as we all agreed, this fight had already ensured a sufficient degree of unity, as formulated in the Party program and in the Party's resolution on tactics, we had to take the next step, and, by common consent, we did take it, working out the forms of a united organization that would merge all the circles together. We have been dragged back to anarchist conduct, to anarchist phrasemongering, to the revival of a circle in place of a Party editorial board. And this step back is being justified on the grounds that the alphabet is more helpful to literate speech than a knowledge of syntax!

The philosophy of khvostism which flourished three years ago in connection with tactics is being resurrected today in connection with organization. Take the following argument of the new editors: “The militant Social-Democratic trend in the Party,” says Comrade Alexandrov, “should
be maintained not only by an ideological struggle, but by definite forms of organization.” Whereupon the editors edifyingly remark: “Not bad, this juxtaposition of ideological struggle and forms of organization. The ideological struggle is a process, whereas the forms of organization are just... forms [believe it or not, that is what they say in No. 56, Supplement, p. 4, col. 1, bottom of page!] designed to clothe a fluid and developing content—the developing practical work of the Party.” That is quite in the style of the joke about a cannon ball being a cannon ball and a bomb a bomb! The ideological struggle is a process, and the forms of organization are only forms clothing the content! The point at issue is whether our ideological struggle is to have forms of a higher type to clothe it, forms of Party organization binding on all, or the forms of the old disunity and the old circles. We have been dragged back from higher to more primitive forms, and this is being justified on the grounds that the ideological struggle is a process, whereas forms—are just forms. That is just how Comrade Krichevsky in bygone days tried to drag us back from tactics-as-a-plan to tactics-as-a-process.

Take the pompous talk of the new Iskra about the “self-training of the proletariat” which is directed against those who are supposed to be in danger of missing the content because of the form. (No. 58, editorial.) Is this not Akimovism No. 2? Akimovism No. 1 used to justify the backwardness of a section of the Social-Democratic intelligentsia in formulating tactical tasks by talking about the more “profound” content of the “proletarian struggle” and about the self-training of the proletariat. Akimovism No. 2 justifies the backwardness of a section of the Social-Democratic intelligentsia in the theory and practice of organization by equally profound talk about organization being merely a form, and the self-training of the proletariat being the important thing. Let me tell you gentlemen who are so solicitous about the younger brother* that the proletariat is not afraid of organization and discipline! The proletariat will do nothing to have the worthy professors and high school students, who do not want to join an organization, recognized as Party members merely because they work under the control of an organization. The proletariat is trained by its whole life for organization far more radically than many an intellectual prig. Having gained some understanding of our program and our tactics, the proletariat will not start justifying backwardness in organization by arguing that the form is less important than the content. It is not the proletariat, but certain intellectuals in our Party who lack self-training in the spirit of organization and discipline, in the spirit of hostility and contempt for anarchist phrasemongering. When they say that it is not ripe for organization, the Akimovs No. 2 libel the proletariat just as the Akimovs No. 1 libel it when they said that it was not ripe for the political struggle. The

* The “lower classes.” — Ed.
proletarian who has become a conscious Social-Democrat and feels that he is a member of the Party will reject *khvostism* in matters of organization with the same contempt as he rejected *khvostism* in matters of tactics.

Finally, consider the profound wisdom of "Practical Worker" in the new *Iskra*. "Properly understood," he says, "the idea of a 'militant' centralized organization uniting and centralizing the *activities*" (the italics are to make it look more profound) "of revolutionaries can naturally materialize only if such activities exist" (new and clever!); "the organization itself, being a form"(mark that!), "can only grow simultaneously"(the italics are the author's, as throughout this quotation) "with the growth of the revolutionary work which is its content." (No. 57.) Does this not remind you very much of the hero in the folk tale who, on seeing a funeral, cried: "Many happy returns of the day"? I am sure there is not a practical worker (in the genuine sense of the term) in our Party who does not understand that the form of our activities (i.e., our organization) has been lagging behind its content for a long time, and lagging desperately, and that only the Simple Simon in the Party could shout to those who are lagging: "Keep in line; don't run ahead!" Compare our Party, let us say, with the Bund. There can be no question but that the *content* of the work of our Party is immeasurably richer, more varied, broader and deeper than that of the Bund. The scope of our theoretical views is wider, our program more developed, our influence among the working-class masses (and not among the organized artisans alone) broader and deeper, our propaganda and agitation more varied, the pulse of the political work of the leaders and of the rank and file more lively, the *popular* movements during demonstrations and general strikes grander, and our work among the non-proletarian population more energetic. And the "form"? Compared with that of the Bund, the "form," of our work is lagging unpardonably, lagging so that it is an eyesore and brings a blush of shame to the cheeks of anyone who does not merely "pick his nose" when contemplating the affairs of his Party. The fact that the organization of our work is lagging behind its content is our weak point, and it was our weak point long before the Congress, long before the Organization Committee was formed. The undeveloped and unstable character of the form makes any serious step in the further development of the content impossible; it causes a shameful stagnation, leads to a waste of energy, to a discrepancy between word and deed. We have all suffered enough from this discrepancy, yet along come the Axelrods and the "Practical

* I will not mention the fact that the content of our Party work was outlined at the Congress (in the program, etc.) in the spirit of revolutionary Social-Democracy only at the cost of a struggle, a struggle against the very anti-*Iskra*-ites and the very Marsh whose representatives numerically predominate in our "minority."
Workers” of the new Iskra with their profound precept: the form must grow naturally, and only simultaneously with the content!

That is where a small mistake in connection with a question of organization (§ 1) will lead you, if you try to lend profundity to nonsense and to find philosophical justification for an opportunist phrase. Pacing slowly in timid zigzags!—we have heard this refrain in connection with questions of tactics; we are hearing it again in connection with questions of organization. Khvostism in matters of organization is a natural and inevitable product of the mentality of the anarchist individualist when he starts to elevate his anarchist deviations (which at the outset may have been accidental) to a system of views, to special differences of principle. At the Congress of the League we witnessed the beginnings of this anarchism, in the new Iskra we are witnessing attempts to elevate it to a system of views. These attempts strikingly confirm what was already said at the Party Congress about the difference between the point of view of the bourgeois intellectual who attaches himself to the Social-Democratic movement and the proletarian who has become conscious of his class interests. For instance, this same “Practical Worker” of the new Iskra with whose profundity we are already familiar denounces me for visualizing the Party as “an immense factory” headed by a director in the shape of the Central Committee (No. 57, Supplement). “Practical Worker” does not even guess that the dreadful word he uses immediately betrays the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual who is familiar neither with the practice nor with the theory of proletarian organization. For the factory, which seems only a bogey to some, is that highest form of capitalist co-operation which has united and disciplined the proletariat, taught it to organize, and placed it at the head of all the other sections of the toiling and exploited population. And Marxism, the ideology of the proletariat trained by capitalism, has taught and is teaching unstable intellectuals to distinguish between the factory as a means of exploitation (discipline based on fear of starvation) and the factory as a means of organization (discipline based on collective work united by the conditions of a technically highly developed form of production). The discipline and organization which come so hard to the bourgeois intellectual are very easily acquired by the proletariat just because of this factory “schooling.” Mortal fear of this school and utter failure to understand its importance as an organizing factor are characteristic of the ways of thinking which reflect the petty-bourgeois mode of life and which give rise to that species of anarchism which the German Social-Democrats call Edelanarchismus, i.e., the anarchism of the “noble” gentleman, or aristocratic anarchism, as I would call it. This aristocratic anarchism is particularly characteristic of the Russian nihilist. He thinks of the Party organization as a monstrous “factory”; he regards the subordination of the part to the whole and of the minority to the majority as “serfdom” (see Axelrod’s articles); division of labour under the direction of
a centre evokes from him a tragi-comical outcry against people being transformed into “wheels and cogs” (to turn editors into contributors being considered a particularly atrocious species of such transformation); mention of the organizational rules of the Party calls forth a contemptuous grimace and the disdainful remark (intended for the “formalists”) that one could very well dispense with rules altogether.

Incredible as it may seem, it was a didactic remark of just this sort that Comrade Martov addressed to me in the *Iskra*, No. 58, quoting, for greater weight, my own words in “A Letter to a Comrade.” Well, what is it if not “aristocratic anarchism,” and *khvostism* to cite examples from the era of disunity, the era of the circles, to justify the preservation and glorification of the circle spirit and anarchy in the era of the Party?

Why did we not need rules before? Because the Party consisted of separate circles, unconnected by any organizational tie. Any individual could pass from one circle to another at his own “sweet will,” for he was not faced with any formulated expression of the will of the whole. Disputes within the circles were not settled by rules, “but by a struggle and by threats to resign,” as I put it in “A Letter to a Comrade,” citing the experience of a number of circles and of our own editorial circle of six in particular. In the era of the circles, this was natural and inevitable, but it never occurred to anybody to extol it, to regard it as ideal; everyone complained of the disunity, everyone was tired of it and longed for the time when the isolated circles would be fused into a formally constituted party organization. And now that this fusion has taken place, we are being dragged back and, under the guise of higher organizational views, treated to anarchist phrasemongering! To those who are accustomed to the loose dressing gown and slippers of the Oblomov* circle domesticity; formal rules seem narrow, restrictive, irksome, petty and bureaucratic, a bond of serfdom and a fetter on the free “process” of the ideological struggle. Aristocratic anarchism cannot understand that formal rules are needed precisely in order to replace the narrow circle ties by the broad Party tie. It was unnecessary and impossible to formulate the internal tie of a circle or the ties between circles, for these ties rested on friendship or on a “confidence” for which no reason or motive had to be given. The Party tie cannot and must not rest on either of these; it must be founded on *formal*, “bureaucratically” worded rules (bureaucratic from the standpoint of the undisciplined intellectual), strict adherence to which can alone safeguard us from the wilfulness and caprices characteristic of the circles, from the circle methods of scrapping that goes by the name of the free “process of the ideological struggle.”

*Oblomov*—the hero of Goncharov’s novel of the same name, an embodiment of inertia, supineness and a passive, vegetating existence.—*Ed.*
The editors of the new Iskra try to trump Alexandrov with the didactic remark that “confidence is a delicate matter and cannot be knocked into people’s hearts and minds” (No. 56, Supplement). The editors do not realize that by this talk about confidence, naked confidence, they are once more betraying their aristocratic anarchism and organizational khvostism. When I was a member of a circle only—whether it was the circle of the six editors or the Iskra organization—I was entitled to justify my refusal, say, to work with X merely on the grounds of lack of confidence, without stating reason or motive. But now that I have become a member of a party, I am no longer entitled to plead lack of confidence in general, for that would throw open the doors to all the freaks and whims of the old circles; I have to give formal reasons for my “confidence” or “lack of confidence,” that is, I must cite a formally established principle of our program, tactics or rules; I must not just declare my “confidence” or “lack of confidence” without giving reasons for them, but must realize that reasons must be given for my decisions—and generally for all decisions of any section of the Party—to the whole Party; I have to adhere to a formally prescribed procedure when giving expression to my “lack of confidence,” or when trying to secure the acceptance of the views and wishes that follow from this lack of confidence. We have risen above the circle view that “confidence” does not have to be accounted for to the Party view which demands adherence to a formally prescribed procedure of expressing, accounting for and testing our confidence. But the editors are trying to drag us back, and are calling their khvostism “new views on organization”!

Listen to the way our so-called Party editors talk about the literary groups that might demand representation on the editorial board. “We shall not get indignant and begin to shout about discipline,” we are admonished by these aristocratic anarchists who have always looked down on such a thing as discipline. We shall either “arrange the matter” (sic!) with the group, if it is reasonable, or just ridicule its demands.

Dear, dear, what a lofty and noble rebuff to vulgar “factory” formalism! But in reality it is the old circle phraseology furbished up a little and served up to the Party by an editorial board which does not feel that it is a Party body, but the survival of an old circle. The intrinsic falsity of this position inevitably leads to the anarchist profundity of elevating the disunity which they pharisaically proclaim to be obsolete to a principle of Social-Democratic organization. There is no need for a hierarchy of higher and lower Party bodies and authorities—aristocratic anarchism regards such a hierarchy as the bureaucratic invention of ministries, departments, etc. (see Axelrod’s article); there is no need for the part to submit to the whole; there is no need for any “formal bureaucratic” definition of Party methods of “arranging matters” or of parting ways. Let the old circle scrapping be sanctified by pompous talk about “genuinely Social-Democratic” methods of organization.
This is where the proletarian who has been through the school of the "factory" can and should teach a lesson to anarchist individualism. The class-conscious worker has long ago emerged from the state of infancy when he used to fight shy of the intellectual as such. The class-conscious worker prizes the richer store of knowledge and the wider political horizon which he finds in Social-Democratic intellectuals. But as we proceed with the building of a real party, the class-conscious worker must learn to distinguish the mentality of the soldier of the proletarian army from the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual who flaunts his anarchist talk, he must learn to insist that the duties of a Party member be fulfilled not only by the rank and file, but by the "people on top" as well; he must learn to treat khvostism in matters of organization with the contempt with which in the old days he used to treat khvostism in matters of tactics!

Inseparably connected with Girondism and aristocratic anarchism is the last characteristic feature of the new Iskra's attitude towards matters of organization, namely, its defence of autonomism as against centralism. This is the meaning in principle (if it has any such meaning) of its outcry against bureaucracy and autocracy, of its regrets over the "undeserved neglect of the non-Iskra-ites" (who defended autonomism at the Congress), of its comical howls about the demand for "unqualified obedience," of its bitter complaints of "pompadour methods," etc., etc. The opportunistic wing of any party always defends and justifies all retrograde tendencies, whether in program, tactics or organization. The new Iskra's defence of retrograde tendencies in matters of organization (khvostism) is closely connected with the defence of autonomism. True, autonomism has, generally speaking, been so discredited by the three years' propaganda work of the old Iskra that the new Iskra is ashamed, as yet, to advocate it openly; it still assures us of its sympathy for centralism, but shows it only by printing the word centralism in italics. Actually, it is enough to apply the slightest touch of criticism to the "principles" of the "true Social-Democratic" (not anarchistic?) quasi-centralism of the new Iskra for the autonomist standpoint to be detected at every step. Is it not now clear to everyone that on the subject of organization Axelrod and Martov have swung over to Akimov? Have they not solemnly admitted it themselves in the significant words, "undeserved neglect of the non-Iskra-ites"? And what was it but autonomism that Akimov and his friends defended at our Party Congress?

It was autonomism (if not anarchism) that Martov and Axelrod defended at the Congress of the League when, with amusing zeal, they tried to prove that the part need not submit to the whole, that the part is autonomous in defining its relation to the whole, that the rules of the Foreign League, in which the relation is thus formulated, are valid, in defiance of the will of the Party majority, in defiance of the will of the Party centre. It is autonomism, too, that Comrade Martov is now openly defending
in the columns of the new *Iskra* (No. 60) in connection with the right of the Central Committee to appoint members to the local committees. I shall not speak of the puerile sophistries which Comrade Martov used to defend autonomism at the Congress of the League, and is still using in the new *Iskra*—the important thing here is to note the undoubted tendency to *defend autonomism as against centralism*, which is a fundamental characteristic of opportunism in matters of organization.

Perhaps the only attempt to *analyse* the concept bureaucracy is the distinction drawn in the new *Iskra* (No. 53) between the “*formal democratic principle*” (author’s italics) and the “*formal bureaucratic principle.*” This distinction (which, unfortunately, was no more developed or explained than the allusion to the non-*Iskra*-ites) contains a grain of truth. Bureaucracy *versus* democracy is the same thing as centralism *versus* autonomism; it is the organizational principle of the revolutionary Social-Democrats as opposed to the organizational principle of the opportunist Social-Democrats. The latter strive to proceed from the bottom upward, and, therefore, wherever possible and as far as possible, advocate autonomism and a “*democracy*” which is carried (by the over-zealous) to the point of anarchism. The former strive to proceed from the top downward, and advocate an extension of the rights and powers of the centre in respect to the parts. In the period of disunity and the circles, this top from which the revolutionary Social-Democrats strove to proceed organizationally was inevitably one of the circles, the one which was most influential because of its activity and its revolutionary consistency (in our case, the *Iskra* organization). Now that real Party unity has been restored and the obsolete circles dissolved in this unity, this top is inevitably the *Party Congress*, as the supreme organ of the Party; the Congress as far as possible includes representatives of all the active organizations, and, by appointing the central bodies (often with a membership which satisfies the advanced elements of the Party more than the backward elements, and which is more to the taste of its revolutionary wing than its opportunist wing) makes them the top until the next Congress. Such, at any rate, is the case among the Social-Democratic Europeans, although this custom, which is so detested in principle by the anarchists, is gradually beginning, not without difficulty and not without conflicts and squabbles, to spread to the Social-Democratic Asiatics.

It is most interesting to note that these fundamental characteristics of opportunism in matters of organization (autonomism, aristocratic or intellectual anarchism, *khovostism* and Girondism) are *mutatis mutandis* (with corresponding modifications) to be observed in all the Social-Democratic parties of the world, wherever there is a division into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing (and where is there not?). Only quite recently this was very strikingly revealed in the German Social-Democratic Party, when its defeat at the elections in the 20th electoral division
of Saxony (known as the Gohre incident)* brought the question of the principles of party organization to the fore. That this incident should have become an issue of principle was largely due to the zeal of the German opportunists. Gohre (an ex-parson, author of that not uncelebrated book, *Drei Monate Fabrikarbeiter** and one of the “heroes” of the Dresden Congress) was himself an extreme opportunist, and the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* (Socialist Monthly), the organ of the consistent German opportunists, at once “took up the cudgels” on his behalf.

Opportunism in program is naturally connected with opportunism in tactics and opportunism in organization. The exposition of the “new” point of view was undertaken by Comrade Wolfgang Heine. To give the reader some idea of the political complexion of this typical intellectual, who on joining the Social-Democratic movement brought with him his opportunist habits of thought, it is enough to say that Comrade Wolfgang Heine is something less than a German Comrade Akimov and something more than a German Comrade Egorov.

Comrade Wolfgang Heine took the warpath in the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* with no less pomp than Comrade Axelrod in the new *Iskra*. The very title of his article is priceless: “Democratic Observations on the Gohre Incident” (*Sozialistische Monatshefte*, No. 4, April). The contents are no less thunderous. Comrade W. Heine rises up in arms against “encroachments on the autonomy of a constituency,” champions the “democratic principle,” and protests against the interference of an “appointed authority” (i.e., the Central Council of the Party) in the free election of deputies by the people. The point at issue, Comrade W. Heine admonishes us, is not a casual incident, but a general “tendency towards bureaucracy and centralism in the Party,” a tendency, he says, which was to be observed before, but which is now becoming particularly dangerous. It must be “recognized as a principle that the local institutions of the Party are the arteries of Party life” (a plagiarism on Comrade Martov’s pamphlet, *Once More in the Minority*). We must not “get accustomed to the idea that all important political decisions must emanate from one centre,” and we must warn the Party against “a doctrinaire policy which loses contact with life” (borrowed from Comrade Martov’s speech at the Party Congress to the effect that “life will claim its own”). Carrying his argument further, Comrade W. Heine says: “... If we go down to the roots of

* Gohre was returned to the Reichstag on June 16, 1903, from the 15th division of Saxony, but resigned after the Dresden Congress. The electorate of the 20th division, which had fallen vacant on the death of Rosenow, wanted to offer the seat to Gohre. The Central Council of the Party and the Central Agitation Committee for Saxony opposed this, and although they had no formal right to forbid Gohre’s nomination, they succeeded in getting him to decline. The Social-Democrats were defeated at the polls.

** Three months as a Factory Worker.—Ed.
the matter, if we abstract ourselves from personal conflicts, which here, as everywhere, have played no small part, we shall find that this bitterness against the revisionists” (the italics are the author’s and evidently hint at a distinction between fighting revisionism and fighting revisionists) “is mainly expressive of the distrust of the Party officials for ‘outsiders’” (W. Heine had evidently not yet read the pamphlet about combating the state of siege, and therefore resorted to an Anglicism—Outsidertum), “the distrust of tradition for the unusual, of the impersonal institution for everything individual,” “in a word, that tendency which we have defined above as a tendency toward bureaucracy and centralism in the party.”

The idea of “discipline” inspires Comrade W. Heine with a no less noble disgust than Comrade Axelrod. . . . “The revisionists,” he writes, “have been accused of lack of discipline for having written for the Sozialistische Monatshefte—whose Social-Democratic character has even been brought into question because it is not controlled by the Party. This attempt to narrow down the concept ‘Social-Democratic,’ this insistence on discipline in the sphere of ideological production, where absolute freedom should prevail” (remember that the ideological struggle is a process whereas the forms of organization are only forms) “in themselves point to the tendency toward bureaucracy and the suppression of individuality.” And W. Heine goes on and on, fulminating against this detestable tendency to create “one big all-embracing organization, as centralized as possible, one set of tactics and one theory,” against the demand for “unqualified obedience,” “blind submission,” against “over-simplified centralism,” etc., etc., literally “in the Axelrod manner.”

The controversy started by W. Heine spread, and as there were no squabbles about co-option in the German Party to obscure the issue, and as the German Akimovs display their complexion not only at congresses but also in a permanent periodical of their own, the controversy soon boiled down to an analysis of the principles of the orthodox and revisionist trends in matters of organization. Karl Kautsky came forward (in Die Neue Zeit, 1904, No. 28, in an article “Wahlkreis und Partei”—“Constituency and Party”) as one of the spokesmen of the revolutionary trend (which, exactly as in our Party, was of course accused of “dictatorship,” “inquisitorial” tendencies and other dreadful things). “W. Heine’s article,” he says, “reveals the line of thought of the whole revisionist trend.” Not only in Germany, but in France and Italy as well, the opportunists are all in favour of autonomism, of a slackening of Party discipline, of reducing it to nought; everywhere their tendencies lead to disorganization and to corrupting the “democratic principle” and converting it into anarchism. “Democracy does not mean absence of authority,” says Karl Kautsky, instructing the opportunists on the subject of organization, “democracy does not mean anarchy; it means the rule of the masses over their representatives, as distinct from other forms of rule where the sup-
posed servants of the people are in reality their masters.” K. Kautsky traces at length the disruptive role played by opportunist autonomism in various countries; he shows that it is precisely the fact that “a great number of bourgeois elements”* have joined the Social-Democratic movement that lends strength to opportunism, autonomism and the tendency to violate discipline, and once more he reminds us that “organization is the weapon that will emancipate the proletariat,” that “organization is the characteristic weapon of the proletariat in the class struggle.”

In Germany, where opportunism is weaker than in France or Italy, “autonomist tendencies have so far led to nothing but more or less high-flown declamations against dictators and grand inquisitors, against excommunication** and heresy hunting, and to endless cavilling, which would only result in endless squabbling if replied to by the other side.”

It is not surprising that in Russia, where opportunism in the Party is even weaker than in Germany, autonomist tendencies should have produced fewer ideas and more “high-flown declamations” and squabbling.

It is not surprising that Kautsky arrives at the following conclusion: “There is probably no other issue on which the revisionists of all countries, despite their multiplicity of form and hue, are so alike as on the question of organization.” Karl Kautsky too defines the basic trends of orthodoxy and revisionism in this sphere by the “dreadful words”: bureaucracy versus democracy. “We are told,” he says, “that to give the Party leadership the right to influence the selection of a candidate (for parliament) by the constituencies would be a ‘shameful violation of the democratic principle, which demands that all political activity proceed from the bottom upward, by the independent activity of the masses, and not from the top downward, by bureaucratic means. . . .’ But if there is any democratic principle, it is that the majority must have its way against the minority, and not the other way round. . . .” The election of a member of parliament by any constituency is an important question for the Party as a whole, which should influence the nomination of candidates, if only through the Party’s representatives (Vertrauensmänner). “Whoever considers this too bureaucratic or too centralistic let him suggest that candidates be nominated by the direct vote of the whole Party membership (sämtlicher Parteigenossen). If he thinks this is not practicable, he must not complain of a lack of democracy when this function, like many others that affect the whole Party, is exercised by one or by several Party bodies.” It has long been a “common law” in the German Party

* Karl Kautsky mentioned Jaurès as an example. The more these people deviated towards opportunism, the more “they were bound to consider Party discipline an improper constraint on their free personality.”

** Bannstrahl: excommunication. This is the German equivalent of the Russian “state of siege” and “emergency laws.” It is the “dreadful word” of the German opportunists.

22—685
for constituencies to “come to a friendly understanding” with the Party leadership about the choice of a candidate. “But the Party has grown too big for this tacit common law to suffice any longer. Common law ceases to be a law when it ceases to be regarded as natural and self-evident, when its stipulations, and even its very existence, are called in question. Then it becomes absolutely essential to formulate the law specifically, to codify it,” to adopt a more “precise statutory definition (statutarische Festlegung) and, accordingly, greater strictness (größere Straffheit) of organization.”

Thus you have, in a different environment, the same struggle between the opportunist wing and the revolutionary wing of the Party on the question of organization, the same conflict between autonomism and centralism, between democracy and “bureaucracy,” between the tendency to relax and the tendency to tighten organization and discipline, between the mentality of the unstable intellectual and that of the staunch proletarian, between intellectualist individualism and proletarian solidarity. What, one asks, was the attitude to this conflict of bourgeois democracy—not the bourgeois democracy which prankish history has only promised in private to show to Comrade Axelrod some day, but the real and actual bourgeois democracy which in Germany has spokesmen no less learned and observant than our own gentlemen of Osoboždeniye? German bourgeois democracy at once reacted to the new controversy and—like Russian bourgeois democracy, like bourgeois democracy always and everywhere—rose up solidly in behalf of the opportunist wing of the Social-Democratic Party. The Frankfurter Zeitung, leading organ of the German stock exchange, published a thunderous editorial (Frankfurter Zeitung, April 7, 1904, No. 97, evening edition) which shows that the unscrupulous habit of plagiarizing Axelrod is becoming a veritable disease with the German press. The stern democrats of the Frankfurk stock exchange lash furiously at “autocracy” in the Social-Democratic Party, “party dictatorship,” at the “autocratic domination of the Party authorities,” at these “excommunications” which are intended “as it were, to chastise all the revisionists” (recall the “false accusation of opportunism”), at the insistence on “blind submission,” “deadening discipline,” “servile subordination” and the transforming of Party members into “political corpses” (that is much stronger than wheels and cogs!). “All distinctiveness of personality,” the knights of the stock exchange indignantly exclaim at the sight of the undemocratic regime in the Social-Democratic Party, “all individuality must be persecuted, don’t you see, for they threaten to lead to the French state of affairs, to Jaurèsism and Millerandism, as was stated in so many words by Zindermann, who made the report on the subject” at the Party Congress of the Saxon Social-Democrats.
And so, in so far as the new catchwords of the new *Iskra* on organization contain any principles at all, there can be no doubt that they are opportunist principles. This conclusion is moreover confirmed by the whole analysis of our Party Congress which divided up into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing, and by the example of all European Social-Democratic parties, where opportunism in organization finds expression in the same tendencies, in the same accusations, and very often in the same catchwords. Of course, the national peculiarities of the various parties and the different political conditions in different countries leave their impress and make German opportunism quite dissimilar from French opportunism, French opportunism from Italian opportunism and Italian opportunism from Russian opportunism. But the similarity of the fundamental division of all these parties into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing, the similarity of the line of thought and the tendencies of opportunism in organization stand out clearly in spite of all the difference of conditions mentioned. * The presence of large numbers of radical intellectuals in the ranks of our Marxists and our Social-Democrats has made, and is making, the existence of opportunism, produced by their mentality, inevitable in the most varied spheres and in the most varied forms. We fought opportunism on the fundamental problems of our world conception, on questions of our program, and a complete divergence of aims inevitably led to an irrevocable division between the Social-Democrats and the liberals who had corrupted our legal Marxism. We fought opportunism on tactical questions, and our divergence with Comrades Krichevsky and Akimov on these less important issues was naturally only temporary, and was not accompanied by the formation of different parties. We must now vanquish the opportunism of Martov and Axelrod in matters of organization, which are, of course, even less fundamental than questions of program and tactics, but which have now come to the forefront in our Party life.

When we speak of fighting opportunism, we must never forget a feature that is characteristic of present-day opportunism in every sphere, namely, its vagueness, diffuseness, elusiveness. An opportunist, by his very nature, will always evade formulating an issue clearly and decisively,

* No one will doubt today that the old division into Economists and politicians among the Russian Social-Democrats on questions of tactics was similar to the division of the whole Social-Democratic movement of the world into opportunists and revolutionaries, although the difference between Comrades Martynov and Akimov, on the one hand, and Comrades von Vollmar and von Elm or Jaurès and Millerand, on the other, may be very great. Nor will anyone doubt the similarity of the main divisions on questions of organization, in spite of the enormous difference between the conditions of politically unfranchised and politically free countries. It is extremely characteristic that the highly principled editors of the new *Iskra*, while briefly touching on the controversy between Kautsky and Heine (No. 64), fearfully evaded the trends of principle of opportunism and orthodoxy in general on questions of organization.
he will always seek a middle course, he will always wriggle like a
snake between two mutually exclusive points of view and try to "agree"
with both and to reduce his differences of opinion to petty amendments,
doubts, good and pious suggestions, and so on and so forth. Comrade
Eduard Bernstein, an opportunist in questions of program, "agrees" with
the revolutionary program of his party, and although he is most likely
anxious to have it "radically revised," he considers it inopportune and
inexpedient, and not so important as the elucidation of "general prin-
ciples" of "criticism" (which mainly consist in uncritically borrowing prin-
ciples and catchwords from bourgeois democracy). Comrade von Voll-
mar, an opportunist in questions of tactics, also agrees with the old tac-
tics of revolutionary Social-Democracy and also confines himself mostly
to declamations, petty amendments and sneers rather than openly ad-
vocating any definite "ministerial" tactics. Comrades Martov and Axel-
rod, opportunists in questions of organization, have also so far failed
to produce, though directly challenged to do so, any definite statement of
principles that could be "fixed by statute"; they too, would like, they
most certainly would like, a "radical revision" of our rules of organiza-
tion (the Iskra, No. 58, p. 2, col. 3), but they would prefer to devote them-
selves first to "general problems of organization" (for a really radical
revision of our Rules, which, in spite of § 1, are centralist rules, would inev-
itably lead, if carried out in the spirit of the new Iskra, to autonomism;
and Comrade Martov, of course, does not like to admit even to himself
that, in principle, his trend is towards autonomism). Their "principles"
of organization therefore display all the colours of the rainbow: the pre-
dominant note is innocent and high-sounding declamations against autoc-
ocracy and bureaucracy, against blind obedience and wheels and cogs—
declamations that are so innocent that it is very, very difficult to discern
in them what is really concerned with principle and what is really con-
cerned with co-option. But the further you go, the worse it gets: attempts
to analyse and precisely define this detestable "bureaucracy" inevitably
lead to autonomism; attempts to "deepen" and justify inevitably lead
to vindicating backwardness, to khvostism, to Girondist phrasemongering.
At last there emerges the principle of anarchism, as the sole really definite
principle, which for that reason stands out in practice in particular relief
(practice is always in advance of theory). Sneering at discipline—auto-
nomism—anarchism—there you have the ladder by which our opportun-
ism in the sphere of organization now climbs and now descends, skipping
from rung to rung and skilfully evading any definite statement of its
principles.*

* Those who recall the debate on § 1 will now clearly see that the mistake
committed by Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod in connection with § 1 had
inevitably to lead, when developed and deepened, to opportunism in matters of
organization. Comrade Martov's initial idea—self-enrolment in the Party—
was nothing but false "democracy," the idea of building the Party from the bottom
questions of program and tactics—sneering at “orthodoxy,” narrowness and immobility—revisionist “criticism” and ministerialism—bourgeois democracy.

There is a close psychological connection between this hatred of discipline and that incessant nagging note of injury which is to be detected in all the writings of all opportunists today in general, and of our minority in particular. They are being persecuted, hounded, ejected, besieged and bullied. There is far more psychological and political truth in these catchwords than was probably suspected even by the author of the pleasant and witty joke about bullies and bullied. For you have only to take the minutes of our Party Congress to see that the minority are all those who suffer from a sense of injury, all those who at one time or another and for one reason or another were offended by the revolutionary Social-Democrats. There are the Bundists and the Rabocheye Dyelo-ites, whom we “offended” so badly that they withdrew from the Congress; there are the Yuzhny Rabochy-ites, who were mortally offended by the slaughter of all organizations in general and of their own in particular; there is Comrade Makhov, who had to put up with offence every time he took the floor (for every time he did, he invariably made a fool of himself); and lastly, there are Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod, who were offended by the “false accusation of opportunism” in connection with § 1 of the Rules and by their defeat in the elections. All these mortal offences were not the accidental outcome of impermissible witticisms, rude behaviour, frenzied controversy, slamming of doors and shaking of fists, as so many philistines imagine to this day, but the inevitable political outcome of the whole three years’ ideological work of the Iskra. If in the course of these three years we were not just wagging our tongues, but giving expression to convictions which were to be transformed into deeds, we had to fight the anti-Iskra-ites and the “Marsh” at the Congress. And when, together with Comrade Martov, who had fought in the front line with vizor up, we had offended such heaps of people, very little remained, we had only to offend Comrade Axelrod and Comrade Martov ever so little, for the cup to overflow. Quantity was transformed into quality. The negation was negated. All the offended forgot their mutual squabbles, fell weeping into each other’s arms, and raised the banner of “revolt against Leninism.”*

upward. My idea, on the other hand was “bureaucratic” in the sense that the Party was to be built from the top downward, from the Party Congress to the individual Party organizations. The mentality of the bourgeois intellectual, anarchist phrasemongering, and opportunist, khoostit profoundity were all to be discerned already in the debate on § 1. Comrade Martov says that “new ideas are beginning to be worked out” by the new Iskra. That is true in the sense that he and Axelrod are really pushing ideas in a new direction, beginning with § 1. The only trouble is that this direction is an opportunist one. The more they “work” in this direction the deeper will they sink in the mire.

* This amazing expression is Comrade Martov’s.
A revolt is a splendid thing when it is the advanced elements who revolt against the reactionary elements. When the revolutionary wing revolts against the opportunist wing, it is a good thing. When the opportunist wing revolts against the revolutionary wing, it is a bad business.

Comrade Plekhanov is compelled to take part in this bad business in the capacity of a prisoner of war, so to speak. He tries to “vent his spleen” by fishing out isolated clumsy phrases by the author of some resolution in favour of the “majority,” and exclaiming: “Poor Comrade Lenin! What fine orthodox supporters he has!” (The Iskra, No. 63, Supplement.)

Well, Comrade Plekhanov, all I can say is that if I am poor, the editors of the new Iskra are downright paupers. However poor I may be, I have not yet reached such utter destitution as to have to shut my eyes to the Party Congress and hunt for material for the exercise of my wit in the resolutions of committee men. However poor I may be, I am a thousand times better off than those whose supporters do not utter a clumsy phrase inadvertently, but on every issue—whether in relation to organization, tactics or program—stubbornly and steadfastly adhere to principles which are the very opposite of the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy. However poor I may be, I have not yet reached the stage where I have to conceal from the public the praises lavished on me by such supporters. And that is what the editors of the new Iskra have to do.

Reader, do you know what the Voronezh Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party stands for? If not, read the minutes of the Party Congress. You will learn from them that the line of that committee is fully expressed by Comrade Akimov and Comrade Brouckère, who at the Congress fought the revolutionary wing of the Party all along the line, and who scores of times were ranked as opportunists by everybody, from Comrade Plekhanov to Comrade Popov. Well, this Voronezh Committee, in its January leaflet (No. 12, January 1904), makes the following statement:

“A great and important event in the life of our steadily growing Party took place last year, when the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., a congress of the representatives of its organizations, was held. Convening a party congress is a very complicated business, and, under the monarchy, a dangerous and difficult one. It is therefore not surprising that it was carried out in a far from perfect way, and that the Congress itself, although it passed off without mishap, did not fulfil all the Party’s expectations. The comrades whom the Conference of 1902 commissioned to convene the Congress were arrested, and the Congress was arranged by persons who represented only one of the trends in Russian Social-Democracy, viz., the “Iskra”-ites. Many organizations of Social-Democrats who did not happen to be Iskra-ites were not invited to take part in the work of the Congress; this is one of the reasons why the task of drawing up a program and rules for the Party was carried out by the Congress in an extremely imperfect way; the delegates themselves admit that there are important flaws in the rules “which may lead to dangerous misunderstandings.” The Iskra-ites themselves split at the Congress, and many prominent workers in our R.S.D.L.P., who hitherto had appeared to be in full agreement with the
Iskra program of action have admitted that many of its views, advocated mainly by Lenin and Plekhanov, are impracticable. Although the latter gained the upper hand at the Congress, the mistakes of the theoreticians are being quickly corrected by the forces of real life and the demands of real work, in which all the non-Iskra-ites are taking part and which, since the Congress, have introduced important amendments. The "Iskra" has undergone a profound change and promises to pay careful heed to the demands of all workers in the Social-Democratic movement generally. Thus, although the work of the Congress will have to be revised at the next Congress, and, as is obvious to the delegates themselves, was unsatisfactory, and therefore cannot be accepted by the Party as unimpeachable decisions, the Congress has cleared up the situation inside the Party, has provided much material for the further theoretical and organizational work of the Party, and has been an experience of immense instructive value for the common work of the Party. The decisions of the Congress and the rules it has drawn up will be taken into account by all the organizations, but many will refrain from being guided by them exclusively, in view of their obvious imperfections.

"Fully realizing the importance of the common work of the Party, the Voronezh Committee actively responded in all matters concerning the organization of the Congress. It fully recognizes the importance of what has taken place at the Congress and welcomes the change undergone by 'Iskra,' which has become the Central Organ (chief organ).

"Although the state of affairs in the Party and in the Central Committee does not satisfy us as yet, we trust that by common effort the difficult work of organizing the Party will be perfected. In view of false rumours, the Voronezh Committee informs the comrades that there is no question of the Voronezh Committee leaving the Party. The Voronezh Committee realizes perfectly what a dangerous precedent might be created by the withdrawal of a workers' organization like the Voronezh Committee from the R.S.D.L.P., what a reproach this would be to the Party, and how disadvantageous it would be to workers' organizations which might follow this example. We must not cause new splits, but persistently strive to unite all class-conscious workers and Socialists in one party. Besides, the Second Congress was not a constituent congress, but an ordinary one. Expulsion from the Party can only be by decision of a Party court, and no organization, not even the Central Committee, has the right to expel any Social-Democratic organization from the Party. Furthermore, the Second Congress adopted paragraph 8 of the Rules, according to which every organization is autonomous in its local affairs, and this fully entitles the Voronezh Committee to put its views on organization into practice and advocate them in the Party."

The editors of the new Iskra, in quoting this leaflet in No. 61, reprinted the second half of this tirade, which we give here in large type; as for the first half, here printed in small type, the editors preferred to omit it. They were ashamed.
R. A FEW WORDS ON DIALECTICS. TWO REVOLUTIONS

A general glance at the development of our Party crisis will readily show that in the main, with minor exceptions, the composition of the two contending sides remained unchanged throughout. It was a struggle between the revolutionary wing and the opportunist wing in our Party. But this struggle passed through the most varied stages, and anyone who wants to understand the vast amount of literature that has already been accumulated, the mass of fragmentary evidence, passages torn from their context, isolated accusations, and so on and so forth, must thoroughly familiarize himself with the peculiarities of each of these stages.

In each of these stages the circumstances of the struggle and the immediate object of attack are essentially different; each stage is, as it were, a separate battle in one general military campaign. Our struggle cannot be understood at all unless the concrete circumstances of each battle are studied. But once that is done we shall clearly find that the development does actually proceed dialectically, by way of contradictions: the minority becomes the majority, and the majority becomes the minority; each side passes from the defensive to the offensive, and from the offensive to the defensive; the starting of the ideological struggle (§ 1) is "negated" and gives place to an all-pervading squabble; * but then begins the "negation of the negation," and, having found a way of living more or less in "peace and harmony" on the various central bodies, we return to the starting point, the purely ideological struggle; but by now this "thesis" has been enriched by all the results of the "antithesis" and has become a higher synthesis, in which the isolated, casual error in connection with § 1 has grown into a quasi-system of opportunist views on matters of organization, and in which the connection between this fact and the basic division of our Party into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing becomes increasingly apparent to all. In a word, not only do oats grow according to Hegel, but the Russian Social-Democrats war among themselves according to Hegel.

But the great Hegelian dialectics which Marxism made its own, having first turned it right side up again, must never be confused with the vulgar trick of justifying the zigzags of politicians who swing over from the revolutionary wing to the opportunist wing of the Party, or with the vulgar habit of lumping together distinct statements, the distinct incidents in the development of different stages of a single process. Genuine dialectics does not justify individual errors, but studies the inevitable turns, proving that they were inevitable by a detailed study of the process in all

* The difficult problem of drawing a line between squabbling and a difference of principle now solves itself: all that relates to co-option is squabbling; all that relates to an analysis of the struggle at the Congress, to the dispute over § 1 and to the swing towards opportunism and anarchism is a difference of principle.
its concreteness. The basic principle of dialectics is that there is no such thing as abstract truth, truth is always concrete. . . . And, one thing more, the great Hegelian dialectics should never be confused with that vulgar worldly wisdom so well expressed by the Italian saying: mettere la coda dove non va il capo (sticking in the tail where the head will not go through).

The outcome of the dialectical development of our Party struggle has been two revolutions. The Party Congress was a real revolution, as Comrade Martov justly remarked in his "Once More in the Minority." The wits of the minority are also right when they say: "The world moves in revolutions; well, we have made a revolution!" They did indeed make a revolution after the Congress; and it is true, too, that generally speaking the world does move in revolutions. But the concrete significance of each concrete revolution is not defined by this general aphorism; there are revolutions which are more like reaction, to paraphrase the unforgettable expression of the unforgettable Comrade Makhov. We must know whether it was the revolutionary wing or the opportunist wing of the Party which was the actual force that made the revolution, we must know whether it was revolutionary or opportunist principles that inspired the fighters, before we can determine whether the "world" (our Party) was moved forward or backward by any concrete revolution.

Our Party Congress was unique and unprecedented in the history of the Russian revolutionary movement. For the first time a secret revolutionary party succeeded in emerging from the darkness of underground life into broad daylight, displaying to the world the whole course and outcome of the struggle within our Party, the whole nature of our Party and of each of its more or less noticeable sections in relation to program, tactics and organization. For the first time we succeeded in throwing off the traditions of circle looseness and revolutionary philistinism, in bringing together dozens of the most varied groups, many of which had been fiercely warring among themselves and had been linked together solely by the force of an idea and were prepared (in principle, that is) to sacrifice all their group aloofness and group independence for the sake of the great whole which we were for the first time actually creating—the Party. But in politics sacrifices are not obtained gratis, they have to be won in battle. The battle over the slaughter of the organizations was bound to be terribly fierce. The fresh breeze of free and open struggle blew into a gale. The gale swept away—and a good thing that it did!—every conceivable remnant of the circle interests, sentiments and traditions without exception, and for the first time created authoritative bodies that were really Party bodies.

But it is one thing to call oneself something, and another to be it. It is one thing to sacrifice the circle system in principle for the benefit of the Party, and another to renounce one's own circle. The fresh breeze proved to be too fresh for those who were used to musty philistinism. "The
Party was unable to stand the strain of its first congress," as Comrade Martov rightly put it (inadvertently) in his "Once More in the Minority." The sense of injury over the slaughter of the organizations was too strong. The furious gale raised all the mud from the bottom of our Party stream; and the mud took its revenge. The old hidebound circle spirit overpowered the newly born Party spirit. The opportunist wing of the Party, utterly routed though it had been, defeated—temporarily, of course—the revolutionary wing, having been accidentally reinforced by the Akimov windfall.

The result of all this is the new _Iskra_, which is compelled to develop and deepen the error its editors committed at the Party Congress. The old _Iskra_ taught the truths of revolutionary struggle. The new _Iskra_ teaches the worldly wisdom of yielding and living in harmony with everyone. The old _Iskra_ was the organ of militant orthodoxy. The new _Iskra_ teaches us to a recrudescence of opportunism—chiefly on questions of organization. The old _Iskra_ earned the honour of being detested by the opportunists, both Russian and West-European. The new _Iskra_ has "grown wise" and will soon cease to be ashamed of the praises lavished on it by the extreme opportunists. The old _Iskra_ marched unswervingly towards its goal, and there was no discrepancy between its word and its deed. The inherent falsity of the position of the new _Iskra_ inevitably leads—independently even of anyone’s will or intention—to political hypocrisy. It cries out against the circle spirit in order to conceal the victory of the circle spirit over the Party spirit. It pharisaically condemns splits, as if one can imagine any way of avoiding splits in any at all organized party except by the subordination of the minority to the majority. It says that heed must be paid to revolutionary public opinion, yet, while keeping dark the praises of the Akimovs, it indulges in petty scandal-mongering about the committees of the revolutionary wing of the Party! How shameful! How they have disgraced our old _Iskra_!

One step forward, two steps back.... It happens in the lives of individuals, and it happens in the history of nations and in the development of parties. It would be criminal cowardice to doubt even for a moment the inevitable and complete triumph of the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy, of proletarian organization and Party discipline. We have already won a great deal, and we must go on fighting, undeterred by reverses, fighting steadfastly, scorning the philistine methods of circle scrapping, doing our very utmost to preserve the single party tie among all the Russian Social-Democrats which has been established at the cost of so much effort, and striving by dint of stubborn and systematic work to make all Party members, and the workers in particular, fully and intelligently acquainted with the duties of Party members, with the struggle at the Second Party Congress, with all the causes and all the stages of our disagreements, and with the utter disastrousness of opportunism, which, in the sphere of organization, as in the sphere of our program and our
tactics, helplessly surrenders to the bourgeois psychology, uncritically adopts the point of view of bourgeois democracy, and blunts the weapon of the class struggle of the proletariat.

In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organization. Disunited by the rule of anarchic competition in the bourgeois world, ground down by forced labour for capital, constantly thrust back to the "lower depths" of utter destitution, savagery and degeneration, the proletariat can become, and inevitably will become, an invincible force only when its ideological unification by the principles of Marxism is consolidated by the material unity of an organization which will weld millions of toilers into an army of the working class. Neither the decrepit rule of Russian tsardom, nor the senile rule of international capital will be able to withstand this army. Its ranks will become more and more serried, in spite of all zigzags and backward steps, in spite of the opportunist phrasemongering of the Girondists of present-day Social-Democracy, in spite of the smug praise of the antiquated circle spirit, and in spite of the tinsel and fuss of intellectual anarchism.

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THE PERIOD OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR AND THE FIRST RUSSIAN REVOLUTION
TWO TACTICS OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY IN THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

PREFACE

In a revolutionary period it is very difficult to keep abreast of events, which provide an astonishing amount of new material for an evaluation of the tactical slogans of revolutionary parties. The present pamphlet was written before the Odessa events.* We have already pointed out in the Proletary (No. 9—"Revolution Teaches") that these events have forced even those Social-Democrats who created the "uprising-as-a-process" theory, and who rejected propaganda for a provisional revolutionary government, virtually to pass over, or to begin to pass over, to the side of their opponents. 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-democracy to the working-class masses in Russia. The revolution will confirm the program and tactics of the Social-Democratic Party in actual practice, by demonstrating the true nature of the various classes of society, by demonstrating the bourgeois character of our democracy and the real aspirations of the peasantry, which, while it is revolutionary in the bourgeois-democratic sense, harbours within itself, not the idea of "socialization," but a new class struggle between the peasant bourgeoisie and the rural proletariat. The old illusions of the old Narodniks, which are so clearly reflected, for instance, in the draft program of the "Socialist-Revolutionary Party" in the attitude it takes towards the question of the development of capitalism in Russia, towards the question of the democratic character of our "society," and towards the question of the meaning of a complete victory of a peasant uprising—all these illusions will be mercilessly and completely blown to the winds by the revolution. For the first time it will give the various classes 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 programs and tactical slogans of their ideologists, but also in the open political action of the masses.

* Reference is to the mutiny on the armoured cruiser Potemkin. (Author's note to the 1908 edition.—Ed.)
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 whether we shall be able to teach the revolution anything; whether we shall be able to make use of our correct 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 this end will depend, on the one hand, on the correctness of our appraisal of the political situation, on the correctness of our tactical slogans, and, on the other hand, on the extent to which these slogans are supported by the real fighting strength of the working-class masses. All the usual, regular, current work of all the organizations and groups of our Party, the work of propaganda, agitation and organization, is directed towards strengthening and extending the ties with the masses. This work is always necessary; but less than at any other time can it be considered sufficient in a revolutionary period. At such a time the working class has an instinctive urge for open revolutionary action, and we must learn to define the aims of this action correctly, and then spread a knowledge and understanding of these aims as widely as possible. It should not be forgotten that the current pessimism about our ties with the masses serves more than ever as a screen for bourgeois ideas regarding the role of the proletariat in the revolution. Undoubtedly, we still have a great deal to do to educate and organize the working class; but the whole question now is: where should the main political emphasis in this education and organization be placed? On the trade unions and legally existing societies, or on armed insurrection, on the work of creating a revolutionary army and a revolutionary government? Both serve to educate and organize the working class. Both are, of course, necessary. But the whole question now, in the present revolution, amounts to this: what is to be emphasized in the work of educating and organizing 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. The class-conscious representatives of the bourgeoisie are perfectly aware of this. That is precisely why the Osvobozhdeniye praises Akimovism, "Economism" in Social-Democracy, which is now placing the trade unions and the legally existing societies in the forefront. That is why Mr. Struve welcomes (the Osvobozhdeniye, No. 72) the Akimovist trend in the principles of the new Iskra. That is why he comes down so heavily on the detested revolutionary narrowness of the decisions of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

In order to lead the masses, it is particularly important for Social-De-
Two Tactics of S.-D. in Democratic Revolution

Machinery at the present time to advance correct tactical slogans. There is nothing more dangerous in time of revolution than underrating the importance of tactical slogans consistent with our principles. For example, the Iskra, in No. 104, virtually passes over to the side of its opponents in the Social-Democratic movement, and yet, at the same time, disparages the significance of slogans and tactical decisions which are in advance of the times and which indicate the path along which the movement is progressing, although with a number of failures, errors, etc. On the contrary, the working out of correct tactical decisions is of immense importance for a party which desires to lead the proletariat in the spirit of the consistent principles of Marxism, and not merely to drag along in the wake of events. In the resolutions of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and of the Conference of the section which has split away from the Party,* we have the most precise, most carefully thought-out, and most complete expression of tactical views—views not casually expressed by individual writers, but accepted by the responsible representatives of the Social-Democratic proletariat. Our Party is in advance of all the others, for it has a precise program, accepted by all. It must also set the other parties an example of strict adherence to its tactical resolutions, in contradistinction to the opportunism of the democratic bourgeoisie of the Osovobozhdeniye and the revolutionary phrasemongering of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who only during the revolution suddenly bethought themselves to come forward with a “draft” of a program and investigate for the first time whether it is a bourgeois revolution that they are witnessing.

That is why we think it a most urgent task of the revolutionary Social-Democrats to study carefully the tactical resolutions of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and of the Conference, to define what deviations have been made in them from the principles of Marxism, and to get a clear understanding of the concrete tasks of the Social-Democratic proletariat in a democratic revolution. It is to this task that the present pamphlet is devoted. The testing of our tactics from the standpoint of the principles of Marxism and of the lessons of the revolution is also necessary for those who really desire to pave the way for unity of tactics as a basis for the future complete unity of the whole Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, and not to confine themselves to admonitions alone.

N. Lenin

July 1905

* The Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (held in London in May 1905) was attended only by Bolsheviks, while in the “Conference” (held in Geneva at the same time) only Mensheviks participated. In the present pamphlet the latter are frequently referred to as new Iskra-ites because while continuing to publish the Iskra they declared, through their then adherent Trotsky, that there was a gulf between the old and the new Iskra. (Author’s note to the 1908 edition.—Ed.)
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 differ as to how to solve this question. Three political tendencies are to be observed. The tsarist government admits the necessity of convening representatives of the people, but under no circumstances does it intend to allow this assembly to be a popular and constituent assembly. It seems willing to agree, if we are to believe the newspaper reports on the work of the Bulygin Commission, to a consultative assembly, to be elected without freedom to carry on agitation and on the basis of strict qualifications or a strict class system. The revolutionary proletariat, inasmuch as it is guided by the Social-Democratic Party, demands complete transfer of power to a constituent assembly, and for this purpose strives to obtain 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," does not demand the overthrow of the tsarist government, does not advance the slogan calling for a provisional government, and does not insist on real guarantees that the elections be absolutely free and fair and that the assembly of representatives be a genuinely popular and a genuinely constituent assembly. As a matter of fact, the liberal bourgeoisie, which is the only serious social support of the Osvobozhdeniye tendency, 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, corresponding to the three main social forces of contemporary Russia. We have shown on more than one occasion (in the Proletary, Nos. 3, 4, 5) how the Osvobozhdentsi use pseudo-democratic phrases to cover up their half-hearted, or, to put it more directly and plainly, their treacherous, perfidious policy towards the revolution. Let us now consider how the Social-Democrats appraise the tasks of the moment. The two resolutions passed quite recently by the Third Congress of the Russian Social-
Democratic Labour Party and by the “Conference” of the section which has split away from the Party provide excellent material for this purpose. The question as to which of these resolutions more correctly appraises the political situation and more correctly defines the tactics of the revolutionary proletariat is of enormous importance, and every Social-Democrat who is anxious to fulfil his duties as a propagandist, agitator and organizer intelligently must study this question very carefully, leaving all irrelevant considerations entirely aside.

By Party tactics we mean the political conduct of the Party, or the nature, tendency and methods of its political activity. Tactical resolutions are adopted by Party congresses in order to define exactly 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, decided and open rupture between the overwhelming majority of the people and the tsarist government. The new question concerns the practical methods to be adopted in convening a genuinely popular and genuinely constituent assembly (the question of such an assembly was officially settled by the Social-Democratic Party in theory long ago, before any other party, in its Party program). Since the people have parted company with the government, and the masses realize the necessity of setting up a new order, the party which made it its object to overthrow the government must necessarily consider what government to set up in place of the old government which is to be overthrown. A new question, the question of a provisional revolutionary government, arises. In order to give a complete answer to this question the Party of the class-conscious proletariat must make clear: 1) the significance of a provisional revolutionary government in the revolution now going on and in the entire struggle of the proletariat in general; 2) its attitude towards a provisional revolutionary government; 3) the precise conditions of Social-Democratic participation in this government; 4) the conditions under which pressure is to be brought to bear on this government from below, i.e., in the event that the Social-Democrats do not participate in it. Only after all these questions are cleared up, will the political conduct of the Party in this sphere be principled, clear and firm.

Let us now consider how the resolution of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party answers these questions. The following is the full text of the resolution:

“Resolution on Provisional Revolutionary Government

Whereas:
“1) both the immediate interests of the proletariat and the interests of its struggle for the ultimate aims of Socialism require the widest possible measure of political liberty and, consequently, the replacement of the autocratic form of government by a democratic republic;
“2) the establishment of a democratic republic in Russia is possible only as a result of a victorious popular uprising, whose organ of power will be a provisional revolutionary government, which alone will be capable of securing complete freedom of agitation during the election campaign and of convening a constituent assembly that will really express the will of the people, an assembly elected on the basis of universal and equal suffrage, direct elections and secret ballot;

“3) under the present social and economic order this democratic revolution in Russia will not weaken, but strengthen the domination of the bourgeoisie, which at a certain moment will inevitably try, stopping at nothing, to take away from the Russian proletariat as many of the gains of the revolutionary period as possible.

“The Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party resolves that:

“a) it is necessary to disseminate among the working class a concrete idea of the most probable course of the revolution and of the necessity, at a certain moment in the revolution, for the appearance of a provisional revolutionary government, from which the proletariat will demand the realization of all the immediate political and economic demands contained in our program (the minimum program);*

“b) subject to the relation of forces, and other factors which cannot be exactly determined beforehand, representatives of our Party may participate in the provisional revolutionary government for the purpose of relentless struggle against all counter-revolutionary attempts and of the defence of the independent interests of the working class;

“c) an indispensable condition for such participation is that the Party should exercise strict control over its representatives and that the independence of the Social-Democratic Party, which is striving for a complete Socialist revolution and, consequently, is irreconcilably hostile to all bourgeois parties, should be strictly maintained;

“d) whether the participation of Social-Democrats in the provisional revolutionary government prove possible or not, we must pro-

* The Minimum Program—a program adopted at the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

“This program consisted of two parts: a maximum program and a minimum program. The maximum program dealt with the principal aim of the working-class party, namely, the Socialist revolution, the overthrow of the power of the capitalists, and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The minimum program dealt with the immediate aims of the Party, aims to be achieved before the overthrow of the capitalist system and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, namely, the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy, the establishment of a democratic republic, the introduction of an 8-hour working day, the abolition of all survivals of serfdom in the countryside, and the restoration to the peasants of the cut-off lands (otrezki) of which they had been deprived by the landlords.” (History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [Bolsheviks], Short Course, p. 41).—Ed.
TWO TACTICS OF S.-D. IN DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

pagate among the broadest masses of the proletariat the necessity for permanent pressure to be brought to bear upon the provisional government by the armed proletariat, led by the Social-Democratic Party, for the purpose of defending, consolidating and extending the gains of the revolution."


The resolution of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, as is evident from its title, is devoted wholly and exclusively to the question of a provisional revolutionary government. Hence, it includes the question as to whether Social-Democrats may participate in a provisional revolutionary government. On the other hand, it deals only with the question of a provisional revolutionary government and with nothing else; consequently, it does not include, for example, the question of the "conquest of power" in general, etc. Was the Congress right in eliminating this and similar questions? Undoubtedly it was right in doing so, since the political situation of Russia does not give rise to such questions as immediate issues. On the contrary, the issue raised by the whole of the people at the present time is the overthrow of the autocracy and the convocation of a constituent assembly. Party congresses must take up and decide issues which are of vital political importance by reason of the prevailing conditions and the objective course of social development, and not those questions which this or that writer happened to touch upon opportunely or inopportune.

Of what import is a provisional revolutionary government in the present revolution, and in the general struggle of the proletariat? The resolution of the Congress explains this by pointing at the very outset to the need for the "widest possible measure of political liberty," both from the standpoint of the immediate interests of the proletariat and from the standpoint of the "ultimate aims of Socialism." And complete political liberty requires that the tsarist autocracy be replaced by a democratic republic, as has already been recognized by our Party program. The stress laid in the resolution of the Congress on the slogan of a democratic republic is necessary both as a matter of logic and in point of principle; for it is precisely complete freedom that the proletariat, as the foremost champion of democracy, is striving to attain. Moreover, it is all the more opportune to stress this at the present time because right now the monarchists, namely, the so-called Constitutional-"Democratic," or Osvobozhdeniye Party in our country, are flying the colours of "democracy." In order to establish a republic, an assembly of people's representatives is absolutely indispensable. Moreover, such an assembly must be a popular (on the basis of universal and equal
suffrage, direct elections and secret ballot) and a constituent assembly. This too is recognized in the Congress resolution, further on. But the resolution does not stop there. In order to establish a new order “that will really express the will of the people” it is not enough to call a representative assembly a constituent assembly. It is necessary for this assembly to have the authority and power to “constitute.” Taking this into consideration, the resolution of the Congress does not confine itself to a formal slogan calling for a “constituent assembly,” but adds the material conditions which alone will enable that assembly really to carry out its tasks. Such specification of the conditions that will enable an assembly which is constituent in name to become constituent in fact is absolutely imperative, for, as we have pointed out more than once, the liberal bourgeoisie, as represented by the Constitutional-Monarchist party, is deliberately distorting the slogan of a popular constituent assembly, reducing it to a hollow phrase.

The Congress resolution states that a provisional revolutionary government alone, one, moreover, that will be the organ of a victorious popular uprising, can secure full freedom of agitation in the election campaign and convene an assembly that will really express the will of the people. Is this postulate correct? Those who would undertake to refute it would have to assert that it is possible for the tsarist government not to side with the reaction, that the tsarist government is capable of being neutral during the elections, that it will see to it that the will of the people is really expressed. Such assertions are so absurd that no one would venture to defend them openly; but they are being dragged in secretly, under cover of liberalism, by these same Osvobozhden si. A constituent assembly must be convened by someone; someone must guarantee the freedom and fairness of the elections; someone must invest such an assembly with power and authority. Only a revolutionary government, which is the organ of the uprising, can desire this in all sincerity and be capable of doing all that is required to achieve this. The tsarist government will inevitably work against this. A liberal government, which will come to terms with the tsar, and which does not rely entirely on the popular uprising, cannot sincerely desire this and could not accomplish it even if it desired it most sincerely. Therefore, the resolution of the Congress gives the only correct and entirely consistent democratic slogan.

However, an evaluation of the role of a provisional revolutionary government would be incomplete and false if the class nature of the democratic revolution were lost sight of. The resolution therefore adds that the revolution will strengthen the domination of the bourgeoisie. This is inevitable under the present, i.e., capitalist, social and economic system. And the strengthening of the domination of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat after the latter has secured some measure of political liberty must inevitably lead to a desperate struggle between them for power, must lead to desperate attempts on the part of the bourgeoisie “to take away from the proletariat the gains of the revolutionary period.” That is why the proletariat,
which is fighting for democracy in front of all and at the head of all, must not forget for a single moment about the new antagonisms latent in bourgeois democracy and about the new struggle.

Thus, the section of the resolution which we have just reviewed fully sets forth the role of a provisional revolutionary government; in its relation to the struggle for freedom and for a republic, to a constituent assembly and to the democratic revolution, which clears the ground for a new class struggle.

The next question is, what should be the attitude of the proletariat in general towards a provisional revolutionary government? The Congress resolution answers this first of all by directly advising the Party to spread among the working class the conviction that a provisional revolutionary government is necessary. The working class must be made aware of this. Whereas the "democratic" bourgeoisie leaves the question of the overthrow of the tsarist government in the shade, we must push it to the fore and insist on the necessity of a provisional revolutionary government. More than that, we must outline a program of action for such a government that would conform with the objective conditions of the historic period through which we are now passing and with the aims of proletarian democracy. This program is the entire minimum program of our Party, the program of the immediate political and economic reforms which, on the one hand, are fully possible of realization on the basis of the existing social and economic relationships and, on the other hand, are requisite for the next step forward, for the achievement of Socialism.

Thus, the resolution fully explains the nature and aims of a provisional revolutionary government. By its origin and fundamental nature such a government must be the organ of the popular uprising. Its formal purpose must be to serve as the medium for convening a popular constituent assembly. The substance of its activities must be to put into effect the minimum program of proletarian democracy, which is the only program capable of safeguarding the interests of the people which has risen against the autocracy.

It might be argued that a provisional government, since it is only provisional, cannot carry out a constructive program which has not yet received the approval of the whole of the people. Such an argument would merely be the sophistry of reactionaries and "absolutists." To abstain from carrying out a constructive program is tantamount to tolerating the existence of the feudal regime of the putrid autocracy. Only a government of traitors to the cause of the revolution could tolerate such a regime, but not a government which is the organ of a popular uprising. It would be mockery for anyone to propose that we should refrain from exercising freedom of assembly pending the confirmation of such freedom by a constituent assembly, on the plea that the constituent assembly might not confirm freedom of assembly! It is just as much of a mockery to object to the immediate execution of the minimum program by a provisional revolutionary government.
Finally, let us note that by making it the task of the provisional revolutionary government to put into effect the minimum program, the resolution eliminates the absurd, semi-anarchist ideas about putting the maximum program into effect immediately, about the conquest of power for a Socialist revolution. The degree of economic development of Russia (an objective condition) and the degree of class consciousness and organization of the broad masses of the proletariat (a subjective condition inseparably connected with the objective condition) make the immediate complete emancipation of the working class impossible. Only the most ignorant people can ignore the bourgeois nature of the democratic revolution which is now taking place; only the most naive optimist can forget how little as yet the masses of the workers are informed of the aims of Socialism and of the methods of achieving it. And we are all convinced that the emancipation of the workers can be effected only by the workers themselves; a Socialist revolution is out of the question unless the masses become class conscious, organized, trained and educated in open class struggle against the entire bourgeoisie. In answer to the anarchist objections that we are putting off the Socialist revolution, we say: we are not putting it off, but are taking the first step towards it, in the only possible way, along the only correct road, namely, the road of a democratic republic. Whoever wants to arrive at Socialism by a different road, other than that of political democracy, will inevitably arrive at absurd and reactionary conclusions, both in the economic and the political sense. If any workers ask us at the given moment why not go ahead and carry out our maximum program we shall answer by pointing out how far the masses of the democratically disposed people still are from Socialism, how undeveloped class antagonisms still are, how unorganized the proletarians still are. Organize hundreds of thousands of workers all over Russia; enlist the sympathy of millions for our program! Try to do this without confining yourselves to high-sounding but hollow anarchist phrases—and you will see at once that in order to achieve this organization, in order to spread Socialist enlightenment, we must achieve the fullest possible measure of democratic reforms.

Let us proceed further. Once we are clear about the role of a provisional revolutionary government and the attitude of the proletariat toward it, the following question arises: would it be right for us to participate in it (action from above) and, if so, under what conditions? What should be our action from below? The resolution supplies precise answers to both these questions. It definitely declares that it is admissible in principle for Social-Democrats to participate in a provisional revolutionary government (during the period of a democratic revolution, the period of struggle for a republic). By this declaration we once and for all disassociate ourselves both from the anarchists, who answer this question in the negative on principle, and from the khvostists among the Social-Democrats (like Martynov and the new Iskra-ites) who have tried to frighten
us with the prospect of a situation wherein it might prove necessary for us to participate in such a government. Through this declaration the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party rejected, once and for all, the idea expressed by the new Iskra that the participation of Social-Democrats in a provisional revolutionary government would be a variety of Millerandism, that it is inadmissible in principle, as sanctifying the bourgeois order, etc.

But its admissibility in principle does not, of course, solve the question of its practical expediency. Under what conditions is this new form of struggle—the struggle "from above," recognized by the Congress of the Party—expedient? It goes without saying that at the present time it is impossible to speak of concrete conditions, such as relation of forces, etc., and the resolution, naturally, refrains from defining these conditions in advance. No intelligent person would venture at the present time to prophesy anything on this subject. What we can and must do is to determine the nature and aim of our participation. This is precisely what is done in the resolution, which points out two objectives of our participation: 1) a relentless struggle against counter-revolutionary attempts, and 2) the defence of the independent interests of the working class. At a time when the liberal bourgeoisie is beginning to talk assiduously about the psychology of reaction (see Mr. Struve's most instructive "Open Letter" in the Osvobozhdeniye, No. 72), in an attempt to frighten the revolutionary people and to impel it to show a spirit of compliance with regard to the autocracy—at such a time it is particularly appropriate for the Party of the proletariat to call attention to the task of waging a real war against counter-revolution. In the final analysis, force alone can settle the great problems of political liberty and the class struggle, and it is our business to prepare and organize this force and to employ it actively, not only for defensive purposes, but also for the purpose of attack. The long reign of political reaction in Europe, which has lasted almost uninterruptedly since the days of the Paris Commune, has too greatly accustomed us to the idea that action can proceed only "from below," has too greatly inured us to seeing only defensive struggles. There can be no doubt that we have now entered a new era: a period of political upheavals and revolutions has been ushered in. In a period such as Russia is passing through at the present time, it is impermissible to be circumscribed by the old set formulae. We must propagate the idea of action from above, we must prepare for the most energetic, offensive action, and we must study the conditions under which these actions are to take place and the forms they are to assume. The Congress resolution lays special emphasis on two of these conditions: one refers to the formal aspect of Social-Democratic participation in a provisional revolutionary government (strict control of the Party over its representatives), the other—to the very nature of such participation (never for an instant to lose sight of the aim of effecting a complete Socialist revolution).
Having thus explained from all aspects the policy of the Party with regard to action "from above"—this new, hitherto almost unprecedented method of struggle—the resolution proceeds to provide also for the eventuality that we shall not be able to act from above. We must exercise pressure on the provisional revolutionary government from below in any case. In order to be able to exercise this pressure from below, the proletariat must be armed—for in a revolutionary situation matters develop very quickly to the stage of open civil war—and must be led by the Social-Democratic Party. The object of its armed pressure is that of "defending, consolidating and extending the gains of the revolution," i.e., those gains which from the standpoint of the interests of the proletariat must consist in the fulfilment of the whole of our minimum program.

This brings our brief analysis of the resolution of the Third Congress on a provisional revolutionary government to a close. As the reader can see, the resolution explains the importance of this new question, the attitude of the Party of the proletariat toward it, and the policy of the Party both inside a provisional revolutionary government and outside of it.

Let us now consider the corresponding resolution of the "Conference."

### 3. WHAT IS A "DECISIVE VICTORY OF THE REVOLUTION OVER TSARISM"?

The resolution of the "Conference" is devoted to the question: "The Conquest of Power and Participation in a Provisional Government."* As we have already pointed out, the very manner in which the question is put betrays confusion. On the one hand the question is presented in a narrow way: It deals only with our participation in a provisional government and not in general with the tasks of the Party in regard to a provisional revolutionary government. On the other hand, two totally dissimilar questions are confounded, viz., the question of our participation in one of the stages of the democratic revolution and the question of the Socialist revolution. Indeed, the "conquest of power" by Social-Democracy is a Socialist revolution, nor can it be anything else if we use these words in their direct and usually accepted sense. If, however, we are to understand these words to mean the conquest of power for a democratic revolution and not for a Socialist revolution, then what is the point in talking not only about participation in a provisional revolutionary government but also about the "conquest of power" in general. Obviously our "Conferencers" were not very clear themselves as to what they should talk

* The full text of this resolution can be reconstructed by the reader from the quotations given on pp. 400, 403, 407, 431 and 433 [see this volume pp. 363, 367-68, 372, 399 and 402—Ed.] of the present pamphlet. (Author's note to the 1908 edition.—Ed.)
about: the democratic or the Socialist revolution. Those who have followed the literature on this question know that it was Comrade Martynov, in his notorious *Two Dictatorships*, who started this muddle: the new *Iskra*-ites are very reluctant to recall the manner in which this question was presented (before January 9) in that model of a *khvostist* work. Nevertheless there can be no doubt that it exercised ideological influence on the Conference.

But let us leave the title of the resolution. Its contents reveal mistakes incomparably more profound and serious. Here is the first part:

"A decisive victory of the revolution over tsarism may be marked either by the establishment of a provisional government, which will emerge from a victorious popular uprising, or by the revolutionary initiative of one representative institution or another, which, under direct revolutionary pressure of the people, decides to set up a popular constituent assembly."

Thus, we are told that a decisive victory of the revolution over tsarism may be marked either by a victorious uprising, or—by a decision of a representative institution to set up a constituent assembly! What does this mean? How are we to understand it? A decisive victory may be marked by a "decision" to set up a constituent assembly? And such a "victory" is put side by side with the establishment of a provisional government which will "emerge from a victorious popular uprising"!! The Conference failed to note that a *victorious* popular uprising and the *establishment* of a provisional government would signify the victory of the revolution *in actual fact*, whereas a "decision" to set up a constituent assembly would signify a victory of the revolution *in words* only.

The Conference of the Mensheviks, or new *Iskra*-ites, committed the same error that the liberals, the *Osvobozhdentsi* are constantly committing. The *Osvobozhdentsi* prattle about a "constituent" assembly and bashfully close their eyes to the fact that power and force remain in the hands of the tsar. They forget that in order to "constitute" one must possess the power to do so. The Conference also forgot that it is still a far cry from a "decision" adopted by representatives—no matter who they are—to the fulfilment of that decision. The Conference further forgot that so long as power remained in the hands of the tsar, all decisions passed by any representatives whatsoever would remain empty and miserable prattle, as was the case with the "decisions" of the Frankfurt Parliament, famous in the history of the German Revolution of 1848. In his *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx, the representative of the revolutionary proletariat, castigated the Frankfurt liberal *Osvobozhdentsi* ("Emancipationists") with merciless sarcasm precisely because they uttered fine words, adopted all sorts of democratic "decisions," "constituted" all kinds of liberties, while actually they left power in the hands of the king and failed to organize an armed struggle against the military forces at the disposal of the king. And while
the Frankfurt Osvobozhdentsi were prattling—the king bided his time, consolidated his military forces, and the counter-revolution, relying on real force, utterly routed the democrats with all their fine “decisions.”

The Conference put on a par with a decisive victory the very thing that lacks the essential condition of victory. How was it possible for Social-Democrats who recognize the republican program of our Party to commit such an error? In order to understand this strange phenomenon we must turn to the resolution of the Third Congress on the section which has split away from the Party.”* This resolution refers to the fact that various tendencies “akin to Economism” have survived in our Party. Our “Conferencers” (it is not for nothing that they are under the ideological guidance of Martynov) talk of the revolution in exactly the same way as the Economists talked of the political struggle or the eight-hour day. The Economists immediately gave currency to the “theory of stages”: 1) the struggle for rights, 2) political agitation, 3) political struggle; or, 1) a ten-hour day, 2) a nine-hour day, 3) an eight-hour day. The results of this “tactics-as-a-process” are sufficiently well known to all. Now we are invited to make sure in advance that we divide the revolution itself properly into stages: 1) the tsar convenes a representative body; 2) this representative body “decides” under pressure of the “people” to set up a constituent assembly; 3) . . . the Mensheviks have not yet agreed among themselves as to the third stage; they have forgotten that the revolutionary pressure of the people will encounter the counter-revolutionary pressure of tsarism and that, therefore, either the “decision” will remain unfulfilled or the issue will be decided after all by the victory or the defeat of the popular uprising. The resolution of the Conference is an exact reproduction of the reasoning of the Economists to the effect that a decisive victory of the workers may be marked either by the realization of the eight-hour day in a revolutionary way, or by the grant of a ten-hour day and a “decision” to go over to a nine-hour day . . . Exactly the same.

* We cite this resolution in full. “The Congress places on record that since the time of the Party’s fight against Economism, certain trends have survived in the R.S.D.L.P. which, in various degrees and respects, are akin to Economism and which betray a common tendency to belittle the importance of the element of consciousness in the proletarian struggle, and to subordinate it to the element of spontaneity. On questions of organization, the representatives of these tendencies put forward, in theory, the principle of organization-as-a-process which is out of harmony with methodical Party work, while in practice they systematically deviate from Party discipline in very many cases, and in other cases preach to the least enlightened section of the Party the idea of a wide application of the elective principle, without taking into consideration the objective conditions of Russian life, and so strive to undermine the only basis for Party ties that is possible at the present time. In tactical questions these trends manifest themselves in a tendency to narrow the scope of Party work, declaring their opposition to the Party pursuing completely independent tactics with regard to the liberal-bourgeois parties, denying that it is possible and desirable for our Party to assume the role of organizer in the people’s uprising and opposing the participation of the Party.
It may be objected perhaps that the authors of the resolution did not mean to place the victory of an uprising on a par with the “decision” of a representative institution convened by the tsar, that they only wanted to provide for the Party’s tactics in either case. To this our answer would be: 1) the text of the resolution plainly and unambiguously describes the decision of a representative institution as “a decisive victory of the revolution over tsarism.” Perhaps that is the result of careless wording, perhaps it could be corrected after consulting the minutes, but, so long as it is not corrected, the present wording can have only one meaning, and this meaning is entirely in keeping with the Oswobozhdeniye line of reasoning. 2) The Oswobozhdeniye line of reasoning, into which the authors of the resolution have drifted, stands out in incomparably greater relief in other literary productions of the new Iskra-ites. For instance, the organ of the Tiflis Committee, Social-Democrat (in the Georgian language; praised by the Iskra in No. 100), in the article “The Zemsky Sobor and Our Tactics,” goes so far as to say that the “tactics” “which make the Zemsky Sobor the centre of our activities” (about the convocation of which, we may add, nothing definite is known as yet) “are more advantageous for us” than the “tactics” of armed insurrection and the establishment of a provisional revolutionary government. We shall refer to this article again further on. 3) No objection can be made to a preliminary discussion of what tactics the Party should adopt in the event of the victory of the revolution as well as in event of its defeat, in the event of a successful uprising as well as in the event the uprising fails to develop into a serious force. It is possible that the tsarist government may succeed in convening a representative assembly for the purpose of coming to terms with the liberal bourgeoisie; providing for that eventuality, the resolution of the Third Congress speaks plainly about “hypocritical policy,” “pseudo-democracy,” “a caricature of popular representation, something like the so-called Zemsky Sobor.”* But the point is that this is not said in a provisional democratic-revolutionary government under any conditions whatsoever.

“The Congress instructs all Party members everywhere to conduct an energetic ideological struggle against such partial deviations from the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy; at the same time it is of the opinion that persons who share such views to a greater or lesser extent may belong to Party organizations on the indispensable condition that they recognize the Party congresses and the Party Rules and wholly submit to Party discipline.” (Author’s note to the 1908 edition.—Ed.)

* The following is the text of this resolution on the attitude towards the tactics of the government on the eve of the revolution:

“Whereas for purposes of self-preservation the government during the present revolutionary period, while intensifying the usual repressions directed mainly against the class-conscious elements of the proletariat, at the same time 1) tries by means of concessions and promises of reforms to corrupt the working class politically and thereby to divert it from the revolutionary struggle; 2) for the same purpose clothes its hypocritical policy of concessions in a pseudo-democratic
in the resolution on a provisional revolutionary government, for it has nothing to do with a provisional revolutionary government. This eventuality defers the problem of the uprising and of the establishment of a provisional revolutionary government; it modifies this problem, etc. The point in question now is not that all kinds of combinations are possible, that both victory and defeat are possible, that there may be direct or circuitous paths; the point is that it is impermissible for a Social-Democrat to confuse the minds of the workers with regard to the genuinely revolutionary path, that it is impermissible for him to take the cue from the Osovozhdeniye and describe as a decisive victory that which lacks the main requisite for victory. It is possible that we may not even obtain the eight-hour day at one stroke, but only after following a long and circuitous path; but what would you say of a man who calls such impotence, such weakness of the proletariat as renders it incapable of counteracting procrastination, delays, haggling, treachery and reaction, a victory for the workers? It is possible that the Russian revolution will end in an "abortive constitution," as was once stated in the Vperyod, but can this justify a Social-Democrat, who on the eve of a decisive struggle would call this abortion a "decisive victory over tsarism"? If the worst comes to the worst, it is possible that so far from getting a republic, even the consti-

cloak, beginning with invitations to the workers to elect their representatives to commissions and conferences and ending with the establishment of a caricature of popular representation, something like the so-called Zemsky Sobor; 3) organizes the so-called Black-Hundreds and incites against the revolution all those elements of the people in general who are reactionary, ignorant or blinded by racial or religious hatred;

"The Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. resolves to call on all Party organizations:

"a) while exposing the reactionary purpose of the government's concessions, to emphasize in their propaganda and agitation the fact that, on the one hand, these concessions were granted under compulsion, and, on the other, that it is absolutely impossible for the autocracy to grant reforms satisfactory to the proletariat;

"b) taking advantage of the election campaign, to explain to the workers the real significance of the government's measures and to show the necessity for the proletariat of the convocation by revolutionary means of a constituent assembly based on universal and equal suffrage, direct elections and secret ballot;

"c) to organize the proletariat for the immediate realization, in a revolutionary way, of the eight-hour working day and of the other immediate demands of the working class;

"d) to organize armed resistance to the actions of the Black-Hundreds and generally of all the reactionary elements led by the government." (Author's note to the 1908 edition.—Ed.)

* The newspaper Vperyod, published in Geneva, began to appear in January 1905 as the organ of the Bolshevik section of the Party. Eighteen issues appeared from January to May. After May, by virtue of the decision of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, the Proletary was issued in place of the Vperyod as the central organ of the R.S.D.L.P. (This Congress took place in London in May; the Mensheviks did not appear, and organized their own "Conference" in Geneva.) (Author's note to the 1908 edition.—Ed.)
tution we get will be the mere ghost of a constitution, something "à la Shipov,"* but would it be pardonable for a Social-Democrat to obscure our slogan calling for a republic?

Of course, the new Iskra-ites have not yet gone so far as to obscure it. But, as is particularly clearly evident from their resolution, to such an extent has the revolutionary spirit fled from them, to such an extent has lifeless pedantry blinded them to the militant tasks of the moment that, of all things, they forgot to mention a word about the republic in their resolutions. It is incredible, but it is a fact. All the slogans of Social-Democracy have been endorsed, repeated, explained and presented in detail in the various resolutions of the Conference—even the election of shop stewards and delegates by the workers has not been forgotten, but in a resolution on a provisional revolutionary government they simply did not find the occasion to mention the republic. To talk of the "victory" of the people's uprising, of the establishment of a provisional government, and not to indicate what relation these "steps" and acts have to the achievement of a republic—means writing a resolution not for the guidance of the proletarian struggle, but for the purpose of hobbling along at the tail end of the proletarian movement.

To sum up: the first part of the resolution 1) gives no explanation whatever of the role of a provisional revolutionary government from the standpoint of the struggle for a republic and of securing a genuinely popular and genuinely constituent assembly; 2) simply confuses the proletariat in its conceptions of democracy by placing on a par with a decisive victory of the revolution over tsarism a state of affairs in which the main requisite for a real victory is lacking.

4. THE ABOLITION OF THE MONARCHIST SYSTEM AND A REPUBLIC

Let us pass on to the next section of the resolution:

"... In either case such victory will inaugurate a new phase in the revolutionary epoch.

"The task which the objective conditions of social development spontaneously raise in this new phase is the final abolition of the whole regime of social estates and the monarchy in the process of mutual struggle among the elements of politically emancipated bourgeois society for the satisfaction of their social interests and for the direct acquisition of power.

* A Constitution ... "à la Shipov"—the appellation given to the political program drawn up by the bourgeois liberal Shipov, who advanced the demand to establish a representative body having a consultative character and deprived of all legislative functions.—Ed.
"Therefore, the provisional government that would undertake
to carry out the tasks of this revolution, which by its historical
nature is a bourgeois revolution, would, in regulating the mutual
struggle of the antagonistic classes of the emancipated nation, not
only have to push revolutionary development further ahead but
would also have to fight against those of its factors which threaten
the foundations of the capitalist system."

Let us examine this section which forms an independent part of the
resolution. The idea underlying the above-quoted arguments coincides
with that stated in the third clause of the Congress resolution. But in
comparing these parts of the two resolutions, the following radical differ-
ence at once becomes apparent. The Congress resolution describes the
social and economic basis of the revolution in a few words and, concen-
trating its entire attention on the sharply defined struggle of classes for
definite gains, places the militant tasks of the proletariat in the forefront.
The resolution of the Conference describes the social and economic basis
of the revolution in a long-winded, nebulous and confused manner, very
vaguely mentions the struggle for definite gains, and leaves the militant
tasks of the proletariat altogether in the shade. The resolution of the Con-
ference speaks of the abolition of the old order in the process of mutual
struggle among the various elements of society. The Congress resolu-
tion states that we, the party of the proletariat, must effect this aboli-
tion, that only the establishment of a democratic republic signifies the
real abolition of the old order, that we must achieve such a re-
public, that we shall fight for it and for complete liberty, not only
against the autocracy, but also against the bourgeoisie, if it attempts
(as it assuredly will) to wrest our gains from us. The Congress resolution
calls on a definite class to wage a struggle for a precisely defined immediate aim. The resolution of the Conference discourses on the mutual struggle
of various forces. One resolution expresses the psychology of active strug-
gele, the other expresses that of passive contemplation; one resounds with
the call for live action, the other is steeped in lifeless pedantry. Both re-
solutions state that the present revolution is only our first step, which
will be followed by another; but from this, one resolution draws the con-
clusion that we must for that reason get over this step as quickly as
possible, leave it behind as quickly as possible, achieve a republic, mer-
cilessly crush the counter-revolution and prepare the ground for the
second step. The other resolution, however, oozes, so to speak, with ver-
obse descriptions of this first step and (excuse the vulgar expression)
chews the cud over it. The resolution of the Congress takes the old and
yet eternally new ideas of Marxism (about the bourgeois nature of a
-democratic revolution) as a preface or first premise from which it draws
conclusions as to the progressive tasks of the most progressive class, which
is fighting both for the democratic and for the Socialist revolution. The
resolution of the Conference does not get beyond the preface, chewing it over and over again and trying to be clever about it.

This is the very distinction which has long been dividing the Russian Marxists into two wings: the pedantic and the militant wings in the old days of "legal Marxism," and the economic and political wings in the period of the newly arising mass movement. From the correct premise of Marxism concerning the deep economic roots of the class struggle in general and of the political struggle in particular, the Economists drew the singular conclusion that we must turn our backs on the political struggle and retard its development, narrow its scope, and derogate from its aims. The political wing, on the contrary, drew a different conclusion from these same premises, namely, that the deeper the roots of our struggle at the present time, the more widely, the more boldly, and the more resolutely we must wage this struggle and the greater the initiative we must show in it. What we are now dealing with is the same old controversy, only under different circumstances and in a modified form. From the premises that a democratic revolution is far from being a Socialist one, that the propertyless are far from being the only ones to whom it is "of interest," that it is deeply rooted in the inexorable needs and requirements of the whole of bourgeois society—from these premises we draw the conclusion that the most progressive class must formulate its democratic aims all the more boldly, express them all the more sharply and fully, advance the direct slogan calling for a republic, popularize the idea of the necessity of a provisional revolutionary government and of the necessity of ruthlessly crushing counter-revolution. Our opponents, the new Iskra-ites, however, deduce from the very same premises that the democratic conclusions should not be expressed fully, that the slogan calling for a republic may be omitted from the practical slogans, that we can refrain from popularizing the idea of the necessity of a provisional revolutionary government, that a mere decision to convene a constituent assembly can be termed a decisive victory, that we need not advance the task of combating counter-revolution as our active aim but that we may submerge it instead in a nebulous (and, as we shall presently see, wrongly formulated) reference to a "process of mutual struggle." This is not the language of political leaders, but of fossilized bureaucrats.

And the more closely one examines the various formulae in the new Iskra-ite resolution, the clearer its aforementioned basic features become. It speaks, for instance, of a "process of mutual struggle among the elements of politically emancipated bourgeois society." Bearing in mind the subject with which this resolution deals (a provisional revolutionary government) one asks in astonishment: if you are referring to the process of mutual struggle, how can you keep silent about the elements which are enslaving bourgeois society politically? Do the "Conferencers" really imagine that because they have assumed that the revolution will be victorious these elements have already disappeared? Such an idea would be
absurd in general, and in particular would be an expression of the greatest political naiveté and political short-sightedness. After the victory of the revolution over the counter-revolution, the latter will not disappear, on the contrary, it will inevitably start a new and even more desperate struggle. Since the purpose of our resolution is to analyse the tasks that will confront us when the revolution is victorious, it is incumbent upon us to devote great attention to the tasks of repelling counter-revolutionary attacks (as is done in the resolution of the Congress), and not to submerge these immediate, urgent and vital political tasks of a militant party in general discussions on what will happen after the present revolutionary period, what will happen when a "politically emancipated society" will already be in existence. Just as the Economists by repeating the truism that politics are subordinated to economics, covered up their failure to understand current political tasks, so the new Iskra-ites, by repeating the truism that struggles will take place in a politically emancipated society, cover up their failure to understand the urgent revolutionary tasks of the political emancipation of this society.

Take the expression "the final abolition of the whole regime of social estates and the monarchy." In plain language, the final abolition of the monarchist system means the establishment of a democratic republic. But our good Martynov and his admirers think that this expression is far too simple and clear. They are absolutely bent on rendering it "more profound" and saying it more "cleverly." As a result, we get ridiculous and vain efforts to appear profound, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, we get a description instead of a slogan, a sort of melancholy looking backward instead of a stirring appeal to march forward. We get the impression, not of virile people eager to fight for a republic here and now, but of fossilized mummies who sub specie aeternitatis* consider the question from the standpoint of plusquamperfectum.**

Let us proceed further:

"... the provisional government ... would undertake to carry out the tasks of this ... bourgeois revolution...." Here we see at once the result of the fact that our "Conferencers" have overlooked a concrete question which confronts the political leaders of the proletariat. The concrete question of a provisional revolutionary government faded from their field of vision before the question of the future series of governments which will carry out the aims of the bourgeois revolution in general. If you want to consider the question "from a historical angle," the example of any European country will show you that it was a series of governments, not by any means "provisional," that carried out the historical aims of the bourgeois revolution, that even the governments which defeated the revolution were nonetheless forced to carry out the historical aims of that

* From the perspective of eternity.—Ed.
** Pluperfect, the remote past.—Ed.
defeated revolution. But what is called a “provisional revolutionary government” is something altogether different from what you are referring to: that is the name given to the government of a revolutionary epoch, which directly replaces the overthrown government and which rests on the uprising of the people, and not on representative institutions coming from the people. A provisional revolutionary government is the organ of struggle for the immediate victory of the revolution, for the immediate repulse of counter-revolutionary attempts, and not by any means an organ for carrying out the historical aims of the bourgeois revolution in general. We may, gentlemen, leave it to the future historians of the future Russkaya Starina to determine exactly what aims of the bourgeois revolution you and we, or this or that government, shall have achieved—there will be time enough to do that in thirty years; now we must put forward slogans and give practical directives for the struggle for a republic and for the proletariat’s most active participation in this struggle.

It is for the reasons stated that the last propositions in the section of the resolution which we have quoted above are also unsatisfactory. The expression that the provisional government would have to “regulate” the mutual struggle among the antagonistic classes is exceedingly inept, or at any rate awkwardly put; Marxists should not use such liberal, Osvobozhdeniye formulations, which lead one to believe that it is possible to have governments which do not serve as organs of the class struggle but as its “regulators”. . . . The government would “not only have to push revolutionary development further ahead but would also have to fight against those of its factors which threaten the foundations of the capitalist system.” But it is the proletariat, the very same in whose name the resolution is speaking, that constitutes this “factor”! Instead of indicating just how the proletariat should “push revolutionary development further ahead” at the present time (push it further than the constitutionalist bourgeois would care to go), instead of advice to prepare definite ways and means of combating the bourgeoisie when the latter turns against the conquests of the revolution, we are offered a general description of a process, which does not say a word about the concrete aims of our activity. The new Iskra-ite method of exposition reminds one of Marx’s opinion (in his famous “theses” on Feuerbach) of the old materialism, which was alien to the ideas of dialectics. Marx said that the philosophers only interpreted the world in various ways, whereas the point is to change this world. Likewise, the new Iskra-ites can give a tolerable description and explanation of the process of struggle which is taking place before their eyes, but they are altogether incapable of giving a correct slogan for this struggle. They march with a will but lead badly, and they depreciate the materialist conception of history by ignoring the active, leading and guiding part in history which can and must be played by parties that understand the material prerequisites of a revolution and that have placed themselves at the head of the progressive classes.

24*
5. HOW SHOULD "THE REVOLUTION BE PUSHED AHEAD"?

Let us quote the next section of the resolution:

"Under such conditions, Social-Democracy must strive to maintain during the whole course of the revolution, a position which would best of all secure for it the possibility of pushing the revolution ahead, which would not tie the hands of Social-Democracy in its struggle against the inconsistent and self-seeking policy of the bourgeois parties and which would preserve it from being merged in bourgeois democracy.

"Therefore, Social-Democracy must not set itself the aim of seizing power or sharing power in the provisional government, but must remain the party of extreme revolutionary opposition."

The advice to occupy a position which best secures the possibility of pushing the revolution ahead is very much to our liking. We only wish that in addition to this good advice they had given a direct indication as to how Social-Democracy should push the revolution further ahead right now, in the present political situation, in a period of rumours, conjectures, talk and schemes about the convocation of popular representatives. Can the revolution be pushed further ahead now by one who fails to understand the danger of the Osvobozhdeniye theory of "compromise" between the people and the tsar, who calls a mere "decision" to convene a constituent assembly a victory, who does not set himself the task of carrying on active propaganda for the idea of the necessity of a provisional revolutionary government, or who leaves in the shade the slogan of a democratic republic? Such people actually push the revolution backward, because, as far as practical politics are concerned, they have not gone beyond the position taken by the Osvobozhdentsi. What is the use of their recognition of a program which demands that the autocracy be replaced by a republic, when in a resolution on tactics, in a resolution that defines the present and immediate tasks of the Party in the period of revolution they omit the slogan calling for a struggle for a republic? Actually it is the position of the Osvobozhdentsi, the position of the constitutionalist bourgeoisie, that is now characterized by the fact that the decision to convene a popular constituent assembly is considered a decisive victory while a prudent silence is maintained on the subject of a provisional revolutionary government and a republic! In order to push the revolution further ahead, i.e., beyond the bounds to which the monarchist bourgeoisie is pushing it, it is necessary actively to advance, emphasize and push to the forefront such slogans as would preclude the "inconsistencies" of the bourgeois democrats. At the present time there are only two such slogans: 1) for a provisional revolutionary government, and 2) for a republic,
since the slogan calling for a popular constituent assembly has been accepted by the monarchist bourgeoisie (see the program of the Osvobozhdeniye League) and accepted for the very purpose of juggling away the revolution, of preventing the complete victory of the revolution, and of enabling the big bourgeoisie to strike a huckster’s bargain with tsarism. And now we see that of the two slogans which alone are capable of pushing the revolution ahead, the Conference completely forgot the slogan calling for a republic, and plainly put the slogan calling for a provisional revolutionary government on a par with the Osvobozhdeniye slogan calling for a popular constituent assembly, terming both the one and the other “a decisive victory of the revolution”!!

Yes, such is the undoubted fact, which, we are sure, will serve as a landmark for the future historian of the Russian Social-Democratic movement. The Conference of Social-Democrats held in May 1905 passed a resolution which contains fine words about the necessity of pushing ahead the democratic revolution, but which actually pushes it back, which actually does not go beyond the democratic slogans of the monarchist bourgeoisie.

The new Iskra-ites like to accuse us of ignoring the danger of the proletariat merging in the democratic bourgeoisie. We should like to see the person who would undertake to prove this charge on the basis of the text of the resolutions passed by the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. Our reply to our opponents is: A Social-Democratic Party, operating in a bourgeois society, cannot take part in politics without marching, in one instance or another, side by side with the democratic bourgeoisie. The difference between us in this respect is that we march side by side with the revolutionary and republican bourgeoisie, without merging with it, whereas you march side by side with the liberal and monarchist bourgeoisie, also without merging with it. That is how matters stand.

The tactical slogans you have formulated in the name of the Conference coincide with the slogans of the “Constitutional-Democratic” Party, i.e., the party of the monarchist bourgeoisie; moreover, you did not even notice or realize this coincidence, thus actually dragging in the wake of the Osvobozhdentsi.

The tactical slogans we have formulated in the name of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party coincide with the slogans of the democratic-revolutionary and republican bourgeoisie. This bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie in Russia have not yet combined into a big people’s party.*

* The “Socialist-Revolutionaries” are more in the nature of a terrorist group of intellectuals than the embryo of such a party, although objectively the activities of that group reduce themselves to this very matter of achieving the aims of the revolutionary and republican bourgeoisie.
However, only one utterly ignorant of what is now taking place in Russia can doubt the existence of the elements of such a party. We propose to lead (in the event that the course of the great Russian revolution is successful) not only the proletariat, organized by the Social-Democratic Party, but also this petty bourgeoisie, which is capable of marching side by side with us.

In its resolution the Conference unconsciously descends to the level of the liberal and monarchist bourgeoisie. The Party Congress in its resolution consciously raises to its own level those elements of the revolutionary democracy who are capable of waging a struggle, and not of acting as brokers.

Such elements are to be found mostly among the peasants. In classifying the big social groups according to their political tendencies we can, without danger of serious error, identify revolutionary and republican democracy with the mass of the peasants—of course, in the same way and with the same reservations and implied conditions as we can identify the working class with Social-Democracy. In other words, we may formulate our conclusions in the following way as well: in a revolutionary period the Conference in its national political slogans unconsciously descends to the level of the mass of the landlords. The Party Congress in its national political slogans raises the peasant masses to the revolutionary level. We challenge anyone who may accuse us of evincing a penchant for paradoxes because of this conclusion to refute the proposition that if we are not strong enough to bring the revolution to a successful conclusion, if the revolution terminates in a "decisive victory" in the sense understood by the Osvobozdentsi, i.e., exclusively in the form of a representative assembly convened by the tsar, which could be called a constituent assembly only in derision—that this will be a revolution in which the landlord and big bourgeois element will preponderate. On the other hand, if we are destined to live through a really great revolution, if history prevents a "miscarriage," this time, if we are strong enough to carry the revolution to the end, to a decisive victory, not in the Osvobo zdentiye or the new Iskra sense of the word, then it will be a revolution in which the peasant and proletarian element will preponderate.

Some people may, perhaps, interpret the fact that we admit such preponderance as a renunciation of the view that the impending revolution will be bourgeois in character. This is quite possible, considering how this concept is misused in the Iskra. For this reason it will not be at all superfluous to dwell on this question.

* We are not referring here to the special peasant slogans which were dealt with in separate resolutions.
6. FROM WHAT DIRECTION IS THE PROLETARIAT THREATENED WITH THE DANGER OF HAVING ITS HANDS TIED IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE INCONSISTENT BOURGEOISIE?

Marxists are absolutely convinced of the bourgeois character of the Russian revolution. What does this mean? It means that the democratic changes in the political system and the social and economic changes, which have become indispensable for Russia, do not in themselves imply the undermining of capitalism, the undermining of bourgeois domination; on the contrary, they will, for the first time, really clear the ground for a widespread and rapid European, and not Asiatic, development of capitalism; they will, for the first time, make impossible for the bourgeoisie to rule as a class. The Socialist-Revolutionaries cannot grasp this idea, for they are ignorant of the rudiments of the laws of the development of commodity and capitalist production; they fail to see that even the complete success of a peasant uprising, even the redistribution of the land for the benefit of the peasants, in accordance with their desires ("Black Redistribution" or something of that kind), will not destroy capitalism at all, but will, on the contrary, give an impetus to its development and hasten the breaking up of the peasantry itself into classes. The failure to grasp this truth makes the Socialists-Revolutionaries unconscious ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie. Persistence on this truth is extremely important for Social-Democrats, not only theoretically but from the standpoint of practical politics, for from it follows the necessity for the complete class independence of the party of the proletariat in the present "general democratic" movement.

But it does not at all follow from this that a democratic revolution (bourgeois in its social and economic substance) is not of enormous interest for the proletariat. It does not at all follow from this that the democratic revolution cannot take place in a form advantageous mainly to the big capitalist, the financial magnate and the "enlightened" landlord, as well as in a form advantageous to the peasantry and to the worker.

The new Iskra-ites thoroughly misunderstand the meaning and significance of the concept bourgeois revolution. Their arguments constantly reveal the underlying idea that a bourgeois revolution is a revolution which can be of benefit only to the bourgeoisie. And yet nothing is more erroneous than such an idea. A bourgeois revolution is a revolution which does not go beyond the limits of the bourgeois, i.e., capitalist, social and economic system. A bourgeois revolution expresses the needs of capitalist development, and far from destroying the foundations of capitalism, it does the opposite, it broadens and strengthens them. This revolution therefore expresses the interests not only of the working class, but of
the entire bourgeoisie as well. Since the domination of the bourgeoisie over the working class is inevitable under capitalism, it is quite correct to say that a bourgeois revolution expresses the interests not so much of the proletariat as of the bourgeoisie. But it is entirely absurd to think that a bourgeois revolution does not express the interests of the proletariat altogether. 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 have no need for bourgeois political liberty; or to anarchism, which rejects all 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 where commodity production exists. Marxism teaches that a society which is based on commodity production, and which has commercial intercourse with civilized capitalist nations, itself inevitably takes the road of capitalism at a certain stage of its development. Marxism has irrevocably broken with the ravings of the Narodniks and the anarchists to the effect that Russia, for instance, can avoid capitalist development, jump out of capitalism, or skip over it, along some path other than the path 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 over and over again 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 decidedly interested in the broadest, freest and most rapid development of capitalism. The removal of all the remnants of the old order which are hampering the broad, free and rapid development of capitalism is of decided advantage to the working class. The bourgeois revolution is precisely a revolution which most resolutely sweeps away the survivals of the past, the remnants of serfdom (which include not only autocracy but monarchy as well) and which 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 revolution, the more assured will be the proletarian struggle against the bourgeoisie for Socialism. Such a conclusion will appear new, or strange and paradoxical only to those who are ignorant of the rudiments of scientific Socialism. 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 unquestion-
ably 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 if the bourgeois revolution does not too resolutely sweep away all the remnants of the past, but leaves some of them, i.e., if this revolution is not fully consistent, if it is not complete and if it is not 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 if the necessary changes in the direction of bourgeois democracy take place more slowly, more gradually, more cautiously, less resolutely, by means of reforms and not by means of revolution; if these changes spare the “venerable” institutions of serfdom (such as the monarchy) as much as possible; if these changes 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 hitch the rifle from one shoulder to the other,” i.e., to turn against the bourgeoisie the guns which the bourgeois revolution will place in their hands, the liberty which the revolution will bring, the democratic institutions which will spring up on the ground that is cleared of serfdom.

On the other hand, it is more advantageous for the working class if the necessary changes in the direction of bourgeois democracy take place by way of revolution and not by way of reform; for the way of reform is the way of delay, of procrastination, of 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 this putrefaction. The revolutionary way is the way of quick amputation, which is the least painful to the proletariat, the way of the direct removal of the decomposing parts, the way of fewest concessions to and least consideration for the monarchy and the disgusting, vile, rotten and contaminating institutions which go with it.

So it is not only because of the censorship, not only for fear of the authorities that our bourgeois-liberal press deplores the possibility of a revolutionary way, is afraid of revolution, tries to frighten the tsar with the bogey of revolution, is anxious to avoid revolution, grovels and toadies for the sake of miserable reforms as a basis for a reformist way. This standpoint is shared not only by the Russkiye Vyedomosti, Syn Otechestva, Nasha Zhizn and Nashi Dni,* but also by the illegal,

* Russkiye Vyedomosti (Russian Journal), Syn Otechestva (Son of the Fatherland), Nasha Zhizn (Our Life) and Nashi Dni (Our Days)—newspapers published by the bourgeois liberal party.—Ed.
uncensored Osvobozhdeniye. The very position the bourgeoisie occupies as a class in capitalist society inevitably causes it to be inconsistent in the democratic revolution. The very position the proletariat occupies as a class compels it to be consistently democratic. The bourgeoisie looks backward, fearing democratic progress, which threatens to strengthen the proletariat. The proletariat has nothing to lose but its chains, but with the help of democracy it has the whole world to gain. That is why the more consistent the bourgeois revolution is in its democratic changes, the less it will limit itself to what is of advantage exclusively to the bourgeoisie. The more consistent the bourgeois revolution is, the greater the guarantees of the benefits that the proletariat and the peasantry will derive from the democratic revolution.

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 democracy, for carrying the revolution to its conclusion. We cannot jump out of the bourgeois-democratic confines of the Russian revolution, but we can vastly extend its boundaries, and within those boundaries we can and must fight for the interests of the proletariat, for its immediate needs and for the conditions that will make it possible to prepare its forces for the complete victory that is to come. There are different kinds of bourgeois democrats. The Monarchist-Zemstvo-ist, who favours an upper chamber, and who “asks” for universal suffrage while secretly, sub rosa, striking a bargain with tsarism for a curtailed constitution, is also a bourgeois-democrat. And the peasant who is fighting, arms in hand, against the landlords and the government officials and with a “naive republicanism” proposes to “kick out the tsar”* is also a bourgeois-democrat. There are bourgeois-democratic regimes like the one in Germany and also like the one in England, like the one in Austria and also like the ones in America or Switzerland. He would be a fine Marxist indeed, who in a period of democratic revolution failed to see the difference between the degrees of democracy, the difference in the natures of its various forms and confined himself to “smart” sophisms to the effect that, after all, this is “a bourgeois revolution” and the fruits of a “bourgeois revolution.”

Our new Iskra-ites are wiseacres of just this sort, who take pride in their short-sightedness. They confine themselves to disquisitions on the bourgeois nature of the revolution just when and where it is necessary to be able to draw a distinction between republican-revolutionary and monarchist-liberal bourgeois democrats, to say nothing of the distinction between inconsistent bourgeois democratism and consistent proletarian democratism. They are satisfied—as if they had really become

* See the Osvobozhdeniye, No. 71, page 337, footnote 2.
TWO TACTICS OF S.-D. IN DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

like the "man in the muffler"*—to converse dolefully about a "process of mutual struggle of antagonistic classes," when the question is one of giving democratic leadership in the present revolution, of laying stress on progressive democratic slogans as distinguished from the treacherous slogans of Mr. Struve and Co., of bluntly and straightforwardly stating the immediate aims of the really revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and the peasantry, as distinguished from the liberal haggling of the landlords and manufacturers. At the present time the substance of the question, which you, gentlemen, have missed, is whether our revolution will result in a real, great victory, or merely in a wretched deal, whether it will go so far as the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, or whether it will "peter out" in a liberal constitution à la Shipov.

At first sight it might appear that in raising the question we are deviating entirely from our subject. But it is only at first sight that this may appear to be so. As a matter of fact, it is precisely this question that is at the root of the difference in principle which has already become clearly marked between the Social-Democratic tactics of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and the tactics initiated by the Conference of the new Iskra-ites. The latter have already taken not two but three steps back, resurrecting the mistakes of Economism in solving problems that are incomparably more complex, more important and more vital to the workers' party, viz., questions of its tactics in time of revolution. That is why we must analyse the question we have raised with all due attention.

The section of the new Iskra-ite resolution which we have quoted above points out the danger of Social-Democracy tying its hands in the struggle against the inconsistent policy of the bourgeoisie, the danger of its becoming merged in bourgeois democracy. The idea of this danger runs like a thread through all the literature typical of the new Iskra, it is the real crux of the principle involved in our Party split (ever since the time the elements of squabbling in this split were wholly eclipsed by the elements of a turn towards Economism). And without any equivocation we admit that this danger really exists, that just at the present time, at the height of the Russian revolution, this danger has become particularly serious. The pressing and extremely responsible duty of finding out from which side this danger actually threatens devolves on all of us theoreticians or—as I should prefer to say of myself—publicists of Social-Democracy. For the source of our disagreement is not a dispute as to whether such a danger exists, but the dispute as to whether it is caused by the so-called khovost-ism of the "Minority" or the so-called revolutionism of the "Majority."

* The "man in the muffler"—a narrow-minded, hide-bound conservative who stubbornly persists in shutting his eyes to the actual conditions of life. A character depicted in a story under the same title by A. Chekhov.—Ed.
To obviate all misinterpretations and misunderstandings, let us first of all note that the danger to which we are referring lies not in the subjective, but in the objective aspect of the matter, not in the formal position which Social-Democracy will take in the struggle, but in the material outcome of the entire present revolutionary struggle. The question is not whether this or that Social-Democratic group will want to merge in bourgeois-democracy or whether they are conscious of the fact that they are about to be merged. Nobody suggests that. We do not suspect any Social-Democrat of harbouring such a desire, and this is not at all a question of desires. Nor is it a question of whether this or that Social-Democratic group will preserve its formal identity, its diversity from and independence of bourgeois-democracy throughout the course of the revolution. They may not only proclaim such "independence" but even retain it formally, and yet it may turn out that their hands will nonetheless be tied in the struggle against the inconsistency of the bourgeoisie.

The final political result of the revolution may be that, in spite of the formal "independence" of Social-Democracy, in spite of its complete organizational independence as a separate party, it will in fact no longer be independent, it will not be able to put the imprint of its proletarian independence on the course of events, will prove so weak that, on the whole and in the last analysis, its "merging" in bourgeois-democracy will nonetheless be a historical fact.

That is what constitutes the real danger. Now let us see where the threat comes from: from the fact that Social-Democracy as represented by the new Iskra is deviating to the Right—as we believe; or from the fact that Social-Democracy as represented by the "Majority," the Vperyod, etc., is deviating to the Left—as the new Iskra-ites believe.

The answer to this question, as we have pointed out, depends on the objective combination of the actions of the various social forces. Our Marxian analysis of Russian life has given us a theoretical insight into the nature of those forces; now their nature is being revealed in practice by the open action of groups and classes in the course of the revolution. Thus, the entire theoretical analysis made by the Marxists long before the period we are now passing through, as well as all the practical observations of the development of revolutionary events, shows that from the standpoint of objective conditions there are two possible alternatives for the course and outcome of the revolution in Russia. A change in the economic and political system in Russia along bourgeois-democratic lines is inevitable and unavoidable. There is no power on earth that can prevent such a change. But the combined actions of the existing forces which are effecting that change may result in one of two alternatives, may bring about one of two alternative forms of that change. Either 1) the result will be a "decisive victory of the revolution over tsarism," or 2) the forces will be inadequate for a decisive victory and the matter will end in a deal between tsarism and the most "inconsistent" and
most "self-seeking" elements of the bourgeoisie. All the infinite variety
of detail and combinations, which no one is able to foresee, reduce them-
selves—in general and on the whole—to either the one or the other of
these two outcomes.

Let us now consider these outcomes, first, from the standpoint of their
social significance and, secondly, from the standpoint of the position
of Social-Democracy (its "merging" or "having its hands tied") in one
or the other case.

What is a "decisive victory of the revolution over tsarism"? We have
already seen that in using this expression the new Iskra-ites do not grasp
even its immediate political significance. Still less do they seem to un-
derstand the class essence of this concept. Surely we Marxists must in
no way allow ourselves to be deluded by words, such as "revolution" or
"the great Russian revolution," as do many revolutionary democrats
(of the type of Gapon). We must be perfectly clear in our own minds as
to what real social forces are opposed to "tsarism" (which is a real force,
perfectly intelligible to all) and are capable of gaining a "decisive victory"
over it. Such a force cannot be the big bourgeoisie, the landlords, the man-
ufacturers, the kind of "society" which follows the lead of the Osvo-
bozhdestvenists. We see that these do not even want a decisive victory. We
know that owing to their class position they are incapable of waging a
decisive struggle against tsarism; they are too greatly handicapped by
the shackles of private property, capital and land to enter into a decisive
struggle. They need tsarism with its bureaucratic, police and military
forces against the proletariat and the peasantry far too much for them
to be able to strive for its destruction. No, the only force capable of gain-
ing "a decisive victory over tsarism," is the people, i.e., the proletariat
and the peasantry, if we take the main, big forces and distribute the rural
and urban petty bourgeoisie (also part of "the people") between the
two. "A decisive victory of the revolution over tsarism" is the revolu-
tionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. Our new
Iskra-ites cannot escape from this conclusion, which Vpered pointed out
long ago. There is no one else who is capable of gaining a decisive victory
over tsarism.

And such a victory will be precisely a dictatorship, i.e., it must inev-
itably rely on military force, on the arming of the masses, on an upris-
ing, and not on institutions of one kind or another, established in a "law-
ful" or "peaceful" way. It can be only a dictatorship, for the realization
of the changes which are urgently and absolutely indispensable for the
proletariat and the peasantry will call forth the desperate resistance of
the landlords, of the big bourgeoisie and of tsarism. Without a dictator-
ship it is impossible to break down that resistance and to repel the coun-
ter-revolutionary attempts. But of course it will be a democratic, not
a Socialist dictatorship. It will not be able (without a series of inter-
mediary 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 village but also in factory life, lay the foundation for a thorough improvement in the position of the workers and for a rise in their standard of living, and—last but not least*—carry the revolutionary conflagration into Europe. Such a victory will by no means as yet transform our bourgeois revolution into a Socialist revolution; the democratic revolution will not directly 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.

How probable such a victory is is another question. We are not in the least inclined to be unreasonably optimistic on that score, we do not for a moment forget the immense difficulties of this task, but since we are out to fight we must desire victory and be able to point out the right road to it. Tendencies capable of leading to such a victory undoubtedly exist. True, our, Social-Democratic, influence on the masses of the proletariat is as yet exceedingly inadequate; the revolutionary influence on the mass of the peasantry is altogether insignificant; the proletariat, and especially the peasantry, are still frightfully scattered, backward and ignorant. But revolution consolidates and enlightens rapidly. Every step in the development of the revolution rouses the masses and attracts them with irresistible force to the side of the revolutionary program, as the only program that fully and consistently expresses their real and vital interests.

According to a law of mechanics, every action produces an equal reaction. In history also the destructive force of a revolution is to a considerable extent dependent on how strong and protracted was the suppression of the striving for liberty, and how profound is the contradiction between the antediluvian "superstructure" and the living forces of the present epoch. The international political situation, too, is in many respects shaping itself in a way most advantageous for the Russian revolution. The uprising of the workers and peasants has already started; it is sporadic, spontaneous, weak, but it unquestionably and undoubtedly proves the existence of forces capable of waging a decisive struggle and marching towards a decisive victory.

If these forces prove inadequate, tsarism will have time to conclude the deal which is already in preparation by Messieurs the Bulygins on the one side, and Messieurs the Struves, on the other. Then the whole thing

"Last but not least" in English in the Russian text.—Ed.
TWO TACTICS OF S.-D. IN DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

will end in a curtailed constitution, or, if the worst comes to the worst, even in a travesty of a constitution. This will also be a "bourgeois revolution," but it will be an abortive, miscarried, half-baked revolution. Social-Democracy entertains no illusions on that score, it knows the treacherous nature of the bourgeoisie, it will not lose heart or abandon its persistent, patient, sustained work of educating the proletariat in the spirit of class consciousness even in the most uninspiring, humdrum days of bourgeois-constitutional "Shipov" bliss. Such an outcome would be more or less similar to the outcome of almost all the democratic revolutions in Europe during the nineteenth century, and our Party development would then proceed along a thorny, hard and long, but familiar and beaten trail.

The question now arises: in which of these two possible outcomes will Social-Democracy find its hands actually tied in the fight against the inconsistent and self-seeking bourgeoisie, find itself actually "merged," or almost so, in bourgeois democracy?

We need only put this question clearly to have no difficulty in answering it without a moment's hesitation.

If the bourgeoisie succeeds in frustrating the Russian revolution by coming to terms with tsarism, Social-Democracy will find its hands actually tied in the fight against the inconsistent bourgeoisie; Social-Democracy will find itself merged "in bourgeois democracy" in the sense that the proletariat will not succeed in putting its clear imprint on the revolution, will not succeed in settling accounts with tsarism in proletarian or, as Marx used to say, "in plebeian" fashion.

If the revolution gains a decisive victory—then we shall settle accounts with tsarism in the Jacobin, or, if you like, in the plebeian way. "The terror in France," wrote Marx in 1848 in the famous *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, "was nothing but a plebeian way of settling accounts with the enemies of the bourgeoisie: absolutism, feudalism and philistinism." (See Marx, *Nachlaes*, Mehring's edition, Vol. III, p. 211.) Have those people who, in a period of a democratic revolution, try to frighten the Social-Democratic workers in Russia with the bogey of "Jacobinism" ever stopped to think of the significance of these words of Marx?

The Girondists of contemporary Russian Social-Democracy, the new Iskra-ites, do not merge with the Osvozhdentsi, but in point of fact they follow, by reason of the nature of their slogans, in the wake of the latter. And the Osvozhdentsi, i.e., the representatives of the liberal bourgeoisie, wish to settle accounts with the autocracy gently, as befits reformers, in a yielding manner, so as not to offend the aristocracy, the nobles, the court—cautiously, without breaking anything—kindly and politely, as befits gentlemen in white gloves (like the ones Mr. Petrunkevich borrowed from a bashi-bazouk to wear at the reception of "representatives of the people" (?) held by Nicholas the Bloody. See *Proletary*, No. 5.
The Jacobins of contemporary Social-Democracy—the Bolsheviks, the adherents of the Vperyod, the Congress people, or adherents of the Proletary, or whatever we may call them—wish by their slogans to inspire the revolutionary and republican petty bourgeoisie, and especially the peasantry, to rise to the level of the consistent democratism of the proletariat, which fully retains its individuality as a class. They want the people, i.e., the proletariat and the peasantry, to settle accounts with the monarchy and the aristocracy in a “plebeian way,” ruthlessly destroying the enemies of liberty, crushing their resistance by force, making no concessions whatever to the accursed heritage of serfdom, of Asiatic barbarism and of all that is an insult to mankind.

This, of course, does not mean that we necessarily propose to imitate the Jacobins in 1793, to adopt their views, program, slogans and methods of action. Nothing of the kind. Our program is not an old one, it is a new one—the minimum program of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. We have a new slogan: the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. We shall also have, if we live to see a real victory of the revolution, new methods of action, concordant with the nature and aims of the working-class Party that is striving for a complete Socialist revolution. By our comparison we merely want to explain that the representatives of the progressive class of the twentieth century, of the proletariat, i.e., the Social-Democrats, are divided into two wings (the opportunist and the revolutionary) similar to those into which the representatives of the progressive class of the eighteenth century, the bourgeoisie, were divided, i.e., the Girondists and the Jacobins.

Only in the event of a complete victory of the democratic revolution will the proletariat have its hands free in the struggle against the inconsistent bourgeoisie, only in that event will it not become “merged” in bourgeois democracy, but will leave its proletarian or rather proletarian-peasant imprint on the whole revolution.

In a word, in order that it may not find itself with its hands tied in the struggle against the inconsistent bourgeois democrats, the proletariat must be sufficiently class conscious and strong to rouse the peasantry to revolutionary consciousness, to direct its attack, and thereby to pursue the line of consistent proletarian democratism independently.

That is how matters stand with regard to the question of the danger of having our hands tied in the struggle against the inconsistent bourgeoisie—a question so unsatisfactorily answered by the new Iskra-ites. The bourgeoisie will always be inconsistent. There is nothing more naive and futile than attempts to set forth conditions and points,* which if satisfied, would enable us to consider the bourgeois democrat a sincere friend of the people. Only the proletariat can be a consistent fighter for

* As was attempted by Starovyer in his resolution, annulled by the Third Congress, and as is attempted by the Conference in an equally bungled resolution.
democracy. It may become a victorious fighter for democracy only if the peasant masses join its revolutionary struggle. If the proletariat is not strong enough for this, the bourgeoisie will be at the head of the democratic revolution and will impart to it an inconsistent and self-seeking nature. Nothing short of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry can prevent this.

Thus, we arrive at the undoubted conclusion that it is precisely the new Iskra-ite tactics, by reason of their objective significance, that are playing into the hands of the bourgeois democrats. Preaching organizational diffusiveness, to the extent of advocating plebiscites, advocating the principle of compromise and the divorcement of Party literature from the Party, derogating from the aims of armed insurrection, confusing the popular political slogans of the revolutionary proletariat with those of the monarchist bourgeoisie, distorting the requisites for a "decisive victory of the revolution over tsarism"—all this taken together constitutes that very policy of khevostism in a revolutionary period which perplexes the proletariat, disorganizes it, confuses its understanding and derogates from the tactics of Social-Democracy, instead of pointing out the only way to victory and of rallying all the revolutionary and republican elements of the people to the slogan of the proletariat.

* * *

In order to confirm this conclusion at which we have arrived on the basis of our analysis of the resolution, let us approach this same question from other angles. Let us see, first, how a simple and outspoken Menshevik illustrates the new Iskra tactics in the Georgian Social-Democrat. And, secondly, let us see who is actually making use of the new Iskra slogans in the present political situation.

7. THE TACTICS OF "ELIMINATING THE CONSERVATIVES FROM THE GOVERNMENT"

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

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

This is how the Russian new Iskra-ites set forth the ideas which were subsequently incorporated in the resolution we have analysed. Note that this was written before the battle of Tsushima,* when the Bulygin “scheme” had not yet seen the light of day. Even the liberals were losing their patience and were expressing their lack of confidence in the pages of the legal press; but a new Iskra-ite Social-Democrat proved more credulous than the liberals. He declares that the Zemsky Sobor “is being convened” and trusts the tsar to such an extent that he proposes to make this as yet non-existent Zemsky Sobor (or, possibly, “State Duma” or “Advisory Legislative Assembly”?) the centre of our actions. Being more outspoken and straightforward than the authors of the resolution adopted at the conference, our Tiflisian does not put the two “tactics” (which he expounds with inimitable naiveté) on a par, but declares that the second is more “advantageous.” Just listen:

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

So, it is in the interests of the proletariat that the tsarist government shall not be able to disunite the bourgeoisie and the proletariat! Is it not by mistake that this Georgian organ is called Social-Democrat instead of being called the Osvobozhdeniye? And note the peerless philosophy with regard to a democratic revolution! Is it not obvious that this poor Tiflisian is hopelessly confused by the pedantic, khvoist interpretation of the

* Tsushima—the naval battle between a Russian squadron and the Japanese fleet (May 14-15, 1905) off Tsushima Island (Korean Strait) which ended in the utter defeat of the former.—Ed.
concept "bourgeois revolution"? He discusses the question of the possible isolation of the proletariat in a democratic revolution and forgets ... forgets about a trifle ... about the peasantry! Of the possible allies of the proletariat he knows and favours the landowning Zemstvo-ists and is not aware of the peasants. And this in the Caucasus! Well, were we not right when we said that by its method of reasoning the new Iskra was sinking to the level of the monarchist bourgeoisie instead of raising the revolutionary peasantry to the position of an ally?

"... Otherwise the defeat of the proletariat and the victory of the government are inevitable. This is just what the autocracy is striving for. In its Zemsky Sobor it will undoubtedly attract to its side the representatives of the nobility, of the Zemstvos, the city Dumas, the universities and similar bourgeois institutions. It will try to appease them with petty concessions, thereby reconciling them to itself. Strengthened in this way, it will direct all its blows against the working people who will have been isolated. It is our duty to prevent such an unfortunate outcome. But can this be done by the first method? Let us assume that we paid no attention whatever to the Zemsky Sobor, but started to prepare for insurrection ourselves, and one fine day came out on the streets armed and ready for battle. The result would be that we would be confronted not with one but with two enemies: the government and the Zemsky Sobor. While we would be preparing, they would have had time to come to terms, to enter into an agreement with one another, to draw up a constitution advantageous to themselves, and to divide power between them. These tactics are of direct advantage to the government, and we must reject them in no uncertain fashion...."

Now this is frank! We must resolutely reject the "tactics" of preparing an uprising because the government "would have had time" to come to terms with the bourgeoisie! Can one find in the old literature of the most rabid "Economism" anything that would even approximate such a disgrace to revolutionary Social-Democracy? That uprisings and outbreaks of workers and peasants are taking place here and there is a fact. The Zemsky Sobor is a Bulygin promise. And the Social-Democrat in the city of Tiflis decides: to reject the tactics of preparing an uprising and to wait for a "centre of influence"—the Zemsky Sobor....

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

* By what means can the Zemstvo-ists be deprived of their own will? Perhaps by the use of a special sort of litmus paper?
"We support the Zemsky Sobor to the extent that it fights the autocracy, and we fight against it in all cases of reconciliation with the autocracy on its part. By energetic interference and force we shall cause a split among the deputies,* rally the radicals to our side, eliminate the conservatives from the government and thus put the whole Zemsky Sobor on the path of revolution. Thanks to such tactics the government will always remain isolated, the opposition strong and thereby the establishment of a democratic system will be facilitated."

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

Poor Russia! It has been said of her that she always wears the outmoded bonnets that Europe discards. We have no parliament as yet, even Bulygin has not yet promised one, but there is parliamentary cretinism galore.

"...How should this interference be effected? First of all, we shall demand that the Zemsky Sobor be convened on the basis of universal and equal suffrage, direct elections and secret ballot. Simultaneously with the announcement** of this method of election, complete freedom to carry on the election campaign, i.e., freedom of assembly, of speech and of the press, the inviolability of the voters and those elected and the release of all political prisoners must be made law.*** The elections themselves must be fixed as late as possible so that we have sufficient time to inform and prepare the people. And since the drafting of the regulations governing the convocation of the Sobor has been entrusted to a commission headed by Bulygin, Minister of the Interior, we should also exert pressure on this commission and on its members.**** If the Bulygin Commission refused to satisfy our demands*****

* Heavens! This is certainly rendering tactics "profound"! There are no forces available to fight in the streets, but it is possible "to split the deputies" "by force." Listen, comrade from Tiflis, one may prevaricate, but one should know the limit....
** In Iskra?
*** By Nicholas?
**** So this is what is meant by the tactics of "eliminating the conservatives from the government"!
***** But surely such a thing cannot happen if we follow these correct and profound tactics!
and grants suffrage only to property owners, then we must interfere in these elections and, by revolutionary means, force the voters to elect progressive candidates and to demand a constituent assembly in the Zemsky Sobor. Finally, we must impel the Zemsky Sobor to convene a constituent assembly or to declare itself to be such, resorting to all possible measures for this purpose: demonstrations, strikes, and, if need be, insurrection. The armed proletariat must constitute itself the defender of the constituent assembly, and both together* will march forward to a democratic republic.

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

Let not the reader imagine that this incredible rubbish is simply a maiden attempt at writing on the part of some new Iskra-adherent who has no authority and no influence. No, this is what is stated in the organ of an entire committee of new Iskra-ites, the Tiflis Committee. More than that. This rubbish has been openly endorsed by the "Iskra" in No. 100 of which we read the following about that issue of the Social-Democrat:

"The first issue is edited in a lively and competent manner. The experienced hand of a capable editor and publicist is perceptible. . . . It may be said with all confidence that the newspaper will carry out the task it has set itself brilliantly."

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

8. Osvobozhdeniye-ism and New Iskra-ism

Let us now proceed to another graphic confirmation of the political meaning of new Iskra-ism.

In a splendid, remarkable and most instructive article, entitled "How To Find Oneself" (Osvobozhdeniye, No. 71), Mr. Struve wages war against the "programmatic revolutionism" of our extreme parties. Mr. Struve is particularly displeased with me personally.** As for myself, Mr. Struve

* Both the armed proletariat and the conservatives "eliminated from the government"?

** "In comparison with the revolutionism of Messrs. Lenin and associates, the revolutionism of the West European Social-Democracy of Bebel, and even of Kautsky, is opportunism; but the foundations of even this revolutionism, already become toned down, have been undermined and washed away by history." A most irate thrust. Only Mr. Struve is mistaken in thinking that it is possible
could not please me more: I could not wish for a better ally in the fight against the reviving Economism of the new Iskra-ites and the utter lack of principles displayed by the "Socialist-Revolutionaries." On some other occasion we shall relate how Mr. Struve and the Osvobozhdeniye proved in practice how utterly reactionary are the "amendments" to Marxism made in the draft program of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. We have already repeatedly spoken about how Mr. Struve rendered me honest, faithful and real service every time he approved of the new Iskra-ites in principle, * and we shall say so once more now.

Mr. Struve's article contains a number of very interesting statements, which we can note here only in passing. He intends "to create Russian democracy by relying on class collaboration and not on class struggle," in which case "the socially privileged intelligentsia" (something in the nature of the "cultured nobility" to which Mr. Struve makes obeisance with the grace of a genuinely fashionable... lackey) will bring the weight of its "social position" (the weight of its moneybags) to this "non-class" party. Mr. Struve expresses the desire to show the youth the worthlessness "of the radical commonplace to the effect that the bourgeoisie has
to pile everything on me, as if I were dead. It is sufficient for me to make a challenge to Mr. Struve, which he will never be able to accept. When and where did I call the revolutionism of Bebel and Kautsky "opportunism"? When and where did I ever claim to have created any sort of special trend in international Social-Democracy not identical with the trend of Bebel and Kautsky? When and where have there been manifest differences between me, on the one hand, and Bebel and Kautsky on the other—differences even slightly approximating in seriousness the differences between Bebel and Kautsky, for instance, in Breslau on the agrarian question? Let Mr. Struve try to answer these three questions.

And to our readers we say: The liberal bourgeoisie everywhere and always has recourse to the method of assuring its adherents in a given country that the Social-Democrats of that country are the most unreasonable, whereas their comrades in a neighbouring country are "good boys." The German bourgeoisie has held up those "good boys" of French Socialists as models for the Bebels and the Kautskys hundreds of times. The French bourgeoisie quite recently pointed to the "good boy" Bebel as a model for the French Socialists. It is an old trick, Mr. Struve! You will find only children and ignoramuses swallowing that bait. The complete unanimity of international revolutionary Social-Democracy on all major questions of program and tactics is an incontrovertible fact.

* Let us remind the reader that the article [by Plekhanov—Ed.] "What Should Not be Done?" (Iskra No. 52) was hailed with pomp and fanfare by the Osvobozhdeniye as a "noteworthy turn" towards concessions to the opportunists. The trend of the principles behind the new Iskra ideas was especially lauded by the Osvobozhdeniye in an item on the split among the Russian Social-Democrats. Commenting on Trotsky's pamphlet, "Our Political Tasks," the Osvobozhdeniye pointed out the similarity between the ideas of this author and what was once written and said by the editors of the Rabocheye Dyelo, Krichevsky, Martynov, Akimov (see the leaflet entitled "An Obliging Liberal," published by the Vpered). The Osvobozhdeniye welcomed Martynov's pamphlet on the two dictatorships (of the item in the Vpered No. 9). Finally, Starovyer's belated complaints about the old slogan of the old Iskra, "first draw a line of demarcation and then unite," met with special sympathy on the part of the Osvobozhdeniye.
become frightened and has sold out the proletariat and the cause of liberty.” (We welcome this desire with all our heart. Nothing would confirm the correctness of this Marxian “commonplace” better than a war waged against it by Mr. Struve. Please, Mr. Struve, don’t pigeon-hole this splendid plan of yours!)

For the purposes of our subject it is important to note the practical slogans against which this politically sensitive representative of the Russian bourgeoisie, who is so responsive to the slightest change in the weather, is fighting at the present time. First, he is fighting against the slogan of republicanism. Mr. Struve is firmly convinced that this slogan is “incomprehensible and foreign to the masses of the people” (he forgets to add: comprehensible, but not of advantage to the bourgeoisie!). We should like to see what reply Mr. Struve would get from the workers in our study circles and at our mass meetings! Or are the workers not of the people? And what about the peasants? They are given to what Mr. Struve calls “naive republicanism” (“to kick out the tsar”)—but the liberal bourgeoisie believes that naive republicanism will be replaced not by deliberate republicanism but by deliberate monarchism! Ça dépend, Mr. Struve; it all depends on circumstances. Neither tsarism nor the bourgeoisie can do other than oppose a radical improvement in the condition of the peasantry at the expense of the landed estates, whereas the working class cannot but assist the peasantry in this respect.

Secondly, Mr. Struve assures us that “in a civil war the party that attacks, always proves to be in the wrong.” This idea verges closely on the above-mentioned trends of the new Iskra ideas. We will not say, of course, that in civil war it is always advantageous to attack; no, sometimes defensive tactics are imperative for a time. But to apply a proposition like the one Mr. Struve has made to Russia in 1905 merely means to reveal some of that “radical commonplace” (“the bourgeoisie takes fright and betrays the cause of liberty”). Whoever now refuses to attack the autocracy and reaction, whoever is not making preparations for such an attack, whoever is not advocating it, takes the name of adherent of the revolution in vain.

Mr. Struve condemns the slogans calling for “secrecy” and “rioting” (a riot being “an uprising in miniature”). Mr. Struve spurns both the one and the other—and he does so from the standpoint of “approaching the masses!” We should like to ask Mr. Struve whether he can point to any passage in, for instance, What Is To Be Done?—the work of an extreme revolutionary from his standpoint—which advocates rioting. As regards “secrecy” is there really much difference between, for example, us and Mr. Struve? Are we not both working on “illegal” newspapers which are being smuggled into Russia “secretly” and which serve the “secret” groups of either the Osvobozhdeniye League or the R.S.D.L.P.? Our workers’ mass meetings are often held “secretly”—that sin does exist. But what about the meetings of the gentlemen of the Osvobozhdeniye League? Is there any
reason why you should brag, Mr. Struve, and look down upon the despised partisans of despised secrecy?

True, the supplying of arms to the workers demands strict secrecy. On this point Mr. Struve is rather more outspoken. Just listen: "As regards armed insurrection or a revolution in the technical sense, only mass propaganda in favour of a democratic program can create the social psychology requisite for a general armed uprising. Thus, even from the point of view that an armed uprising is the inevitable consummation of the present struggle for emancipation—a view which I do not share—the permeation of the masses with ideas of democratic reform is a fundamental and most necessary task."

Mr. Struve tries to dodge the question. He speaks of the inevitability of an uprising instead of speaking about its imperativeness for the victory of the revolution. The uprising—unprepared, spontaneous, sporadic—has already begun. No one can positively vouch that it will develop into a comprehensive and integral popular armed uprising, for that depends on the state of the revolutionary forces (which can be fully gauged only in the course of the struggle itself), on the behaviour of the government and the bourgeoisie, and on a number of other circumstances which it is impossible to estimate exactly. There is no point in switching the discussion to inevitability, in the sense of absolute certainty with regard to some definite event, as Mr. Struve does. What you must discuss, if you want to be a partisan of the revolution, is whether insurrection is imperative for the victory of the revolution, whether it is imperative to proclaim it vigorously, to advocate and make immediate and energetic preparations for it. Mr. Struve cannot fail to understand this difference: he does not, for instance, obscure the question of the necessity of universal suffrage, which is indisputable for a democrat, by raising the question of whether its attainment is inevitable in the course of the present revolution, which is debatable and of no urgency for people engaged in political activity. By dodging the question of the necessity of an uprising, Mr. Struve expresses the innermost essence of the political position of the liberal bourgeoisie. In the first place, the bourgeoisie would rather come to terms with the autocracy than crush it; secondly, the bourgeoisie in any case leaves the armed struggle to the workers. This is the real meaning of Mr. Struve's evasiveness. That is why he draws back from the question of the necessity of an uprising to the question of the "social psychology" requisite for it, of preliminary "propaganda." Just as the bourgeois windbags in the Frankfurt Parliament of 1848 engaged in drawing up resolutions, declarations and decisions, in "mass propaganda" and in preparing the "requisite social psychology" at a time when it was a matter of resisting the armed force of the government, when the movement "had made" an armed struggle "imperative," when verbal persuasion alone (which is a hundredfold necessary during the preparatory period) became common, bourgeois inactivity and cowardice—
so also Mr. Struve evades the question of insurrection, screening himself behind phrases. Mr. Struve graphically shows us what many Social-Democrats stubbornly fail to see, namely, that a revolutionary period differs from ordinary, everyday preparatory periods in history in that the sentiments, the excitation of feeling and convictions of the masses must and do reveal themselves in action.

Vulgar revolutionism is the failure to see that the word is also a deed; this proposition is indisputable when applied to history generally or to those periods of history when no open political mass actions take place, and when they cannot be replaced or artificially evoked by putsches of any sort. Khvostism on the part of revolutionaries is the failure to understand that—when a revolutionary period has started, when the old “superstructure” has cracked from top to bottom, when open political action on the part of the classes and masses who are creating a new superstructure for themselves has become an accomplished fact, when civil war has begun—if one still confines oneself to “words” as of old, failing to advance the direct slogan to pass to “deeds,” if one still tries to avoid deeds by pleading the need for “psychological requisites” and “propaganda” in general, that is apathy, deadness, pedantry, or else it is betrayal of the revolution and treachery to it. The Frankfurt windbags of the democratic bourgeoisie are a memorable historical example of just such treachery or of just such pedantic stupidity.

Would you like an explanation of this difference between vulgar revolutionism and the khvostism of revolutionaries, taken from the history of the Social-Democratic movement in Russia? We shall give you such an explanation. Just call to mind the years 1901 and 1902, which are so recent but which already seem ancient history to us today. Demonstrations had begun. The protagonists of vulgar revolutionism raised a cry about “storming” (Robocheye Dyelo), “bloodthirsty leaflets” were issued (of Berlin origin, if my memory does not fail me), attacks were made on the “literariness” and on the bureaucratic nature of the idea of conducting agitation on a national scale through a newspaper (Nadezhdin). On the other hand, the revolutionaries given to khvostism preached that “the economic struggle is the best means of political agitation.” What was the attitude of the revolutionary Social-Democrats? They attacked both of these tendencies. They condemned flashes in the pan and the cries about storming, for it was or should have been obvious to all that open mass action was a matter of days to come. They condemned khvostism and bluntly issued the slogan even of a popular armed uprising, not in the sense of a direct appeal (Mr. Struve would not discover any appeals to “riots” in our utterances of that period), but in the sense of a necessary deduction, in the sense of “propaganda” (about which Mr. Struve has be-thought himself only now—our honourable Mr. Struve is always several years behind the times), in the sense of preparing that very “requisite social psychology” about which the representatives of the bewildered,
huckstering bourgeoisie are now holding forth so “sadly and inappropriately.” At that time propaganda and agitation, agitation and propaganda, were really pushed to the fore by reason of the objective state of affairs. At that time the work of publishing an all-Russian political newspaper, the weekly issuance of which was regarded as an ideal, could be proposed (and was proposed in What Is To Be Done?) as the touchstone of the work of preparing for an uprising. At that time the slogans advocating mass agitation instead of direct armed action, preparation of the social psychology requisite for insurrection instead of flashes in the pan, were the only correct slogans for the revolutionary Social-Democratic movement. At the present time the slogans have been superseded by events, the movement has gone beyond them, they have become cast-offs, rags fit only to clothe the hypocrisy of the Osvobozdeniye and the khvostism of the new Iskra!

Or am I mistaken, perhaps? Perhaps the revolution has not yet begun? Perhaps the time for open political action of classes has not yet arrived? Perhaps there is still no civil war, and the criticism of weapons should as yet not be the necessary and obligatory successor, heir, trustee and executor of the weapon of criticism?

Look around, come out of your study into the streets; you will find an answer to these questions there. Has not the government itself started civil war by shooting down hosts of peaceful and unarmed citizens everywhere? Are not the armed Black-Hundreds acting as “arguments” of the autocracy? Has not the bourgeoisie—even the bourgeoisie—recognized the need for a citizens’ militia? Does not Mr. Struve himself, the ideally moderate and punctilious Mr. Struve, say (alas, he says so only to evade the point!) that “the open nature of revolutionary action” (that’s the sort of fellows we are today!) “is now one of the most important conditions for exerting an educating influence upon the masses of the people?”

Those who have eyes to see can have no doubt as to how the question of armed insurrection must now be presented by the partisans of revolution. Just take a look at the three ways in which this question has been presented in the organs of the free press which are at all capable of influencing the masses.

The first presentation. The resolution of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.* It is publicly acknowledged and declared that the general democratic revolutionary movement has already

* The following is the text in full:

“Whereas
“1. the proletariat, being, by virtue of its very position, the most advanced and the only consistently revolutionary class, is for that very reason called upon to play the leading part in the general democratic revolutionary movement in Russia;
“2. this movement has already brought about the necessity for an armed uprising;
brought about the necessity for an armed uprising. The organization of the proletariat for an uprising has been placed on the order of the day as one of the essential, principal and indispensable tasks of the Party. Instructions are issued to adopt the most energetic measures to arm the proletariat and to ensure the possibility of directly leading the uprising.

The second presentation. An article in the Osvobozhdeniye, containing a statement of principles, by the “leader of the Russian constitutionalists” (as Mr. Struve was recently described by such an influential organ of the European bourgeoisie as the Frankfurter Zeitung), or the leader of the Russian progressive bourgeoisie. He does not share the opinion that an uprising is inevitable. Secret activity and riots are the specific methods of irrational revolutionism. Republicanism is a method of stunning. The question of armed insurrection is really a mere technical question, whereas “the fundamental and most necessary task” is to carry on mass propaganda and to prepare the requisite social psychology.

The third presentation. The resolution of the new Iskra-ite Conference. Our task is to prepare an uprising. A planned uprising is precluded. Favourable conditions for an uprising are created by the disorganization of the government, by our agitation, and by our organization. Only then “can technical military preparations acquire more or less serious significance.”

And is that all? Yes, that is all. The new Iskra-ite leaders of the proletariat still do not know whether insurrection has become imperative. It is still not clear to them whether the task of organizing the proletariat for direct battle has become an urgent one. It is not necessary to urge the

“3. the proletariat will inevitably take a most energetic part in this uprising, this participation determining the fate of the revolution in Russia;

“4. the proletariat can play the leading part in this revolution only if it is welded into a united and independent political force under the banner of the Social-Democratic Labour Party, which is to guide its struggle not only ideologically but practically as well;

“5. it is only by filling this part that the proletariat can be assured of the most favourable conditions for the struggle for Socialism against the propertied classes of a bourgeois-democratic Russia;

“the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. recognizes that the task of organizing the proletariat for direct struggle against the autocracy through armed insurrection is one of the most important and pressing tasks of the Party in the present revolutionary period.

“The Congress therefore resolves to instruct all the Party organizations:

“a) to explain to the proletariat by means of propaganda and agitation not only the political importance, but also the practical organizational aspect of the impending armed uprising;

“b) in this propaganda and agitation to explain the part played by mass political strikes, which may be of great importance at the beginning and in the very process of the insurrection;

“c) to adopt the most energetic measures to arm the proletariat and also to draw up a plan for the armed uprising and for direct leadership of the latter, establishing for this purpose, to the extent that it is necessary, special groups of Party functionaries.” (Author’s note to the 1908 edition.—Ed.)
adoption of the most energetic measures; it is far more important (in 1905, and not in 1902) to explain in general outlines under what conditions these measures "may" acquire "more or less serious" significance.

Do you see now, Comrades of the new Iskra, where your turn to Marty-novism has led you? Do you realize that your political philosophy has proved to be a rehash of the Osvobozhdeniye philosophy?—that (against your will and without your being aware of it) you are following in the wake of the monarchist bourgeoisie? Is it clear to you now that, while repeating what you know by rote and attaining perfection in sophistry, you have lost sight of the fact that—in the memorable words of Peter Struve's memorable article—"the open nature of revolutionary action is now one of the most important conditions for exerting an educating influence upon the masses of the people"?

9. WHAT DOES BEING A PARTY OF EXTREME OPPOSITION IN TIME OF REVOLUTION MEAN?

Let us return to the resolution on a provisional government. We have shown that the tactics of the new Iskra-ites do not push the revolution further ahead—a thing which they may have wanted their resolution to make possible for them—but back. We have shown that these very tactics tie the hands of Social-Democracy in the struggle against the inconsistent bourgeois and do not safeguard it against merging in bourgeois democracy. Naturally, the false premises of the resolution lead to the false conclusion that: "Therefore, Social-Democracy must not set itself the aim of seizing power or sharing power in the provisional government, but must remain the party of extreme revolutionary opposition." Consider the first half of this conclusion, which is part of a statement of aims. Do the new Iskra-ites declare the aim of Social-Democratic activity to be a decisive victory of the revolution over tsarism? They do. They are not able to formulate the requisites for a decisive victory correctly, and they stray into the Osvobozhdeniye formulation, but they do set themselves the aforementioned aim. Further: do they connect a provisional government with an uprising? Yes, they do so plainly, by stating that a provisional government "will emerge from a victorious popular uprising." Finally, do they set themselves the aim of leading the uprising? Yes, they do. Like Mr. Struve, they do not admit that an uprising is imperative and urgent, but at the same time, in contradistinction to Mr. Struve, they say that "Social-Democracy strives to subject it" (the uprising) "to its influence and leadership and to use it in the interests of the working class."

Does not this hang together nicely? We set ourselves the aim of sub-jecting the uprising of both the proletarian and the non-proletarian masses to our influence and our leadership, and of using it in our interests. Accordingly, we set ourselves the aim of leading, in the course of the uprising,
both the proletariat and the revolutionary bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie ("the non-proletarian groups"), i.e., of "sharing" the leadership of the uprising between the Social-Democrats and the revolutionary bourgeoisie. We set ourselves the aim of securing victory for the uprising, which should lead to the establishment of a provisional government "which will emerge from a victorious popular uprising"). Therefore . . . therefore we must not set ourselves the aim of seizing power or of sharing it in a provisional revolutionary government!!

Our friends cannot dovetail their arguments. They vacillate between the standpoint of Mr. Struve, who is evading the issue of an uprising, and the standpoint of revolutionary Social-Democracy, which calls upon us to undertake this urgent task. They vacillate between anarchism, which condemns participation in a provisional revolutionary government on principle, as treachery to the proletariat, and Marxism, which demands such participation on condition that the Social-Democratic Party exercise the leading influence in the uprising.* They have absolutely no independent position: neither that of Mr. Struve, who wants to come to terms with tsarism and is therefore compelled to resort to evasions and subterfuges on the question of insurrection, nor that of the anarchists, who condemn all action "from above" and all participation in a bourgeois revolution. The new Iskra-ites confuse a deal with tsarism with a victory over tsarism. They want to take part in the bourgeois revolution. They have gone somewhat in advance of Martynov's Two Dictatorships. They even consent to lead the uprising of the people—in order to renounce that leadership immediately after victory is won (or, perhaps, immediately before the victory?), i.e., in order not to avail themselves of the fruits of victory but to turn them over entirely to the bourgeoisie. This is what they call "using the uprising in the interests of the working class . . . ."

There is no need to dwell on this muddle any longer. It will be more useful to examine how this muddle originated in the formulation which reads: "to remain the party of extreme revolutionary opposition."

This is one of the familiar propositions of international revolutionary Social-Democracy. It is a perfectly correct proposition. It has become a truism for all opponents of revisionism or opportunism in parliamentary countries. It has become generally accepted as the legitimate and necessary rebuff to "parliamentary cretinism," Millerandism, Bernsteinism and the Italian reformism of the Turati brand. Our good new Iskra-ites have learned this excellent proposition by heart and are zealously applying it . . . quite inappropriately. Categories of parliamentary struggle are introduced into resolutions written for conditions in which no parliament exists. The concept "opposition," which has become the reflection and the expression of a political situation in which no one seriously speaks of an

* See Proletary, No. 3, "On a Provisional Revolutionary Government," article two.
The uprising is senselessly carried over to a situation in which an uprising has begun and in which all the supporters of the revolution are thinking and talking about leadership in it. The desire to "stick to" old methods, i.e., action only "from below," is expressed with pomp and circumstance precisely at a time when the revolution has confronted us with the necessity, in the event of the uprising being victorious, of acting from above.

No, our new Iskra-ites are decidedly out of luck! Even when they formulate a correct Social-Democratic proposition they don't know how to apply it correctly. They failed to take into consideration that in a period in which a revolution has begun, when there is no parliament in existence, when there is civil war, when there are insurrectionary outbreaks, the concepts and terms of parliamentary struggle are changed and transformed into their opposites. They failed to take into consideration the fact that, under the circumstances referred to, amendments are moved by way of street demonstrations, interpellations are introduced in the form of aggressive action by armed citizens, opposition to the government is expressed by forcibly overthrowing the government.

Like a well-known hero of our folklore, who always repeated good advice just when it was most out of place, our admirers of Martynov repeat the lessons of peaceful parliamentarism just at a time when, as they themselves admit, actual hostilities have commenced. There is nothing more bizarre than this pompous emphasis of the slogan "extreme opposition" in a resolution which begins by referring to a "decisive victory of the revolution" and to a "popular uprising"! Just try to visualize, gentlemen, what it means to represent the "extreme opposition" in an insurrectionary period. Does it mean exposing the government or deposing it? Does it mean voting against the government or defeating its armed forces in open battle? Does it mean refusing the government replenishments for its Treasury or does it mean the revolutionary seizure of this Treasury in order to use it for the requirements of the uprising, to arm the workers and peasants and to convokе a constituent assembly? Do you not begin to understand, gentlemen, that the term "extreme opposition" expresses only negative actions—to expose, to vote against, to refuse? Why is this so? Because this term applies only to parliamentary struggle and, moreover, to a period when no one makes "decisive victory" the immediate object of the struggle. Do you not begin to understand that things undergo a cardinal change in this respect from the moment the politically oppressed people launch a determined attack along the whole front in desperate battle for victory?

The workers ask us: Is it necessary to buckle down energetically to the urgent business of insurrection? What is to be done to make the incipient uprising victorious? What use should be made of the victory? What program can and should be applied when victory is achieved? The new Iskra-ites, who are making Marxism more profound, answer: We must remain the party of extreme revolutionary opposition. . . . Well, were we not right in calling these knights past masters in philistinism?
10. "REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNES" AND REVOLUTIONARY-
DEMOCRATIC DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT AND
THE PEASANTRY

The Conference of the new Iskra-ites did not stick to the anarchist position into which the new Iskra had talked itself (only "from below," not "from below and from above"). The absurdity of conceding an uprising and not conceding victory and participation in a provisional revolutionary government was too glaring. The resolution therefore introduced certain reservations and restrictions into the solution of the question proposed by Martynov and Martov. Let us consider these reservations as stated in the following section of the resolution:

"These tactics" ("to remain the party of extreme revolutionary opposition") "do not, of course, in any way exclude the expediency of a partial and episodic seizure of power and the establishment of revolutionary communes in one or another city, in one or another district, exclusively for the purpose of helping to spread the uprising and disrupting the government."

That being the case, it means that in principle they concede action from above as well as from below. It means that the proposition laid down in L. Martov's well-known article in the Iskra (No. 93) is being discarded, and that the tactics of the Vperyod, i.e., not only "from below," but also "from above," are acknowledged as correct.

Further, the seizure of power (even if it is partial, episodic, etc.) obviously presupposes the participation not only of Social-Democrats and not only of the proletariat. This follows from the fact that it is not only the proletariat that is interested and takes an active part in a democratic revolution. This follows from the fact that the uprising is a "popular uprising," as is stated in the beginning of the resolution we are discussing, that "non-proletarian groups" (the words used in the Conference resolution on the uprising), i.e., the bourgeoisie, also take part in it. Hence, the principle that any participation of Socialists in a provisional revolutionary government jointly with the petty bourgeoisie is treachery to the working class was thrown overboard by the Conference, which is what the Vperyod demanded. "Treachery" does not cease to be treachery because the action which constitutes it is partial, episodic, local, etc. Hence, the parallel established between participation in a provisional revolutionary government and vulgar Jaurèsism was thrown overboard by the Conference, which is what the Vperyod demanded. A government does not cease to be a government because its power does not extend to many cities but is confined to a single city, does not extend to many districts but is confined to a single district; nor is the fact that it is a government determined by what it is called. Thus, the Conference discarded
the formulation of the principles involved in this question which the new Iskra tried to give.

Let us now see whether the restrictions imposed by the Conference on the formation of revolutionary governments and participation in them, which is now permitted in principle, are reasonable. What the difference is between the concept "episodic" and the concept "provisional," we do not know. We are afraid that this "new" and foreign word is intended to cover up a lack of clear thinking. It appears "more profound," but actually it is only more foggy and confused. What is the difference between the "expediency" of a partial "seizure of power" in a city or district, and participation in a provisional revolutionary government of the entire state? Do not "cities" include such cities as St. Petersburg, where the events of January 9 took place? Do not districts include the Caucasus, which is bigger than many a state? Will not the problems (which at one time vexed the new Iskra) of what to do with the prisons, the police, public funds, etc., confront us the moment we "seize power" in a single city, let alone in a district? No one will deny, of course, that if we lack sufficient forces, if the uprising is not wholly victorious, or if the victory is indecisive, it is possible that provisional revolutionary governments will be established in separate localities, in individual cities and the like. But what is the point of such an assumption, gentlemen? Do not you yourselves speak at the beginning of the resolution about a "decisive victory of the revolution," about a "victorious popular uprising"?? Since when have the Social-Democrats taken over the job of the anarchists: to divide the attention and the aims of the proletariat, to direct its attention to the "partial" instead of to the general, the single, the integral and complete? While presupposing the "seizure of power" in a single city, you yourselves speak of "spreading the uprising"—to another city, may we venture to think? to all cities, may we dare to hope? Your conclusions, gentlemen, are as unsound and haphazard, as contradictory and confused as your premises. The Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. gave an exhaustive and clear answer to the question of a provisional revolutionary government in general. And this answer covers all cases of local provisional governments as well. The answer given by the Conference, however, by artificially and arbitrarily singling out a part of the question, merely dodges (but unsuccessfully) the question as a whole, and creates confusion.

What does the term "revolutionary commune" mean? Does it differ from the concept "provisional revolutionary government," and, if so, in what respect? The gentlemen of the Conference themselves do not know. Confusion of revolutionary thought leads them, as very often happens, to revolutionary phrasemongering. Yes, the use of the words "revolutionary commune" in a resolution passed by representatives of Social-Democracy is revolutionary phrasemongering and nothing more. Marx more than once condemned such phrasemongering, when "fascinating" terms of the bygone past were used to hide the tasks of the future. In such
cases, a fascinating term that has played its part in history becomes futile and pernicious trumpery, a child’s rattle. We must explain to the workers and to the whole of the people clearly and unequivocally why we want a provisional revolutionary government to be set up, and exactly what changes we shall accomplish, if we exercise decisive influence on the government, on the very morrow of the victory of the popular uprising which has already commenced. These are the questions that confront political leaders.

The Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. gave perfectly clear answers to these questions and drew up a complete program of these changes—the minimum program of our Party. The word “commune,” however, is not an answer at all; it only serves to confuse people by the distant echo of a sonorous phrase, or empty rhetoric. The more we cherish the memory of the Paris Commune of 1871, for instance, the less permissible is it to refer to it off-hand, without analysing its mistakes and the special conditions attending it. To do so would be to follow the absurd example set by the Blanquists, who (in 1874, in their “Manifesto”) paid homage to every act of the Commune, and whom Engels ridiculed. What reply will a “Conferencer” give to a worker who asks him about this “revolutionary commune,” mentioned in the resolution? He will only be able to tell him that this was the name given to a workers’ government that once existed, which was unable to and could not at that time, distinguish between the elements of a democratic revolution and those of a Socialist revolution, which confused the tasks of fighting for a republic with the tasks of fighting for Socialism, which was unable to carry out the task of launching an energetic military offensive against Versailles, which made a mistake in not seizing the Bank of France, etc. In short, whether in your answer you refer to the Paris Commune or to some other commune, your answer will be: it was a government such as ours should not be. A fine answer, isn’t it! Does it not testify to pedantic ratiocination and impotence on the part of a revolutionary when he maintains silence with regard to the practical program of the Party and makes inappropriate attempts in the resolution to give a lesson in history? Does this not reveal the very mistake which they unsuccessfully tried to accuse us of having committed, i.e., confusing a democratic revolution with a Socialist revolution, between which none of the “communes” could differentiate?

The aim of a provisional government (so inappropriately termed “commune”) is declared to be “exclusively” to spread the uprising and to disrupt the government. Taken in its literal sense, the word “exclusively” eliminates all other aims; it is an echo of the absurd theory of “only from below.” Such elimination of other aims is another instance of shortsightedness and lack of reflection. A “revolutionary commune,” i.e., a revolutionary government, even if only in a single city, will inevitably have to administer (even if provisionally, “partly, episodically”) all the affairs of state, and it is the height of folly to hide one’s head under
one’s wing and refuse to see this. This government will have to enact an eight-hour working day, establish workers’ control over factories, institute free universal education, introduce the election of judges, set up peasant committees, etc.; in a word, it will certainly have to carry out a number of reforms. To designate these reforms as “helping to spread the uprising” would be playing around with words and deliberately causing greater confusion in a matter which requires absolute clarity.

* * *

The concluding part of the new Iskra-ites’ resolution does not provide any new material for a criticism of the trend towards the principles of “Economism” which has revived in our Party, but it illustrates what has been said above from a somewhat different angle. Here is that part:

“Only in one event should Social-Democracy, on its own initiative, direct its efforts towards seizing power and holding it as long as possible—namely, in the event of the revolution spreading to the advanced countries of Western Europe, where conditions for the achievement of Socialism have already reached a certain (?) degree of maturity. In that event, the restricted historical scope of the Russian revolution can be considerably extended and the possibility of entering the path of Socialist transformation will arise.

“By framing its tactics in accordance with the view that, during the whole period of the revolution, the Social-Democratic Party will retain the position of extreme revolutionary opposition to all the governments that may succeed one another in the course of the revolution, Social-Democracy will best be able to prepare itself to utilize political power if it falls [??] into its hands.”

The basic idea expressed here is the same as that repeatedly formulated by the Vperyod, when it stated that we must not be afraid (as is Martynov) of a complete victory for Social-Democracy in a democratic revolution, i.e., of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, for such a victory will enable us to rouse Europe, and the Socialist proletariat of Europe will then throw off the yoke of the bourgeoisie, and in its turn help us to accomplish the Socialist revolution. But see how this idea is debased in the new Iskra-ites’ rendering of it. We shall not dwell on details—on the absurd assumption that power could “fall” into the hands of a class-conscious party which considers seizure of power harmful tactics; on the fact that in Europe the conditions for Socialism have reached not a certain degree of maturity, but are already mature; on the fact that our Party program does not speak of Socialist reforms but only of a Socialist revolution. Let us take the principal and
basic difference between the idea as presented by the Vperyod and as presented in the resolution. The Vperyod set the revolutionary proletariat of Russia an active aim: to win in the battle for democracy and to use this victory for carrying the revolution into Europe. The resolution fails to grasp this connection between our "decisive victory" (not in the new Iskra sense) and the revolution in Europe, and therefore it speaks not about the tasks of the proletariat, not about the prospects of its victory, but about one of the possibilities in general: "in the event of the revolution spreading..." The Vperyod expressly and definitely indicated—and this was incorporated in the resolution of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party—just how "political power" can and must "be utilized" in the interests of the proletariat, bearing in mind what can be achieved immediately, at the given stage of social development, and what must first be achieved as a democratic prerequisite of the struggle for Socialism. Here, also, the resolution is hopelessly dragging at the tail when it states: "will be able to prepare itself to utilize," but fails to say in what way and how it will be able to prepare itself, and for what sort of utilization. We have no doubt, for instance, that the new Iskra-ites may be "able to prepare themselves to utilize" the leading position in the Party; but the point is that so far their experience along the lines of such utilization and the extent to which they are prepared for this do not hold out much hope of possibility being transformed into reality... .

The Vperyod quite definitely stated wherein lies the real "possibility of retaining power"—namely, in the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, in their joint mass strength, which is capable of outweighing all the forces of counter-revolution, in the inevitable concurrence of their interests in democratic changes. Here, too, the resolution of the Conference gives us nothing positive, merely evading the question. Surely the possibility of retaining power in Russia must be determined by the composition of the social forces in Russia itself, by the circumstances of the democratic revolution which is now taking place in our country. A victory of the proletariat in Europe (and it is a far cry from carrying the revolution into Europe to the victory of the proletariat) would give rise to a desperate counter-revolutionary struggle on the part of the Russian bourgeoisie—yet the resolution of the new Iskra-ites does not say a word about this counter-revolutionary force, the importance of which has been appraised by the resolution of the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. If in our fight for a republic and democracy we could not rely upon the peasantry as well as on the proletariat, the prospect of our "retaining power" would be hopeless. But if it is not hopeless, if a "decisive victory over tsarism" opens up such a possibility, then we must say so, we must actively call for the transformation of this possibility into reality and issue practical slogans not only for the contingency of the revolution being carried over into Europe, but also for the purpose
of carrying it over. The reference made by the khvostist Social-Democrats to the "restricted historical scope of the Russian revolution" merely serves to cover up their limited understanding of the aims of this democratic revolution and of the role of the proletariat as the vanguard in this revolution!

One of the objections raised to the slogan calling for "the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" is that dictatorship presupposes a "single will" (Iskra No. 95), and that there can be no single will of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie. This objection is not sound, for it is based on an abstract, "metaphysical" interpretation of the concept "single will." There may be a single will in one respect and not a single will in another. The absence of singleness of purpose on questions of Socialism and in the struggle for Socialism does not preclude singleness of will in questions of democracy and in the struggle for a republic. To forget this would be tantamount to forgetting the logical and historical difference between a democratic revolution and a Socialist revolution. To forget this would be tantamount to forgetting the character of the democratic revolution as a revolution of the whole people: if it is "of the whole people" it means that there is "singleness of will" precisely in so far as this revolution satisfies the common needs and requirements of the whole people. Beyond the bounds of democracy there can be no question of a single will of the proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie. Class struggle between them is inevitable; but it is in a democratic republic that this struggle will be the most thorough-going and widespread struggle of the people for Socialism. Like everything else in the world, the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has a past and a future. Its past is autocracy, serfdom, monarchy and privilege. In the struggle against this past, in the struggle against counter-revolution, a "single will" of the proletariat and the peasantry is possible, for there exists a unity of interests.

Its future is the struggle against private property, the struggle of the wage worker against the employer, the struggle for Socialism. Here, singleness of will is impossible. Here our path lies not from the autocracy to a republic, but from a petty-bourgeois democratic republic to Socialism.

Of course, in actual historical circumstances, the elements of the past become interwoven with those of the future, the two paths cross. Wage labour, with its struggle against private property, exists under the autocracy as well; it exists in its incipient stage even under serfdom. But this does not in the least prevent us from drawing a logical and historical dividing line between the major stages of development. We all draw a

* The development of capitalism, which is more widespread and rapid under conditions of freedom, will inevitably put a speedy end to singleness of will; the sooner counter-revolution and reaction are crushed, the sooner will the singleness of will come to an end.
distinction between bourgeois revolution and Socialist revolution, we all absolutely insist on the necessity of drawing a strict line between them; but can it be denied that in history individual, particular elements of the one revolution and the other become interwoven? Have there not been a number of Socialist movements and attempts at establishing Socialism in the period of democratic revolutions in Europe? And will not the future Socialist revolution in Europe still have to do a great deal that has been left undone in the field of democracy?

A Social-Democrat must never for a moment forget that the proletariat will inevitably have to wage a class struggle for Socialism even against the most democratic and republican bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. This is beyond doubt. From this logically follows the absolute necessity of a separate, independent and strictly class party of Social-Democracy. From this follows the temporary nature of our tactics of "striking jointly" with the bourgeoisie and the duty to keep a strict watch "over our ally, as over an enemy," etc. All this is also beyond any doubt. But it would be ridiculous and reactionary to deduce from this that we must forget, ignore or neglect these tasks which, although transient and temporary, are vital at the present time. The fight against the autocracy is a temporary and transient task of the Socialists, but to ignore or neglect this task would be tantamount to betraying Socialism and rendering a service to reaction. The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry is unquestionably only a transient, provisional aim of the Socialists, but to ignore this aim in the period of a democratic revolution would be plainly reactionary.

Concrete political aims must be set in concrete circumstances. All things are relative, all things flow and are subject to change. The program of the German Social-Democratic Party does not contain the demand for a republic. In Germany the situation is such that for all practical purposes this question can hardly be separated from the question of Socialism (although even as regards Germany, Engels, in his comments on the draft of the Erfurt Program of 1891, warned against belittling the importance of a republic and of the struggle for a republic!). In the Russian Social-Democratic Party the question of eliminating the demand for a republic from its program or agitation has never even arisen, for in our country there can be no talk even of an indissoluble connection between the question of a republic and the question of Socialism. It was quite natural for a German Social-Democrat of 1898 not to put the special question of a republic in the forefront, and this evoked neither surprise nor condemnation. But a German Social-Democrat who in 1848 would have left the question of a republic in the shade would have been an outright traitor to the revolution. There is no such thing as abstract truth. Truth is always concrete.

The time will come when the struggle against the Russian autocracy will be ended—the period of democratic revolution in Russia will be over;
then it will be ridiculous to talk about “singleness of will” of the proletariat and the peasantry, about a democratic dictatorship, etc. When that time comes we shall attend to the question of the Socialist dictatorship of the proletariat directly and deal with it at greater length. But at present the party of the advanced class cannot but strive most energetically for a decisive victory of the democratic revolution over tsarism. And a decisive victory is no other than the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.


At the present juncture the tactical questions of the Social-Democratic movement revolve around the question of a provisional revolutionary government. It is neither possible nor necessary to dwell in as great detail on the other resolutions of the Conference. We shall confine ourselves merely to indicating briefly a few points which confirm the difference in principle, analysed above, between the tactical tendencies of the resolutions of the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. and those of the Conference resolutions.

Take the question of the attitude towards the tactics of the government on the eve of the revolution. Once again you will find a comprehensive answer to this question in one of the resolutions of the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. This resolution takes into consideration all the variegated conditions and tasks of the particular moment: the exposure of the hypocrisy of the government’s concessions, the utilization of “travesties of popular representation,” the achievement by revolutionary means of the urgent demands of the working class (the principal one being the demand for an eight-hour working day), and, finally, resistance to the Black-Hundreds. In the Conference resolutions this question is divided up and spread over several sections: “resistance to the dark forces of reaction” is mentioned only in the preamble of the resolution on the attitude to other parties. Participation in elections to representative bodies is considered separately from the question of “compromises” between tsarism and the bourgeoisie. Instead of calling for the achievement of an eight-hour working day by revolutionary means, a special resolution, with the big-sounding title “On the Economic Struggle,” merely repeats (after high-flown and stupid phrases about “the central place occupied by the labour question in the public life of Russia”) the old slogan of agitation for “the legislative institution of an eight-hour working day.” The inadequacy and the belatedness of this slogan at the present time are too obvious to require proof.
The question of open political action. The Third Congress takes into consideration the impending radical change in our activity. Secret activity and the development of the secret apparatus must on no account be abandoned: this would be playing into the hands of the police and be of the utmost advantage to the government. But at the same time we cannot start too soon thinking about open action as well. Expedient forms of such action and, consequently, a special apparatus—less secret—must be prepared immediately for this purpose. The legal and semi-legal societies must be made use of with a view to transforming them, as far as possible, into bases of the future open Social-Democratic Labour Party in Russia.

Here too the Conference divides up the question, and fails to issue any slogans that would encompass it as a whole. There bobs up as a separate point the ridiculous instruction given to the Organization Commission to see to the "placing" of its legally functioning publicists. There is the wholly absurd decision to subordinate to its influence "the democratic newspapers that set themselves the aim of rendering assistance to the working-class movement." This is the professed aim of all our legal liberal newspapers, nearly all of which follow the trend of the Osvobozhdeniye. Why should not the editors of the Iskra make a start themselves by carrying out their own advice and giving us an example of how to subject the Osvobozhdeniye to Social-Democratic influence?... In place of the slogan calling for the utilization of the legally existing unions for the purpose of establishing bases for the Party, we are given, first, private advice about the "trade" unions only (that all Party members must join them) and, secondly, advice to guide "the revolutionary organizations of the workers" = "organizations not officially constituted" = "revolutionary workers' clubs." How these "clubs" come to be classed as unofficially constituted organizations, what these "clubs" really are—goodness only knows. Instead of definite and clear instructions from a supreme Party body, we have some jottings of ideas and the rough drafts of publicists. We get no complete picture of the beginning of the Party's transition to an entirely new basis in all its work.

The "peasant question" was approached altogether differently by the Party Congress and by the Conference. The Congress drew up a resolution on the "attitude to the peasant movement," the Conference on "work among the peasants." In the one case prime importance is attached to the task of guiding the widespread revolutionary democratic movement in the general national interests of the fight against tsarism. In the other instance, the question is reduced to mere "work" among a particular section of society. In the one case, a central practical slogan for our agitation is advanced, calling for the immediate organization of revolutionary peasant committees in order to carry out all the democratic changes. In the other, a "demand for the organization of committees" is to be presented to a constituent assembly. Why must we wait for this Constituent Assembly? Will it really be constituent? Will it be stable without a preliminary
or simultaneous establishment of revolutionary peasant committees? All these questions are ignored by the Conference. All its decisions reflect the same general idea which we have traced—namely, that in the bourgeois revolution we must do only our special work, without setting ourselves the aim of leading the entire democratic movement and of accomplishing this independently. Just as the Economists constantly harped on the idea that the Social-Democrats should concern themselves with the economic struggle, leaving it to the liberals to take care of the political struggle, so too the new Iskra-ites keep harping in all their discussions on the idea that we should creep into a modest corner out of the way of the bourgeois revolution, leaving it to the bourgeoisie to do the active work of carrying out the revolution.

Finally, we cannot but note also the resolution on the attitude toward other parties. The resolution of the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. speaks of exposing all the limitations and inadequacies of the bourgeois movement for emancipation, without entertaining the naive idea of enumerating every possible instance of such limitation from Congress to Congress or of drawing a line of distinction between bad bourgeois and good bourgeois. The Conference, repeating the mistake made by Starovyer, carries on a persistent search for such a line, developing the famous "litmus paper" theory. Starovyer started from a very good idea: to put more exacting terms to the bourgeoisie. Only he forgot that any attempt to separate beforehand the bourgeois democrats who are worthy of approval, agreements, etc., from those who are unworthy leads to a "formula" which is immediately thrown overboard by the course of events and which introduces confusion into the proletarian class consciousness. The emphasis is shifted from real unity in the struggle to declarations, promises, slogans. Starovyer considered that "universal and equal suffrage, direct elections and secret ballot" was the radical slogan that would serve this purpose. Not even two years elapsed, and the "litmus paper" proved its worthlessness, the slogan calling for universal suffrage was adopted by the Osvobozhdentsi, who not only came no closer to Social-Democracy as a result of this, but, on the contrary, tried to mislead the workers and divert them from Socialism by means of this very slogan.

Now the new Iskra-ites are setting "terms" even "more exacting," are "demanding" from the enemies of tsarism "energetic and unequivocal [!] support of every determined action of the organized proletariat," etc., going so far as to include "active participation in the self-armament of the people." The line has been drawn much further—but nonetheless this line has already become outdated once more, having immediately proved worthless. Why, for instance, is there no slogan calling for a republic? How is it that the Social-Democrats "demand" all manner of things from the bourgeois democrats in the interest of "relentless revolutionary war against all the props of the system of social estates and the monarchy" except a fight for a republic?
That this question is not mere captiousness, that the mistake of the new *Iskra*-ites is of most vital political significance is proved by the "Russian Liberation League" (see *Proletary* No. 4).* These "enemies of tsarism" will fully satisfy all the "requirements" of the new *Iskra*-ites. And yet we have shown that the spirit of the *Osvobozhdeniye* reigns in the program (or lack of program) of this "Russian Liberation League" and that the *Osvobozhdentsi* can easily take it in tow. The Conference, however, declares in the concluding section of the resolution that "Social-Democracy will continue to come out as of old against the *hypocritical friends of the people*, against all those political parties which, though they display a liberal and democratic banner, refuse to render genuine support to the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat." The "Russian Liberation League," far from refusing this support, offers it most insistently. Is that a guarantee that the leaders of this League are not "hypocritical friends of the people," even if they are *Osvobozhdentsi*?

You see: by inventing "terms" beforehand and presenting "demands" which are ludicrous by reason of their grim impotence, the new *Iskra*-ites immediately put themselves in a ridiculous position. Their terms and demands immediately prove inadequate when it comes to gauging living realities. Their quest for formulae is hopeless, for there is no formula which can be used to detect all the various manifestations of hypocrisy, inconsistency and limitations of bourgeois democrats. It is not a matter of "litmus paper," of forms, or written and printed demands, nor is it a matter of drawing beforehand a line of distinction between hypocritical and not hypocritical "friends of the people"; it is a matter of real unity in the struggle, of unabating criticism on the part of Social-Democrats of every "uncertain" step taken by bourgeois democrats. What is needed for a "genuine consolidation of all the social forces interested in democratic change" is not the "points" over which the Conference laboured so assiduously and so vainly, but the ability to put forward genuinely revolutionary slogans. For this we need slogans that will raise the revolutionary and republican bourgeoisie to the level of the proletariat instead of depreciating the aims of the proletariat to the level of the monarchist bourgeoisie. For this the most resolute participation in the uprising is necessary, instead of sophist evasions of the urgent task of armed insurrection.

* *Proletary* No. 4, which appeared on June 17[4], 1905, contained a lengthy article entitled "A New Revolutionary Labour League." The article gives the contents of the appeals issued by this league which assumed the name of "Russian Liberation League" and which set itself the aim of convening a constituent assembly through the medium of an armed uprising. Further, the article defines the attitude of the Social-Democrats to such non-Party leagues. To what extent this league made itself felt, and what its fate was in the revolution is absolutely unknown to us. (Author's note to the 1908 edition.—*Ed.)*
12. WILL THE SWEEP OF THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION BE DIMINISHED IF THE BOURGEOISIE RECOILS FROM IT?

The foregoing lines were already written when we received a copy of the resolutions adopted by the Caucasian Conference of the new Iskra-ites, published by the Iskra. Even if we tried we could not have thought of anything better pour la bonne bouche (for dessert) than this material.

The Editorial Board of the Iskra quite justly remarks:

"On the fundamental question of tactics, the Caucasian Conference arrived at a decision analogous" (in truth!) "to the one adopted by the All-Russian Conference" (i.e., of the new Iskra-ites)....

"The question of the attitude of Social-Democracy towards a provisional revolutionary government has been settled by the Caucasian comrades in the spirit of most outspoken opposition to the new method advocated by the Vperyod group and the delegates of the so-called Congress who joined it.... It must be admitted that the tactics of the proletarian party in a bourgeois revolution have been very aptly formulated by the Conference."

What is true is true. No one could have given a more "apt" formulation of the fundamental error of the new Iskra-ites. We shall quote this formulation in full, indicating in parentheses first the blossoms and then the fruit presented at the end.

Here is the resolution of the Caucasian Conference of the new Iskra-ites on a provisional revolutionary government:

"Whereas we consider it to be our task to take advantage of the revolutionary situation to render more profound" (of course! They should have added: "à la Martynov") "the Social-Democratic consciousness of the proletariat" (only to render the consciousness more profound, and not to establish a republic? What a "profound" conception of the revolution!) "and in order to secure for the Party complete freedom) to criticize the nascent bourgeois-state system" (it is not our business to secure a republic! Our business is only to secure freedom of criticism. Anarchist ideas give rise to anarchist language: "bourgeois-state" system!), "the Conference declares against the formation of a Social-Democratic provisional government and joining such a government" (recall the resolution passed by the Bakuninists ten months before the Spanish revolution and referred to by Engels: see Proletary No. 3), "and considers it to be the most expedient course to exercise pressure from without" (from below and not from above) "upon the bourgeois provisional government in order to secure a feasible measure" (?) "of democratization of the state system. The Conference believes that the formation of a provisional government by Social-
Democrats, or their joining such a government, would lead, on the one hand, to the masses of the proletariat becoming disappointed in the Social-Democratic Party and abandoning it because the Social-Democrats, in spite of the fact that they had seized power, would not be able to satisfy the pressing needs of the working class, including the establishment of Socialism" (a republic is not a pressing need! The authors, in their innocence, do not notice that they are speaking a sheerly anarchist language, as if they were repudiating participation in bourgeois revolutions!), "and, on the other hand, will cause the bourgeois classes to recoil from the revolution and thus diminish its sweep."

That is the point. That is where anarchist ideas become interwoven (as is always the case among the West European Bernsteinians also) with the sheerest opportunism. Just think: not to join a provisional government because this will cause the bourgeoisie to recoil from the revolution and will thus diminish the sweep of the revolution! Here, indeed, we have before us the new *Iskra* philosophy in its complete, pure and consistent form: the revolution is a bourgeois revolution, therefore we must bow down to bourgeois philistinism and make way for it. If we were guided, even in part, even for a moment, by the consideration that our participation might cause the bourgeoisie to recoil, we would simply be yielding precedence in the revolution entirely to the bourgeois classes. We would thereby be placing the proletariat entirely under the tutelage of the bourgeoisie (while retaining for ourselves complete "freedom of criticism"!), compelling the proletariat to be meek and mild so as not to cause the bourgeoisie to recoil. We would emasculate the immediate needs of the proletariat, namely, its political needs—which the Economists and their epigones have never thoroughly understood—so as not to cause the bourgeoisie to recoil. We would completely abandon the field of revolutionary struggle for the achievement of democracy to the extent required by the proletariat, for the field of bargaining with the bourgeoisie, betraying our principles, betraying the revolution in order thereby to purchase the bourgeoisie's voluntary consent ("that it might not recoil").

In two brief lines, the Caucasian new *Iskra*-ites managed to express the quintessence of the tactics of betraying the revolution and of converting the proletariat into a paltry appendage of the bourgeois classes. The tendency, which we traced above to the mistakes of the new *Iskra*-ites, now stands out before us as a clear and definite principle, *viz.*, to drag at the tail of the monarchist bourgeoisie. Since the establishment of a republic would cause (and is already causing: Mr. Struve, for example) the bourgeoisie to recoil, therefore down with the fight for a republic. Since any resolute and consistent democratic demand on the part of the proletariat always and everywhere in the world causes the bourgeoisie to recoil, therefore, hide in your lairs, comrade workers, act only from
without, do not dream of using the instruments and weapons of the "bourgeois state" system in the interests of the revolution, and reserve for yourselves "freedom to criticize"!

Here the fundamental fallaciousness of their understanding of the term "bourgeois revolution" has come to the surface. The Martynov or new Iskra "understanding" of this term leads straight to a betrayal of the cause of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie.

Those who have forgotten the old Economism, those who do not study it or remember it, will find it difficult to understand the present off-shoot of Economism. Recall the Bernsteinian Credo. From "purely proletarian" views and programs, people arrived at the conclusion: we, the Social-Democrats, must concern ourselves with economics, with the real cause of labour, with freedom to criticize all political chicanery, with rendering Social-Democratic work really more profound. They, the liberals, can concern themselves with politics. God save us from dropping into "revolutionism": that will cause the bourgeoisie to recoil. Those who read the whole Credo over again or the Supplement to No. 9 of the Rabochaya Mysl (September 1899), will be able to follow this entire line of reasoning.

Today we have the same thing, only on a large scale, applied to an appraisal of the whole of the "great" Russian revolution—alas, already vulgarized and reduced to a travesty beforehand by the theoreticians of orthodox philistinism! We, the Social-Democrats, must concern ourselves with freedom to criticize, with rendering class consciousness more profound, with action from without. They, the bourgeois classes, must have freedom to act, a free field for revolutionary (read: liberal) leadership, freedom to put through "reforms" from above.

These vulgarizers of Marxism have never pondered over what Marx said about the need of substituting the criticism of weapons for the weapon of criticism. They take the name of Marx in vain, while in actual fact they are drawing up resolutions on tactics wholly in the spirit of the Frankfurt bourgeois windbags, who freely criticized absolutism and rendered democratic consciousness more profound, but failed to understand that a time of revolution is a time of action, of action both from above and from below. Having converted Marxism into pedantry, they have made the ideology of the advanced, most determined and energetic revolutionary class the ideology of its most undeveloped strata, which shrink from the difficult revolutionary-democratic tasks and leave it to Messieurs Struves to take care of these democratic tasks.

If the bourgeois classes recoil from the revolution because the Social-Democrats join the revolutionary government, they will thereby "diminish the sweep" of the revolution.

Listen to this, Russian workers: The sweep of the revolution will be mightier if it is carried out by Messrs. the Struves who have not been frightened away by the Social-Democrats and who want, not victory over tsarism, but to come to terms with it. The sweep of the revolution will
be mightier if, of the two possible outcomes which we have outlined above the first eventuates, i.e., if the monarchist bourgeoisie comes to terms with the autocracy concerning a "constitution" à la Shipovl!

Social-Democrats who write such disgraceful things in resolutions intended for the guidance of the whole Party, or who approve of such "apt" resolutions, are so blinded by their pedantry, which has utterly corroded the living spirit of Marxism, that they do not see how these resolutions convert all their other fine words into mere phrasemongering. Take any of their articles in the Iskra, or take even the notorious pamphlet written by our celebrated Martynov—you will read there about insurrection of the people, about carrying the revolution to completion, about striving to rely upon the common people in the fight against the inconsistent bourgeoisie. But then all these excellent things become miserable phrasemongering immediately you accept or commend the idea about "the sweep of the revolution" being "diminished" as a result of the alienation of the bourgeoisie. One of two things, gentlemen: either we, together, with the people, must strive to carry out the revolution and win a complete victory over tsarism in spite of the inconsistent, self-seeking and cowardly bourgeoisie, or we do not accept this "in spite of," we stand in fear lest the bourgeoisie "recoil" from the revolution in which case we betray the proletariat and the people to the bourgeoisie— to the inconsistent, self-seeking and cowardly bourgeoisie.

Don’t try to misinterpret what I have said. Don’t start howling that you are being charged with deliberate treachery. No, you have constantly been crawling and have at last crawled into the mire just as unconsciously as the Economists of old, drawn inexorably and irrevocably down the inclined plane of making Marxism "more profound" to anti-revolutionary, soulless and lifeless "philosophizing."

Have you ever considered, gentlemen, what the real social forces that determine the "sweep of the revolution" are? Let us leave aside the forces of foreign politics, of international combinations, which have turned out very favourably for us at the present time, but which we all leave out of our discussion, and quite rightly so, inasmuch as it is a question of the internal forces of Russia. Look at the internal social forces. Aligned against the revolution are the autocracy, the imperial court, the police, the government officials, the army and the handful of the élite. The greater the indignation of the people becomes, the less reliable become the troops, and the more the government officials waver. Moreover, the bourgeoisie in general and on the whole is now in favour of the revolution, is zealously making speeches about liberty, holding forth more and more frequently in the name of the people, and even in the name of the revolution. * But

* Of interest in this connection is Mr. Struve’s open letter to Jaurès, recently published by the latter in l’Humanité and by the former in the Osvobozhdeniye No. 72.
we Marxists all know from theory and from daily and hourly observation
of our liberals, Zemstvo-ists and Osvobozhdentsi that the bourgeoisie
is inconsistent, self-seeking and cowardly in its support of the revolution.

The bourgeoisie, in the mass, will inevitably turn towards counter-revo-
lution, towards the autocracy, against the revolution and against the people,
immediately its narrow, selfish interests are met, immediately it “recoils”
from consistent democracy (and it is already recoiling from it!). There
remains the “people,” that is, the proletariat and the peasantry. The prole-
tariat alone can be relied on to march to the end, for its goal lies far beyond
the democratic revolution. That is why the proletariat fights in the front
ranks for a republic and contemptuously rejects silly and unworthy advice
to take care not to frighten away the bourgeoisie. The peasantry includes
a great number of semi-proletarian as well as petty-bourgeois elements.

This causes it also to be unstable and compels the proletariat to unite in
a strictly class party. But the instability of the peasantry differs radically
from the instability of the bourgeoisie, for at the present time the peasant-
ry is interested not so much in the absolute preservation of private pro-
erty as in the confiscation of the landed estates, one of the principal
forms of private property. While this does not cause the peasantry to be-
come Socialist or cease to be petty-bourgeois, the peasantry is capable
of becoming a wholehearted and most radical adherent of the democratic
revolution. The peasantry will inevitably become such if only the pro-
gress of revolutionary events, which is enlightening it, is not interrupted
too soon by the treachery of the bourgeoisie and the defeat of the pro-
letariat. Subject to this condition, the peasantry will inevitably become
a bulwark of the revolution and the republic, for only a completely vic-
torious revolution can give the peasantry everything in the sphere of ag-
grarian reforms—everything that the peasants desire, of which they dream,
and of which they truly stand in need (not for the abolition of capitalism
as the “Socialist-Revolutionaries” imagine, but) in order to emerge from
the mire of semi-serfdom, from the gloom of oppression and servitude, in
order to improve their living conditions as much as it is possible to im-
prove them under the system of commodity production.

Moreover, the peasantry is drawn to the revolution not only by the
prospect of radical agrarian reform but by its general and permanent
interests. Even in the struggle with the proletariat the peasantry stands
in need of democracy, for only a democratic system is capable of giving
exact expression to its interests and of ensuring its predominance as the
mass, the majority. The more enlightened the peasantry becomes (and
since the war with Japan it is becoming enlightened much more rapidly
than those who are accustomed to measuring enlightenment by the school
standard suspect), the more consistently and determinedly will it favour
a thoroughgoing democratic revolution; for, unlike the bourgeoisie, it
has nothing to fear from the supremacy of the people, but, on the contrary,
can only gain by it. A democratic republic will become the ideal of the
peasantry as soon as it begins to free itself from its naive monarchism, because the deliberate monarchism of the bourgeois brokers (with an upper chamber, etc.) implies for the peasantry the same disfranchisement and the same downtroddenness and ignorance as it suffers from today, only slightly glossed over with the varnish of European constitutionalism.

That is why the bourgeoisie as a class naturally and inevitably strives to come under the wing of the liberal-monarchist party, while the peasantry, in the mass, strives to come under the leadership of the revolutionary and republican party. That is why the bourgeoisie is incapable of carrying the democratic revolution to its consummation, while the peasantry is capable of doing so, and we must exert all our efforts to help it to do so.

It may be objected: but there is no need to prove this, this is all ABC; all Social-Democrats understand this perfectly well. But that is not so. Those who can talk about "the sweep" of the revolution being "diminished" because the bourgeoisie will fall away from it do not understand this. Such people simply repeat the words of our agrarian program by rote without understanding their meaning, for otherwise they would not be frightened by the concept of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, which follows inevitably from the entire Marxian philosophy and from our program; otherwise they would not restrict the sweep of the great Russian revolution to the limits to which the bourgeoisie is prepared to go. Such people defeat their abstract Marxian revolutionary phrases by their concrete anti-Marxian and anti-revolutionary resolutions.

Those who really understand the role of the peasantry in a victorious Russian revolution would not dream of saying that the sweep of the revolution would be diminished if the bourgeoisie recoiled from it. For, as a matter of fact, the Russian revolution will begin to assume its real sweep, will really assume the widest revolutionary sweep possible in the epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolution, only when the bourgeoisie recoils from it and when the masses of the peasantry come out as active revolutionaries side by side with the proletariat. In order that it may be consistently carried to its conclusion, our democratic revolution must rely on such forces as are capable of paralysing the inevitable inconsistency of the bourgeoisie (i.e., capable precisely of "causing it to recoil from the revolution," which the Caucasian adherents of Iskra fear so much because of their lack of judgment).

The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must accomplish the Socialist revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to
crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. Such are the tasks of the proletariat, which the new Iskra-ites always present so narrowly in their arguments and resolutions about the scope of the revolution.

One circumstance, however, must not be forgotten, although it is frequently lost sight of in discussions about the “sweep” of the revolution. It must not be forgotten that the point at issue is not what difficulties this problem presents, but what is the road along which we must seek and attain its solution. The point is not whether it is difficult or easy to make the sweep of the revolution mighty and invincible, but how we must act in order to make this sweep more powerful. It is precisely on the fundamental nature of our activity, on the direction which it should take, that our views differ. We emphasize this because careless and unscrupulous people too frequently confuse two different questions, namely, the question of the direction in which the road leads, i.e., the selection of one of two different roads, and the question of the ease with which the goal can be reached, or of how near the goal is on the given road.

We have not dealt here with this last question at all because it has not evoked any disagreement or divergency in the Party. But it goes without saying that the question is extremely important in itself and deserves the most serious attention of all Social-Democrats. It would be a piece of unpardonable optimism to forget the difficulties which accompany the task of drawing into the movement not only the mass of the working class, but of the peasantry as well. These difficulties have more than once been the rock against which all the efforts to carry a democratic revolution to completion have been wrecked. And above all it was the inconsistent and self-seeking bourgeoisie which triumphed, because it both “made capital” by way of securing monarchist protection against the people, and “preserved the virginity” of liberalism... or of the Osbobozhdeniye trend. But a thing may be difficult without being unattainable. What is important is to be convinced that the path chosen is the correct one, and this conviction will multiply a hundredfold the revolutionary energy and revolutionary enthusiasm which can perform miracles.

How deep is the gulf that divides Social-Democrats today on the question of what path to choose can be seen at once by comparing the Caucasian resolution of the new Iskra-ites with the resolution of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. The Congress resolution says that the bourgeoisie is inconsistent, that it will invariably try to deprive us of the gains of the revolution. Therefore, make energetic preparations for the fight, comrades and fellow workers! Arm yourselves, win the peasantry to your side! We shall not surrender our revolutionary conquests to the self-seeking bourgeoisie without a fight. The resolution of the Caucasian new Iskra-ites says: The bourgeoisie is inconsistent, it may recoil from the revolution. Therefore, comrades and fellow workers, please do not think of joining a provisional government, for, if you do, the bourgeo-
TWO TACTICS OF S.-D. IN DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

sie will surely recoil, and the sweep of the revolution will thereby be diminished!

One side says: push the revolution forward, to its consummation, in spite of the resistance or the passivity of the inconsistent bourgeoisie.

The other side says: do not think of carrying the revolution to completion independently, 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? Is it not clear that the first tactics are the only correct tactics of revolutionary Social-Democracy, while the second are in fact purely Osvobozhdeniye tactics?

13. CONCLUSION. DARE WE WIN?

People who are superficially acquainted with the state of affairs in the ranks of Russian Social-Democracy, or who judge by appearances without knowing the whole history of our internal Party struggle since the days of Economism, very often dismiss even the tactical disagreements which have now become crystallized, especially after the Third Congress, by arguing that there are two natural, inevitable and quite reconcilable trends in every Social-Democratic movement. One side, they say, lays special emphasis on the ordinary, current, everyday work, on the necessity of developing propaganda and agitation, of preparing forces, deepening the movement, etc., while the other side lays emphasis on the militant, general political, revolutionary tasks of the movement, pointing out the necessity of armed insurrection and of advancing the slogans: for a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship, for a provisional revolutionary government. Neither side should exaggerate, they say; extremes are bad, both here and there (and, generally speaking, everywhere in the world), etc., etc.

But the cheap truths of worldly (and "political" in quotation marks) wisdom, which are undoubtedly contained in such arguments, too often cover up a failure to understand the urgent and acute needs of the Party. Take the present differences among the Russian Social-Democrats on the question of tactics. Of course, the special emphasis laid on the everyday, routine aspect of the work, such as we observe in the new Iskra -ite arguments about tactics, could not in itself present any danger and would not give rise to any difference of opinion regarding tactical slogans. But the moment you compare the resolutions of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party with the resolutions of the Conference this difference becomes strikingly obvious.

What, then, is the trouble? The trouble is that, in the first place, it is not enough to point abstractly to the two trends in the movement and to the harmfulness of extremes. You must know concretely what the given move-
ment is suffering from at the given time, what constitutes the real political
danger to the Party at the present time. Secondly, you must know what real
political forces are profiting by this or that tactical slogan—or perhaps
the absence of this or that slogan. To listen to the new Iskra-ites, one would
arrive at the conclusion that the Social-Democratic Party is faced with
the danger of throwing overboard propaganda and agitation, the economic
struggle and criticism of bourgeois democracy, of being inordinately ab-
sorbed in military preparations, armed attacks, the seizure of power, etc.
Actually, however, real danger is threatening the Party from an entirely
different quarter. Anyone who is more or less closely familiar with the state
of the movement, anyone who follows it carefully and intelligently, cannot
fail to see the ridiculous side of the new Iskra’s fears. The entire work of
the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party has already been fully mould-
ed into solid, immutable forms which absolutely guarantee that our main
attention will be fixed on propaganda and agitation, impromptu and mass
meetings, the distribution of leaflets and pamphlets, assisting in the eco-
nomic struggle and championing the slogans of that struggle. There is not a
single committee of the Party, not a single district committee, not a single
central delegates’ meeting or a single factory group where ninety-nine per
cent of all the attention, energy and time are not always and constantly
devoted to these functions, which have become firmly established ever
since the middle of the nineties of the last century. Only those who are
entirely unfamiliar with the movement do not know this. Only very naive
or ill-informed people can take the new Iskra-ites seriously when they,
with an air of great importance, repeat stale truths.

The fact is that not only is no excessive zeal displayed among us with re-
gard to the tasks of insurrection, to the general political slogans and to the
matter of leading the popular revolution in its entirety, but, on the contra-
ry, it is backwardness in this very respect that stands out most strikingly,
constitutes our weakest spot and a real danger to the movement, which may
degenerate and in some places is degenerating into a movement no longer
revolutionary in deeds, but only in words. Among the many hundreds of
organizations, groups and circles carrying on the work of the Party you will
not find a single one which has not carried on, from its very inception, the
kind of everyday work about which the wiseacres of the new Iskra now talk
with the air of people who have discovered new truths. On the other hand,
you will find only an insignificant percentage of groups and circles that have
understood the tasks which an armed uprising entails, have begun to carry
them out, and have realized the necessity of leading the popular revolution
against tsarism, the necessity of advancing for that purpose certain defi-
nite progressive slogans and no other.

We are incredibly behind in our progressive and genuinely revolutionary
tasks, in very many instances we have not even become conscious of them;
here and there we have failed to notice the strengthening of the revolution-
ary bourgeois democracy owing to our backwardness in this respect. But
the writers in the new Iskra, turning their backs on the course of events and on the requirements of the times, keep repeating insistently: Don't forget the old! Don't let yourselves be carried away by the new! This is the principal and unvarying leitmotif of all the important resolutions of the Conference; whereas in the Congress resolutions you just as unvaryingly read: while confirming the old (and without stopping to chew it over and over, for the very reason that it is old and has already been settled and recorded in literature, in resolutions and by experience) we put forward a new task, draw attention to it, issue a new slogan, and demand that the genuinely revolutionary Social-Democrats immediately set to work to put it into effect.

That is how matters really stand with regard to the question of the two trends in Social-Democratic tactics. The revolutionary period has called forth new tasks, which only the totally blind can fail to see. And some Social-Democrats unhesitatingly recognize these tasks and place them on the order of the day, declaring: the armed uprising brooks no delay, prepare yourselves for it immediately and energetically, remember that it is indispensable for a decisive victory, issue the slogans calling for a republic, for a provisional government, for a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. Others, however, draw back, mark time, write prefaces instead of giving slogans; instead of pointing out the new while confirming the old, they chew on this old tediously and at great length, inventing pretexts to avoid the new, unable to determine the requisites for a decisive victory or to issue the slogans which alone are in line with the striving to attain complete victory.

The political result of this khvostism stares us in the face. The fairy-tale about a rapprochement between the "Majority" of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and the revolutionary bourgeois democracy remains a fable which has not been confirmed by a single political fact, by a single important resolution of the "Bolsheviks" or a single act of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. On the other hand, the opportunist, monarchist bourgeoisie, as represented by the Oswoobozhdeniye, has for a long time past been welcoming the "principles" of new Iskra-ism and now it is actually running its mill with the grist which the latter bring, is adopting their catchwords and "ideas" directed against "secrecy" and "riots," against exaggerating the "technical" side of the revolution, against openly proclaiming the slogan calling for an armed uprising, against the "revolutionism" of extreme demands, etc., etc. The resolution of a whole conference of "Menshevik" Social-Democrats in the Caucasus and the endorsement of that resolution by the editors of the new Iskra sums it all up politically in an unmistakable way; the bourgeoisie might recoil if the proletariat takes part in a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship! This sums it up in a nutshell. This gives the finishing touch to the transformation of the proletariat into an appendage of the monarchist bourgeoisie. The political meaning of the khvostism of the new Iskra is
thereby proved in fact, not by a casual declaration of some individual, but by a resolution especially endorsed by a whole trend.

Anyone who ponders over these facts will understand the real significance of the stock reference to the two sides and the two trends in the Social-Democratic movement. For a study of these trends on a large scale, take Bernsteinism. The Bernsteinians have been dinning into our ears in exactly the same way that it is they who understand the true needs of the proletariat, the tasks connected with the growth of its forces, with rendering the entire activity more profound, with preparing the elements of a new society, with propaganda and agitation! Bernstein says: we demand a frank recognition of what is. And thus he sanctions a "movement" without "final aims," sanctions defensive tactics only, preaches the tactics of fear "lest the bourgeoisie recoil." The Bernsteinians also raised an outcry against the "Jacobinism" of the revolutionary Social-Democrats, against the "publicists" who fail to understand the "initiative of the workers," etc., etc. In reality, as everyone knows, the revolutionary Social-Democrats never even thought of abandoning the everyday, petty work, the mustering of forces, etc., etc. All they demanded was a clear understanding of the final aim, a clear presentation of the revolutionary tasks; they wanted to raise the semi-proletariat and lower middle classes to the revolutionary level of the proletariat, not to debase the revolutionary spirit of the latter to the level of opportunist considerations such as "lest the bourgeoisie recoil." Perhaps the most graphic expression of this rift between the intellectual opportunist wing and the proletarian revolutionary wing of the Party was the question: dürfen wir siegen? "Dare we win?" Is it permissible for us to win? Would not victory be dangerous to us? Ought we to win? This question, which seems so strange at first sight, was raised, however, and had to be raised, because the opportunists were afraid of victory, were frightening the proletariat away from it, were predicting that trouble would come of it, were ridiculing the slogans bluntly calling for victory.

The same fundamental division between the intellectual-opportunist trend and the proletarian-revolutionary trend exists also among us, with the very material difference, however, that here we are faced with the question of a democratic revolution, and not of a Socialist revolution. The question "dare we win?" which is so absurd at first sight, has been raised among us also. It was raised by Martynov in his Two Dictatorships, in which he prophesied dire misfortune if we make effective preparations for and successfully carry out an uprising. The question has been raised in all the new Iskra literature dealing with a provisional revolutionary government, and, in this connection, all the time persistent though futile efforts have been made to liken Millerand's participation in a bourgeois-opportunist government to Varlin's participation in a petty-bourgeois revolutionary government. It is embodied in a resolution: "lest the bourgeoisie recoil." And although Kautsky, for instance, now tries to wax ironical about our disputes concerning a provisional revolutionary government, and says that
it is like dividing the skin of a bear before the bear has been killed, this irony only proves that even intelligent and revolutionary Social-Democrats are liable to put their foot in it when they talk about something they know of only by hearsay. German Social-Democracy is still a long way from killing its bear (carrying out a Socialist revolution), but the dispute as to whether we "dare" kill the bear was of enormous importance from the point of view of principles and of practical politics. Russian Social-Democrats are still far from being strong enough to "kill their bear" (to carry out a democratic revolution), but the question as to whether we "dare" kill it is of extreme importance for the whole future of Russia and for the future of Russian Social-Democracy. An army cannot be energetically and successfully mustered and led unless we are sure that we "dare" win.

Take our old Economists. They too raised an outcry that their opponents were conspirators, Jacobins (see Rabocheye Dvelo, especially No. 10, and Martynov's speech in the debate on the program at the Second Congress), that by plunging into politics they were divorcing themselves from the masses, that they were losing sight of the fundamentals of the labour movement, ignoring the initiative of the workers, etc., etc. In reality these supporters of "the initiative of the workers" were opportunist intellectuals who tried to foist on the workers their own narrow and philistine conception of the tasks of the proletariat. In reality the opponents of Economism, as everyone can see from the old Iskra, did not neglect or push into the background any of the phases of Social-Democratic work, nor did they forget the economic struggle in the slightest; but at the same time they were able to present the urgent and immediate political tasks in their full scope, and to oppose the transformation of the party of the workers into an "economic" appendage of the liberal bourgeoisie.

The Economists had learned by rote that politics are based on economics and "understood" this to mean that the political struggle should be reduced to an economic struggle. The new Iskra-ites have learned by rote that the economic basis of the democratic revolution is the bourgeois revolution, and "understood" this to mean that the democratic aims of the proletariat should be degraded to the level of bourgeois moderation and should not overstep the boundaries beyond which "the bourgeoisie will recoil. On the pretext of rendering their work more profound, on the pretext of rousing the initiative of the workers and pursuing a pure class policy, the Economists were actually delivering the working class into the hands of the liberal-bourgeois politicians, i.e., were leading the Party along a path which objectively meant exactly that. The new Iskra-ites, using the same pretexts, are in fact betraying the interests of the proletariat in the democratic revolution to the bourgeoisie, i.e., are leading the Party along a path which objectively means exactly that. The Economists thought that leadership of the political struggle was no concern of the Social-Democrats but properly the business of the liberals. The new Iskra-ites think that active manage-
ment of the democratic revolution is no concern of the Social-Democrats, but properly the business of the democratic bourgeoisie, for, they argue, if the proletariat takes a pre- eminent part in the revolution and leads it, this will "diminish the sweep" of the revolution.

In short, the new Iskra-ites are the epigones of Economism, not only by virtue of their origin at the Second Party Congress, but also by their present manner of presenting the tactical tasks of the proletariat in the democratic revolution. They, too, represent an intellectual-opportunist wing of the Party. In the sphere of organization they began with the anarchist individualism of intellectuals and finished with "disorganization-as-a-process," providing in the "Rules" adopted by the Conference for the separation of the Party's publishing activities from the Party organization, an indirect and practically four-stage system of elections, a system of Bonapartist plebiscites instead of democratic representation, and finally the principle of "agreements" between the part and the whole. In Party tactics they continued to slide down the same inclined plane. In the "plan of the Zemstvo campaign" they declared that speeches to Zemstvo-ists were "a higher type of demonstration," finding only two active forces on the political scene (on the eve of January 9)—the government and the democratic bourgeoisie. They made the pressing problem of armament "more profound" by substituting for the direct and practical slogan to take to arms, the slogan to arm the people with a burning desire to arm themselves. The tasks connected with an armed uprising, with the establishment of a provisional government and with a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship have now been distorted and toned down by them in their official resolutions. "Lest the bourgeoisie recoil"—this final chord of their last resolution throws a glaring light on the question of where their path is leading the Party.

The democratic revolution in Russia is a bourgeois revolution by reason of its social and economic content. But a mere repetition of this correct Marxian proposition is not enough. It must be properly understood and properly applied in political slogans. In general, all political liberties that are founded on present-day, i.e., capitalist, relations of production are bourgeois liberties. The demand for liberties expresses primarily the interests of the bourgeoisie. The representatives of the bourgeoisie were the first to raise this demand. Its supporters have everywhere used the liberties they acquired, like masters, reducing them to moderate and meticulous bourgeois doses, combining them with the most subtle methods of suppressing the revolutionary proletariat in peaceful times and with brutally cruel methods in times of stress.

- But only the rebel Narodniks, the anarchists and the "Economists" could deduce from this that the struggle for liberty should be rejected or disparaged. These intellectual-philistine doctrines could be foisted on the proletariat only for a time and against its will. The proletariat always realized instinctively that it needed political liberty, needed it more than
anyone else, despite the fact that its immediate effect would be to strengthen and to organize the bourgeoisie. It is not by avoiding the class struggle that the proletariat expects to find its salvation but by developing it, by extending its scope, increasing the conscious elements in the struggle, its organization and determination. The Social-Democrat who disparages the tasks of the political struggle becomes transformed from a tribune of the people into a trade union secretary. The Social-Democrat who disparages the proletarian tasks in a democratic bourgeois revolution becomes transformed from a leader of the people’s revolution into a leader of a free labour union.

Yes, the people’s revolution. Social-Democracy has always fought quite justifiably against the bourgeois-democratic abuse of the word “people.” It demands that this word shall not be used to cover up the failure to understand the class antagonisms within the people. It insists categorically on the need for complete class independence for the party of the proletariat. But it divides the “people” into “classes,” not in order that the advanced class may become self-centred, or confine itself to narrow aims and emasculate its activity out of the consideration that the economic rulers of the world might be frightened away, but in order that the advanced class, which does not suffer from the half-heartedness, vacillation and indecision of the intermediate classes, may with all the greater energy and enthusiasm fight for the cause of the whole of the people, at the head of the whole of the people.

That is what the present-day new Iskra-ites so often fail to understand and why they substitute for active political slogans in the democratic revolution a mere pedantic repetition of the word “class,” parsed in all genders and cases!

The democratic revolution is a bourgeois revolution. The slogan of a Black Redistribution, or “land and liberty”—this most widespread slogan of the peasant masses, downtrodden and ignorant, yet passionately yearning for light and happiness—is a bourgeois slogan. But we Marxists should know that there is not, nor can there be, any other path to real freedom for the proletariat and the peasantry, than the path of bourgeois freedom and bourgeois progress. We must not forget that there is not, nor can there be, at the present time, any other means of bringing Socialism nearer, than complete political liberty, than a democratic republic, than a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. As the representatives of the advanced and only revolutionary class, revolutionary without reservations, doubts or retrospection, we must present to the whole of the people the aims of a democratic revolution as widely and as boldly as possible, displaying the utmost initiative. In the sphere of theory, to disparage these aims means to make a caricature of Marxism, to distort it in philistine fashion, while in the sphere of practical politics it means delivering the cause of the revolution into the hands of the bourgeoisie, which will inevitably recoil from the task
of consistently carrying out the revolution. The difficulties that lie on the road to complete victory of the revolution are enormous. No one could blame the representatives of the proletariat if, having done everything in their power, their efforts were defeated by the resistance of the reaction, the treachery of the bourgeoisie and the ignorance of the masses. But everybody, and the class-conscious proletariat above all, will condemn Social-Democracy if it curtails the revolutionary energy of the democratic revolution and dampens the revolutionary ardour because it is afraid to win, because it is actuated by the consideration that the bourgeoisie might recoil.

Revolutions are the locomotives of history, said Marx. Revolutions are the festivals of the oppressed and the exploited. At no other time are the masses 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 narrow, philistine scale of gradual progress. But the leaders of the revolutionary parties must also make their aims more comprehensive and bold at such a time, so that their slogans are always in advance of the revolutionary initiative of the masses, serving as a beaconlight, revealing to them our democratic and Socialist ideal in all its magnitude and splendour, and showing 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 compelled by force to drag ourselves along such paths, we shall be able to fulfil our duty in petty, everyday work also. But let ruthless struggle first decide the choice of the path. We shall be traitors to and betrayers of the revolution if we do not use the festive energy of the masses and their revolutionary ardour in order to wage a ruthless and unflinching struggle for the direct and decisive path. Let the bourgeois opportunists contemplate the future reaction with cowardly fear. The workers will not be frightened either by the thought that the reaction promises to be terrible or by the thought that the bourgeoisie proposes to recoil. The workers are not looking forward to striking bargains, are not asking for sops; they are striving to crush the reactionary forces without mercy, i.e., to set up a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

Of course, greater dangers threaten the ship of our Party in stormy times than in periods of the smooth “sailing” of liberal progress, which means the painfully slow sweating of the working class by its exploiters. Of course, the tasks of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship are a thousand times more difficult and more complicated than the tasks of an “extreme opposition” or of exclusively parliamentary struggle. But whoever can deliberately prefer smooth sailing and the path 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, when the festive days
will 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 progressive class.

At the head of the whole of the 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 must in practice be the policy of the revolutionary proletariat, such is the class slogan which must permeate and determine the solution of every tactical problem, of every practical step of the workers' party during the revolution.
POSTSCRIPT

ONCE AGAIN OSVOBOZHDENIYE-ISM, ONCE AGAIN NEW ISKRA-ISM

Numbers 71-72 of the Osvobozhdeniye and Nos. 102-103 of the Iskra provide a wealth of additional material on the question to which we have devoted Chapter 8 of our pamphlet. Since it is quite impossible to make use of the whole of this rich material here, we shall confine ourselves to the most important points only: first, to the kind of "realism" in Social-Democracy that is praised by the Osvobozhdeniye and why the latter must praise it; secondly, to the interrelationship between the concepts revolution and dictatorship.

1. WHAT DO THE BOURGEOIS LIBERAL REALISTS PRAISE THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC "REALISTS" FOR?

The articles entitled "The Split in Russian Social-Democracy" and "The Triumph of Common Sense" (Osvobozhdeniye No. 72) set forth the opinion on Social-Democracy held by the representatives of the liberal bourgeoisie, an opinion which is of remarkable value for class-conscious proletarians. We cannot too strongly recommend every Social-Democrat to read these articles in full and to *pore over* every sentence in them. We shall reproduce first of all the most important propositions contained in both these articles:

"It is fairly difficult," writes the Osvobozhdeniye, "for an outside observer to grasp the real political meaning of the differences that have split the Social-Democratic Party into two factions. A definition of the 'Majority' faction as the more radical and unswerving, as distinct from the 'Minority' which allows of certain compromises in the interests of the cause, would not be quite exact, and in any case would not provide an exhaustive characterization. At any rate the traditional dogmas of Marxian orthodoxy are observed by the Minority faction with even greater zeal perhaps than by the Lenin faction. The following characterization would appear to us to be more accurate,
The fundamental political temper of the ‘Majority’ is abstract revolutionism, rebellion for the sake of rebellion, an eagerness to stir up an uprising among the popular masses by any available means and to seize power immediately in their name; to a certain extent this brings the ‘Leninists’ close to the Socialist-Revolutionaries and overshadows the idea of the class struggle in their minds with the idea of a Russian revolution involving the whole people; while abjuring in practice much of the narrow-mindedness of the Social-Democratic doctrine, the ‘Leninists’ are, on the other hand, thoroughly imbued with the narrow-mindedness of revolutionism, renounce all practical work except the preparation of an immediate uprising, ignore on principle all forms of legal and semi-legal agitation and every species of practically useful compromise with other oppositional trends. The Minority, on the contrary, while steadfastly adhering to the doctrine of Marxism, at the same time preserves the realistic elements of the Marxian world outlook. The fundamental idea of this faction is to oppose the interests of the ‘proletariat’ to the interests of the bourgeoisie. But, on the other hand, the struggle of the proletariat is conceived—of course within certain bounds set by the immutable dogmas of Social-Democracy—in realistically sober fashion, with a clear realization of all the concrete conditions and aims of this struggle. Neither of the two factions pursues its basic point of view quite consistently, for in their ideological and political activity they are bound by the strict formulae of the Social-Democratic catechism, which keep the ‘Leninists’ from becoming unqualified putchists after the fashion of certain, at least, of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the ‘Iskra-ites’ from becoming the practical leaders of a real political movement of the working class.”

And, after quoting the contents of the most important resolutions, the Osvobozhdeniye writer goes on to illustrate his general “thoughts” with several concrete remarks about them. In comparison with the Third Congress, he says, “the Minority Conference takes a totally different attitude towards armed insurrection.” “In connection with the attitude towards armed insurrection,” there is a difference in the respective resolutions on a provisional government. “A similar difference is revealed with regard to the worker’s trade unions. The ‘Leninists’ do not breathe a single word in their resolution about this most important starting point in the political education and organization of the working class. The Minority, on the other hand, drew up a very weighty resolution.” With regard to the liberals, both factions, he says, are unanimous but the Third Congress “repeats almost word for word Plekhanov’s resolution on the attitude towards the liberals adopted at the Second Congress and rejects Starovyer’s resolution adopted by the same Congress, which called for a more favourable attitude to the liberals.” Although the Congress
and the Conference resolutions on the peasant movement are in agreement on the whole, "the ‘Majority’ lays more emphasis on the idea of the revolutionary confiscation of the estates of the landlords and other land, while the ‘Minority’ wants to make the demand for democratic state and administrative reforms the basis of its agitation."

Finally, the Osvobozhdeniye cites from the Iskra, No. 100, a Menshevik resolution, the main clause of which reads as follows:

"In view of the fact that at the present time underground work alone does not secure adequate participation of the masses in Party life and in some degree leads to the masses as such being contrasted to the Party as an illegal organization, the latter must assume leadership of the trade union struggle of the workers on a legal basis, strictly linking up this struggle with the Social-Democratic tasks." In commenting on this resolution the Osvobozhdeniye exclaims:

"We heartily welcome this resolution as a triumph of common sense, as evidence that a definite section of the Social-Democratic Party is beginning to see the light with regard to tactics."

The reader now has before him all the essential opinions of the Osvobozhdeniye. It would, of course, be the greatest mistake to regard these opinions as correct in the sense of corresponding to objective truth. Every Social-Democrat will easily detect mistakes in them at every step. It would be naive to forget that these opinions are thoroughly permeated with the interests and views of the liberal bourgeoisie, and that accordingly they are utterly biased and tendentious. They reflect the views of the Social-Democrats in the same way as a concave or convex mirror reflects objects. But it would be an even greater mistake to forget that in the final analysis these bourgeois-distorted opinions reflect the real interests of the bourgeoisie, which, as a class, undoubtedly understands correctly what trends in Social-Democracy are advantageous, close, akin and agreeable, and what trends are harmful, distant, alien and antipathetic, to it. No bourgeois philosopher or bourgeois publicist can ever understand Social-Democracy properly, be it the Menshevik or the Bolshevik variety. But if he is a more or less sensible publicist, his class instinct will not deceive him, and he will always grasp, on the whole correctly, the significance for the bourgeoisie of one or another trend in the Social-Democratic movement, although he may present it in a distorted way. That is why the class instinct of our enemy, his class opinion, is always deserving of the most serious attention on the part of every class-conscious proletarian.

What, then, does the class instinct of the Russian bourgeoisie as expressed by the Osvobozhdeni, tell us?

It quite definitely expresses its satisfaction with the trend represented by the new Iskra, praising it for its realism, sobriety, the triumph of common sense, the seriousness of its resolutions, its beginning to see the
light on questions of tactics, its practicalness, etc.—and it expresses dissatisfaction with the trend of the Third Congress, censuring it for narrow-mindedness, revolutionism, its rebel spirit, its repudiation of practically useful compromises, etc. The class instinct of the bourgeoisie suggests to it exactly what had been repeatedly proved with the help of incontrovertible facts in our literature, namely, that the new Iskra-ites are the opportunists and their opponents the revolutionary wing of the present-day Russian Social-Democratic movement. The liberals cannot but sympathize with the trend of the former, and cannot but censure the trend of the latter. The liberals, as the ideologists of the bourgeoisie, fully understand the advantages to the bourgeoisie of “practicalness, sobriety and seriousness” on the part of the working class, i.e., of narrowing in fact its sphere of activity to the bounds of capitalism, reforms, the trade union struggle, etc. What is dangerous and terrible to the bourgeoisie is the “revolutionary narrow-mindedness” of the proletariat and its endeavour to win leadership in a popular Russian revolution to promote its own class aims.

That this is the real meaning of the word “realism” as employed by the Osvobozhdeniye is evident among other things from the way it was used previously by the Osvobozhdeniye and Mr. Struve. The Iskra itself could not but admit that this was the meaning of the Osvobozhdeniye’s “realism.” Take, for instance, the article entitled “It Is High Time!” in the supplement to the Iskra No. 73-74. The author of this article (a consistent exponent of the views of the “Marsh” at the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party) frankly expressed the opinion that “at the Congress Akimov played the part of a spectre of opportunism rather than of its real representative.” And the Editorial Board of the Iskra was forthwith obliged to correct the author of the article “It Is High Time!” by stating in a footnote:

“We cannot agree with this opinion. Comrade Akimov’s views on the program bear the clear imprint of opportunism, which fact is admitted even by the Osvobozhdeniye critic, who—in one of its recent issues—stated that Comrade Akimov is an adherent of the ‘realist’—read: revisionist—tendency.”

Thus the Iskra itself is perfectly aware that the Osvobozhdeniye’s “realism” is simply opportunism and nothing else. If in attacking “liberal realism” (Iskra, No. 102) the Iskra now passes over in silence the fact that it was praised by the liberals for its realism, the explanation of this circumstance is that such praise is harder to swallow than any censure. Such praise (which the Osvobozhdeniye uttered not by mere chance and not for the first time) proves the affinity that exists between the realism of the liberals and those tendencies of Social-Democratic “realism” (read: opportunism) that manifest themselves in every resolution of the new Iskra-ites by reason of the fallacy of their whole tactical line.
Indeed, the Russian bourgeoisie has already fully revealed its inconsistency and egoism in the “popular” revolution—has revealed it in Mr. Struve’s arguments and by the whole tone and content of the numerous liberal newspapers, and by the nature of the political utterances of the bulk of the Zemstvo-ists, the bulk of the intellectuals and in general of all the adherents of Messrs. Trubetskoy, Petrunkevich, Rodichev and Co. Of course the bourgeoisie does not always clearly understand, but in general and on the whole it does grasp excellently, by reason of its class instinct, that, on the one hand, the proletariat and the “people” are useful for its revolution as cannon fodder, as a battering-ram against the autocracy, but that, on the other hand, the proletariat and the revolutionary peasantry will be terribly dangerous to it if they win a “decisive victory over tsarism” and carry the democratic revolution to completion. That is why the bourgeoisie strains every effort to the end that the proletariat should be satisfied with a “modest” role in the revolution, that it should be more sober, practical and realistic, that its activity should be circumscribed by the principle, “lest the bourgeoisie recoil.”

The bourgeois intellectuals know full well that they will not be able to get rid of the working-class movement. That is why they do not come out against the working-class movement, they do not come out against the class struggle of the proletariat—no, they even pay lip service to the right to strike, to a genteel class struggle, understanding the working-class movement and the class struggle in the Brentano or Hirsch-Duncker sense. In other words they are fully prepared to “yield” to the workers the right to strike and to organize in trade unions (which has already in fact been practically won by the workers themselves), provided the workers renounce their “rebelliousness,” their “narrow-minded revolutionism,” their hostility to “practically useful compromises,” their claims and aspirations to put the imprint of their class struggle on the “popular Russian revolution,” the imprint of proletarian consistency, proletarian determination and “plebeian Jacobinism.” That is why the bourgeois intellectuals all over Russia exert every effort, resorting to thousands of ways and means—books,* lectures, speeches, talks, etc., etc.—to imbue the workers with the ideas of (bourgeois) sobriety, (liberal) practicalness, (opportunist) realism, (Brentano) class struggle, (Hirsch-Duncker) trade unions, etc. The latter two slogans are particularly convenient for the bourgeois of the “Constitutional-Democratic” or the Osvobozhdeniye party, since outwardly they coincide with the Marxian slogans, since with a few small omissions and some slight distortions they can easily be confused with and sometimes even passed off for Social-Democratic slogans. For instance, the legal liberal newspaper Rassvyet [Dawn] (which we hope some day to discuss in greater detail with the readers of the Proletary) frequently says such “bold” things

*Cf. Prokopovich, The Labour Question in Russia.
about the class struggle, about the possible deception of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, about the working-class movement, about the initiative of the proletariat, etc., etc., that the inattentive reader or an unenlightened worker might easily be led to believe that its "social-democrat-ism" is genuine. Actually, however, it is a bourgeois imitation of social-democratism, an opportunist distortion and perversion of the concept of class struggle.

At the root of this gigantic (in the extent of its influence on the masses) bourgeois subterfuge lies the tendency to reduce the working-class movement to a trade union movement for the most part, to keep it as far away as possible from pursuing an independent (i.e., revolutionary and directed towards a democratic dictatorship) policy, to "overshadow in the minds of the workers the idea of a Russian revolution involving the whole people with the idea of the class struggle."

As the reader will perceive, we have turned the Oswobozhdeniye formulation upside down. This is an excellent formulation, excellently expressing the two views of the role of the proletariat in a democratic revolution, the bourgeois view and the Social-Democratic view. The bourgeoisie wants to confine the proletariat to the trade union movement and thereby to "overshadow in its mind the idea of a Russian revolution involving the whole people with the idea of the (Brentano) class struggle"—which is wholly in the spirit of the Bernsteinian authors of the Credo, who overshadowed in the minds of the workers the idea of political struggle with the idea of a "purely working-class" movement. Social-Democracy, however, wants, on the contrary, to develop the class struggle of the proletariat to the point where the latter will take the leading part in the popular Russian revolution, i.e., will lead this revolution to the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

The revolution in our country is one that involves the whole people, says the bourgeoisie to the proletariat. Therefore, you, as a separate class, must confine yourselves to your class struggle, must in the name of "common sense" direct your main attention to the trade unions, and their legalization, must consider these same trade unions "the most important starting point in your political education and organization," must in a revolutionary situation draw up for the most part "serious" resolutions like the new Iskra resolution, must pay heed to resolutions that are "more favourably inclined to the liberals," must show preference for leaders who display a tendency to become "practical leaders of a real political movement of the working class," must "preserve the realistic elements of the Marxian world outlook" (if you have unfortunately already become infected with the "strict formulae" of this "unscientific" catechism).

The revolution in our country is one involving the whole people, Social-Democracy says to the proletariat. Therefore, you, as the most progressive and the only consistently revolutionary class, must strive not only to take a most active part but also to assume leadership in it. There-
fore, you must not confine yourselves to a narrow conception of the scope of the class struggle as meaning mainly the trade union movement, but, on the contrary, you must strive to extend the scope and the content of your class struggle to include not only all the aims of the present, democratic, Russian revolution of the whole of the people, but the aims of the subsequent Socialist revolution as well. Therefore, while not ignoring the trade union movement, while not refusing to take advantage of even the slightest legal possibilities, you must, in a revolutionary period, make your prime tasks an armed uprising and the formation of a revolutionary army and a revolutionary government as being the only way to complete victory of the people over tsarism, to the attainment of a democratic republic and real political liberty.

It would be superfluous to speak about the half-hearted and inconsistent stand, which, naturally, is so pleasing to the bourgeoisie, that the new Iskra-ite resolutions took on this question because of their erroneous "line."

II. COMRADE MARTYNOV RENDERS THE QUESTION "MORE PROFOUND" AGAIN

Let us pass on to Martynov’s articles in Nos. 102 and 103 of the Iskra. We shall, of course, make no reply to Martynov’s attempts to prove the incorrectness of our and the correctness of his interpretation of a number of citations from Engels and Marx. These attempts are so trivial, Martynov’s subterfuges are so obvious and the question is so clear that it would be of no interest to dwell on this point again. Every thinking reader can easily see through the simple wiles employed by Martynov in his retreat all along the line, particularly after the appearance of the complete translation of Engels’ pamphlet The Bakuninists at Work and Marx’s Address of the Central Council to the Communist League of March 1850, on the preparation of which a group of collaborators of the Proletary are now working. A single quotation from Martynov’s article will suffice to make his retreat clear to the reader.

"The Iskra ‘admits,’" says Martynov in No. 103, "that the establishment of a provisional government is one of the possible and expedient ways of furthering the revolution, and denies the expediency of the participation of Social-Democrats in a bourgeois provisional government, precisely in the interests of a complete seizure of the state machine, in the future for a Social-Democratic revolution."

In other words, the Iskra now admits the absurdity of all its fears concerning the responsibility of a revolutionary government for the Treasury and the banks, concerning the danger and impossibility of taking
over the "prisons," etc. But the Iskra is only muddling things as of old, confusing democratic with Socialist dictatorship. This muddle is unavoidable, it is a means to cover up the retreat.

But among the muddle-heads of the new Iskra Martynov stands out as a muddle-head of the first order, as a muddle-head of talent, if we may say so. Confusing the question by his laborious efforts to render it "more profound," he thereby almost invariably "arrives at" new formulations which show up splendidly the entire falsity of the stand he has taken. You will remember how in the days of Economism he rendered Plekhanov "more profound" and created the formulation: "economic struggle against the employers and the government." It would be difficult to find in all the literature of the Economists a more apt expression of the entire falsity of this trend. It is the same today. Martynov zealously serves the new Iskra and almost every time he opens his mouth he furnishes us with new and excellent material for an evaluation of the new Iskra's false position. In No. 102 (p. 3, col. 2) he says that Lenin "has imperceptibly substituted 'dictatorship' for 'revolution.'"

As a matter of fact all the accusations levelled at us by the new Iskra-ites can be reduced to this one. And how grateful we are to Martynov for this accusation! What an invaluable service he renders us in the struggle against the new Iskra ideas by formulating his accusation in this way! We must positively beg the editors of the Iskra to let Martynov loose against us more often for the purpose of rendering the attacks on the Proletary "more profound" and for a "truly principled" formulation of these attacks. For the more Martynov strains to argue on the plane of principles, the worse are the results he gets, and the more clearly does he reveal the gaps in the new Iskra ideas, the more successfully does he perform on himself and on his friends the useful pedagogical operation: reductio ad absurdum (reducing the principles of the new Iskra to the absurd).

The Vperyod and the Proletary "substitute" the concept of dictatorship for that of revolution. The Iskra does not want such a "substitution." Just so, most esteemed Comrade Martynov! You have unwittingly stated a great truth. With this new formulation you have confirmed our contention that the Iskra is dragging at the tail of the revolution, is straying into an Osvozhdeniye formulation of its tasks, whereas the Vperyod and the Proletary are issuing slogans that lead the democratic revolution forward.

You don't understand this, Comrade Martynov? In view of the importance of the question we shall try to give you a detailed explanation.

The bourgeois nature of a democratic revolution expresses itself, among other things, in the fact that a number of classes, groups and sections of society, whose stand is based entirely on the recognition of private property and commodity production, and which are incapable of going beyond these bounds, are led by force of circumstances to recognize the inefficacy
of the autocracy and of the whole feudal order in general, and join in the
demand for liberty. The bourgeois nature, however, of this liberty, which is
demanded by “society” and advocated in a flood of words (and words only!) by
the landowners and the capitalists, is manifesting itself more and more
clearly. At the same time the radical difference between the struggle of
the workers for liberty and the struggle of the bourgeoisie, between pro-
letarian and liberal democratism, becomes ever more obvious. The working
class and its class-conscious representatives are marching in the van of this
struggle and urging it forward, not only without fearing to carry it to
completion, but aspiring to go far beyond the uttermost limits of the dem-
ocratic revolution. The bourgeoisie is inconsistent and self-seeking,
and accepts the slogans calling for liberty only in part and hypocritically.
All attempts to draw a particular line or to draw up particular “points”
(like the points in Starovyer’s or the Conferencers’ resolution) beyond
which begins this hypocrisy of the bourgeois friends of liberty, or, if
you like, this betrayal of liberty by its bourgeois friends, are unavoid-
ably doomed to failure; for the bourgeoisie, caught between two fires
(the autocracy and the proletariat), is capable of changing its position
and slogans by a thousand ways and means, adapting itself by moving
an inch to the Left or an inch to the Right, constantly bargaining and
dickering. The task of proletarian democratism does not consist in invent-
ing such dead “points,” but in unceasingly passing judgment on the
developing political situation, in exposing the ever new and unforeseen
inconsistencies and betrayals on the part of the bourgeoisie.

Recall the history of Mr. Struve’s political writings in the illegal
press, the history of Social-Democracy’s war with him, and you will see
clearly how these tasks were carried out by Social-Democracy, the cham-
pion of proletarian democratism. Mr. Struve began with a purely Shipov
slogan: “Rights and an authoritative Zemstvo” (see my article in Zarya,
“The Persecutors of the Zemstvo and the Hannibals of Liberalisms”).* 
Social-Democracy exposed him and pushed him in the direction of a
definitely constitutional program. When this “pushing” took effect,
thanks to the particularly rapid course of revolutionary events, the strug-
gle shifted to the next question of democracy: not only a constitution
in general, but absolutely universal and equal suffrage, direct elections
and secret ballot. When we “captured” this new position from the “enemy”
(the adoption of universal suffrage by the Osvobozhdeniye League) we began
to press further, showing up the hypocrisy and falsity of a two chamber
system, and the fact that universal suffrage had not been fully recognized
by the Osvobozhdentsei, pointing to their monarchism and showing up the
huckstering nature of their democratism, or, in other words, the selling
out of the interests of the great Russian revolution by these Osvobozhdeniye
heroes of the money-bags.

Finally, the savage obstinacy of the autocracy, the enormous progress of the civil war and the hopelessness of the position into which the monarchists forced Russia have begun to penetrate even the thickest of skulls. The revolution has become a fact. It is no longer necessary to be a revolutionary to acknowledge the revolution. The autocratic government has actually been disintegrating in the sight of all. As has justly been remarked in the legal press by a certain liberal (Mr. Gredeskul), actual insubordination to this government has set in. Despite all its apparent strength the autocracy has proved impotent; the events attending the developing revolution have simply begun to brush aside this parasitic organism which is rotting alive. The liberal bourgeoisie, compelled to base their activity (or, to put it more correctly, their political wire-pulling) on relationships as they are actually taking shape, have begun to realize the necessity of recognizing the revolution. They do so not because they are revolutionaries; but despite the fact that they are not revolutionaries. They do so of necessity and against their will, viewing the successes of the revolution with an angry eye, accusing the autocracy of being revolutionary because it does not want to strike a deal, but wants to fight it out to a finish. Born hucksters, they hate struggle and revolution, but circumstances force them to tread the ground of revolution, for there is no other ground under their feet.

We are witnessing a highly instructive and highly comic spectacle. The bourgeois liberal prostitutes are trying to drape themselves in the toga of revolution. The Osvobozhdentsi—risum teneatis, amici!*—the Osvobozhdentsi are beginning to hold forth in the name of the revolution! The Osvobozhdentsi are beginning to make assurances that they “do not fear revolution” (Mr. Struve in the Osvobozhdeniye No. 72)!!! The Osvobozhdentsi are voicing their claims “to be at the head of the revolution”!!!

This is an exceptionally noteworthy phenomenon, characterizing not only the progress of bourgeois liberalism, but even more so the progress of the real successes of the revolutionary movement, which has compelled recognition. Even the bourgeoisie is beginning to feel that it is more advantageous to take its stand on the side of the revolution—so shaky is the autocracy. On the other hand, however, this phenomenon, which testifies to the fact that the entire movement has risen to a new and higher plane, at the same time sets us new and higher aims. The recognition of the revolution on the part of the bourgeoisie cannot be sincere, irrespective of the personal integrity of this or that bourgeois ideologist. The bourgeoisie cannot help introducing selfishness and inconsistency, the spirit of bargaining and petty reactionary tricks even into this higher stage of the movement. Now we must differently formulate the immediate concrete tasks of the revolution, in line with our program and enlarging upon it. What was adequate yesterday is inadequate today. Yesterday,

* Restrain your laughter, friends!—Ed.
perhaps, the demand for the recognition of the revolution was adequate as an advanced democratic slogan. Today this is not enough. The revolution has forced even Mr. Struve to recognize it. Today what is demanded of the advanced class is to define exactly the very content of the urgent and pressing tasks of this revolution. Messrs. the Struves, while recognizing the revolution, stick out their donkeys' ears again and again, once more striking up the old song about the possibility of a peaceful outcome, about having Nicholas call on the Osvobozhdentsi to take power, etc., etc. The Osvobozhdentsi recognize the revolution in order to juggle it without danger to themselves, in order to betray it. It is our job at the present time to show the proletariat and the whole people the inadequacy of the slogan: "Revolution"; we must show how necessary it is to have a clear and unambiguous, consistent and determined definition of the content of the revolution. And this definition is provided by the one slogan capable of correctly expressing a "decisive victory" of the revolution, the slogan: for a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

We have shown that the Osvobozhdentsi are ascending (not without being prodded by the Social-Democrats) step by step in the matter of recognizing democracy. At first the issue in the dispute between us was: the Shipov system (rights and an authoritative Zemstvo) or constitutionalism? Then it was: limited suffrage or universal suffrage? Later: recognition of the revolution or a huckster's bargain with the autocracy? Finally, now it is: recognition of the revolution without a dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry or recognition of the demand for a dictatorship of these classes in the democratic revolution? It is possible and even probable that the Osvobozhdentsi (it does not matter whether they be the present ones or their successors in the Left wing of the bourgeois-democratic movement) will ascend another step, i.e., recognize in time (perhaps by the time Comrade Martynov goes up one more step) the slogan of dictatorship also. It will inevitably be so if the Russian revolution continues to forge ahead successfully and attains a decisive victory. What will be the position of Social-Democracy then? The complete victory of the present revolution will be the end of the democratic revolution and the beginning of a determined struggle for a Socialist revolution. The satisfaction of the demands of the present-day peasantry, the complete smashing of reaction, and the attainment of a democratic republic will mark the end of the revolutionism of the bourgeoisie and even of the petty bourgeoisie—will be the beginning of the real struggle on the part of the proletariat for Socialism. The more complete the democratic revolution will be, the sooner, the more widespread, the purer and the more determined will be the development of this new struggle. The slogan calling for a "democratic" dictatorship expresses the historically limited nature of the present revolution and the necessity of a new struggle on the basis of the new order for the complete emancipation of the working
class from all oppression and all exploitation. In other words: when the
democratic bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie ascends another step, when
not only the revolution but the complete victory of the revolution be-
comes an accomplished fact, then we shall "substitute" (perhaps amid the
horrified cries of new Martynovs in the future) for the slogan of the dem-
ocratic dictatorship, the slogan of a Socialist dictatorship of the prole-
tariat, i.e., of a complete Socialist revolution.

III. THE VULGAR BOURGEOIS REPRESENTATION OF DICTATORSHIP
AND MARX'S VIEW OF IT

Mehring tells us in the notes to his edition of Marx's articles from the
Neue Rheinische Zeitung of 1848 that one of the reproaches levelled at
this newspaper by bourgeois publications was that it had allegedly de-
manded "the immediate introduction of a dictatorship as the sole means
of achieving democracy" (Marx, Nachlass, Vol. III, p. 53). From the vul-
gar bourgeois standpoint the concepts dictatorship and democracy are
mutually exclusive. With no understanding of the theory of class strug-
gle, and accustomed as he is to seeing in the political arena only the petty
squabbling of the various bourgeois circles and coteries, the bourgeois
conceives dictatorship to mean the annulment of all the liberties and
guarantees of democracy, tyranny of every kind, and every sort of abuse
of power in the personal interests of a dictator. In point of fact, it is pre-
cisely this vulgar bourgeois view that is manifested in the writings of
our Martynov, who winds up his "new campaign" in the new Iskra by
attributing the partiality of the Vperyod and the Proletary for the slogan
of dictatorship to Lenin's "being obsessed by a passionate desire to try
his luck" (Iskra, No. 103, p. 3, col. 2). In order to explain to Mar-
tynov the concept of class dictatorship as distinct from personal dicta-
torship, and the aims of a democratic dictatorship as distinct from a So-
cialist dictatorship, it would not be amiss to dwell on the views of the
Neue Rheinische Zeitung.

"Every provisional organization of the state after a revolution,"
wrote the Neue Rheinische Zeitung on September 14, 1848, "requires
a dictatorship, and an energetic dictatorship at that. From
the very beginning we have reproached Camphausen" (the head of the
Ministry after March 18, 1848) "for not acting dictatorially, for not
having immediately smashed up and eliminated the remnants of the old
institutions. And while Herr Camphausen was lulling himself with
constitutional illusions, the defeated party (i.e., the party of re-
action) strengthened its positions in the bureaucracy and in the army,
and here and there even began to venture upon open struggle."

Here, Mehring justly remarks, we have in a few sentences a summary
of all that was propounded in detail in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung in
long articles on the Camphausen Ministry. What do these words of Marx tell us? That a provisional revolutionary government must act dictatorially (a proposition which the Iskra was totally unable to grasp since it was fighting shy of the slogan of dictatorship), and that the task of such a dictatorship is to destroy the remnants of the old institutions (which is precisely what was clearly stated in the resolution of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party about the struggle against counter-revolution and what, as we have shown above, was omitted in the resolution of the Conference). Thirdly, and lastly, it follows from these words that Marx castigated the bourgeois democrats for entertaining “constitutional illusions” in a period of revolution and open civil war. The meaning of these words becomes particularly obvious from the article in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung of June 6, 1848. Marx wrote:

“A constituent national assembly must first of all be an active, revolutionary-active assembly. The Frankfurt Assembly, however, is busying itself with school exercises in parliamentarism while allowing the government to act. Let us assume that this learned council succeeds after mature consideration in working out the best possible agenda and the best possible constitution. But what is the use of the best possible agenda and of the best possible constitution, if the German governments have in the meantime placed the bayonet on the agenda?”

That is the meaning of the slogan of dictatorship. We can gauge from this what Marx’s attitude would have been towards resolutions which call a “decision to organize a constituent assembly” a decisive victory, or which invite us to “remain the party of extreme revolutionary opposition!”

Major questions in the life of nations are settled only by force. The reactionary classes are usually themselves the first to resort to violence, to civil war; they are the first to “place the bayonet on the agenda” as the Russian autocracy has been doing systematically and consistently everywhere ever since January 9. And since such a situation has arisen, since the bayonet has really become the main point on the political agenda, since insurrection has proved to be imperative and urgent—constitutional illusions and school exercises in parliamentarism become only a screen for the bourgeois betrayal of the revolution, a screen to conceal the fact that the bourgeoisie is “recoiling” from the revolution. It is therefore the slogan of dictatorship that the genuinely revolutionary class must advance.

On the question of the tasks of this dictatorship Marx wrote, already in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung, as follows:

“The National Assembly had only to act dictatorially against all the reactionary attempts of the obsolete governments, and the
force of public opinion which it would then have won for itself would be so great that all bayonets and rifle butts would have been splintered against it... But this Assembly bores the German people instead of carrying the people with it or being carried away by it.”

In Marx’s opinion, the National Assembly should have “eliminated from the regime actually existing in Germany everything that contradicted the principle of the sovereignty of the people,” then it should have “consolidated the revolutionary ground on which it rested in order to make the sovereignty of the people, won by the revolution, secure against all attacks.”

Thus, the tasks which Marx set before a revolutionary government or dictatorship in 1848 amounted in substance above all to a democratic revolution, viz., defence against counter-revolution and the actual elimination of everything that militated against the sovereignty of the people. And this is no other than a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship.

To proceed: which classes, in Marx’s opinion, could and should have achieved this task (actually to exercise to the end the principle of the sovereignty of the people and to beat off the attacks of the counter-revolution)? Marx speaks of the “people.” But we know that he always ruthlessly combated the petty-bourgeois illusions about the unity of the “people” and about the absence of a class struggle within the people. In using the word “people,” Marx did not thereby gloss over class differences, but united definite elements capable of carrying the revolution to completion.

After the victory of the Berlin proletariat on March 18, wrote the Neue Rheinische Zeitung, the results of the revolution proved to be twofold:

“On the one hand the arming of the people, the right of association, the sovereignty of the people actually attained; on the other hand, the preservation of the monarchy and the Camphausen-Hansemann Ministry, i.e., the government of the representatives of the upper bourgeoisie.

“Thus the revolution had two series of results, which had necessarily to diverge. The people had emerged victorious, it had won liberties of a decisively democratic nature, but the direct power passed not into its hands, but into those of the big bourgeoisie. In a word, the revolution was not completed. The people allowed the formation of a ministry of big bourgeois, and the big bourgeois immediately betrayed their tendencies by offering an alliance to the old Prussian nobility and bureaucracy. Arnim, Canitz and Schwerin joined the Ministry.

“The upper bourgeoisie, ever anti-revolutionary, concluded a defensive and offensive alliance with the reaction out of fear of the people, that is to say, the workers and the democratic bourgeoisie.” (Our italics.)
Thus, not only a "decision to organize a constituent assembly," but even its actual convocation is insufficient for a decisive victory of the revolution! Even after a partial victory in an armed struggle (the victory of the Berlin workers over the troops on March 18, 1848) an "incomplete" revolution, a revolution "that has not been carried to completion," is possible. But on what does its completion depend? It depends on whose hands the immediate rule passes into, whether into the hands of the Petrunkeviches and Rodichevs, that is to say, the Camphausens and the Hansemanns, or into the hands of the people, i.e., the workers and the democratic bourgeoisie. In the first case the bourgeoisie will possess power, and the proletariat—"freedom of criticism," freedom to "remain the party of the extreme revolutionary opposition." Immediately after the victory the bourgeoisie will conclude an alliance with the reaction (this would inevitably happen in Russia too, if, for example, the St. Petersburg workers gained only a partial victory in the street fighting with the troops and left it to Messrs. Petrunkevich and Co. to form a government). In the second case, a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship, i.e., the complete victory of the revolution, would be possible.

It now remains to define more precisely what Marx really meant by "democratic bourgeoisie" (demokratische Bürgerschaft), which together with the workers he called the people, in contradistinction to the big bourgeoisie.

A clear answer to this question is supplied by the following passage from an article in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung of July 29, 1848:

"... the German revolution of 1848 is only a parody of the French revolution of 1789.

"On August 4, 1789, three weeks after the storming of the Bastille, the French people in a single day prevailed over the feudal burdens.

"On July 11, 1848, four months after the March barricades, the feudal burdens prevailed over the German people. Teste Gierke cum Hansemanno."

"The French bourgeoisie of 1789 did not for a moment leave its allies, the peasants, in the lurch. It knew that the foundation of its rule was the destruction of feudalism in the countryside, the creation of a free landowning (grundbesitzenden) peasant class.

* "Witnesses: Herr Gierke and Herr Hansemann." Hansemann was a minister who represented the party of the big bourgeoisie (Russian counterpart: Trubetskoy or Rodichev, and the like), Gierke was Minister of Agriculture in the Hansemann Cabinet, who drew up a plan, a "bold" plan for "abolishing feudal burdens," professedly "without compensation," but in fact for abolishing only the minor and unimportant burdens while preserving or granting compensation for the more essential ones. Herr Gierke was something like the Russian Messrs. Kablukov, Manuilov, Hertzenstein and similar bourgeois liberal friends of the muzhik who desire the "extension of peasant landownership" but do not wish to hurt the landlords.
"The German bourgeoisie of 1848 is without the least compunction betraying the peasants, who are its most natural allies, the flesh of its flesh, and without whom it is powerless against the nobility.

"The continuance of feudal rights, their sanction under the guise of (illusory) redemption—such is the result of the German revolution of 1848. That is the little wool out of the great cry."

This is a very instructive passage: it gives us four important propositions: 1) The incompletely accomplished German revolution differs from the completed French revolution in that the German bourgeoisie betrayed not only democracy in general, but also the peasantry in particular. 2) The foundation for the full consummation of a democratic revolution is the creation of a free class of peasants. 3) The creation of such a class means the abolition of feudal burdens, the destruction of feudalism, but does not yet mean a Socialist revolution. 4) The peasants are the "most natural" allies of the bourgeoisie, that is to say, of the democratic bourgeoisie, which without them is "powerless" against the reaction.

With the corresponding allowances for concrete national peculiarities and the substitution of serfdom for feudalism, all these propositions are fully applicable to Russia in 1905. There is no doubt that by learning from the experience of Germany, as elucidated by Marx, we cannot arrive at any other slogan for a decisive victory of the revolution than the slogan calling for a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. There is no doubt that the main components of the "people," whom Marx in 1848 contrasted with the resisting reactionaries and the treacherous bourgeoisie, are the proletariat and the peasantry. There is no doubt that in Russia too the liberal bourgeoisie and the gentlemen of the Osvobozhdeniye League are betraying and will continue to betray the peasantry, i.e., will confine themselves to a pseudo-reform and take the side of the landlords in the decisive battle between them and the peasantry. Only the proletariat is capable of supporting the peasantry to the end in this struggle. There is no doubt, finally, that in Russia also the success of the peasant struggle, i.e., the transfer of the whole of the land to the peasantry, will signify a complete democratic revolution and will constitute the social support of the revolution carried to its completion, but it will by no means signify a Socialist revolution, or "socialization," about which the ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, talk. The success of the peasant uprising, the victory of the democratic revolution will but clear the way for a genuine and decisive struggle for Socialism on the basis of a democratic republic. In this struggle the peasantry as a landowning class will play the same treacherous, vacillating part as is being played at present by the bourgeoisie in the struggle for democracy. To forget this is to forget Socialism, to deceive oneself and others as to the real interests and tasks of the proletariat.
In order to leave no gaps in the presentation of the views held by Marx in 1848, it is necessary to note one essential difference between German Social-Democracy of that time (or the Communist Party of the Proletariat, to use the language of the period) and present-day Russian Social-Democracy. Here is what Mehring says:

“IT” (the Neue Rheinische Zeitung) “appeared in the political arena as the ‘organ of democracy,’ and although the red thread that ran through all its articles is unmistakable, it at first represented the interests of the bourgeois revolution against absolutism and feudalism to a greater extent than the interests of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. Very little is to be found in its columns about the separate labour movement during the years of the revolution, although one should not forget that along with it there appeared twice a week, under the editorship of Moll and Schapper, a special organ of the Cologne Labour League. At any rate, the present-day reader will be struck by how little attention the Neue Rheinische Zeitung paid to the German labour movement of its day, although its most capable mind, Stephan Born, was a pupil of Marx and Engels in Paris and Brussels and was now [in 1848] correspondent for their newspaper in Berlin. Born relates in his Memoirs that Marx and Engels never expressed a single word in disapproval of his agitation among the workers; nevertheless, it appears probable from subsequent declarations of Engels’ that they were dissatisfied, at least with the methods of this agitation. Their dissatisfaction was justified inasmuch as the class consciousness of the proletariat in by far the greater part of Germany was as yet entirely undeveloped, and Born was forced to make many concessions to it, which could not stand the test of criticism from the viewpoint of the Communist Manifesto. Their dissatisfaction was unjustified inasmuch as Born managed nonetheless to maintain the agitation conducted by him on a relatively high plane. . . . Without doubt, Marx and Engels were also historically and politically right in thinking that it was to the utmost interest of the working class primarily to push the bourgeois revolution forward as far as possible. . . . Nevertheless, a remarkable proof of how the elementary instinct of the labour movement is able to correct the conceptions of the most brilliant thinkers is provided by the fact that in April 1849 they decided in favour of a specific workers’ organization and of participation in the labour congress, which was being prepared especially by the East Elbe” (Eastern Prussia) “proletariat.”

Thus, it was only in April 1849, after the revolutionary newspaper had been appearing for almost a year (the Neue Rheinische Zeitung began publication on June 1, 1848) that Marx and Engels declared in favour of a special workers’ organization! Until then they were merely running an
“organ of democracy” unconnected by any organizational ties with an independent workers’ party. This fact, monstrous and incredible as it may appear from our present-day standpoint, clearly shows us what an enormous difference there is between the German Social-Democratic Party of those days and the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party of today. This fact shows how much less the proletarian features of the movement, the proletarian current within it, were in evidence in the German democratic revolution (because of the backwardness of Germany in 1848 both economically and politically—its disunity as a state). This should not be forgotten in judging Marx’s repeated declarations during this period and somewhat later about the need for organizing an independent proletarian party. Marx arrived at this practical conclusion only as a result of the experience of the democratic revolution, almost a year later—so middle-class, so petty-bourgeois was the whole atmosphere in Germany at that time. To us this conclusion is an old and solid acquisition of half a century’s experience of international Social-Democracy—an acquisition with which we began to organize the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. In our case there can be no question, for instance, of revolutionary proletarian newspapers keeping outside the pale of the Social-Democratic Party of the proletariat, or of their appearing even for a moment simply as “organs of democracy.”

But the contrast which had hardly begun to reveal itself between Marx and Stephan Born exists in our case in a form which is the more developed, the more powerfully the proletarian current manifests itself in the democratic stream of our revolution. Speaking of the probable dissatisfaction of Marx and Engels with the agitation conducted by Stephan Born, Mehring expresses himself too mildly and too evasively. This is what Engels wrote of Born in 1885 (in his preface to the Enthuellungen über den Kommunistenprozess zu Köln. Zurich, 1885):*

The members of the Communist League everywhere stood at the head of the extreme democratic movement, proving thereby that the League was an excellent school of revolutionary action. And he went on to say:

“... the compositor Stephan Born, who had worked in Brussels and Paris as an active member of the League, founded a Workers’ Brotherhood (Arbeiterverbruderung) in Berlin which became fairly widespread and existed until 1850. Born, a very talented young man, who, however, was rather too much in a hurry to become a big political figure, fraternized with the most miscellaneous ragtag and bobtail (Kreti und Plethi) in order to get a crowd together, and was not at all the man who could bring unity into the discordant tendencies, light into the chaos. Consequently, in the official publications of the association the views represented in the Communist Mani-

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festo are mingled hodge-podge with guild recollections and guild aspirations, fragments of Louis Blanc and Proudhon, protectionism, etc.; in short they desired to be all things to all men (Allen alles sein). In particular, strikes, trade unions and producers' co-operatives were set going, and it was forgotten that what had to be done above all was, by means of political victories, to conquer the field in which alone such things could be lastingly realized. (Our italics.) And when the victories of the reaction made the leaders of the Brotherhood realize the necessity of taking a direct part in the revolutionary struggle, they were naturally left in the lurch by the confused mass which they had grouped around themselves. Born took part in the Dresden uprising in May 1849, and got away by pure luck. But the Workers' Brotherhood held aloof from the great political movement of the proletariat, as a purely separate body which, to a large extent, existed only on paper and played such subordinate role that the reaction found it necessary to suppress it only in 1850, and its surviving branches many years later. Born, whose real name should be Bu'termilch (buttermilk), * did not become a big political figure but a petty Swiss professor, who no longer translates Marx into guild language but the meek Renan into his own fulsome German."

That is how Engels judged the two tactics of Social-Democracy in the democratic revolution!

Our new Iskra-ites are also tending to "Economism," and with such unreasonable zeal as to earn the praises of the monarchist bourgeoisie for their "seeing the light." They too collect around themselves a motley crowd, flattering the Economists, demagogically attracting the undeveloped masses by the slogans of "self-activity," "democracy," "autonomy," etc., etc. Their labour unions, too, often exist only on the pages of the braggart new Iskra. Their slogans and resolutions betray a similar failure to understand the tasks of the "great political movement of the proletariat."

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* Born's real name is Buttermilch. In translating Engels I made a mistake in the first edition by taking the word Buttermilch to be not a proper noun but a common noun. This mistake naturally afforded great delight to the Mensheviks. Koltzov wrote that I had "rendered Engels more profound" (reprinted in Two Years, a collection of articles) and Plekhanov even now recalls this mistake in the Tovarishch—in short, it afforded an excellent pretext to slur over the question of the two tendencies in the working-class movement of 1848 in Germany, the tendency of Born (akin to our Economists) and the Marxist tendency. To take advantage of the mistake of an opponent, even if it was only on the question of Born's name, is no more than natural. But to use a correction to a translation to slur over the question of the two tactics is to dodge the real issue. (Author's note to the 1908 edition.—Ed.)
NOTE TO CHAPTER 10 OF TWO TACTICS

Insert for § 10.

1) We would remind the reader that in the polemics between the Iskra and the Vperyod, the former referred among other things to Engels’ letter to Turati, in which Engels warned the (future) leader of the Italian reformists not to confuse the democratic with the Socialist revolution. The impending revolution in Italy—wrote Engels about the political situation in Italy in 1894—will be a petty-bourgeois, democratic revolution and not a Socialist revolution. The Iskra reproached the Vperyod with having departed from the principle laid down by Engels. This reproach was unjustified, because the Vperyod (No. 14) fully acknowledged, in general and on the whole, the correctness of Marx’s theory on the difference between the three main forces in the revolutions of the nineteenth century. According to this theory, the following forces take a stand against the old order, against the autocracy, feudalism and serfdom: 1) the liberal big bourgeoisie, 2) the radical petty bourgeoisie, 3) the proletariat. The first fights for nothing more than a constitutional monarchy; the second, for a democratic republic; the third, for a Socialist revolution. To confuse the petty-bourgeois struggle for a complete democratic revolution with the proletarian struggle for a Socialist revolution spells political bankruptcy for a Socialist. Marx’s warning to this effect is quite justified. But it is for this very reason that the slogan “revolutionary communes” is erroneous, because the very mistake committed by the communes that have existed in history is that they confused the democratic revolution with the Socialist revolution. On the other hand, our slogan—a revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry—fully safeguards us against this mistake. While recognizing the incontestably bourgeois nature of the revolution, which is incapable of immediately overstepping the bounds of a merely democratic revolution, our slogan pushes forward this particular revolution and strives to mould it into forms most advantageous to the proletariat; consequently, it strives to make the very most of the democratic revolution in order to attain the greatest success in the further struggle of the proletariat for Socialism.

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First published in 1926
in the Lenin Miscellany, Vol. V
THE ATTITUDE OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY TOWARD
THE PEASANT MOVEMENT

The tremendous importance of the peasant movement in the democratic revolution through which Russia is now passing has been repeatedly explained in the entire Social-Democratic press. As is well known, the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. adopted a special resolution on this question in order to define more exactly and to co-ordinate the activities of the whole party of the class-conscious proletariat with regard to the peasant movement of the present day. Despite the fact that the resolution was prepared in advance (the first draft was published in the Vperyod No. 11, March 23 [10], 1905, despite the fact that it was carefully gone over at the Party Congress, which took pains to formulate the views that had already been established throughout the Russian Social-Democratic movement—indeed of all this, the resolution has caused perplexity among a number of comrades working in Russia. The Saratov Committee has unanimously declared this resolution to be unacceptable (see the Proletary No. 10). Unfortunately, the desire we expressed at the time, to receive an explanation of that verdict, has not been satisfied as yet. We only know that the Saratov Committee has declared the agrarian resolution passed by the new Iskra Conference also unacceptable—hence it is what is common to both resolutions that dissatisfies them, and not what distinguishes one from the other.

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

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

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

We consider it necessary to inform you about the perplexity that has arisen among us upon perusal of the resolution of the Third Congress “on the attitude toward the peasant movement,” and about the organizational plan which we are already beginning to apply in our work in the rural districts.

“§ a) To carry on propaganda among the broad strata of the people to the effect that Social-Democracy sets itself the task of giving most energetic support to all the revolutionary measures undertaken by the peasantry that are capable of improving its position, including confiscation of the land belonging to the landlords, the state, the church, the monasteries, and the imperial family” (from the resolution of the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.).

First of all, it is not made clear in this paragraph how the Party organizations will, or should, carry on their propaganda. Propaganda requires, first and foremost, an organization which is very close to those whom it is intended to propagandize. The question as to whether this organization is to be committees consisting of the rural proletariat, or whether other organizational means of conducting oral and written propaganda may be adopted, is left open.

The same may be said of the promise to render energetic support. To render support, and energetic support at that, is also possible only if local organizations exist. The question of “energetic support” seems to us to be extremely hazy in general. Can Social-Democracy support the expropriation of those landlords’ estates which are farmed most intensively, using machinery, cultivating high grade crops, etc.? The transfer of such estates to petty-bourgeois proprietors, however important it may be to improve their position, would be a step back from the standpoint of the capitalist development of the given estate. In our opinion, we, as Social-Democrats, should have made a reservation on this point of “support”: “provided the expropriation of this land and its transference to peasant (petty-bourgeois) ownership results in a higher form of economic development on these estates.”

Further:

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

Doubts arise with regard to the latter part of this paragraph. The fact is that the bourgeois-democratic organizations, such as the “Peasant League,” and reactionary-utopian organizations, such
as the Socialist-Revolutionaries, organize under their banner both the bourgeois and the proletarian elements of the peasantry. By electing our own representatives of the rural proletarian organizations to such “peasant” committees, we shall be contradicting ourselves, our view on entering a bloc, etc.

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

These are a few general remarks on the resolutions of the Third Congress. It is desirable to have these analysed as soon and in as great detail as possible.

As regards the plan for a “rural” organization in our Regional Organization, we are obliged to work under conditions which the resolutions of the Third Congress wholly ignore. First of all, we must note that the territory we cover—the Moscow Province and the adjoining uyezds of the neighbouring Provinces—is mainly an industrial area with a relatively undeveloped system of home industries and with a very small section of the population engaged exclusively in agriculture. Huge textile mills, each employing 10,000 to 15,000 workers, are interspersed among small factories, employing 500 to 1,000 workers, and scattered in out-of-the-way hamlets and villages. One would think that under such conditions Social-Democracy would find a most favourable field for its activity here, but facts have proved that such a superficial premise does not hold water. Even now, in spite of the fact that some of the factories have been in existence for 40-50 years, the overwhelming majority of our “proletariat” has not become divorced from the land. The “village” has such a strong hold over it, that none of the psychological and other characteristics which a “pure” proletarian acquires in the course of collective work develop among our proletarians. The farming carried on by our “proletarians” is of a peculiar mongrel type. A weaver employed in a factory hires an agricultural labourer to till his patch of land. His wife (if she is not working in the factory), his children, and the aged and invalid members of the family work on this same piece of land, and he himself will work on it when he becomes old or crippled, or is fired for violent or suspicious behaviour. Such “proletarians” can hardly be called proletarians. Their economic status is that of paupers. Their ideology is that of petty bourgeois. They are ignorant and conservative. It is from these that the “Black-Hundred” elements are recruited. Lately, however, even among them class consciousness has begun to awaken. Using “pure” proletarians as footholds, we are endeavouring to rouse these ignorant masses from their age-long slumber, and not without success. The footholds are increasing in number, and in places are becoming firmer, the paupers are coming under our influence, are beginning to adopt our ideology, both in the factory and in the
village. And we believe that it will not be unorthodox to form organizations in an environment that is not "purely" proletarian. We have no other environment, and if we were to insist on orthodoxy and organize only the rural "proletariat," we would have to dissolve our organizations and the organizations in the neighbouring districts. We know we shall have difficulties in combating the burning desire to expropriate the arable and other land neglected by the landlords, or those lands which the holy fathers in hoods and cassocks have not been able to farm properly. We know that bourgeois democracy, from the "democratic"-monarchist faction (such a faction exists in the Ruza Uyezd) down to the "Peasant" League, will fight us for influence among the "paupers," but we shall arm the latter to oppose the former. We shall make use of all the Social-Democratic forces in the region, both intellectuals and proletarian workers, to set up and consolidate our Social-Democratic committees of "paupers." And we shall do this in accordance with the following plan. In each uyezd seat, or big industrial centre, we shall set up uyezd committees of the groups coming under the Regional Organization. The uyezd committee, in addition to setting up factory committees in its district, will also set up "peasant" committees. For reasons of secrecy, these committees should not have many people on them and should consist of the most revolutionary and capable pauperized peasants. In places where there are both factories and peasants—it is necessary to organize workers and peasants in a single sub-group committee.

In the first place, such committees should have a clear and exact idea of local conditions: A) The agrarian relationships: 1) Peasant allotments, leases, form of tenure (communal, by households, etc.). 2) The local land: a) to whom it belongs; b) the amount of land; c) what relation the peasants have to this land; d) on what terms the land is held: 1) labour rent, 2) excessive rent for "otrezki," etc.; e) indebtedness to kulaks, landlords, etc. B) Imposts, taxes, the rate of assessment of peasant and landlord lands respectively. C) Migratory and handicraft industries, passports, winter hiring, etc. D) Local factories and plants: the working conditions in these: 1) wages, 2) working day, 3) the attitude of the management, 4) housing conditions, etc. E) The administration: the zemsky nachalniki, the village elder, the clerk, the volost judges, constables, priest. F) The Zemstvo: the councillors representing the peasants, the Zemstvo employees: the teacher, doctor, libraries, schools, taverns. G) Volost assemblies: their composition and procedure. H) Organizations: the "Peasant League," Socialist-Revolutionaries, Social-Democrats.

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

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

*Regional Organizer*

It goes without saying that we shall not undertake the task of working out the detailed practical directives to which the comrade refers: this is a matter for the comrades on the spot and for the central body in Russia, which is guiding the practical work. We propose to take the opportunity presented by our Moscow comrade’s interesting letter to explain the resolution of the Third Congress and the urgent tasks of the Party in general. It is obvious from the letter that the perplexity caused by the resolution of the Third Congress is only partly due to theoretical doubt. The other source is the new question, which has not arisen before, about the inter-relation between the “revolutionary peasant committees” and the “Social-Democratic Committees” which are working among the peasants. The very fact that this question has been raised testifies to the great progress Social-Democratic work among the peasants has made. Questions—relatively speaking—of detail are now being forced to the front by the practical requirements of “rural” agitation, which is becoming a fixed feature and assuming stable, permanent forms. And the author of the letter keeps forgetting that when he is blaming the Congress resolution for lack of clarity, he is, in fact, seeking an answer to a question which the Congress of the Party did not raise and could not have raised.

For instance, the author is not quite right when he says that both propagation of our ideas and support for the peasant movement are possible “only” if we have our organizations in the particular localities. Of course such organizations are desirable, and as the work increases they will become necessary; but such work is possible and necessary even where no such organizations exist. In all our activities, even when carried on exclusively among the urban proletariat, we must never lose sight of the peasant question and must broadcast the declaration made by the whole party of the class-conscious proletariat as represented by the Third Congress, namely, that we support the peasant uprising. The peasants must learn this—from literature, from the workers, from special organizations, etc. The peasants must learn that the Social-Democratic proletariat, in giving this support, will not shrink from any form of confiscation of the land (i.e., expropriation without compensation to the owners).

The author of the letter raises a theoretical question in this connection, viz., whether the demand for the expropriation of the big estates and their
transfer to “peasant, petty-bourgeois ownership” should not be circumscribed by a special reservation. But by proposing such a reservation the author has arbitrarily limited the purport of the resolution of the Third Congress. There is not a word in the resolution about the Social-Democratic Party undertaking to support the transfer of the confiscated land to petty-bourgeois proprietors. The resolution states: we support... “including confiscation,” i.e., including expropriation without compensation, but the resolution does not in any way decide to whom the expropriated land is to be given. It was not by chance that the question was left open: it is obvious from the articles in the Vperyod (Nos. 11, 12, 15) that it was deemed unwise to decide this question in advance. It was stated there, for instance, that under a democratic republic Social-Democracy cannot pledge itself and tie its hands with regard to the nationalization of the land.

Indeed, unlike the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionaries, we lay the main emphasis at the present time on the revolutionary-democratic aspect of the peasant uprising and the special organization of the rural proletariat into a class party. The crux of the question now is not schemes of “Black Redistribution,” or nationalization, but that the peasants recognize the need of a revolutionary break-up of the old order and that they accomplish it. That is why the Socialist-Revolutionaries emphasize “socialization,” etc., while we lay stress on revolutionary peasant committees. Without the latter, say we, all change amounts to nothing. With them and supported by them the victory of the peasant uprising is possible.

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

Let us take a concrete instance. Let us assume that the peasant uprising has been victorious. The revolutionary peasant committees and the provisional revolutionary government (relying, in part, on these very committees) can proceed to the confiscation of any big property. We are in favour of confiscation, as we have already declared. But to whom shall we recommend that the confiscated land be given? On this question we have not tied our hands nor shall we ever do so by declarations like those rashly proposed by the author of the letter. The author of the letter has forgotten that the resolution of the Third Congress speaks of “purging the revolutionary-democratic content of the peasant movement of all reactionary admixtures”—that is one point—and, secondly, of the need “in all cases and under all circumstances for an independent organization of the rural proletariat.” These are our directives. There will always be reactionary admixtures in the peasant
movement, and we declare war on them in advance. Class antagonism between the rural proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie is unavoidable, and we reveal it in advance, explain it and prepare for the struggle on the basis of it. One of the immediate causes of such struggle may very likely be the question: to whom shall the confiscated land be given, and how? We do not gloss over that question, nor do we promise equal distribution, "socialization," etc. What we do say is that this is a question we shall fight out later on, fight again, on a new field and with other allies. Then, we shall certainly be with the rural proletariat, with the entire working class against the peasant bourgeoisie. In practice, this may mean the transfer of the land to the class of petty peasant proprietors—wherever big estates based on bondage and feudal servitude still prevail, where there are as yet no material prerequisites for large-scale Socialist production; it may mean nationalization—provided the democratic revolution is completely victorious; or the big capitalist estates may be transferred to workers' associations; for from the democratic revolution we shall at once, and just in accordance with the measure of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organized proletariat, begin to pass to the Socialist revolution. We stand for uninterrupted revolution. We shall not stop halfway. The reason we do not now and immediately promise all sorts of "socialization," is just because we know what is actually required for that task, and do not gloss over but reveal the new class struggle that is maturing within the ranks of the peasantry.

At first we support the peasantry in general against the landlords, support it to the end and by all means, including confiscation, and then (or rather not "then," but at the same time) we support the proletariat against the peasantry in general. To try now to calculate what the combination of forces will be within the peasantry on "the morrow" of the revolution (the democratic revolution) is sheer utopia. Without descending to adventurism or going against our scientific conscience, without striving for cheap popularity, we can and do say only one thing: we shall put every effort into assisting the entire peasantry to make the democratic revolution, in order thereby to make it easier for us, the Party of the proletariat, to pass on, as quickly as possible, to the new and higher task—the Socialist revolution. We hold forth no promises of harmony, equalization or "socialization" as a result of the victory of the present peasant uprising—on the contrary, we "promise" a new struggle, new inequality, a new revolution, toward which we are striving. Our doctrine is not as "sweet" as the fairytales of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, but let whoever wants to be fed solely on sweets join the Socialist-Revolutionaries; we shall say to such people: good riddance.

In our opinion this Marxian standpoint also settles the question of the committees. In our opinion there should be no Social-Democratic peasant committees: if they are Social-Democratic that means they are not purely peasant committees; if they are peasant committees that means they are
not purely proletarian, not Social-Democratic committees. There are many who would fain confuse these two, but we are not of their number. Wherever possible we shall strive to set up our committees, committees of the Social-Democratic Labour Party. They will be joined by peasants, paupers, intellectuals, prostitutes (a worker recently asked us in a letter why not carry on agitation among the prostitutes), soldiers, teachers, workers—in short, all Social-Democrats and none but Social-Democrats. These committees will conduct the whole of Social-Democratic work, in its entire scope striving, however, to organize the rural proletariat separately and particularly, for the Social-Democratic Party is the class party of the proletariat. To consider it "unorthodox" to organize the proletariat which has not entirely freed itself from various relics of the past is a great delusion and we would like to think that the corresponding passages of the letter are due to a mere misunderstanding. The urban and industrial proletariat will inevitably be the basic nucleus of our Social-Democratic Labour Party, but we must attract to it, enlighten and organize all toilers and all the exploited, as is stated in our program—all without exception: handcraftsmen, paupers, beggars, servants, tramps, prostitutes—of course, subject to the necessary and obligatory condition that they join the Social-Democratic movement and not that the Social-Democratic movement join them, that they adopt the standpoint of the proletariat and not that the proletariat adopt theirs.

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

Proletary No. 16,
September 14 [1], 1905
THE LESSONS OF THE MOSCOW UPRISING

The publication of the book *Moscow in December 1905* (Moscow, 1906) could not have been more opportune. It is an essential task of the workers’ party to assimilate the lessons of the December uprising. Unfortunately, this book is like a barrel of honey spoiled by a spoonful of tar: the most interesting material—despite its incompleteness—and incredibly slowly, incredibly trite conclusions. We shall deal with these conclusions separately, and turn our attention now to the burning political question of the day, to the lessons of the Moscow uprising.

The principal form of the December movement in Moscow was a peaceful strike and demonstrations. The overwhelming majority of the worker masses took an active part only in these forms of struggle. But it was the December action in Moscow that convincingly proved that, as an independent and predominant form of struggle the general strike is out of date, that the movement is breaking these narrow bounds with elemental and irresistible force and is giving rise to a higher form of struggle, uprising.

In declaring the strike, all the revolutionary parties, all the Moscow unions, sensed and even realized that it must inevitably grow into an uprising. On December 6 the Soviet of Workers’ Deputies resolved to “strive to transform the strike into an armed uprising.” As a matter of fact, however, none of the organizations were prepared for this. Even the Joint Council of Fighting Squads (on December 9!) spoke of an uprising as of something very remote, and it is quite evident that it had no hand in or control of the street fighting that took place. The organizations failed to keep pace with the growth and range of the movement.

The strike grew into an uprising, primarily as a result of the pressure of the objective conditions that were created after October. The government could no longer be taken by surprise by a general strike: it had already organized the counter-revolution, which was ready for military action. The general course of the Russian revolution after October, and the sequence of events in Moscow in the December days, have supplied striking proof of one of the most profound propositions of Marx: 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 more powerful means of attack.
December 7 and 8: a peaceful strike, peaceful mass demonstrations. Evening of the 8th: the siege of the Aquarium. The morning of the 9th: the crowd on Strastnaya Square is attacked by the dragoons. Evening: Fiedler's house is wrecked. Temper rises. The unorganized street crowds, quite sporadically and hesitatingly, set up the first barricades.

The 10th: artillery fire is opened on the barricades and the crowds in the streets. Barricades are set up more deliberately, and no longer in isolated cases, but on a really mass scale. The whole population is in the streets; all the main centres of the city are covered by a network of barricades. For several days the fighting squads wage a stubborn guerilla fight against the troops, which exhausts the troops and compels Dubasov to beg for reinforcements. Only on December 15 does the superiority of the government forces become complete, and on December 17 the Semyenov regiment storms the Presnya District, the last stronghold of the uprising.

From 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 organizations, the mass proletarian struggle developed from a strike to an uprising. This is the greatest historical gain of 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 extremes in its resistance, and so brought vastly nearer the moment when the revolution will also go to extremes in the application of means of attack. The reaction cannot go further than bombard barricades, houses and street crowds. But the revolution can go ever so much further than the Moscow fighting squads; 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 the change in the objective conditions of the struggle and the need for a transition from the strike to an uprising sooner than its leaders. As is always the case, practice marched ahead of theory. A peaceful strike and demonstrations immediately ceased to satisfy the workers; they asked: what was 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. The workers set to in large numbers, but even this did not satisfy them; they wanted to know: what was to be done next?—they demanded active measures. In December we, the leaders of the Social-Democratic proletariat, behaved like a commander-in-chief who had arranged the disposition of his troops in such an absurd way that most of them remained out of action. 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 view, which is seized upon by all the opportunists, that the strike was inopportune and should not have been started, and that we "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 ourselves to a peaceful strike and that a fearless and relentless armed fight was indispensable. 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 them the fact that the impending revolutionary action must take the form of a desperate, bloody war of extermination.

This is the first lesson of the December events. Another lesson refers to the character of the uprising, the methods by which it is conducted, and the conditions under which the troops come over to the side of the people. On this, an extremely biased view prevails in the Right wing of our Party. It is alleged that it is impossible to fight modern troops; the troops must become revolutionary. Of course, unless the revolution assumes a mass character and also affects the troops, serious fighting is out of the question. It is necessary, of course, to carry on work among the troops. But we must not imagine that the troops will come over to our side at one stroke, as it were, as a result of persuasion, or their own convictions. The Moscow insurrection clearly proved 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 more acute. The Moscow uprising presented an example of the desperate, frantic struggle for the troops that takes place between the reaction and the revolution. Dubasov himself declared that only five thousand out of the fifteen thousand men of the Moscow garrison were reliable. The government restrained the waverers by the most diverse and most 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 disarmed them; and those soldiers who were suspected of being least reliable were removed by treachery and violence. We must have the courage to confess openly and unreservedly that in this respect we lagged behind the government. We failed to utilize the forces at our disposal to wage an active, bold, resourceful and aggressive fight for the wavering troops, like that successfully waged by the government. We have carried on work in the army, and we will redouble our efforts in the future to ideologically "win over" the army. But we shall prove to be miserable pedants if we forget that at the moment of the uprising a physical fight for the army must be waged.
In the December days the Moscow proletariat taught us magnificent lessons in ideologically “winning over” the troops, as, for example, on December 8 on Strastnaya Square, when the crowd surrounded the Cossacks, mingled and fraternized with them, and persuaded them to turn back. Or on December 10 in the 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 of the crowd: “Hurrah for the Cossacks!” These examples of courage and heroism should be impressed forever on the memory of the proletariat.

But here are examples of how we lagged behind Dubasov. On December 9 soldiers were marching down Bolshaya Serpukhovskaya Street singing the Marseillaise, on their way to join the insurgents. The workers sent delegates to meet them. Malakhov himself galloped at break-neck speed towards them. The workers were too late. Malakhov reached them first. He delivered a passionate speech, caused the soldiers to waver, surrounded them with dragoons, marched them off to barracks and locked them in. Malakhov reached the soldiers, we did not, although within two days, 150,000 men had risen at our call, and these could and should have organized the patrolling of the streets. Malakhov surrounded the soldiers with dragoons, whereas we failed to surround the Malakhovs with bomb-throwers. We could and should have done this; and long ago the Social-Democratic press (the old Iskra) pointed out that it was our duty during an uprising to exterminate ruthlessly all the civil and military chiefs. What took place on Bolshaya Serpukhovskaya Street was repeated, apparently, in front of the Nesvizhsky and Krutitsky Barracks, and when the workers attempted to “call out” the Ekaterinoslav Regiment, and when delegates were sent to the sappers in Alexandrov, and when the Rostov artillery on its way to Moscow was turned back, and when the sappers were disarmed in Kolomna, and so forth. When the uprising began we proved unequal to our task in the fight for the wavering troops.

December confirmed another of Marx’s profound propositions, which the opportunist have forgotten, namely, that insurrection is an art, and that the principal rule of this art is that an audacious and determined offensive must be waged. We have not sufficiently assimilated this truth. We have not sufficiently mastered this art, nor taught it to the masses, this rule of attacking, come what may. We must make up for this with all our energy. It is not enough to take sides on the question of political slogans; we must take sides also on the question of armed insurrection. 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 separate enemies from friends according to this principle. We must not preach passivity, nor advocate “waiting” until the troops “come over.”
No! We must proclaim from the housetops 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 tactics and the organization of the forces for insurrection. Military tactics are determined by the level of military technique. This plain truth was dinned into the ears of the Marxists by Engels. 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 was right when he wrote that it is high time now, after Moscow, to revise Engels' conclusions, and that Moscow had inaugurated "new barricade tactics." These tactics are the tactics of guerilla warfare. The organization 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 snigger whenever units of five or units of three are mentioned. But sniggering is only a cheap way of ignoring the new question of tactics and organization called forth 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 units, the slogan of bold attack was not issued to the masses of the workers and they did not apply it; the guerilla 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 this experience still further. And the guerilla warfare and mass terror which have been going on in Russia everywhere and almost continuously since December will undoubtedly help the masses to learn the correct tactics to be applied during an uprising. Social-Democracy must recognize this mass terror and incorporate it into its tactics, organizing and controlling it, of course, subordinating it to the interests and conditions of the labour movement and the general revolutionary struggle, while eliminating and ruthlessly lopping off the "hooligan" perversion of this guerilla warfare which was so magnificently and ruthlessly suppressed by our Moscow comrades during the uprising and by the Letts during the notorious Lettish republics.

Military technique has made new progress quite recently. 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 an inadequate extent. We can and must take advantage of improvements in technique, teach the
workers' units to make bombs in large quantities, help them and our fighting squads to obtain supplies of explosives, fuses and automatic rifles. If the masses of the workers take part in uprisings in the towns, if mass attacks are made upon the enemy, if a determined and skilful fight is waged for the troops, who after the Duma, after Sveaborg and Kronstadt, are wavering more than ever—and the participation of rural districts in the general struggle is secured—victory will be ours in the next all-Russian armed uprising.

Let us then more extensively develop our work and more boldly set our tasks, while assimilating 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 time. Around the slogan demanding the overthrow of the tsarist regime and the convocation of a Constituent Assembly by a revolutionary government we are rallying and shall continue to rally an increasing section of the proletariat; the peasantry and the army. As hitherto, the basis and chief content of our work is to develop the consciousness 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 the same in all times and 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 the masses and ensure victory. The offensive against the enemy must be most energetic; attack and not defence must become the slogan of the masses; the ruthless extermination of the enemy will be their task; the organization of the struggle will become mobile and flexible; the wavering elements among the troops will be drawn into the active struggle. The party of the class-conscious proletariat must do its duty in this great struggle.

Proletary No. 2,
September 11 [August 29], 1906
THE BOYCOTT

The Left-wing Social-Democrats must reconsider the question of boycotting the State Duma. It should be borne in mind that we have always discussed this question concretely, and in connection with a definite political situation. For instance, Proletary (Geneva) wrote that “it would be ridiculous to foreswear making use even of the Bulygin Duma”—if it could be born. And in referring to the Witte Duma in the pamphlet The State Duma and Social-Democracy, 1906 (by N. Lenin and F. Dan), N. Lenin wrote: “We must discuss the question of tactics once again, in a business-like manner.... The situation today is not what it was at the time of the Bulygin Duma.”

The principal difference between revolutionary Social-Democracy and opportunist Social-Democracy on the question of boycott is as follows: the opportunists in all circumstances confine themselves to applying the stereotyped method copied from a specific period in the history of German Socialism. We must utilize representative institutions; the Duma is a representative institution; therefore boycott is anarchism, and we must go into the Duma. All the arguments used by our Mensheviks, and especially by Plekhanov, on this topic, could be reduced to this childishly simple syllogism. The Menshevik resolution on the importance of representative institutions in a revolutionary epoch (see Partiniye Izvestia, No. 2) strikingly reveals the stereotyped and anti-historical nature of their argument.

The revolutionary Social-Democrats, on the contrary, emphasize the necessity of carefully appraising the concrete political situation. It is impossible to cope with the tasks of the revolutionary epoch in Russia by copying in a biassed manner the latest German pattern, forgetting the lessons of 1847-48. The progress of our revolution will be altogether incomprehensible if we confine ourselves to making bare contrasts between “anarchist” boycott and Social-Democratic participation in elections. Learn from the history of the Russian revolution, gentlemen!

This history has proved that the tactics of boycotting the Bulygin Duma were the only correct tactics at that time, and were entirely justified by events. Whoever forgets this and argues about boycott without

taking the lessons of the Bulygin Duma into account (as the Mensheviks always do) is certifying his own mental poverty, his inability to explain and take into account one of the most important and eventful periods of the Russian revolution. The tactics of boycotting the Bulygin Duma were based on a correct appraisal of the temper of the revolutionary proletariat and of the objective features of the situation, which made an immediate general outbreak inevitable.

Let us pass on to the second lesson of history—to the Witte, Cadet Duma. Nowadays we often hear Social-Democratic intellectuals making repentant speeches about the boycott of that Duma. The fact that it did assemble and undoubtedly rendered indirect service to the revolution is considered to be sufficient reason for repentantly confessing that the boycott of the Witte Duma had been a mistake.

Such a view, however, is extremely biased and short-sighted. It fails to take into consideration a number of very important facts of the period prior to the Witte Duma, the period of its existence and the period after its dissolution. Remember that the election law for that Duma was promulgated on December 11, at a time when the insurgents were waging an armed fight for a Constituent Assembly. Remember that even the Menshevik "Nachalo" (Beginning) wrote at the time: "The proletariat will also sweep away the Witte Duma just as it swept away the Bulygin Duma." Under such circumstances the proletariat could not and should not have surrendered to the tsar without a fight, the power to convene the first representative assembly in Russia. The proletariat had to fight against the strengthening of the autocracy by means of loans obtained on the security of the Witte Duma. The proletariat had to combat the constitutional illusions on which, in the spring of 1906, the election campaign of the Cadets and the elections among the peasantry were entirely based. At that time, when the importance of the Duma was being immeasurably exaggerated, the only means of combating such illusions was the boycott. The degree to which the spread of constitutional illusions was connected with participation in the election campaign and in the elections in the spring of 1906 is strikingly revealed by the attitude adopted by our Mensheviks. Suffice it to recall that, in spite of the warnings of the Bolsheviks, in the resolution of the Fourth (Unity) Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party the Duma was referred to as a "power"! Another instance: with complete self-assurance, Plekhanov wrote: "The government will fall into the abyss if it dissolves the Duma." In reply to him it was said at that time: we must prepare to push the enemy into the abyss and not, like the Cadets, place hopes on its "falling" into the abyss by itself. And how soon the words then uttered were proved correct!

It was the duty of the proletariat to exert every effort to preserve the independence of its tactics in our revolution, namely: together with the class-conscious peasantry against the vacillating and treacherous Liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie. But it was impossible to employ these tactics
during the elections to the Witte Duma owing to a number of circumstances, both objective and subjective, which, in the overwhelming majority of localities in Russia, would have made participation in the elections tantamount to the workers’ party tacitly supporting the Cadets. The proletariat could not and should not have adopted half-hearted and artificially concocted tactics, prompted by “cunning” and consternation, of elections for an unknown purpose, of elections to the Duma, but not for the Duma. And yet it is a historical fact, which the silence, subterfuges and evasions of the Mensheviks cannot remove, that not one of them, not even Plekhanov, dared advocate in the press that we should go into the Duma. It is a fact that not a single call was issued in the press to go into the Duma. It is a fact that the Mensheviks themselves, in the leaflet issued by the Joint Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P., officially recognized the boycott and confined the dispute only to the question of the stage at which the boycott was to be adopted. It is a fact that the Mensheviks laid emphasis, not on the elections to the Duma, but on the elections as such, and even on the process of electing as a means of organizing for insurrection and for sweeping away the Duma. Events proved, however, that it was impossible to carry on mass agitation during the elections, and that the Duma alone provided certain opportunities for carrying on agitation among the masses.

Whoever really makes an effort to consider and weigh all these complicated facts, both objective and subjective, will see that the Caucasus was but an exception which proved the general rule. He will see that contrite speeches and explaining away the boycott as a piece of “youthful impetuousness” reveal an extremely narrow, superficial and short-sighted estimation of events.

The dissolution of the Duma has now clearly demonstrated that in the conditions prevailing in the spring of 1906 the boycott, on the whole, was the right tactics and that it was useful. Under the conditions which then prevailed, only by means of the boycott could the Social-Democrats fulfil their duty of giving the people the necessary warning against the tsar’s constitution and supplying the necessary criticism of the chicanery of the Cadets during the elections; and both (warning and criticism) were strikingly substantiated by the dissolution of the Duma.

Here is a small instance to illustrate the above. In the spring of 1906, Mr. Vodovozov, who is half-Cadet and half-Menshevik, was wholeheartedly in favour of participating in the elections and supporting the Cadets. Yesterday (August 11) he wrote in Tovarishch* that the Cadets “wanted to be a parliamentary party in a country that has no parliament and a constitutional party in a country that has no constitution”; that “

* Tovarishch (Comrade)—a newspaper published with the close collaboration of Prokopovich and Kuskova, former “Economists.” It played the part of “Left” wing of the Cadets.—Ed.
whole character of the Cadet Party has been determined by the fundamental contradiction that exists between a radical program and quite non-radical tactics."

The Bolsheviks could not desire a greater triumph than this admission on the part of a Left Cadet or Right-wing Plekhanovite.

However, while absolutely rejecting faint-hearted and short-sighted speeches of repentance, as well as the silly explanation of the boycott as "youthful impetuosity," we do not by any means reject the new lessons of the Cadet Duma. It would be mere pedantry to hesitate openly to admit these new lessons and take them into account. History has shown that when the Duma assembles opportunities arise for carrying on useful agitation both from within the Duma and, in connection with it, outside—that the tactics of joining forces with the revolutionary peasantry against the Cadets can be applied in the Duma. This may seem paradoxical, but such, undoubtedly is the irony of history: it was the Cadet Duma that clearly demonstrated to the masses the correctness of what we might briefly describe as "anti-Cadet" tactics. History has ruthlessly confuted all constitutional illusions and all "faith in the Duma"; but history has undoubtedly proved that that institution is of some, though modest, use to the revolution as a platform for agitation, for exposing the true "nature" of the political parties, etc.

Hence, the conclusion: It would be ridiculous to shut our eyes to realities. The time has now come when the revolutionary Social-Democrats must cease to be boycottists. We shall not refuse to go into the Second Duma when (or "if") it is convened. We shall not refuse to utilize this arena, but we shall not exaggerate its modest importance; on the contrary, guided by the experience already provided by history, we shall entirely subordinate the struggle we wage in the Duma to another form of struggle, namely, strikes, insurrection, etc. We will call the Fifth Congress of the Party; there we will resolve that in the event of elections taking place, it will be necessary to enter into an election agreement, for a few weeks, with the Trudoviks (unless the Fifth Party Congress is convened it will be impossible to conduct a united election campaign; and "blocs with other parties" are absolutely prohibited by the decision of the Fourth Congress). And then we shall utterly rout the Cadets.

This conclusion, however, does not by any means reveal the whole complexity of the task that confronts us. We deliberately emphasized the words: "in the event of elections taking place," etc. We do not know yet whether the Second Duma will be convened, when the elections will take place, what the electoral laws will be like, or what the situation will be at that time. Hence, our conclusion suffers from being extremely general: we need it to enable us to sum up past experience, to take note of the lessons of the past, to put the forthcoming questions of tactics on a proper basis; but it is totally inadequate for solving the concrete problems of immediate tactics.
Only Cadets and "like-Cadets" of all sorts can be satisfied with such a conclusion at the present time, can create "slogans" for themselves out of yearnings for a new Duma and try to persuade the government of the desirability of convening it at the earliest date, etc. Only conscious or unconscious traitors to the revolution would *at the present time* exert all efforts to divert the inevitable new tide of temper and excitement into the channel of an election and not into that of a fight waged by means of a general strike and uprising.

This brings us to the crux of the question of present-day Social-Democratic tactics. The issue now is not whether we should take part in the elections. To say "yes" or "no" in this case means saying nothing at all about the fundamental problem of the moment. Outwardly, the political situation in August 1906 is similar to that in August 1905, but enormous progress has been made during this period: the forces that are fighting on the respective sides, the forms of the struggle, as well as the time required for carrying out this or that strategical move—if we may so express it—have become more exactly defined.

The government's plan is clear. It is absolutely right in its calculations when it fixes the date of the convocation of the Duma and does not fix—*contrary to the law*—the date of the elections. The government does not want to tie its hands or show its cards. Firstly, it is gaining time in which to consider the amendment of the election law. Secondly—and this is the most important—it is keeping the date of the elections in reserve until the character and intensity of the new rise of temper can be fully gauged. The government wishes to fix the date of the elections at the particular time (and perhaps in the particular form, *i.e.*, the form of elections) when it *can split and paralyse the incipient uprising*. The government's reasoning is correct: if things remain quiet perhaps we shall not convene the Duma at all, or revert to the Bulygin laws. If, however, a strong movement arises, then perhaps we shall try to split it by fixing a provisional date for the elections and in this way entice certain cowards and simpletons away from the direct revolutionary struggle.

Liberal blockheads (see *Tovarishch* and *Rech*) so utterly fail to understand the situation that they are of their own accord crawling into the net set by the government. They are trying with might and main "to prove" the need for the Duma and the *desirability* of diverting the rising tide into the channel of an election. But even they cannot deny that the question of what form the impending struggle will assume is still an open one. Today's issue of *Rech* (August 12) admits:

"What the peasants will say in the autumn... we cannot tell as yet... It will be difficult to make any general forecasts until September-October, when the temper of the peasantry is definitely revealed."
The Liberal bourgeoisie remain true to their nature. They do not want to assist actively in choosing the form of the struggle and in moulding the temper of the peasants one way or another, nor are they capable of doing so. The interests of the bourgeoisie demand, not that the old regime be overthrown, but merely weakened, and that a Liberal Cabinet be formed.

The interests of the proletariat demand the complete overthrow of the old, tsarist regime and the convocation of a Constituent Assembly with full power. Its interests demand the most active intervention in moulding the temper of the peasants, in choosing the most resolute forms of struggle, as well as the best moment for it. On no account must we withdraw, or obscure, the slogan: convocation of a Constituent Assembly by revolutionary means, i.e., through the medium of a provisional revolutionary government. We must concentrate our efforts on explaining the conditions of insurrection: that it must be combined with the strike movement; that all the revolutionary forces must be rallied and prepared for it, etc. We must resolutely take the path that was indicated in the well-known manifestos, “To the Army and Navy” and “To All the Peasants,” which were signed by the “bloc” of all revolutionary organizations, including the Trudovik group. Lastly, we must take special care that the government does not under any circumstances succeed in splitting, stopping, or weakening the incipient uprising by ordering elections. In this respect the lessons of the Cadet Duma must be absolutely binding for us, viz., the lessons that the Duma campaign is a subordinate and secondary form of struggle, and that, owing to the objective conditions of the moment, the direct revolutionary movement of the masses of the people still remains the principal form of struggle.

Of course, the tactics of subordinating the Duma campaign to the main struggle, of assigning a secondary role to that campaign, keeping it in reserve for the contingency of an unfavourable outcome of the battle, or of the postponement of the battle until experience of the Second Duma is obtained—such tactics may, if you like, be described as the old boycott tactics. On formal grounds this description might be justified, because, apart from the work of agitation and propaganda, which is always obligatory, “preparation for elections” consists of minute technical preparations, which can very rarely be made a long time before the elections. We do not want to argue about words; in substance, these tactics are the logical development of the old tactics, but not a repetition of them; they are a deduction drawn from the last boycott, but not the last boycott itself.

To sum up. We must take into account the experience of the Cadet Duma and spread its lessons among the masses. We must prove to them that the Duma is “unfit,” that the Constituent Assembly is essential, that the Cadets are wavering; we must demand that the Trudoviks throw off the yoke of the Cadets, and we must support the former against the
latter. We must recognize at once the need for an election agreement between the Social-Democrats and the Trudoviks in the event of new elections taking place. We must exert all our efforts to counteract the government’s plan to split the uprising by ordering elections. Advocating their tried revolutionary slogans with greater energy than ever, Social-Democrats must exert every effort to rally all the revolutionary elements and classes more closely, to convert the upsurge which is very probable in the near future into an armed uprising of the whole of the people against the tsarist government.

Proletary No. 1,
September 3 [August 21], 1906
THE LESSONS OF THE REVOLUTION

Five years have elapsed since the working class of Russia, in October 1905, dealt the first mighty blow to the tsarist autocracy. In those great days the proletariat aroused millions of toilers to struggle against their oppressors. In the space of a few months of that year the proletariat won improvements for which the workers had been waiting for decades in vain from “the powers that be.” The proletariat won for the whole Russian people, if only for a short time, something that Russia had never known before—freedom of the press, assembly and association. It swept Bulygin’s fake Duma from its path, extracted from the tsar a manifesto proclaiming a constitution and made it impossible once and for all for Russia to be ruled without representative bodies.

But the great victories of the proletariat proved to be only half-victories because the tsarist regime was not overthrown. The December uprising ended in defeat and the tsarist autocracy began to deprive the working class of what it had won, deprive it of one gain after another as its offensive weakened, as the struggle of the masses began to grow weaker. In 1906 workers’ strikes, peasants’ and soldiers’ outbreaks were much weaker than they had been in 1905 but were still very formidable, nonetheless. The tsar dispersed the First Duma during which the militancy of the people had begun to mount again, but did not dare to change the electoral law all at once. In 1907 the struggle of the workers grew weaker still, and the tsar, dispersing the Second Duma, staged a coup d’état (June 3, 1907); he broke all the most solemn promises that he had made not to promulgate laws without the consent of the Duma and changed the electoral law in such a way that the landowners and the capitalists, the party of the Black-Hundred elements and their servitors were assured of a majority in the Duma.

But the victories and the defeats in the revolution taught the Russian people great historical lessons. While we are honouring the fifth anniversary of 1905, let us try to elucidate the sum and substance of these lessons.

The first and main lesson is that only the revolutionary struggle of the masses can bring about worthwhile improvements in the lives of the workers and in the administration of the state. No “sympathy” for the work-
ers on the part of educated people, no struggle of lone terrorists, however heroic, could do anything to undermine the tsarist autocracy and the omnipotence of the capitalists. This could be achieved only by the struggle waged by the workers themselves, only by the combined struggle of millions, and when this struggle grew weaker the workers immediately began to be deprived of what they had won. The Russian revolution was confirmation of the sentiments expressed in the song of international labour:

“No saviour from on high deliver,
No trust have we in prince or peer;
Our own right hand the chains must shiver,
Chains of hatred, greed and fear!”

The second lesson is that it is not enough to undermine and restrict the power of the tsar. It must be destroyed. Until the tsarist regime is destroyed concessions won from the tsar will never be durable. The tsar made concessions when the tide of the revolutionary offensive was rising. When it ebbed, he took them all back. Only a democratic republic, the overthrow of the tsarist regime, the passage of power into the hands of the people can deliver Russia from the violence and tyranny of officialdom, from the Black-Hundred-Octobrist Duma, from the despotic power which the landowners and their servitors wield over the countryside. If the miseries of the peasants and the workers have become even harder to bear now, after the revolution, this is the price they are paying for the fact that the revolution was weak, that the tsarist regime was not overthrown. The year 1905, then the first two Dumas, and their dissolution, taught the people a lot, taught them above all to fight in common for political demands. At first, upon awakening to political life, the people demanded concessions from the autocracy: that the tsar should convene a Duma, that he should appoint new ministers in place of the old, that the tsar should “grant” universal suffrage. But the autocracy did not and could not agree to such concessions. The autocracy answered the requests for concessions with bayonets. And then the people began to realize that they would have to fight against the autocratic regime. Now, we may say, this understanding is being driven even more drastically into the heads of the peasants by Stolypin and the black-reactionary noblemen’s Duma. Yes, they are driving it in and they’ll drive it right home too.

The tsarist autocracy has also learned a lesson from the revolution. It has seen that it cannot rely on the faith of the peasants in the tsar. It is now strengthening its power by forming an alliance with the Black-Hundred landowners and the Octobrist industrialists. To overthrow the tsarist autocracy, the revolutionary mass struggle will now require much greater momentum than in 1905.

Is it possible to gain this much greater momentum? The reply to this question brings us to the third and cardinal lesson of the revolution. This
lesson consists in our having seen just how the various classes of the Russian people act. Prior to 1905 many thought that the whole people aspired to freedom in the same way and wanted the same freedom; at least the great majority had no clear understanding of the fact that the different classes of the Russian people had different views on the struggle for freedom and were not striving for the same freedom. The revolution dispelled the mist. At the end of 1905, then later during the First and Second Dumas, all classes of Russian society came out openly. They showed themselves in action, revealing what their true ambitions were, what they could fight for and how strongly, persistently and vigorously they were able to fight.

The factory workers, the industrial proletariat waged a most implacable and strenuous struggle against the autocracy. The proletariat began the revolution with the Ninth of January and mass strikes. The proletariat carried this struggle to its uttermost limit, rising in armed insurrection in December 1905 in defence of the bullet-riddled, knouted and tormented peasantry. The number of workers who went on strike in 1905 was about three million (and with the railwaymen, post-office employees, etc., probably reached four million), in 1906—one million, in 1907—three-quarters of a million. The world had never yet seen a strike movement raised to such a pitch. The Russian proletariat showed what untold forces there are in the working-class masses when a real revolutionary crisis matures. The strike wave of 1905, the greatest ever known in history, did not exhaust all the militant forces of the proletariat by a long way. For instance, in the Moscow factory region there were 567,000 factory workers while the number of strikers was 540,000, whereas in the St. Petersburg factory region which has 300,000 factory workers there were a million strikers. This means that the workers in the Moscow district were still far from developing the same militance in the struggle as the St. Petersburg workers. In the Livonian province (city of Riga) there were 250,000 strikers to the 50,000 workers employed there. In other words each worker on the average struck more than five times in 1905. Now, in all parts of Russia, there cannot possibly be less than three million factory, mining and railway workers and this number is growing year by year. With a movement as strong as in Riga in 1905 they could turn out an army of 15 million strikers.

No tsarist regime could withstand such an onset. But everybody understands that such an onset cannot be evoked artificially in accordance with the desires of the Socialists or progressive workers. Such an onset is possible only when the whole country is convulsed with crisis, mass indignation and revolution. In order to prepare such an onset we must draw the most backward sections of the workers into the struggle, we must devote years and years to persistent, widespread, unflagging propaganda, agitation and organizational work, building up and reinforcing proletarian unions and organizations in every form.
In militance the working class of Russia stood in the forefront of all the other classes of the Russian people. The very conditions of their lives make the workers capable of struggle and impel them to struggle. Capital concentrates the workers in great masses in big cities, cohering them together, teaching them to act in conjunction. At every step the workers come face to face with their main enemy—the capitalist class. In combat with this enemy the worker becomes a Socialist, comes to realize the necessity of a complete reconstruction of the whole social structure, the complete abolition of all poverty and all oppression. Becoming Socialists the workers fight with self-abnegating courage against everything that stands in their path, first and foremost the tsarist regime and the feudal landlords.

The peasants too during the revolution entered the struggle against the landowners and against the government, but their struggle was much weaker. It is established that a majority of the factory workers (about three-fifths) took part in the revolutionary struggle, in strikes, while undoubtedly, only a minority of the peasants took a part: in all probability not more than one-fifth or one-fourth. The peasants fought less persistently, more disconnectedly, less politically, at times still pinning their hopes on the benignity of the tsar little-father. In 1905-06 the peasants, properly speaking, only gave the tsar and the landlords a bit of a fright. But frightening them is no use. They must be destroyed, their government—the tsarist government—must be wiped off the face of the earth. Now Stolypin and the Black, landocratic Duma are trying to create new gentlemen farmers from the ranks of the rich peasants, to be the allies of the tsar and the Black-Hundred. But the more the tsar and the Duma help the rich peasants to ruin the mass of the peasantry, the more apperceptive does this mass become, the less faith will it preserve in the tsar, the faith of feudal slaves, the faith of benighted and ignorant people. Each year that passes swells the ranks of the agricultural labourers in the countryside, they have nowhere to seek salvation except in an alliance with the urban workers for joint action. Each year that passes fills the countryside with ruined peasants, utterly destitute, driven to desperation by hunger. When the urban proletariat rises again, millions upon millions of these peasants will throw themselves into the struggle against the tsar and the landowners with greater determination and solidarity.

The bourgeois liberals too took part in the revolution, i.e., the liberal landowners, industrialists, lawyers, professors, etc. They constitute the party of "people's freedom" (the Constitutional Democrats or Cadets). They were lavish in their promises to the people and made a lot of noise about freedom in their newspapers. They had a majority in the First and Second Dumas. They held out a promise of gaining freedom by "peaceful means," they deprecated the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants. The peasants and many of the peasant deputies ("Trudoviks") believed these promises and followed humbly and obediently at the heels
of the liberals, steering clear of the revolutionary struggle of the prole
tariat. This was the greatest mistake committed by the peasants (and a lot
of townfolk) during the revolution. With one hand, and at that very rare-
ly, the Liberals assisted the struggle for freedom while they kept offering
the other hand to the tsar, promising to preserve and strengthen his power,
to make peace between the peasants and the landlords, to “pacify” the
“turbulent” workers.

When the revolution came to the point of a pitched battle with the tsar,
the December uprising of 1905, the liberals in a body basely betrayed the
freedom of the people and recoiled from the struggle. The tsarist autocracy
took advantage of this betrayal of the people’s freedom by the liberals,
took advantage of the ignorance of the peasants who to a large extent be-
lieved the liberals and defeated the insurgent workers. And when the prole-
tariat was defeated no Dumas, no blandishments and fair promises of the
Cadets could hold back the tsar from abolishing all the vestiges of freedom
and restoring the suzerainty and despotic power of the feudal landlords.

The liberals found themselves deceived. The peasants have re-
ceived a severe, but useful lesson. There will be no freedom in Russia as
long as the broad masses of the people believe in the liberals, believe in the
possibility of “peace” with the tsarist regime and stand aloof from the
revolutionary struggle of the workers. No power on earth can hold back
the advent of freedom in Russia when the mass of the urban proletariat
rises in struggle, brushes aside the wavering and treacherous liberals,
enlists under its banner the rural labourers and impoverished peasantry.

And that the proletariat of Russia will rise in such a struggle, that it
will take the lead in the revolution again is warranted by the whole econom-
ic situation of Russia, all the experience of the revolutionary years.

Five years ago the proletariat dealt the first blow to the tsarist autoc-
cracy. The first rays of freedom gleamed for the Russian people. Now the
tsarist autocracy has been restored to its old self, the feudal lords are
reigning and ruling again, the workers and peasants are everywhere being
crushed down again, everywhere the Asiatic despotism of the authorities
and infamous maltreatment of the people. But these hard lessons will
not have been in vain. The Russian people are not what they were prior
to 1905. The proletariat has taught them to fight. The proletariat will
bring them to victory.

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