

Eight Hours & a Gun

Revolutionary Russia, 1904-1905



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For Eide

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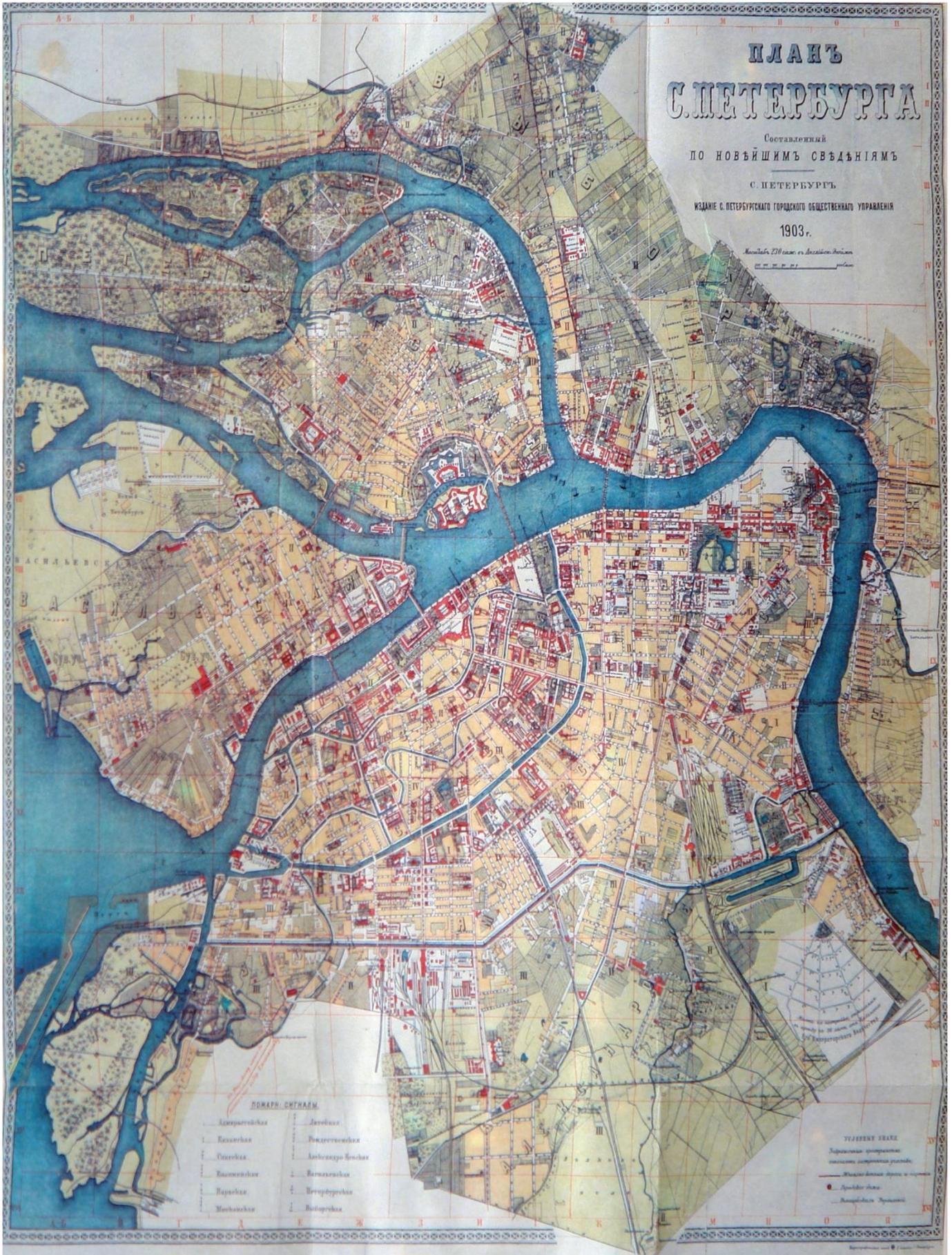
Maps

The Russian empire

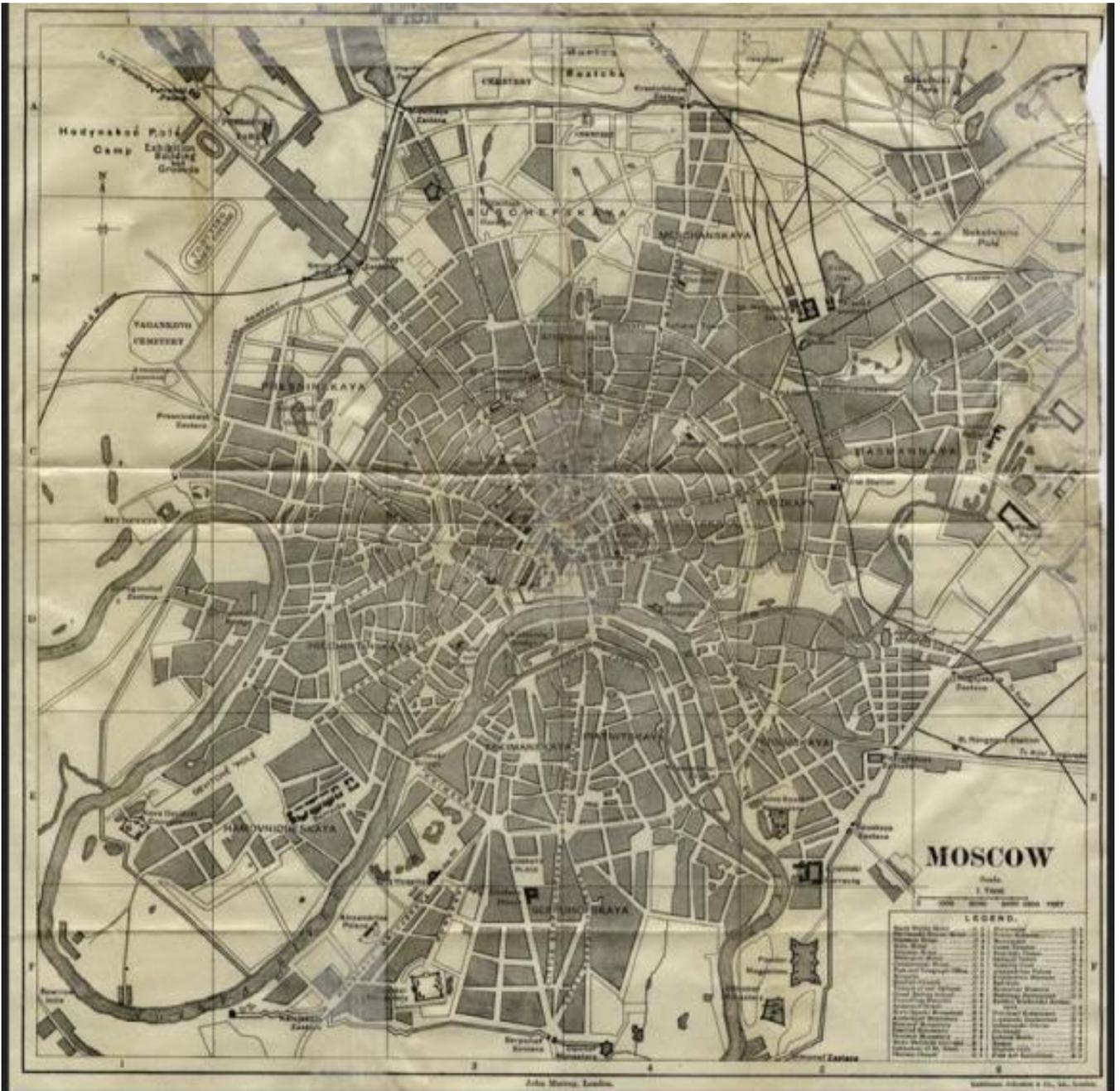


European Russia





Moscow



Abbreviations

Bund	General Jewish Workers' Union in Russia, Poland and Lithuania
CC	Central Committee
EC	Executive Committee
GOT	Emancipation of Labour Group
Kadets	Constitutional Democratic Party
LSDP	Lithuanian Social-Democratic Party
LSDSP	Latvian Social-Democratic Workers' Party
PPS	Polish Socialist Party
Proletariat	Social Revolutionary Party Proletariat
RPU	Revolutionary Ukrainian Party
RSDRP	All-Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party
SAV	Finnish Active Resistance Party
SD	Social-Democrat, Social-Democratic
SDKPiL	Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania
SPD	Social-Democratic Party of Germany
Spilka	Ukrainian Social-Democratic Union
SR	Social Revolutionary
SSDP	Finnish Social Democratic Party
USDRP	Ukrainian Social-Democratic Workers' Party
VPSR	All-Russian Party of Socialist Revolutionaries

Preface

This book continues the analysis of *Building the Old Bolsheviks, 1881-1903*, and traces the complex and contradictory history of revolutionary socialist organisations in the Russian empire from 1904 to 1905, and early 1906,, but it focuses on the factional struggle in the All-Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDRP). It aims to answer four main questions. Why were the RSDRP in Russia and abroad unprepared for the events of 1904? Why were they both taken by surprise by Bloody Sunday in January 1905? Why did they take so long to catch up with events? Why was the Moscow rising defeated?

Building the Old Bolsheviks demonstrated that the RSDRP organisations at home and abroad were dominated by *intelligenty*. A male *intelligent* and female *intelligentka* had a secondary education, and many had a higher education. A *praktik* was a practical underground worker, and though some were intelligenty and intelligentki, most *praktiki* and *rabochy-intelligenty* (worker intellectuals) had a primary education at best. Some intelligenty (a category which includes both males and females) appeared in *Building the Old Bolsheviks*, so most of the information about their activities up to the end of 1903 will not be repeated here. Others will appear in this book, often with the barest biographical detail; and many will disappear into emigration, prison, deportation or exile, often without trial; and since it often reached 50 below in Yakutsk in north eastern Siberia, where many Jewish *gosudarstvennyye prestupniki* (state criminals) were sent, it was often a death sentence. Survivors will often reappear after they escaped, completed their sentences or returned from emigration, and while some gave up the struggle, and others focused on winning small reforms, a minority risked working underground again.

The names of a few of the intelligenty who joined the RSDRP before 1904 are often the only ones known to most Anglophones and Francophones, and *Building the Old Bolsheviks* demonstrated that almost all of them came from comfortably-off or wealthy families. Some became émigrés, though many of those who stayed in Russia died in prison or exile, or were killed during the 1905 and 1917 revolutions, the civil war of 1918-1921, the purges of the later 1930s or the war of 1939-1945. I have tried not to let the comparatively rich sources for the usual intelligenty suspects dominate my account, yet archivists, editors and publishers in the Stalinist era were able to control which surviving autobiographies and biographies, or which parts of them, were made available for translation. For example, even the works of ‘Lenin’ remain incomplete and chronologically jumbled. Dozens of works by ‘Trotsky’ have appeared, yet his autobiography ignores *praktiki* and mentions key intelligenty like Leonid Krasin (‘Nikitich’) and Alexandr Malinovsky (‘Bogdanov’), the other two members of the early *troika* with ‘Lenin’, only in passing. Some of Malinovsky’s works have been translated into English in recent years, though few by Luly Tsederbaum and other male Menshevik intelligenty, and fewer by Nadezhda Krupskaya and other Bolshevik and Menshevik intelligentki. Hardly any western academics or revolutionaries have translated full-length autobiographies or biographies of *praktiki* or *rabochy-intelligenty*, though they sometimes translate sentences and phrases that suit their ideological perspective. It is unclear how many of these translated autobiographies and biographies were based on original manuscripts, and, if they were, whether they survive and whether the translations have been carefully checked recently. Consequently, a huge amount of translation work remains to be done; but before that can happen Westerners who know Russian and write about the early Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and other social democrats (SDs) will have to challenge their conservative craft attitude and their self-appointed status as gatekeepers.

Another difficulty is that almost no western academics who know Russian have had any practical involvement in a revolutionary organisation, and the few revolutionaries who know Russian have just as ‘top down’ a perspective. They all tend to focus on a handful of well-known intelligenty and intelligentki and marginalise most others, though this book will challenge the haters of the devils ‘Trotsky’, ‘Lenin’ and ‘Stalin’, and the worshippers of saints Lev, Vladimir and Joseb. To avoid the bewildering multiplicity of *klitchki* (underground pseudonyms), this book uses transliterations of their given and family names whenever possible. For example, Joseb Jughashvili did not sign himself ‘Stalin’ in print until late 1912. Late in 1902 Krupskaya greeted Lev Bronstein as ‘Piero’ in London, though he had reportedly used the passport of an Irkutsk man called Trotsky when he escaped from Siberia. In summer 1901 a letter from ‘Lenin’ arrived at the *Iskra* press in Munich, though nobody realised it was Vladimir Ulyanov’s *klitchka*, though he had at least 160 other *klitchki* before and after that.

This book is implicitly critical of western writers about Russia, though I have not engaged with academic or sectarian squabbles. None of the thousand or more works I have read are 100 percent reliable, so I use terms such as ‘according to’ and ‘reportedly’ to indicate my many misgivings; and while I include some information from the internet, for want of anything better, it comes with the usual health warning.

The reader does not need to be able to read Russian, or what Anglophones call Belarussian, Estonian, Finnish, Georgian, German, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Ukrainian, Yiddish or any of the 170 or so other languages spoken in the Russian empire, or to have a detailed knowledge of Russian geography, history or culture; but since the tsar and his ministers sought to 'Russify' the names of cities in subject nations, this book uses the names favoured by the majority of their inhabitants. The capital of what Anglophones know as Finland was Helsingki, not Helsinki or Helsingfors, that of Estonia was Tallinn, not Reval, that of Latvia was Riga, not Riga, that of Lithuania was Vilnius, not Vilna or Vilno, that of Poland was Warszawa, not Warsaw, that of Ukraine was Kyiv, not Kiev, that of Georgia was Tbilisi, not Tiflis, and that of Azerbaijan was Baki, not Baku.

This book travels across much of Western Europe, following the political refugees who relied on the few states that would take them in. The Finnish authorities resisted Russian attempts to extradite political suspects as long as they could, and British law stipulated that 'fugitives' should 'never be surrendered for extradition if their crimes were of a political character', though the 1905 Aliens Act tightened the rules. The Swiss authorities resisted deporting foreigners charged with a political crime, and the French authorities also gave limited sanctuary to political refugees.

This book uses the Russian calendar, which was 12 days behind the Western calendar until 1900, then 13 days behind until 1918, though it gives both dates where there is potential confusion; and it converts Russian weights, measurements and distances to metric quantities, to make them intelligible to western readers.

Revolutionary socialists have often asserted that revolutions come from 'below', though hardly any western writers have seriously considered the possibility that revolutionary socialist workers in Russia, or anywhere else, are the real leaders most of the time. The author of this book is a retired academic with 25 years' experience in a revolutionary socialist organisation, and over 40 years as a trade union activist, and this book is based on Marx's premise that 'the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves'. I have also tried to follow Marx's mottos: 'doubt everything', 'ignorance never helped anybody' and 'go your own way and let people talk'; and I want to thank Eide O'Callaghan, Ian Birchall and Sebastian Budgen very warmly for their support.

Introduction

Building the Old Bolsheviks argued that after the Russian army's humiliating defeat in the Crimean War, the autocracy's modernisation policies were intended to allow Russia to compete with rival Western European powers, militarily and economically, though they had important unintended consequences.

The policy of industrialisation came at the expense of the peasantry, yet there was no peasant rising after a handful of self-appointed social-revolutionary intelligenty organised a tiny group of mainly non-intelligent socialist-revolutionaries (SRs) to assassinate the tsar in 1881. The new tsar strengthened Otdeleniye po Okhraneniyu Obshchestvennoy Bezopasnosti i Poryadka (the Department of Public Safety and Order, or Okhrana), whose gendarmes (the political police), along with the ordinary police, spies, informers and infiltrators, conducted in a massive security clamp-down.

The policy of expanding the number of universities and higher technical institutes to train professionals and administrators for local authorities and industry exposed a cohort of young male intelligenty, mainly from modestly-off families, to the problem of surviving financially often well away from home, and the repression of students' mutual aid organisations and peaceful demonstrations by the police and military led to confrontations which radicalised a tiny minority. Women secondary school graduates were not allowed to take degrees, and the higher courses for women were few and far between, and most were temporarily or permanently closed; yet a tiny minority of those who did attend them, or got degrees from foreign universities, were radicalised, and supported male students' struggles; and a few later taught workers at legal evening schools.

The policy of expanding primary education was intended to achieve a literate industrial workforce. Many peasant households had insufficient land to support all their members, and were weighed down by taxes and redemption payments to the government for their land, and many literate young male and female peasants used the expanding railway network to travel to the few large urban industrial centres and regions to work in factories, some of which were technically in advance of many of those in Western Europe, since only the newest were imported. Industrial workers' conditions varied from poor to life-threatening, and when police, gendarmes and troops repressed their economic struggles, they politicised a minority. The policy of punishing the minorities of radicalised workers and intelligenty in prison, deportation and exile, encouraged contacts between them, yet the SDs' ideas were often contradictory, not least because of the continued influence of SR ideas.

The policy of clamping down on the importation of western liberal, SR, reformist socialist and SD literature had not stopped in the relatively liberal early 1860s. Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* Volume I was translated into Russian in 1872, and the censors passed it because they felt that its analysis and conclusions did not apply to overwhelmingly peasant Russia. More works by Western European liberals, radicals and utopian and revolutionary socialists, including some by Marx, Friedrich Engels and German SDs, were smuggled in during the 1870s, mainly by Jewish praktiki in the western provinces of the Pale. They passed them to Jewish SD intelligenty, especially those in Vilnius, and they supplied some Russian intelligenty in central European Russian cities, particularly those in St. Petersburg. Most of these works required a knowledge of German or French, so only intelligenty with one or both of those languages learned some, but by no means all, of the latest western SD ideas. A few taught their incomplete understanding of those ideas to *kruzhki* (clandestine study circles) of other intelligenty. After 1881 a tiny handful of former SR terrorists in Switzerland struggled to apply some SD ideas based on Western European conditions to Russia. They believed that Marx's stress on the centrality of workers in the revolutionary process could not yet be applied directly, since Russia had no sizeable working class or politically-powerful bourgeoisie; and this, together with the residue of their SR traditions and their uneven access to recent Western European SD literature, led them to produce a rather mechanical form of 'Russian Marxism'. Later in the 1880s they formed the Gruppya Osvobozhdenie Truda (the Emancipation of Labour Group, or GOT), and contacted a tiny kruzhok of St. Petersburg students who propagandised a few illegal workers' kruzhki. GOT publications were smuggled into Russia and became increasingly influential among SD intelligenty; yet year by year the émigrés' lack of first-hand knowledge about the cultural, economic and political consequences of industrialisation, their reliance on liberal Western and legal Russian newspapers and on information provided by intelligenty correspondents and occasional visitors, hampered their ability to produce an adequate SD perspective for Russia.

In the early 1890s the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) adopted the radical reformist Erfurter Programm, and in the mid-1890s it influenced a tiny number of intelligenty who liaised with a network of skilled and politicised engineers and a few textile workers in St. Petersburg. It is unclear how much influence the intelligenty's propaganda and agitation had on the mass strikes in the city, and in a few other major industrial centres, in 1896 and in 1897, let alone in the Pale, where there were no large-scale industries anywhere but Poland;

yet in 1897 Jewish SD intelligenty organised אגלגעמיינער יידישער אַרבעטער בונד אין ליטע פּוילין און רוסלאַ (the General Jewish Workers' Union in Russia and Poland, or Bund). In 1898 a handful of Bundist intelligenty played a decisive part in founding Rossyskaya Sotsial-Demokraticheskaya Partya, (the All-Russian Social-Democratic Party), along with an even tinier number of self-appointed Russian SD intelligenty, though most were soon imprisoned. The two survivors arbitrarily changed the RSDP's name to Rossyskaya Sotsial-Demokraticheskaya Rabochaya Partya (the All-Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, or RSDRP), and allowed a rightward moving 'legal Marxist' – who accepted a few of Marx's ideas, but rejected others, and evidently took no part in illegal activity - to write its programme, which the Bundist intelligenty did not like, though they had copies printed.

Meanwhile, the Okhrana had become increasingly effective, and many SD workers and intelligenty had been imprisoned, deported or exiled without trial. In 1899 an exiled St. Petersburg SD intelligent in Siberia came up with the idea that Russia's working class included both industrial proletarians and 'semi-proletarian' peasants. He planned an émigré 'centre' to produce an SD paper *for* workers to be smuggled into Russia. He was influenced by the Erfurter Program, though some SPD leaders, and especially full-time party officials and trade union bureaucrats who had become deputies in the Reichstag (parliament) or a Landtag (a regional assembly), were impressed by the very modest reforms they had managed to achieve legally, and they had begun to reject key elements of Marx's analysis. This 'revisionism' fuelled reformism among a few pessimistic émigré Russian SD intelligenty, which they exported to intelligenty in Russia, who often remained partly hegemonised by some SR ideas and 'Russian Marxism'.

After a few of the former St. Petersburg SD intelligenty were freed from Siberia, early in 1901, a tiny number stayed in Russia and monopolised contacts with the émigré 'centre' in Switzerland. Between them they organised a smuggling operation to two army doctors in Russia, serviced by a tiny number of praktiki, to distribute the émigré's newspaper *Iskra* (*The Spark*). Almost all local RSDRP organisations included no workers, and hardly any allowed more than one or two rabochy-intelligenty to lead a few basic workers' kruzhenki. Meanwhile, because of tsarist oppression, many Polish socialist intelligenty had become revolutionary nationalists, and Bundist intelligenty favoured a federal organisation for the RSDRP.

In 1902 *Iskra's* émigré 'centre' worked hard to marginalise other émigré RSDRP intelligenty, and exhorted intelligenty agents in Russia to win, split or duplicate local organisations, by fair means or foul. They aimed to form an *Iskra*-dominated organising committee which would ensure the appointment of *Iskra* delegates to the RSDRP's Second Congress, and their rivals used the same methods.

Early in 1903 two émigré SD intelligenty ignored an *Iskra* agent's grossly immoral conduct and alienated two of the paper's main financiers and other influential émigrés. Hardly any émigrés exhorted agents in Russia to help workers become Congress delegates, and most evidently made no effort at all, since only three arrived in Geneva, and there were no intelligenty delegates from several local committees, since the *Iskra*-dominated organising committee had decided, in several cases wrongly, that the organisations were inoperative or insufficiently large. Congress delegates met in Brussels, and then London, where those from SD parties affiliated to the RSDRP, but not directly associated with the *Iskra* network, insisted on their federalist or nationalist agendas, but lost the votes, and after they left the *Iskra* contingent split on 'democratic centralism' - how tightly the RSDRP's intelligenty émigré 'centre' should control the organisation in Russia and what the obligations of members should be. One group which wanted a tight, centralised structure, led from abroad, won most of the remaining key votes and called themselves the 'majority', while the other group wanted a looser organisation and accepted the name of the 'minority'.

All the émigré intelligenty relied heavily on liberal Western European and legal Russian newspapers, and a few intelligenty visitors and letters, for much of their information about Russia. The émigré 'minority' intelligenty controlled *Iskra*, the leading Party Council, the émigré part of the Central Committee, the funds and many of the contacts in Russia. Both émigré groups exported their perspectives to a handful of intelligenty in Russia, and by the end of 1903 the émigrés had hardened into 'Bolshevik' and 'Menshevik' ('majoritarian' and 'minoritarian') factions, just as Russia's fragile economy and autocracy's imperialist policy was making it highly vulnerable.

1. A little, victorious war to stem the tide of revolution

(i) The end of the world-wide slump

During 1903 the Russian finance minister encouraged further industrialisation.¹ The government invested 265 million rubles in railways,² and guaranteed rail-making firms at least 20 percent profit to encourage inward investment.³ In 12 years it had paid for over 27,000km,⁴ and the network now covered 60,000km.⁵ During 1903 pig-iron production accounted for 99 percent of domestic demand,⁶ and half of it - 2.9 million tonnes – was made in the south,⁷ yet a quarter was unsold at the end of the year.⁸ Production at the privately-owned Luzovka works had halved,⁹ and annual production had fallen from half a million tonnes since 1900.

Most industrial enterprises were privately owned, but many depended on government orders, and 85 plants in St. Petersburg sold it almost 60 million of their 73 million rubles' worth of production, though national locomotive production had fallen from 1,225 to 922 since 1901.¹⁰ During 1903 the government encouraged industrial cartels, and 11 manufacturers controlled the Prodvagon railway wagon cartel,¹¹ while the Prodamenta iron and steel cartel had raised its prices.¹² Foreigners had invested 828 million rubles in Russian industry, making a total of 1.02 billion, and owned 45 percent of joint-stock capital and 85 percent of investment in the oil industry in Caucasia,¹³ while almost 25,000 tonnes of coal had been imported at Black Sea ports.¹⁴ In three years entrepreneurs had closed around 3,000 factories, sacked 100,000 workers and slashed the pay of the rest,¹⁵ while many had replaced men with women and children, since they were deemed 'more stable and tranquil' and could be paid less.¹⁶ The economy was umbilically linked to the world's capitalist markets, though the three-year economic slump was ending,¹⁷

Factory inspectors' reports were published for the first time in 17 years, but for 1901, not 1903, and only in summary.¹⁸ They omitted workers in mines, small factories and workshops and on the railways.¹⁹ Almost half of the 1.64 million inspected workers were in workforces of over 500,²⁰ while over half a million of the 2.8 million factory, railway and mineworkers were in workforces of over 1,000. Many plants in major centres were up-to-date,²¹ but workers were restive.

During 1903 the inspectors noted 55 strikes,²² involving 1,382 workforces and almost 87,000 workers, for a total of 445,000 days.²³ They included 31,000 metalworkers,²⁴ or 26 percent of the national total, and six percent of those in St. Petersburg,²⁵ plus 19,000 textile workers,²⁶ including ten percent of all cotton workers and 21 percent of those in the capital.²⁷ Thirty-one percent of strikes ended in victory, 18 percent in compromise and 51 percent in defeat.²⁸ In reality, at least 2,224 strikes had involved 363,000 inspected and uninspected workers,²⁹ including 200,000 in the south, and the proportion of strikers that inspectors deemed 'political' had risen to 53 percent.³⁰

Officially the justice ministry dealt with 5,590 'state criminals' during 1903, but sent 28 to civic courts. Gendarmes prosecuted 6,400 on behalf of the tsar,³¹ and military courts tried 45. Between them they exiled 910 to Siberia, deported 592 elsewhere and expelled 31 foreigners, while the police held 845 in preliminary detention, pending trial, 282 in prison and had 1,268 under surveillance.³² In reality there were at 1,755 political suspects in detention, 4,661 under surveillance, and 1,739 state criminals in prison,³³ of whom 60 percent were workers;³⁴ while 170 of those convicted had been sent to northern Siberia.³⁵ In reality at least 470 were sent to eastern Siberia, two-fifths were intelligently and one-sixth were women. The proportion of nobles charged with political offences had fallen by two-thirds since the 1880s, while that of the urban bourgeoisie had risen by almost three-quarters, and those involved in industry and commerce had tripled.³⁶ The government had banned corporal punishment,³⁷ yet the governor of Ekaterinburg prison in eastern Siberia had had prisoners flogged to death, and very unusually, he was jailed for three years for torture, embezzlement and forgery.³⁸

At the end of 1903 a quarter of the empire's population,³⁹ in 23 of the 50 European provinces and one Siberian province, lived under one form or another of martial law.⁴⁰ The government had established a rural police force,⁴¹ though each policeman was responsible for an average of around 2,600 people. The government had deployed 40,000 *strazhniki* (guardsmen),⁴² and mobilised 160,000 peasant troops to deal with 427 disturbances,⁴³ though there had been 141 officially-recorded cases of serious peasant unrest.⁴⁴

The government had recovered 8.5 million of the 259 million rubles it had spent on food and seed-grain for starving peasants in 1891-1892,⁴⁵ and its annual budget surplus amounted to 500 million rubles, though its foreign debts totalled around 4.2 billion.⁴⁶ French banks had invested 6.8 billion francs in Russian industry,⁴⁷ but stopped lending to the government, hoping to encourage the tsar to negotiate a peace treaty with Japan,⁴⁸ yet the tsar had imperial ambitions in the Far East.

(ii) Rule the East

In 1860 the tsar had called the new navy base on the Sea of Japan at Vladivostok (Rule the East), though the harbour was iced-up for up to four months a year and enemy warships would be able to blockade the narrow entrance.⁴⁹ In 1874 the tsar decreed that almost all men had to serve in the armed forces for six years, and though those with degrees would serve six months less and graduates from gymnasia (elite secondary schools) 18 months less, though peasants who sought to evade service by cutting off their shooting finger would be sent to a military prison or punishment battalion. Conscripts received three uniforms, a greatcoat, a knapsack and leather to make their boots, though they had to bring underwear and soap, and they slept on a straw mattress in a wooden bunk, covered by their greatcoats. Their daily ration was 1.36 kilos of bread and 0.45 kilos of meat, and they had bread for breakfast, cabbage soup with meat for their midday meal and porridge made of buckwheat or another cereal for supper. They could not enter theatres or restaurants, use the front doors of private houses, smoke in public places, ride in trams or in first or second class railway coaches, and signs at the entrances to parks read 'DOGS AND SOLDIERS FORBIDDEN TO ENTER'.⁵⁰

In 1875 the government negotiated access to ice-free ports in Korea,⁵¹ and acquired the resource-rich Pacific island of Sakhalin from a reluctant Japanese emperor,⁵² though Prussian officers were training his army.⁵³ The tsar was assassinated in 1881, but the new tsar approved the construction of 36 battleships in 1882.⁵⁴ In 1890, when he visited Japan, he entered a temple strictly forbidden to foreigners, and a samurai hit him hard on the head.⁵⁵ He privately described the Japanese as 'macaques' (short-tailed monkeys).⁵⁶ In 1891 he announced the construction of the Trans-Siberian railway from Moscow to the Pacific coast, mainly for military purposes.⁵⁷ The army conscripted less than one percent of peasants each year,⁵⁸ though from 1883 to 1893 5.34 million were deemed unfit for service,⁵⁹ and the tsar died of liver disease caused by alcoholism in 1894.⁶⁰

In 1895 the Japanese army defeated the Chinese army and annexed the Liaotung peninsula,⁶¹ which included the ice-free deep-water port of Lüshun.⁶² The tsar subsequently supported a coup against the Japanese-backed Korean government,⁶³ and the Russian, French and German governments made the Japanese return the peninsula to China.⁶⁴ The Russian government guaranteed a Chinese loan,⁶⁵ and in 1897 it forced the emperor to lease the peninsula for 25 years,⁶⁶ and agree to a Russian railway from Chita in eastern Siberia to Vladivostok. The Chinese Eastern Railway cut 600km from the route,⁶⁷ and the Russians began an 880km line from Harbin to Lüshun, which they called 'Port Arthur'. The navy built a dry dock for battleships at Vladivostok,⁶⁸ and a coaling station for the Pacific fleet.⁶⁹ The navy sent an icebreaker, and the tsar approved the construction of eight battleships and several cruisers and destroyers.⁷⁰ German troops seized the port of Qingdao, which they called 'Tsingtao',⁷¹ and forced the Japanese emperor to grant a 99-year lease. By 1899 Russian steam-powered warships had solved the ice problem at Vladivostok and others were stationed at Port Arthur.⁷²

In 1900 the Russian army budget was ten times that of the education ministry, and the navy's was more than that of the justice ministry and agriculture ministry combined,⁷³ but the war ministry had no systematic contact with other ministries. The army was inferior to those in Western Europe, while the navy's 'backward state' was 'more marked'. The promotion of officers depended on favouritism and they treated troops cruelly. Their food was bad, and waste, thefts and embezzlement were common.⁷⁴ When Chinese peasants attacked the Chinese Eastern Railway, Russian troops lost control of a large part of the southern section,⁷⁵ so over 100,000 were sent to relieve the siege of Harbin, and they occupied three provinces.⁷⁶ By autumn 170,000 peasant troops controlled the region,⁷⁷ but in the seven years to 1901 7.02 million peasant conscripts had been deemed unfit for service.⁷⁸ In January 1902 the Japanese emperor signed a treaty which obliged the British government to send troops if any country joined Russia in declaring war.⁷⁹ The British government told the tsar to withdraw troops from Manchuria,⁸⁰ and he promised a three-stage withdrawal by the end of the following year, but he strengthened the Pacific fleet.⁸¹ In five years the Russian government had spent 1.14 billion rubles in the Far East.⁸²

The Russian army budget for 1903 was around 360 million rubles and the navy's 140 million. The 125,000 troops in the Far East had around 175 rapid-fire field guns and eight machine guns, though many units lacked telegraphs and telephones, and some lacked binoculars, telescopes and range-finders. Few generals had seen combat since 1878, and their average age was 70, while half of the corps commanders were in their 60s.⁸³ Senior officers wore white uniforms and carried sabres, but their maps were out of date and some had 'blank patches', while their intelligence was completely inadequate. Most infantrymen were illiterate and some did not speak Russian. They had had no proper training and their boots were 'totally unfitted for their purpose'. They had no up-to-date equipment, camouflage or mountain guns, and some mortars blew up in their faces,⁸⁴ while the Tula armoury south of Moscow had only just begun to make machine guns under licence from the British firm of Vickers.⁸⁵

In May the tsar ordered the exclusion of all foreign influence from Manchuria and the rapid strengthening of his Far East forces, and in June the Japanese emperor agreed with his ministers that, if necessary, there would have to

be a war. The Japanese infantry outnumbered Russia's by 156 battalions to 100, and their artillery batteries by 106 to 30, though the Russians had 75 cavalry squadrons to Japan's 54. Most of Japan's six battleships, ten cruisers, 40 destroyers and 40 smaller warships had been built in Britain, and were of a superior quality to the Russians', while their literate Japanese crews had been trained by British officers. Russia's Pacific fleet varied considerably in quality, and most sailors were illiterate.⁸⁶ Japanese warships had better armour, and their guns could fire three times as much shell by weight, with 15 times as much explosive power.⁸⁷ The Russians had seven battleships,⁸⁸ though they had gone unrepaired, their supplies were insufficient, manoeuvres had not taken place, to avoid wear and tear,⁸⁹ and they rarely went to sea to train the gunners, to save ammunition. Many admirals were from the days of sail and had paid little attention to steam technology. Most crews got acquainted with their ships, and often with their duties, on their first voyage,⁹⁰ and officers had to use lanyard technology, not telescopic sights. New warships fired their guns below deck only in calm weather, to avoid capsizing, while government money for shells 'flowed in a broad stream into the pockets of contractors and joint-stock companies, Russian as well as foreign'.⁹¹

Russian soldiers were not allowed to ride in private or a public carriages, enter a first or second class railway carriages, sit in theatre stalls or lower than the third row of the balcony, or enter restaurants or cafés, apart from railway and steamer buffets. On warships they had to live in the bow of a lower deck. Their pay was negligible and they lived on soup, tea and black bread.⁹² Around 23,000 were in Russian garrisons, 30,000 were railway frontier guards and 80,000 were stationed east of Lake Baikal in Western Siberia.⁹³ The 9,300km Trans-Siberian line had opened,⁹⁴ and had reportedly cost over a billion rubles;⁹⁵ yet it was single-track and had unusually light rails, sharp curves and steep gradients,⁹⁶ and speeds over many sections were limited to 10km an hour.⁹⁷

Late in January 1904 the tsar placed parts of the Trans-Siberian line and much of Eastern Siberia and the Far East under martial law,⁹⁸ and at least one general understood that the tsar wanted to control Persia, the Bosphorus, the Dardanelles, Tibet, Manchuria and Korea.⁹⁹ The interior minister reportedly told a critic that 'You are not familiar with Russia's internal situation. We need a little, victorious war to stem the tide of revolution'.¹⁰⁰ Around five million Jews, or half the world's Jewish population, lived in the Russian empire,¹⁰¹ and Jews and Latvians were among the first to be mobilised.¹⁰² Jews formed four percent of the population, but provided 5.7 percent of conscripts. They could achieve no higher rank than corporal and the family of a deserter was liable to a 300 ruble fine,¹⁰³ yet there had been unsuccessful attempts to prevent Jews from joining the army.¹⁰⁴ In spite of the government's notorious anti-semitism, an Odesa Jew had won the support of Jewish bankers in Paris, though a Jewish banker in New York had helped to raise enough to pay for three or four more Japanese battleships.¹⁰⁵

On 1 February the chief of the Japanese general staff asked the emperor for permission to go to war with Russia. He agreed on the 5th and severed diplomatic relations. The St. Petersburg attaché moved to Stockholm, but kept in touch with his agents in Russia. A Japanese admiral had sent 10 destroyers to Port Arthur, and on the 6th he sent 30 more, plus six battleships, 10 cruisers, and 40 torpedo boats. They attacked just before midnight on the 8th,¹⁰⁶ when the Russian fleet was at anchor outside the harbour and the vice-admiral was hosting a party onshore. One Russian battleship capsized, another was badly holed and a third was crippled. Next day the other four suffered severe damage,¹⁰⁷ at a cost of six Japanese dead and 45 wounded.¹⁰⁸ Four Japanese cruisers had gone to the Korean port of Chemulpo with 3,000 troops, and damaged two Russian warships so badly that their captains scuttled them,¹⁰⁹ and the tsar declared war.¹¹⁰

The Russian government's annual budget was over three times that of Japan,¹¹¹ and it committed 30 percent, or around two million rubles a day, to the war.¹¹² Japan's population was around 46.5 million, while Russia's was 130 million.¹¹³ The Russian army had one million men and 4.5 million reserves, while the Japanese had an army of 150,000 and 900,000 reserves.¹¹⁴ Theoretically Russia could field 3,000,000 troops, compared to Japan's 500,000;¹¹⁵ yet the Japanese got 150,000 soldiers to the Korean peninsula in 24 hours and soon had 320,000. There were reportedly 100,000 Russian troops in the Far East,¹¹⁶ yet the Trans-Siberian line could carry two supply trains,¹¹⁷ and two troop trains, a day,¹¹⁸ or around 35,000 troops a month.¹¹⁹ Lake Baikal was frozen and troops had to march 160km around it, carrying their equipment,¹²⁰ so the journey took five weeks. Some conscripts had received less than ten days' training, while many reservists did not understand modern tactics,¹²¹ and could not fire the new rifles and cannons.¹²² Some guns at Port Arthur were based on the 1867 model and others were made of brass. The field artillery was too heavy to move in rough terrain, and officers complained about the lack of shells and machine guns. In some regiments over half of the men's boots disintegrated in a fortnight, so they had to patch them with bark.¹²³

On 11 February, in Korea's Chemulpo Bay, a Russian cruiser and minelayer hit Japanese mines and sank.¹²⁴ The only competent Russian admiral,¹²⁵ and the former war minister, arrived in Port Arthur; but Japanese warships lured the fleet onto a minefield and the flagship sank with the loss of 635 men, including the admiral.¹²⁶ The autocracy was militarily, economically and politically vulnerable, yet Russian revolutionaries were in disarray.

(iii) Those who sit and those who are sat upon

The Central Committee (CC) of Vserossiyskaya partiya sotsialistov-revolutsionerov, (the All-Russian Party of Socialist- Revolutionaries, or VPSR), had dissociated itself from the assassination of the US president in autumn 1901, and announced that 'We repudiate terrorism in free countries, but in Russia where despotism excludes all possibility of an open political movement ... we are compelled to use the force of revolutionary truth against tyranny'.¹²⁷ During 1903 there were five police spies in VPSR organisations, but by the end of the year the VPSR had groups in Saratov in the Volga region, and Kyiv, Odesa and Katerynoslav in Ukraine. Others were developing in Orel, Kursk, Bryansk, Kherson, Azov and Kishinev, and new ones were being formed in Baki, Tbilisi, Astrakhan, Minsk, Vitebsk, Białystok and Perm, where they co-operated with Rossyskaya Sotsial-Demokraticheskaya Rabochaya Partya, (the All-Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, or RSDRP).

The peasants' union had recruited along the Volga,¹²⁸ and though Penza police had seized the VPSR press in autumn,¹²⁹ the teachers' union had 'ties' (firm links) with the 'most revolutionary' peasant 'Brotherhoods'. The Saratov province governor reported that poorly paid teachers were vulnerable to revolutionary propaganda and the Tambov province governor reported that 12 teachers were agitating peasants.¹³⁰ Police broke up the VPSR organisation in St. Petersburg,¹³¹ but sympathisers, especially Jews who had gone to the USA, sent tens of thousands of rubles.¹³² That year the VPSR had issued 395,000 items of printed propaganda,¹³³ though the 'intransigents' who focussed on terror had split away.¹³⁴ By early 1904 the governor of Moscow, the brother of the previous tsar, had recently resigned, but he was targeted by the VPSR combat organisation. On 17 February they blew him up in the Kremlin, and his fingers were found on a nearby rooftop.¹³⁵

Months after the split at its Second Congress, the RSDRP was in disarray, at home and abroad. In Geneva, over the winter of 1903-1904, the 53-year-old intelligent and former SR terrorist Pavel Axelrod, a co-founder of the émigré Gruppa Osvobozhdenie Truda, (the Emancipation of Labour Group, or GOT) supported the RSDRP Second Congress 'minority' and claimed that the 'majority' intelligenty who controlled the RSDRP's 'apparatus' in Russia had established 'section and department chiefs, officials in chancelleries, sergeant majors, non-commissioned officers, privates' and 'guards'.¹³⁶ What was needed were self-reliant, independent and responsible leaders who obeyed without being automata,¹³⁷ or they risked becoming 'cannon fodder'.¹³⁸ The 33-year-old émigré intelligent 'majority' leader, Vladimir Ulyanov, thought it 'the nastiest muck I've ever had to read in all our party literature'.¹³⁹

Karl Kautsky, the 49-year-old leading member of the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, (the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, or SPD), had recently argued that Russia was closer to revolution than Germany, since the autocracy could not rely on the peasantry or the peasant army. Early in 1904 he told Axelrod that Ulyanov was 'combining Bonapartist methods with a Nechaevan [terrorist] ruthlessness', and the 'majority' had 'a significantly more corruptive and confusing influence'.¹⁴⁰

During January the 27-year-old 'majority' supporter and Russian CC intelligentka Rozalia Zalkind toured committees, drumming up support for a Third Congress. She became St. Petersburg committee's organisational secretary, but made little progress with 'minority'-inclined workers. The organisation nominally numbered hundreds, yet work had ground to a halt.¹⁴¹ The rest of the CC opposed a Third Congress,¹⁴² and rejected Ulyanov's proposal to co-opt two more members, yet they remained dependent on the émigrés, and particularly on Ulyanov. 'We all implore the Old Man to give up his quarrel and begin work. We are waiting for leaflets, pamphlets, and all kind of advice'.¹⁴³

In Geneva the 30-year-old intelligent and 'minority' leader Iuly Tsederbaum wrote a 'Short Constitution of the All-Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party (Maximum Constitution of the 'Hards')' for *Iskra*.

1. The Party is divided into those who sit and those who are sat upon. *Note:* Groups and individuals who cannot sit nor wish to be sat upon are completely abolished.
2. In general, sitters are to sit. As for those who are sat upon, their main function is to be sat upon.
3. In the interests of centralism, the sitters shall enjoy varying degrees of trust. As for those who are sat upon, they are all equal in their rights.
4. To reward those who have sat, a Council is set up. The latter, though, can also sit independently.
5. This hierarchy is crowned by a Fifth, whose rights of sitting are limited only by the laws of nature.
6. The sitting of the Central Organ [*Iskra*] is maintained by measures of spiritual reasoning. In any case of resistance by those who have thus been brought to reason, they are handed over to the Central Committee.
7. Then the Central Committee *takes action*.
8. Those who are sat upon make contributions to the party treasury both for the expense of sitting and likewise for the purpose of propaganda.
9. In the fullness of time all party members, sitters and sat upon, will make a revolution. *Note:* From which obligation

those who have been sufficiently and completely sat upon are exempt. And they still say Russians are unable to express their thoughts succinctly. *Parlez-moi de ça!* [Tell me about it!].¹⁴⁴

Tsederbaum favoured 'peace at any price' between 'bourgeois Japan' and the Russian autocracy, and wanted neither to win.¹⁴⁵ 'We are international socialists, and *therefore* any political alliance of the socialists of our country with any *class state* whatever, we regard as betrayal of the cause of revolution'. He believed that many RSDRP intelligently in Russia supported the 'minority', and wanted them to 'exert political pressure on this or that political group which happens to clash with the autocracy in order to arouse it to a more energetic assertion of progressive demands or to push it along the road of a more radical and more democratic process'. The revolution 'existed already potentially in the thoughts and feelings of the broad masses of the people' and required 'only an outlet'.

[We] must concern ourselves with the arming of the masses moving towards the uprising, but we must not forget that underground organisations can do very little in this respect. None of their efforts will have much meaning if they are incapable of arming the people with one irreplaceable weapon – the burning necessity of attacking the autocracy and of arming itself for that. That is where we must direct our energies – towards a propaganda among the masses of self-arming for the aims of the uprising.

The RSDRP had 'not so much to "organise" a revolution as 'unleash' one,¹⁴⁶ though by Western European standards it was 'nothing more than an organisation of leaders of the proletarian struggle', and not of 'struggling proletarians'.¹⁴⁷ Tsederbaum denounced the 'state of siege' in the RSDRP in a pamphlet which he had printed by a private firm in Geneva on 6 February,¹⁴⁸ and other émigré RSDRP intelligent largely agreed.

Vladimir Makhnovets had joined the RSDRP in 1898. Early in 1904, in Geneva, the 31-year-old supported the 'majority' and criticised the 'minority' programme because it spoke 'only about material conditions', and saw proletarians as 'individual mute tools and implements' in a 'giant machine'. 'Consciousness within the movement of the proletariat' was 'the *essential precondition* of social revolution', and 'the condition of the working-class *can* improve *even* while capitalism still exists', so SDs should be 'as interested as trade unionists' in winning 'the maximum of what this system can give them'. He feared a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' would become 'a dictatorship of the revolutionary government over the proletariat', and oppositionist SDs would be branded 'not truly proletarian' and 'not conscious' by an 'enlightened despotism'. He argued that the idea of the 47-year-old former SR terrorist, Georgi Plekhanov, a co-founder of the GOT, '*salus revolutiae suprema lex ist*', meant 'the end justifies the means' and led to terrorism, but the proletariat needed 'a broadly democratic organisation of power' and 'a guarantee of non-intervention' in 'individual and social freedom'.¹⁴⁹

The wealthy 34-year-old émigré 'minority' intelligent Alexandr Potresov later recalled that the 'majority' had lost faith in the people, though they were 'an excellent instrument on which to play one's hero symphony'.¹⁵⁰ Plekhanov found it 'morally repugnant' to let 24-year-old 'minority' Jewish intelligent Lev Bronstein publish in *Iskra*, and threatened to resign, and the other editors excluded Bronstein.¹⁵¹

In Munich, late in 1903, almost 2250km from St. Petersburg, the 37-year-old intelligent Israel Helphand had previously agreed with Bronstein that capitalism's global development had lessened the political significance of nation states and was also convinced about the political effectiveness of mass strikes. Helphand generally supported the 'minority', and argued in *Iskra* that since competition for raw materials and markets would inevitably lead to a world war, the Russian proletariat would be 'the *avant-garde* of the social revolution' and 'shake the political foundations of the capitalist world'. Helphand told Axelrod that 'The fight against autocracy demands the unity of all the elements of opposition and the concentration of forces for an immediate political effect', yet the 'minority'-dominated émigré CC had lost direct contact with Russian workers and was like 'a motor without a fly-wheel', so *Iskra* should co-opt Ulyanov.¹⁵² Early in 1904 Helphand noted in *Iskra* that it was easier to get goods to New York than troops and munitions to Port Arthur, and foreign bankers required Russian victories before making further loans. He foresaw a 'government of workers' democracy' in Russia, led by SDs.¹⁵³ He edited the RSDRP journal *Zarya (Dawn)*, which targeted 'proletarian-sectarians' persecuted by the Orthodox Church, and used language they understood, calling capitalism 'the devil'.¹⁵⁴ Another émigré attacked Tsederbaum.

Petr Krasikov was born into a teacher's family in the city of Krasnoyarsk, central Siberia, in 1870. In 1892 he contacted the GOT in Switzerland, and was expelled from St. Petersburg University for revolutionary activity in 1893 and deported to Krasnoyarsk in 1894. He met Ulyanov in 1897, and by 1900 Krasikov was an RSDRP member and an *Iskra* agent in Pskov, 300km south west of St. Petersburg, near the Estonian border. By 1902 he was a member of the Second Congress organising committee, became a delegate, and was vice-chair at the Congress in summer 1903. By early 1904 he was a 'majority' supporter, and a member of the Russian CC's northern bureau,¹⁵⁵ but left

for Geneva,¹⁵⁶ where he published a pamphlet at the RSDRP press at 27 Rue de la Coulouvrenière, and called Tserdbaum's perspective a 'step towards opportunism'.¹⁵⁷ Ulyanov's writings attracted an intelligent to Geneva.

Nikolai Volsky was born into a family of Lithuanian heritage in Morshansk, Tambov province, central Russia, in 1879. He entered St. Petersburg Polytechnic in the 1890s, joined SR *kruzhki* and read works by Marx. Volsky was deported to Ufa in western Siberia for two years in 1898, and after he completed his sentence he attended Kyiv Polytechnic and resumed revolutionary activity. He read *Kapital*, and works by Plekhanov, the Zurich University professor Richard Avenarius and the Prague University professor Ernst Mach, and in 1902 he admired Ulyanov's pseudonymous pamphlet, *Chto delat?* (*What Is To Be Done?*) When Volsky attended a demonstration he received a near-fatal head wound, and was subsequently arrested several times.¹⁵⁸ In 1903, at another demonstration, police beat him and put him in prison. On his release, late that year, he met the 31-year-old RSDRP 'majority' intelligent Gleb Krzhizhanovsky, who feared Volsky would be re-arrested; so he gave him a letter written in invisible ink for Ulyanov, to be sewn into his coat hem, and sent him to Geneva via Austrian-controlled Galicia.

Early in 1904, in Geneva, Volsky argued with Plekhanov, and especially with Ulyanov, who was adamant that Marx and Engels had 'mapped out and said everything that needs to be said. If Marxism needs further development, then this can be done only in the direction indicated by its founders. Nothing in Marxism is subject to revision. There is only one answer to revisionism: smash its face in!' Volsky was alarmed at his 'savage intolerance' and his control of an organisation that evidently 'implicitly obeyed' him 'in everything'. Ulyanov thought Mach and Avenarius were 'worthless, confused, and idealistic', though Volsky later recalled that Ulyanov's 'shallow and puerile' notes 'reeked of primitive and vulgar materialism of the most naïve kind'. He showed 'no knowledge of any of the problems concerned', or of philosophy, and had no clarity about how we know what we know; and when Volsky accused him of not recognising the materialist assumptions of a book by 'Bogdanov', Ulyanov retorted that 'A man who builds his philosophy on sensation alone is beyond hope. He should be put away in a lunatic asylum'. 'Being a Marxist does not mean learning Marxist formulae by heart. A parrot can do that'.¹⁵⁹

After the RSDRP Party Council in Geneva refused to support a Third Congress,¹⁶⁰ Krzhizhanovsky offered his resignation from the Russian CC, but Ulyanov told the 31-year-old CC 'majority' intelligent Fridrik Lengnik to refuse it, and drafted a letter for him to send to Plekhanov, who had now joined the 'minority' and chaired Party Council. The letter complained about the appointment of the typographer Joseph Blumenfeld, who was in his late thirties and 'minority' supporter, as Party Council secretary, because he did not 'observe the rules of secrecy'. Days later Ulyanov drafted a letter for Lengnik to complain to the Russian CC about Party Council.

The three members passed resolutions legitimising (!) the editorial board's sending out its representatives separately from the [émigré] CC, and instructing the CC to give the editorial board literature in the amount required for distribution (!). That means giving it them for their own transportation and delivery, for they now send out one 'agent' after another, who *refuse* to execute commissions for the Central Committee.

If there was no Third Congress, then either the émigré CC should resign, or Ulyanov and Lengnik would do so unilaterally, because the *Iskra* editors were pushing the CC 'towards bankruptcy'.¹⁶¹ Ulyanov noted that Russian merchants and the millionaire-industrialists thought it was 'necessary to secure new marketing outlets for their goods and new ports in an unrestricted ice-free sea for the development of Russian trade';¹⁶² though he focussed on recruiting intelligenty.

Martyn Mandelshtam was born in 1872. He joined SR *kruzhki* in Moscow in 1891, and helped to found the intelligently-led 'workers' union' in 1893, but was arrested in 1895. Since he was a Jew he was exiled to Verkhoyansk in north east Siberia in 1897; but in 1902 he joined Saratov RSDRP committee and then emigrated in 1903. He attended the Second Congress, supported the 'majority' and by 1904 he was a émigré CC agent in Geneva.¹⁶³

The intelligentka Lidia Knipovich had been an SR until she became an SD in 1896, and by early 1904 the 48-year-old was a 'majority' supporter in Russia. Nadezhda Krupskaya, who had met Ulyanov in St. Petersburg and married him in exile, was now 35, sent Knipovich a letter from Geneva to tell her that *Iskra* was 'changing its line'.

[I]t turns out (!) that the editors were never in agreement with *What Is To Be Done?* and that the views there expressed are not the views of *Iskra*, but only those of Lenin ... If that be the case, why did they maintain silence all this time – what right had they to be silent? Trotsky's [Bronstein's] report (something absolutely absurd) and the minutes of the [émigré RSDRP] League have come out. Lenin and Lenin's ideas are being slandered on all sides.

The Minority are waiting for a *coup d'état* – they say with open cynicism that they are 'waiting for the first break in the ranks'.

Krupskaya evidently believed that 'majority' supporters in Russia were vulnerable to arrest and more became émigrés.¹⁶⁴

Panteleimon Lepeshinsky had been an SR, then became an SD in St. Petersburg, but was exiled to Siberia and married Olga Protopopova. By 1903 Lepeshinskaya studied at Geneva University, and Lepeshinsky escaped to join her late that year. By 1904 they were both in their mid-thirties and were 'majority' supporters,¹⁶⁵ though the intelligenty in Russia were still in disarray.

(iv) Down with the Autocracy!

During 1903 the RSDRP émigré intelligenty had supplied study guides and propagandists to smaller Russian committees. Virtually all their members were intelligenty, and usually included a secretary-organiser, a treasurer, a press manager, who was isolated to minimise the risk of infiltration, a propagandist, who was well-versed in Marxist theory and led workers' kruzhki, a main public speaker, a librarian, and someone responsible for reporting to the émigrés. In large committees there were often subcommittees for finance, activity in legal trades unions and co-operatives, producing false passports, finding safe rooms, writing and printing a local paper and leaflets. These posts were rotated every three months or so, when possible, and committees could co-opt. Printing took most of their funds, but while full-timers usually had to move after six months, to avoid arrest, their wages took most of the rest, so this left little to support comrades in jail and their dependents. A 'college' of propagandists wrote syllabi and acquired literature for workers' kruzhki, which were formed by age, sex, occupation, or by education or political experience. Basic kruzhki of six to 15 usually came from several workplaces for training in socialist theory, and read translations of pamphlets by Marx and Engels, illegal socialist papers and the RSDRP programme, reinforced by lectures and discussions. They met weekly, if possible, and more regularly in winter, and leaders fed selected graduates into kruzhki 'of the middle type', which studied the development of socialism, while 'higher circles' read works by Ulyanov, Plekhanov, Kautsky and Charles Darwin. Members of these kruzhki led seminars and gave reports, and the other members and the leader criticised them. Graduates were regarded as rabochy-intelligenty (worker intellectuals); but only if intelligenty were unavailable were they allowed to lead basic kruzhki.¹⁶⁶

In the Donbass region of Ukraine, in autumn 1903, a luzovka SD leaflet had demanded a constituent assembly and included the slogan, 'Down with the Autocracy'. The 51-year-old worker Petr Moiseenko recalled 'little difference' between supporters of the rival Second Congress groupings, and though recent recruit called Bondareva led workers' kruzhki which discussed the RSDRP programme and the SPD's Erfurter Programm, she later acknowledged that she understood neither, and she first heard about the Second Congress in jail, early in 1904.¹⁶⁷ The Donetsk mineworkers' union and Kyiv's RSDRP committee had called for the reinstatement of the former *Iskra* editors who had not been re-elected at the Second Congress, and Kharkiv committee declared its full solidarity with *Iskra*. So did the St. Petersburg, Moscow, Tula, Tver and Northern committees; though Saratov, Orlov, mid-Urals, Tomsk, Odesa, Katerynoslav committees, and the 'majority'-controlled Caucasian joint committee, supported all the Second Congress decisions and hoped for unity between the 'majority' and the 'minority'.¹⁶⁸

There were reportedly 3,250 SDs in Russia,¹⁶⁹ and though most members were workers, the small number of leading intelligenty were split, and several 'majority' supporters left Geneva for Russia. Mandelshtam went to Berlin to contact the SPD, Nikolai Bauman, who was 30, went to Moscow to try to establish 'majority' control of the Russian CC, Vladimir Bobrovsky, who was 30, went to work with the Caucasian joint committee, and Meir Wallach, who was 27, went to the German-Russian border to contact smugglers and organise the transport of literature to 'majority'-controlled organisations in Russia and help comrades cross both ways.¹⁷⁰ He considered himself an 'agent of the Central Committee for the Northwestern Region',¹⁷¹ and found that the 50 RSDRP workers in the major textile centre of Ivanovo in the industrial region around Moscow were 'quite miserable' and had insufficient literature.¹⁷² After the 44-year-old former St. Petersburg weaver and 'majority' rabochy-intelligent Fyodor Afanasev was released under surveillance, he went to Ivanovo, and, very unusually, he became an RSDRP committee secretary,¹⁷³ and a member of the Russian CC's regional centre.¹⁷⁴ He and Wallach formed 12 workers' kruzhki and linked them together,¹⁷⁵ and the émigré 'Majority' intelligenty continued recruiting like-minded intelligenty in Russia.

(v) Malinovsky and Lunacharsky

Alexandr Malinovsky was born in the village of Sokolko, Grodno province, in 1873. His mother was from a gentry family and his father was a schoolteacher.¹⁷⁶ When he became an inspector at a zemstvo (local authority) school in Tula, around 200km south of Moscow, the boys had access to the library and physics laboratory. Around 1883, after two younger brothers died, Alexandr stopped believing in god and developed a 'hatred for everything that destroys what is understandable, close and dear to us as life'.¹⁷⁷ He attended Yaroslavl gymnasium, 260km north east of

Moscow, though in 1886 he won a scholarship to Tula gymnasium as a boarder.¹⁷⁸ It felt like 'a barracks or a prison', and its 'malicious and obtuse authorities' taught him 'to hate rulers and deny all authority',¹⁷⁹ so he read works by revolutionary democrats,¹⁸⁰ and contacted SRs and SDs.¹⁸¹ In 1892 he was top of his class, so he won the gold medal, and entered Moscow University, but felt 'deeply alienated from official Russian society' and 'consumed by the quest for social ideals and aims'. He considered himself an SR, and led the *sovet* (council) of delegates from illegal *zemliachestva* (mutual aid associations). Late in 1894, after the *sovet* humiliated a professor who had praised the dead tsar, the police barred Malinovsky from university cities for three years. He returned to Tula, where the gunsmith Ivan Saveliev persuaded him to lead workers' *kruzhki*. By 1896 he considered himself an SD,¹⁸² and the young SD intelligent Pavel Skvortsov helped him to lead an arms workers' *kruzhok*.¹⁸³ Malinovsky believed that intelligently should write and distribute literature, while workers led practical activity,¹⁸⁴ and he noted that they tried to 'connect technical and economic phenomena with the forms of spiritual culture arising out of them'. He enrolled at Kharkiv University to study psychiatric medicine, but still attended Skvorstov's Tula *kruzhok*,¹⁸⁵ until it 'attributed absolute importance' to morality.¹⁸⁶ Late in 1897 he published his *kruzhok* lectures in Moscow as *Krasnii kurs ekonomicheskoi nauki* (*A Short Course of Economic Science*), as 'Bogdanov'.¹⁸⁷ The censors 'mutilated' much of it,¹⁸⁸ but left key arguments alone. He wanted to develop a 'science of ideas' to clarify and tackle issues relating to the subjective factor in history, and argued that 'Ideological forms arise out of the technical conditions of production and economic relations', 'influence technique and economics' and 'assist or lay the path for the development of production'. Philosophy, art, literature, religion and customs were 'instruments of organization' with material effects, though he doubted if a transformed ideological 'superstructure' could end exploitation and alienation unless 'old authoritarianism' ended first.¹⁸⁹ (Five years earlier Engels had noted privately that he and Marx believed the 'superstructure', or all the other aspects of society, acted on the economic 'base'.¹⁹⁰)

Ulyanov was an exile in Siberia and he reviewed the book by 'Bogdanov' for the liberal St. Petersburg periodical, *Mir bozhy*, (*God's World*), in 1898.¹⁹¹ He thought it 'by far the best' guide available, since it used 'only the terminology' of 'historical materialism' – the term used for Marxism to get around the censors - and his only 'trivial and hole-picking' criticisms were its marginalizing of agrarian capitalism, proletarianisation and urbanisation.¹⁹² He suspected 'Bogdanov' was Plekhanov,¹⁹³ and was 'extremely interested' in reading his next book.¹⁹⁴

In 1899 Malinovsky published a revised edition of his book in St. Petersburg,¹⁹⁵ in response to 'the demands of our workers for a general world view'. He rejected dialectics, and favoured a universally applicable historical perspective. He believed human knowledge was selective, incomplete, relative and causal,¹⁹⁶ and rejected Plekhanov's 'Russian Marxism'.¹⁹⁷ (In Siberia Ulyanov thought the book was 'very valuable'.)¹⁹⁸ Malinovsky joined the RSDRP,¹⁹⁹ and in autumn he graduated as a doctor of psychiatry, though he was briefly detained for conducting 'social propaganda amongst workers'. In spring 1900 he and the midwife Natalia Korsak, who was from a gentry family and also under surveillance, went to Kaluga, 120km south west of Moscow, and married.²⁰⁰ In autumn Malinovsky and the 24-year-old former Kyiv SD intelligent Anatoly Lunacharsky became 'close friends, since our philosophic ideas were very similar'. They 'found mutual enrichment in each other' and in SD intelligently *kruzhki*,²⁰¹ though late that year Malinovsky was deported to Vologda province, around 460km north of Moscow, under surveillance, for three years. Early in 1901,²⁰² he met the 26-year-old Kyiv intelligent Nikolai Berdyaev, who had been arrested after the RSDRP Second Congress, and had been deported for three years. He was now a Christian Socialist,²⁰³ but was unsure whether Christianity should become revolutionary or Marxism should become a religion.²⁰⁴ He found Malinovsky 'extremely sincere and utterly devoted to his ideas', though he was 'constantly engaged in finicky and sterile sophistry', while Malinovsky saw Berdyaev's idealist tendencies as a 'psychological abnormality'.²⁰⁵ In spring Malinovsky wrote to the *Iskra* editors Geneva.²⁰⁶ He offered to write 'for broad layers of the urban population', and enclosed sample material, and though Ulyanov wanted to alter it, he backed off after Malinovsky threatened to offer it to other socialists.²⁰⁷ Ulyanov begged him not to insist on 'tactless and inappropriate remarks' about the 'dictatorship by one member of the committee', but urged the 27-year-old 'majority' intelligent Vladimir Bonch-Bruевич to 'accelerate the appearance' of Malinovsky's article in Geneva.²⁰⁸

Malinovsky published *Poznanie s istoricheskoi tochki zrenenya* (*Cognition from an Historical Point of View*) in St. Petersburg. He saw knowledge as a biological, psychic and social phenomenon, adopted the term 'empiriocriticism' - Avenarius' term for favouring direct experience and jettisoning metaphysics - and referred to Mach, who wanted to eliminate metaphysics in favour of a 'monist' perspective - a single source for all things - and believed that the ego 'must be given up' in favour of the collective.²⁰⁹ Malinovsky's book was a direct challenge to the 35-year-old 'legal Marxist' academic, who he called not comrade, but 'Mr. Tugan-Baranovsky'.²¹⁰

In summer Lunacharsky was deported to Totma, 670km north east of Moscow, and put under surveillance, though he propagandised workers. Early in 1902 the police dropped the charges against him, and at Malinovsky's prompting, he returned to Vologda, met former Kyiv comrades and lived with Malinovsky and his wife and his sister Anna Malinovskaya.²¹¹ Lunacharsky published a book on 'positive aesthetics', aiming to combine empiriocriticism

and Marx, and emphasised the biological and physiological bases of aesthetic sensitivity.²¹² Malinovsky had become a zemstvo mental hospital doctor,²¹³ and edited articles arguing against idealism.²¹⁴ He quoted Mark on 'base' and 'superstructure', and found his 'historical monism' 'basically true', though Marx 'no longer fully satisfied' him, since 'In their struggle for existence men can unite only with the help of *consciousness*', and '*social life in all its manifestations is a consciously psychical life*', so '*Social being and social consciousness are, in the exact meaning of these terms, identical*'.²¹⁵ He argued that the basic social unit was the 'thinking individual',²¹⁶ and that society spontaneously eliminated its internal contradictions and strengthened harmonious relations, so an 'analysis of cooperative relations between social groups' would provide 'the basis for a study of general forms of knowledge' and 'an analysis of cooperation within individual groups' would provide 'the basis for the study of special ideological tendencies'.²¹⁷ Late that year he and Lunacharsky wrote to the *Iskra* editors, who were 2,700km from St. Petersburg in London.²¹⁸ Ulyanov was pleased, and though Krupskaya complained about their lax security, the émigrés needed money, letters and literature.²¹⁹ Bronstein told Ulyanov that he was 'much impressed' with 'Bogdanov' and his attempt to create a philosophical system which 'combined Marxism with the theory of knowledge put forward by Mach and Avenarius', though Ulyanov had reservations. 'I am not a philosopher,' he said, with a slightly timorous expression, 'but Plekhanov denounces Bogdanov's philosophy as a disguised form of idealism'.²²⁰

Early in 1903 Malinovsky and his wife went to live on her brother's estate in Orel province.²²¹ Lunacharsky had married Anna Malinovskaya, but though they were forced to move to Totma, 210km north east of Vologda, he propagandised students and staff at the teacher-training college.²²² He had assumed that the *Iskra* editors were 'indissolubly fused', so that summer, when news of the split at the RSDRP Second Congress arrived, it came 'like a bolt from the blue'. Malinovsky concluded that the émigré 'aristocrats' had 'refused to realize that we were now a real party', but 'what counted above all was the collective will of those who were doing the practical work in Russia'.²²³ His exile ended, but he remained under surveillance. He and his wife moved to Tver, 180km north west of Moscow,²²⁴ and he contacted Moskovskaya literaturnaya sreda (the Literary Wednesday Group, which had been founded in 1899, and included radicals like the famous writer 'Maxim Gorky'. Alexey Peshkov's pseudonym had stuck).²²⁵ Malinovsky had contact with the Moscow RSDRP committee,²²⁶ and a wealthy publisher financed the legal unaligned journal, *Pravda (Truth)*,²²⁷ which Malinovsky edited,²²⁸ and he also published *Empiriomonizm: Stati po Filosofii (Empiriomonism: Articles on Philosophy)* as 'Bogdanov'.²²⁹ For him, 'Man' was 'a definite complex of "immediate experiences"'. 'Insofar as the data of experience appear in dependence upon the state of a particular nervous system, they form the psychical world of that particular person; insofar as the data of experience are taken outside of such a dependence, we have before us the physical world.'

The basis of objectivity must lie in the sphere of collective experience. We term these data of experience objective which have the same vital meaning for us and for other people, those data upon which we not only construct our activities without contradiction, but upon which, we are convinced, other people must also base themselves in order to avoid contradiction. The objective character of the physical world consists in the fact that it exists not for me personally, but for everybody, and has a definite meaning for everybody, the same, I am convinced, as for me. The objectivity of the physical series is its *universal significance*.

In the 'last analysis' this '*universal significance*' was 'established by the mutual verification and co-ordination of the utterances of various people', yet while 'the physical world' was 'socially co-ordinated, socially-harmonised' as '*socially-organised experience*', 'objective experience' contained contradictions.

Sprites and hobgoblins may exist in the sphere of social experience of a given people or of a given group of people – for example, the peasantry; but they need not therefore be included under socially-organised or objective experience, for they do not harmonise with the rest of collective experience and do not fit in with the organising forms, for example, with the chain of causality.

He argued that 'knowledge actively harmonises experience, eliminating its infinite contradictions, creating for it universal organising forms, replacing the primeval chaotic world of elements by a derivative, ordered world of relations'.²³⁰ He questioned 'orthodox' materialism, and particularly Plekhanov's version, since 'ideology' and 'culture' were intimately related, and alongside political and economic revolutions, Russia needed a cultural revolution. Science required an understanding of how wrong ideas got into people's heads, and since knowledge was 'socialized experience, and language was the means of its socialization', a science of language was necessary. The proletariat might be incapable of holding onto political power after a social revolution, or of using it to construct socialism; so it was necessary to tackle the backward ideas inside proletarians' heads beforehand, to allow their creativity and the advances in technology to be released immediately afterwards.²³¹

Malinovsky attacked the government's prosecution of the war, criticised the 34-year-old 'legal Marxist' intelligent Petr Struve, denounced bourgeois intelligenty as 'temporary allies' of the proletariat in the campaign for a 'democratic constitution', and urged the RSDRP to fight for 'self-consciousness'. Workers should 'unite in unions', use strikes and 'any other means' to improve wages and conditions, and force the government to pass laws that benefited them. He agreed with Ulyanov that intelligenty had to bring socialist consciousness to workers, and was sure that the creative potential of energy, technology and state planning could dominate nature after a revolution. 'A group lives as a whole; there is no individual personality'. 'I' was the product of the capitalist division of labour and authoritarian dualism, so socialists should think and act on the basis of an idea that embraced a 'whole world of experience' and aim for the 'collectivising of man'.²³² He agreed with Marx that being determined consciousness, so 'nothing could reside in the central nervous system, and hence in the mind, in life, that had not been put there through experience'.²³³ He was unsure whether property relations were part of the 'base' or 'superstructure', and was concerned that after the 'base' changed the ideological 'remnants' might cause a 'cultural lag' and hinder revolutionary development. He stressed that since revolutions did not necessarily create new forms of organisation or ideas from nothing, 'a new technology and a new ideology' had to 'be ready in the productively developed class' well beforehand.²³⁴ He also published *Iz psikhology obshchestva: 1. Avtoritarnoe mysheenie (Essays in Social Psychology: 1. Authoritarian Thinking)*, in the St. Petersburg periodical, *Obrazovanie (Education)*.²³⁵

After Lunacharsky's exile ended in May 1904 he and Lunacharskaya settled in Kyiv.²³⁶ He met Krzhizhanovsky,²³⁷ joined the RSDRP committee, and blamed the 'minority' for the Second Congress split. He contributed to the legal 'semi-Marxist' *Kievskie otkliki (Kyiv Ekho)*,²³⁸ published a 'popular exposition' of Avenarius's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft (Critique of Pure Experience)*,²³⁹ and wrote about a 'religion' of socialism. 'The faith of an active human being is a faith in mankind of the future; his religion is a combination of the feelings and thoughts which make him a participant in the life of mankind and a link in that chain which extends up to the superman.'²⁴⁰

Malinovsky arrived in Geneva in May,²⁴¹ and favoured the 'majority'.²⁴² He noted that Ulyanov wrote 'letters in minuscule handwriting on small sheets', and Krupskaya and Mandelshtam copied the most important ones, then Mandelshtam hid them in his shoe heel, returned to Russia.²⁴³ He gave Lunacharsky Ulyanov's 'direct order' to meet him,²⁴⁴ and Lunacharsky did not refuse, he delayed his departure.²⁴⁵ Ulyanov thought Malinovsky 'capable of occupying a leading position',²⁴⁶ so they formed a 'tacit bloc' that 'ruled out philosophy as a neutral field'.²⁴⁷

The demand for *Iskra* was rising in Russia,²⁴⁸ though it refused to print 'majority' articles. The 'minority' had replaced the 'majority' supporter, M. Leibovich, *Iskra's* forwarding office manager, early that year. Leibovich had returned to Russia and visited Katerynoslav RSDRP committee.²⁴⁹ Soon after the police raided the Mykolaiv committee press and arrested the printers,²⁵⁰ and Leibovich subsequently joined the committee.²⁵¹

(vi) One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

In March 1904 Bonch-Bruевич had negotiated with a co-operative press run by Russian émigrés in Geneva,²⁵² got credit from a French company for paper, while Mandelshtam raised money,²⁵³ and they established Izdatelskiy dom sotsial-demokraticheskoy partiynoy literatury (the Publishing House of Social Democratic Party Literature).²⁵⁴ In Geneva The Bolshevik intelligenty's first publications were *Doloy bonapartizm (Down With Bonapartism)* by the 41-year-old former SR Mikhail Olminsky,²⁵⁵ and *Nashi nedorazumeniya (Our Disagreements)* by Olminsky and Malinovsky. They claimed that the Second Congress delegates from 27 organisations had led 'hundreds, and some of them thousands of organised workers', and were 'in no way passive, non-purposive political neophytes who allow themselves to be led down any road'. Many were committee members, and 'many more' were 'professional agitators' who led 'city sections and factory organisations', though in reality only a tiny number of workers had attended the Second Congress.²⁵⁶

In May Ulyanov's *Shag vperyod, dva shaga nazad, Krizis v nashey partii (One Step Forward, Two Steps Back, The Crisis in Our Party)*, was printed at 27 Rue de la Coulouvreniere in Geneva as by 'N. Lenin'.²⁵⁷ He argued that the 'minority' had usurped positions to which the 'majority' had been elected at the Second Congress and that they mistakenly believed that peasants were 'stupid' and proletarians were 'incorrigibly backward' and incapable of being leaders. The 'minority' wanted to allow 'every professor, every high-school student and "every striker" to declare himself a member', while the 'majority' favoured building 'downwards' from a core of professional revolutionaries. The idea of recruiting 'unorganised elements' from the intelligenty was a 'disorganising idea', and confused party and class, since the fundamental struggle in the RSDRP was between 'bourgeois-intellectual individualism' and 'proletarian organisation and discipline'. He identified four groups of Second Congress delegates: 'Iskra-ists of the majority' were 'consistent revolutionary Social Democrats': 'Iskra-ists of the minority' were 'minor

opportunists'; the 'Marsh' of 'indeterminate and unstable groups' were 'middling opportunists, and the 'anti-*Iskra*-ists' were 'major opportunists'; but the RSDRP intelligently did not have to split.

Plekhanov demanded that the émigré CC disown the pamphlet.²⁵⁸

Imagine that the Central committee recognized by us all possessed the still-debated right of 'liquidation'. Then this would happen. Since a Congress is in the offing, the C.C. everywhere 'liquidates' the elements with which it is dissatisfied, everywhere seats its own creatures and, filling all the committees with these creatures, without difficulty guarantees itself a fully submissive majority at the Congress ... [which] amiably cries 'Hurrah!', approves all its successful and unsuccessful actions, and applauds all its plans and initiatives.

The 'majority' had confused a 'dictatorship of the proletariat with a dictatorship over the proletariat'.²⁵⁹

In Paris the 34-year-old SD non-factional intelligent David Goldendakh was a member of the tiny group, *Borba* (*Struggle*),²⁶⁰ and feared that RSDRP 'functionaries' would 'transform themselves from its servants to dictators'.

Hitherto the committees served the workers; now the workers served the committees. Unconditional obedience is demanded of everyone: workers are to obey the committees, which in turn obey the Central Committee, and the latter, under the supervision of the Central Organ [*Iskra*] – which is counting on working masses who are ready to be subordinated – prepares, orders, and produces the general uprising.

The danger was that the RSDRP workers in Russia would become 'an assembly of sheep'.²⁶¹

The 26-year-old Russian CC member Vladimir Noskov arrived in Geneva, forbade the dispatch of Ulyanov's pamphlet to Russia and threatened that the Russian CC would resign unless he stopped agitating for a Third Congress.²⁶² In *Iskra* Tsederbaum described Ulyanov as a 'political corpse',²⁶³ and Plekhanov called him a 'Bonapartist'.²⁶⁴ Axelrod argued that Ulyanov's insistence on 'centralism' and 'discipline' was 'Jacobinism', and a 'caricature of the bureaucratic-autocratic system of our interior minister',²⁶⁵ so there was no place for him in the RSDRP leadership, and Axelrod encouraged an 'adjutant' to convince 'minority' supporters going to Russia to train a *kruzhki* of workers to lead basic *kruzhki* with the slogan of 'Down with deputising for the proletariat!'²⁶⁶ Ulyanov rejoined Party Council,²⁶⁷ as the war went badly for Russia.

(vii) Defeat after defeat

In Manchuria, early in March 1904 the battle of Mukden involved a total of 624,000 Russian and Japanese troops, the largest ever number up to that point, and after the Russians were defeated, government officials in St. Petersburg acknowledged that call-ups were impossible in 32 of the 50 European Russian provinces.²⁶⁸

In May the London *Morning Post*'s Maurice Baring arrived in Russia and travelled from Moscow to the Far East on the Trans-Siberian railway. After 18 days he reached Harbin, where the Russian army had retreated. He was told that there had been no more than 60,000 troops when the war began, rather than the 100,000 that were needed. He went to Mukden and then Lyaoyang, north of the Liaotung peninsula. Everyone he met regarded the *Morning Post* as 'by far the most Russophobe newspaper' in Britain; yet Baring referred to the Russian army as 'we'.²⁶⁹

The US and British governments had financed the Japanese, whose German-trained troops had reached the Yalu River in Korea, where the Russians lost 2,700 men,²⁷⁰ often in bayonet charges against artillery.²⁷¹ The Japanese troops who landed near Port Arthur met no resistance and severed the garrison's land communications.²⁷² The Japanese defeated the Russians at Nashau-Kinchau, and in June they defeated them again at Tellisu.²⁷³ The blockade of Port Arthur and the scuttled Russian warships made it extremely difficult to bring in food for the 45,000 troops and the civilians, but the garrison commander refused to surrender.²⁷⁴ Soon after the Japanese navy virtually annihilated the surviving warships of the Russian Pacific fleet near Vladivostok.

Days later the tsar abolished corporal punishment in the armed forces, ended peasants' redemption payments for their land,²⁷⁵ forgave their 127 million rubles of debt,²⁷⁶ and cancelled payments after the birth of a male heir.²⁷⁷ He also increased the number of places where Jews could live,²⁷⁸ and promised religious tolerance, close collaboration with *zemstva*, a relaxation of censorship and the end of deportation for some opposition leaders.²⁷⁹ He amnestied 121 of the 646 political deportees in Archangelsk province, permitted public criticism of the government's conduct of the war,²⁸⁰ though newspapers that published 'false information', 'fostered disorder' or 'provoked the population's hostility to officials, soldiers or government institutions', would be fined, suspended or closed,²⁸¹ and he put the Okhrana on high alert.

The Okhrana's Moscow headquarters had 21 office staff, a doctor, three teachers in the training school, 42 agents for external and internal surveillance and arrests, 62 secret agents, 73 surveillants and 11 specialists in

opening letters in the post office 'black cabinet'.²⁸² The police found an illegal press in the apartment of the RSDRP 'majority' intelligent Bauman, and detained him;²⁸³ yet railway workers persuaded troops working alongside them to strike,²⁸⁴ and a quarter of Moscow district reserve officers failed to report for duty, though only about half had a legitimate excuse.²⁸⁵ By the end of June two percent of conscripts had absconded,²⁸⁶ and the number of reservists failing to report was rising steadily. Troops were more open to anti-government propaganda, and 97 had been tried for political offences. In Tambov a reserve cavalry regiment had to be forced onto a train for the front, and there were similar events in Pskov and Archangelsk, though soldiers broke into Jewish-owned shops and destroyed property in Magiloŭ, Kherson and Vitebsk.²⁸⁷ The army stopped mobilising reservists in large towns and cities,²⁸⁸ and the tsar abolished the police's power to punish without trial;²⁸⁹ though the smuggling of *Iskra* and other socialist books, newspapers and pamphlets continued, and there was increased RSDRP activity, especially in the south.

2. We have a new party coming into being

(i) The south

Boris Rozenfeld had been active in the radical student movement in the 1870s,¹ and a fellow-student was one of the tsar's assassins in 1881. Boris, who was Jewish, married an Orthodox Russian,² who had also been active in the student movement, and Lev was born in 1883, when, very unusually for a Jew, his father was an engine driver in Moscow. In the early 1890s Boris became the chief engineer in a small factory in Vilnius,³ and Lev attended the gymnasium.⁴ In 1896 Boris got a job in Tbilisi in Georgia,⁵ where Lev attended the gymnasium and joined SD kruzki.⁶ He read the SD Ferdinand Lassalle's 1884 *Arbeiter-Programm (Workers' Programme)* and other illegal literature,⁷ and when he graduated in 1901 he was barred from all higher educational institutions, though his father somehow got him into Moscow University.⁸ He studied law, was active in student politics, wrote revolutionary leaflets, helped to organise strikes,⁹ and joined the RSDRP.¹⁰ In spring 1902 he led student demonstrations and was deported to Tbilisi under surveillance.¹¹ He led railway workers' and shoemakers' kruzki, then went to study in Paris. He met Ulyanov, joined the *Iskra* network,¹² though he supported the Second Congress 'majority' in 1903. He married Olga Bronstein,¹³ Lev's sister,¹⁴ and the couple returned to Tbilisi,¹⁵ where he led the RSDRP committee and helped to organise a railway strike.¹⁶ In January 1904 the police prosecuted 32 SDs and exiled 26, but released 24, including Rozenfeld,¹⁷ and another SD intelligent returned.

In 1903 24-year-old Stepan Shahumyan had gone to Switzerland for health reasons. He met Plekhanov and Ulyanov, attended the RSDRP's Second Congress in London, and supported the 'majority', but was hard up, so he returned to Tbilisi. He taught at a gymnasium, wrote for the RSDRP, led a campaign against 'minority' supporters and Armenian nationalists,¹⁸ and the Caucasian joint committee co-opted him early in 1904. The RSDRP press in the Avlabari district of Tbilisi produced leaflets in runs of up to 3,000, and the police were told to look out for disturbances connected to the war with Japan. There was no large factory in Tbilisi province, though 20 of the 25 rural village 'societies' demanded concessions on rent, grazing and woodland rights. The government sent an envoy, but the peasants boycotted official institutions, and though around 300 were arrested, others resorted to terror.

In Georgia's Kutaisi province up to 97,000 peasant households (59 percent of the total) had paid 6.5 million rubles in redemption payments for their land, but 81 percent had less than three hectares and a family needed at least four to survive. Most gentry would not sell any land, and those who did charged up to four times more than in Tbilisi province, so the RSDRP called for the 'revolutionary seizure' of gentry and government land, and peasants extended their boycott of government institutions to the Orthodox Church. In spring, after the Caucasian joint committee proposed demonstrations and strikes, the Batumi committee on the Black Sea coast formed 'revolutionary' subcommittees of workers and 'democratic' committees of peasants, while SDs in Guria district of Kutaisi province formed committees of urban and agricultural workers. Village men elected a 'head of ten' for every 90 households, and the heads of ten 'tens' elected a 'head of hundred', who elected rural 'society' representatives, and they elected regional representatives. Regional representatives supported Guria RSDRP committee, and anyone who accepted the programme and was deemed 'politically trustworthy' could join. Batumi RSDRP committee did not understand 'all the subtleties in the present polemic between the different groups in the party', but acknowledged 'the absolute necessity of union now'.¹⁹ Jobs were scarce in Batumi, though many Gurian peasants who had worked in major towns had returned to their villages, where RSDRP 'minority' supporters ignored émigré intelligently and focussed on peasant demands.²⁰

In neighbouring Azerbaijan the population of Baki had grown to 265,000 and the oilfield met 95 percent of Russia's domestic needs,²¹ thanks to almost 28,000 oil-workers. Alexandr Stopani was 33, and had been an *Iskra* agent since late 1900. In spring 1904 'minority' intelligently led the Baki committee, though after it withdrew its support for a Third Congress,²² Stopani and other 'majority' supporters established a rival committee,²³ and Baki, Tbilisi and Samegrelo RSDRP committees joined Mykolaiv, Odesa, Katerynoslav, Moscow, Riga and St. Petersburg committees in damning the Russian CC's conciliatory attitude to the 'minority'.²⁴

The RSDRP Tbilisi committee forced the 24-year-old former seminarian Ioseb Jughashvili to recant his support for a Georgian federal organisation.²⁵ In summer Alexandr Svanidze, his former classmate, introduced him to his sister Ketevan, and they married in an Orthodox Church in Gori. They lived in Didi-Lilo, close to her family, though Jughashvili soon left for Tbilisi,²⁶ where the 29-year-old 'majority' supporter, Mikha Tskhakaya, sent him to Kutaisi province.²⁷ After Samegrelo committee rejected a Third Congress, Jughashvili helped to form a rival committee.²⁸

Rozenfeld had gone to Moscow earlier that year. He led RSDRP kruzki and stored and distributed illegal literature; but the police detained him and others to forestall an anti-war demonstration in February. He was

deported to Tbilisi in summer, joined the Caucasian joint committee, wrote propaganda, contributed to the Georgian-language paper, *borba proletariata (Proletarian Struggle)*, addressed large meetings of railway workers who were preparing to strike and visited Batumi and Kutaisi committees.²⁹ Agents from both émigré factions visited committees and argued for or against a Third Congress, and after the Caucasian joint committee voted to postpone it,³⁰ Rozenfeld agitated for a split between 'majority' and 'minority' supporters.³¹ In summer, near Tbilisi three Armenians stabbed a general who had confiscated Armenian Church land and money. The general's wife beat them off, and he survived, but soon resigned.³²

The 31-year-old RSDRP intelligent Mykola Skrypnik was a 'majority' supporter in Batumi, and early in 1904 he gave illegal literature to steamship crews to pass on to soldiers sailing to the Far East. The police got close, so he went to Kyiv in Ukraine, and on the day that war was declared Krzhizhanovsky sent him to Katerynoslav, where arrests had decimated the RSDRP committee and the survivors lacked funds. Skrypnik rebuilt the committee, workers made collections, and the publication of anti-war leaflets 'went on apace'; yet when he tried to link 'majority'-led committees and paralyse 'minority' efforts to propagandise workers, he was arrested and subsequently exiled to Archangelsk province without trial for five years.³³

In Kyiv, on summer Sundays men and women revolutionaries met up to 100 soldiers secretly behind the Jewish bazaar, and gave them *Iskra* and other illegal literature, which they smuggled into their barracks; though there were arrests after three sapper battalions demanded better rations, and the meeting places were closed.³⁴

Katerynoslav, Mykolaiv and Odesa committees passed a 'majority' resolution for a Third Congress, though 'minority' supporters obliged them to yield control.³⁵ Kharkiv, Crimea, Gornozavdsk and Don committees supported the 'minority';³⁶ so a small group of émigré 'majority' intelligently organised.

(ii) We are not to leave the Party, but to fight for all our worth

From 1882 to 1904 2,229 women had graduated from the Bestuzhev higher education courses in St. Petersburg, or studied at universities abroad, and 8,000 had qualifications similar to degrees.³⁷

Lidia Fotieva was born into a Moscow office worker's family in 1881. She entered the Conservatory in 1899, but enrolled on the St. Petersburg Bestuzhev courses in 1900, and was active in the student movement in 1901. After she was deported to Perm, Krupskaya asked her to keep *Iskra* supporters informed.³⁸ In 1903 she had 'no clear idea of what really constituted the difference of opinion' at the Second Congress, but leaned towards the 'majority'. In autumn she was arrested on suspicion of being a member of the RSDRP,³⁹ and by 1904 she had joined the party in prison.⁴⁰ In spring she was released for lack of evidence, and comrades gave her a 'conspiratorial address' in Samara. From there a guide took her to Suwałki near the Polish-German border, gave her the address of an SPD tailor in Goldap and a train ticket to Berlin, and bribed the border guards' commander with 15 rubles to let her cross.

Fotieva arrived in Geneva in summer and Bonch-Bruевич gave her a job in the 'majority' forwarding office with his partner Vera Velichkina, Martin and Lidia Mandelshtam, and Lepeshinskaya and Lepeshinsky. Krupskaya asked Fotieva to help her, and 'each incoming letter had to be studied' and 'the coded part decoded and written out'.

In answer, a letter that would not rouse the suspicions of the secret police was written in ordinary ink with the more confidential part coded and traced between the lines by chemical means. Mistakes in the coding of incoming letters were not infrequent, and much time and effort had to be spent deciphering them. There were also cases where the loss of a letter in the mail or the disclosure of an organisation necessitated the use of a new, unfamiliar code, and then we had a hard time identifying it. Sometimes the chemically written lines could not be developed, and it was necessary to ask for a repetition of the letter through a Personal column. ... Laconic in form and worded so that the addressee alone could understand them, these messages gave directions and suggestions, requested information, acknowledged the receipt of letters or queried answers long overdue, stated failure to decode such and such a letter, etc.

Ulyanov wrote letters, or Krupskaya wrote them in his name, and she also wrote the messages for the personal columns of legal papers.⁴¹ Then another 'majority' intelligent arrived in Geneva.

Vyacheslav Karpinsky was born into a Penza intelligent's family in 1880.⁴² He considered himself a revolutionary by 1894,⁴³ agitated Kharkov and Rostov-na-Donu workers, became an organizer and a leader of Kharkov Soyuz borby (League of Struggle), and joined the RSDRP in 1898. He was repeatedly arrested,⁴⁴ and deported to Vologda in 1901,⁴⁵ but escaped in 1902 and worked underground.⁴⁶ In summer 1904 he arrived in Geneva, went to a suburban bar and Ulyanov told him that Plekhanov had suggested he should 'fly to America to hide his shame'.⁴⁷

Plekhanov argued that workers in capitalist countries would become socialists if 'left to themselves', though Russian intelligenty had to help workers become fully politically conscious. Ulyanov's idea that consciousness determined being was idealist.⁴⁸ Plekhanov announced in *Iskra* that he had thrown Ulyanov's 'over-bent stick' – a

perspective unilaterally changing tack at short notice - on the 'rubbish heap', and would publish an article to 'liquidate the "fourth" period of our Party's history'.⁴⁹ His fellow GOT co-founder, the 54-year-old former terrorist Vera Zasulich, publicly criticised a socialist for the first time by describing Ulyanov as a Russian Louis XIV in *Iskra*.⁵⁰

In Russia Ulyanov's 26-year-old sister Maria was released from prison and went to Sablino near St. Petersburg, where her 40-year-old married sister, Anna Elizarova, joined her. Maria sent her brother's analysis of the Second Congress to Russian committees, but told Krupskaya that the émigré 'minority' intelligenty and the Russian CC were acting in concert and making it difficult for 'majority' supporters,⁵¹ so she went to Geneva.

At the end of July 22 intelligenty 'majority' supporters met outside Geneva. They included the Lepeshinskys, the Mandelshtams, the Pervukhins, Bonch-Bruевич and Velichkina, Fotieva, Krasikov, Karpinsky, 33-year-old Wacław Worowski, Ulyanov, Krupskaya, Elizaveta Knunyants and the Ilyins,⁵² (probably F.N. and his spouse), Malinovsky,⁵³ and his wife Natalia, Anna Lunacharskaya, Maria Ulyanova and Feodosia Drabkina,⁵⁴ who had joined the RSDRP in 1902 aged 19,⁵⁵ and was the wife of 30-year-old Yakov Drabkin, who had joined the revolutionary movement in 1896 and had been a delegate to the RSDRP Second Congress.⁵⁶ The 22 elected Malinovsky to lead the 'bureau of the committees of the Majority in Russia',⁵⁷ and Mandelshtam wrote to supporters there. 'We are not to leave the Party, but to fight for all our worth'. 'We have to conquer Russia despite the central institutions, and we shall do this in the same way as *Iskra* once did'.⁵⁸ Subsequently 30 of the 46 other SD émigrés supported Ulyanov's appeal,⁵⁹ which included a critique of the Russian CC conciliators.⁶⁰ Krupskaya asked Russian correspondents to mark letters 'Personally for L.' or 'Personally for N.K.' in case they 'fall into alien hands'; yet St. Petersburg Okhrana told the Paris Agentura that she 'occupies a central position in the organisation of *Iskra* abroad',⁶¹ and Mandelshtam would manage affairs in Geneva while she and Ulyanov had a holiday.⁶²

They had company. Maria Essen was an experience *Iskra* agent in her early thirties. She had recently escaped from exile in Yakutsk and managed to get to Geneva. In July she joined Krupskaya and Ulyanov on a walking tour,⁶³ and recalled seeing Ulyanov sitting on a mountain top, deep in thought, and announcing that the 'minority' were 'really shitting on us'.⁶⁴ 'We have no party, but we have a new party coming into being, and no subterfuges and delays, no senile malicious vituperation from *Iskra* can hold back the final and decisive victory of this party'. After a few days Essen returned to Geneva,⁶⁵ though three male intelligenty joined Ulyanov and Krupskaya.

Mikhail Alexandrov was born into an aristocratic family in Voronezh in Voronezh province in 1863. In 1885, at St. Petersburg University, he joined Narodnaya volya, but was arrested for distributing illegal literature to workers in 1894. He spent eight years in prison, including three in solitary, and considered himself an SD by 1902.⁶⁶ The RSDRP's underground presses in Moscow, Odesa and Baki could set type from one copy of *Iskra*, though the 'minority' intelligenty in Geneva now sent stereotypes,⁶⁷ and by 1903 Alexandrov was an editor at the Baki press,⁶⁸ 'Nina'. The 32-year-old intelligent and Russian CC member Leonid Krasin designed a 'disappearing trapdoor' for the 'seven selfless printers' who 'lived together like friars in a cloister', worked ten hours a day and, 'in emergencies, hours without limit', for 25 rubles a month. The temperature varied from almost freezing in winter to 30 degrees centigrade in summer; though the windows were sealed and there was no heating or ventilation. No one left during the day, but they 'took turns going up for air for three-hour periods' at night. Most of them supported the 'majority',⁶⁹ yet political opinions were 'absolutely not reflected' in their work.⁷⁰

In summer 1904, in Switzerland, Alexandrov, Malinovsky and Pervukhin spent a month with Ulyanov and Krupskaya near Lac de Bré, considering their political options and corresponding with key supporters. Ulyanov wrote to ask Fotieva to write to 'all *our friends* in Russia' and 'start collecting and posting all kinds of correspondence to our addresses marked "For Lenin" immediately. Money is also needed (marked the same). Events are coming to a head. The minority are clearly preparing an action by collusion with part of the CC. We are expecting the worst.' Krupskaya sent Fotieva the addresses of ten 'friends who can be relied upon entirely',⁷¹ and added that a 'majority' paper would cost 2,000 rubles a month.⁷² Essen left for Russia with Lengnik, joined the Russian CC, and 'majority' agents installed Worowski as leader of its 'southern bureau',⁷³ where terrorism remained influential.

(iii) In Combat We Will Achieve Our Rights

Yegor Sazonov was born into a peasant family of religious dissenters in Ufa, Western Siberia, in 1879. His father, a successful timber trader, was devoted to the tsar. Yegor later went to Moscow University to learn to be a 'poor man's doctor', but took part in a demonstration in 1901 and was briefly detained. He read illegal literature and considered himself a socialist, though University expelled him and the police deported him to Ufa. He joined the VPSR, though police watched his house, raided it several times, and eventually arrested him. After 18 months in prison he was exiled to Eastern Siberia for three years, but escaped to Switzerland, studied science, joined the VPSR and returned to Russia in 1903.⁷⁴ Late that year the VPSR CC sent 24-year-old Boris Savinkov to St. Petersburg,

where the combat organisation had eight members, and early in 1904 he recruited Sazonov. Savinkov went to Moscow, met other members, and then escaped to Switzerland.⁷⁵

In Geneva the VPSR's Mikhail Sokolov, a former student at an agricultural college near Saratov, favoured economic and agrarian terror including murder, arson and the destruction of crops and livestock,⁷⁶ and the 60-year-old veteran terrorist and VPSR leader, Ekaterina Breshkovskaya, wanted to use 'agrarian and political terror' for 'eliminating and disorganising all direct representatives and agents of the contemporary ruling classes'.⁷⁷ The VPSR old guard had 16 supporters, but 25 others agreed to call on peasants to form combat organisations.⁷⁸ The CC had forbidden émigré comrades to return to Russia, but Sokolov defied them and toured southern and western provinces, agitating peasants and workers.⁷⁹ All VPSR publications carried the slogan: 'In Combat We Will Achieve Our Rights',⁸⁰ and *Bratskiye krestyan!* (*Brother peasants!*) had reached a Kursk province village by February 1904. In several provinces there were rumours that peasant troops would return from Manchuria in spring and there would be a redistribution of land, and peasants were already declaring that the land was theirs,⁸¹ taking the gentry's timber and offering 'armed resistance' to the police. The insurgency reached to four districts before troops arrived;⁸² and disorders continued in Kutaisi and Tbilisi in Georgia, while others broke out in Vitebsk, Orlov, Chernigov, Voronezh, the Baltic provinces and Warszawa,⁸³ on 109 occasions.⁸⁴ In the fertile central 'black earth' provinces 40 estates were ravaged or destroyed, though over 4,000 insurgents were later punished.⁸⁵ Arrests seriously weakened the VPSR combat organisation,⁸⁶ and its 34-year-old leader, Evno Azev, escaped abroad.

In St. Petersburg the interior minister's coach had iron-lined blinds,⁸⁷ and was pulled by three fast horses. Policemen usually rode in front and behind, while policemen, gendarmes and surveillants guarded his route. He rarely left his office, except for a weekly report to the tsar,⁸⁸ and though the Director of the Police Department knew about a planned assassination, late in July he did not ensure that the coach had a guard in front, and the minister did not tell his driver to vary his route.⁸⁹ Sazonov threw a bomb at the minister's coach,⁹⁰ and it was blown to bits; so skin, brain and blood were spattered everywhere.⁹¹ Sazonov's face was entirely bruised, his eyes were out of their sockets, his left foot was broken and two toes were severely damaged;⁹² yet the guards kicked, punched and beat him with rifle butts, dragged him along by one leg, so his head kept hitting the pavement, then up three flights of hotel stairs, where they stripped him and beat him semiconscious. Later they took him to hospital, where surgeons removed bomb fragments and amputated the two toes. The police refused him water,⁹³ and arrested his young Jewish assistant,⁹⁴ the 20-year-old Białystok leather worker Schmil Sikorsky.⁹⁵ The Director of the Police Department found his own letters in Sazonov's papers.⁹⁶

A British journalist noted that the assassination 'was received with semi-public rejoicings'. Fellow train passengers shook Sazonov's father's hand when he went to see him in prison,⁹⁷ and donations to the VPSR reportedly reached tens of thousands of rubles;⁹⁸ though the autocracy faced more serious problems in Poland.

(iv) Autocratic centralisation

By 1904 around 300,000 troops were stationed in Poland,⁹⁹ where over 11 million people formed around eight percent the empire's population. Polish workers produced a quarter of the empire's industrial output yet Poles had fewer rights than most Russians, and Polish Catholics had fewer still, while the Russian language was mandatory in public institutions and underfunded educational institutions.¹⁰⁰ Warszawa's population density was four times that of St. Petersburg,¹⁰¹ and 50,000 of 640,000 or more citizens relied on charity,¹⁰² while conditions in the Piotrków province industrial centre of Łódź were even worse,¹⁰³ and strikes broke out in Warszawa and Łódź.¹⁰⁴

The Headquarters of Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy, (the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, or SDKPiL), were in Kraków, Galicia, where the 26-year-old intelektualny Felix Dzierzynski was in charge of finance, communications, transport, literature distribution and deployment of activists. He supervised organisations across the border in Łódź, Puławy, Zyrardow, Białystok, Częstochowa, the Dąbrowa coalfield and Vilnius, though there was a shortage of literature and experienced agitators. After the government proclaimed martial law in Warszawa and Piotrków provinces, he collaborated with the RSDRP's military organisation and asked the SDKPiL émigré committee to produce leaflets for peasants. Agricultural labourers' strikes in Lublin province influenced the Puławy garrison,¹⁰⁵ and Warszawa University students went on strike.¹⁰⁶ From Geneva Axelrod passed on 1,500 marks from the SPD to the SDKPiL,¹⁰⁷ and the 37-year-old intelektualny SDKPiL leader Lev Jogiches went to Kraków to edit literature and its smuggling and distribution.¹⁰⁸

On 8 February 100 sugar refinery workers in Elżbietów, central Poland, persuaded agricultural workers to walk off a gentleman's estate.¹⁰⁹ By next day there were no trains from Warszawa to Łódź or Western Europe.¹¹⁰ On the 10th martial law was imposed in Łódź, and was subsequently extended across Poland.¹¹¹ The SDKPiL, the Bund and the nationalist Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, (the Polish Socialist Party), issued appeals to end strikes to avoid

bloodshed, though they agreed that the most hopeful should continue until the strikers' demands were met,¹¹² and most of those workers had returned victorious by the 14th.¹¹³ In the Częstochowa region of southern Poland 22 employers recognised workers' delegations, stopped personal searches, respected workers' dignity, cut their hours, allowed time for washing at the end of the day, improved pay and medical care and established schools.¹¹⁴ Warszawa bricklayers won a ten-hour day and a pay rise, telephone workshop workers had an eight-hour day and a rise of up to 15 percent, while 10,000 workers at a huge linen-weaving factory had an hour off the day and a rise of up to ten percent, and municipal factory workers in Łódź had a 15 percent rise.¹¹⁵

When Jews and Latvians were mobilised, Bundists and members Socialdemokratų Partija Lietuvos (the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, or LSDP) had propagandised them.¹¹⁶ The governor of Piotrków province reported to St. Petersburg that the workers' sympathies were 'entirely on the side of Japan', and members of the PPS and the Bund clubbed patriotic demonstrators in Warszawa.¹¹⁷ The general strike ended on 1 March,¹¹⁸ though Warszawa demonstrators chanted 'Down with Tsarism!', 'Long live independent socialist Poland!', 'Down with the war!' and 'Long live Japan!'¹¹⁹ Dzierzynski insisted that SDKPiL members should disperse, rather than tackle the police, yet they made no arrests on a 1,000-strong demonstration. Dzierzynski sent Martyn Kasprzak to Warszawa to publish appeals, and when police raided the press, he killed five and wounded a sixth before he was arrested. The SDKPiL's leading workers' committee in Warszawa issued thousands of May Day appeals publicising his court martial, and there were two protest demonstrations. The one organised by the SDKPiL, Proletariat and the Bund, and another by the PPS, were the largest ever. The PPS smuggled men, arms and ammunition from Kraków, and put Józef Kwiatek in charge of the *bojówki* (paramilitary units).¹²⁰ The economy was going into recession,¹²¹ and in July the Warszawa branch of the Russian State Bank failed to honour 23 percent of its bills of exchange.¹²² A strike of Warszawa bricklayers' was followed by a 10,000-strong demonstration, with the slogans of 'Down with the Autocracy!' 'Down with the Exploiters!' and 'Long Live Socialism!'¹²³

A quarter of Polish peasant primary school children were taught in Russian, but many learned Polish in secret schools, even though their parents risked a stiff fine and two weeks in jail, and teachers were liable to a 300 ruble fine and three months in jail. Secret nationalist and socialist groups existed in almost all of Warszawa's secondary schools and higher education institutions, though the police arrested 30 students, mostly from the University and Polytechnical Institute, for celebrating the assassination of the Russian interior minister. SDKPiL students at Puławy Agricultural Institute contacted the RSDRP military organisation in the garrison, though 49 students were arrested, and the Polytechnical Institute was closed.¹²⁴ Dzierzynski sent agents with false papers and illegal literature to Łódź, Częstochowa, Kalisz, Lublin and the Dąbrowa Basin to train agitators, linked local leaders and report to Kraków, only two or three agitators, including 25-year-old Jakub Fürstenberg, operated at any one time. Dzierzynski visited Warszawa and summoned an émigré to establish a new press, though back in Kraków he privately denounced Ulyanov's proposed structure for the RSDRP as 'autocratic centralisation'.¹²⁵

St. Petersburg police had put Józef Piłsudski, the PPS military leader, in a mental hospital in 1900, though a Polish doctor helped the 36-year-old to escape early in 1904 and he contacted the Japanese ambassador in London.¹²⁶ Piłsudski argued that Japan was 'the enemy of our enemy', and a Russian defeat would be 'our victory',¹²⁷ so he wanted to form a legion of Polish prisoners of war and US volunteers in the Far East.¹²⁸ In summer Piłsudski visited Japan and persuaded the government to authorise the military attachés in London and Paris to give arms and explosives to the PPS, in return for intelligence about the deployment of Russian troops in Poland;¹²⁹ though one Polish born SD had a markedly different perspective.

The intelektualistka Rosa Luxemburg had been a founder-member of the SDKPiL, but had moved to Germany, became a German citizen and joined the SPD. Early in 1904 the 32-year-old was convicted in her absence of insulting the kaiser the previous year, though at the International Socialist bureau in Brussels she opposed recognising the LSDP). In summer she asked the RSDRP 'minority' intelligent Potresov in Geneva to translate her critique of Ulyanov's analysis of the Second Congress, and convey her 'heartfelt best wishes' to Zasulich and the 32-year-old RSDRP 'minority' intelligent Fyodor Gurvich.¹³⁰

In Berlin 36-year-old Wilhelm Buchholtz liaised between the SPD and the RSDRP 'minority' intelligenty in Switzerland.¹³¹ The SPD leader August Bebel considered the RSDRP 'majority' 'unscrupulous',¹³² and Luxemburg's critique of Ulyanov's pamphlet appeared in *Die Neue Zeit* (*The New Time*) with a preface by Kautsky, who noted that though it dealt with Russian conditions, the organisational questions it discussed were important for the SPD.¹³³ Luxemburg argued that one of the 'indispensable conditions' for achieving socialism was 'a large contingent of workers educated in the political struggle' who could 'develop their own political activity through direct influence on public life, in a party press, and public congresses'. She acknowledged that Russian SDs had to work out a 'tactic suited to the class struggle of the proletariat in an autocratic state'; though she criticised Ulyanov for insisting on the 'rigorous separation of the organised nucleus of revolutionaries' and the 'blind subordination' of all RSDRP organs to a centre 'which alone thinks, guides, and decides for all'. His pamphlet was 'full of the sterile spirit of the

overseer', and she believed that his 'concern is not so much to make the activity of the party more fruitful as to control the party' and 'to narrow the movement rather than to develop it, to bind it rather than unify it'. She acknowledged that a 'proletarian vanguard, conscious of its class interests and capable of self-direction in political activity', was emerging in Russia, though Ulyanov risked putting a brake on workers' self-activity 'on the eve of decisive battles'. She argued that the bureaucratism, conservatism and opportunism of the legal SPD had arisen 'out of unavoidable social conditions' and was 'a product and an inevitable phase of the historic development of the labour movement', and concluded that 'Historically, the errors committed by the truly revolutionary movement are infinitely more fruitful than the infallibility of the cleverest Central Committee'.¹³⁴

That summer nine SPD members associated with *Der Königsberger Prozess*, (*The Königsberg Process*), near the Russian border, were charged with smuggling illegal literature into Russia, contacting secret societies, insulting the tsar and high treason. They convinced the court that Russian SDs opposed terror, and went free, but Bebel sent a letter 'full of complaints' to the 'minority' supporter Helphand in Germany, and threatened to 'change the party's tactics' towards Russian SDs; so Helphand warned the 'minority' intelligent Potresov in Geneva.

The public propaganda for a violent revolution by Russian social democracy is damaging to all German parliamentary tactics. Naturally, there is nothing to be done about this, and I have written to him to that effect. But it should not be forgotten that the German government is only seeking an opportunity to accuse the social democrats of preparing for armed revolt in order to be able to justify the introduction of political repression at the same time. Therefore the editorial staff of *Iskra* must strive to avoid anything that the German government could consider to be formal grounds for advancing false accusations against the German social democrats.¹³⁵

The SPD ordered *Iskra* transporters to leave the *Vorwärts* cellar, though Karl Liebknecht, the SPD leader Wilhelm's 37-year-old son, gave them a letter to a comrade who would store their literature,¹³⁶ before it was sent via the Pale.

In spring 24-year-old Bundist Vladimir Grinberg struggled against *Iskra*-ists in Zurich, and in summer he was one of seven Bundists at the International Socialist Congress in Amsterdam.¹³⁷ The RSDRP delegates included Gurvich, Zasulich, Plekhanov, Axelrod and another founder-member of the GOT, 49-year-old Lev Deutsch. Plekhanov rejected the request of the VPSR and eight Bund delegates to have one of the Russian delegation's two votes, and refused to let Krasikov and Mandelshtam, the RSDRP 'majority' delegates, join the delegation until Kautsky supported them.¹³⁸ The Bundists got no support from Luxemburg, though they managed to share one vote with the VPSR delegates,¹³⁹ who claimed to represent 200 members,¹⁴⁰ and have workers' groups in 24 towns and cities.¹⁴¹ Plekhanov shook hands with the Japanese delegate, denounced the autocracy for provoking the war and looked forward to the defeat of the Russian army.¹⁴² Luxemburg had mandates from the SDKPiL and SPD, and the Congress adopted her critique of the SPD intellectual Eduard Bernstein's 'revisionism', and backed revolution.¹⁴³ When she returned to Berlin to begin her three-month prison sentence she asked Kautsky to tell Plekhanov that the SPD EC was 'on our side', and in autumn, during the coronation of the new kaiser, she went free because of the amnesty.¹⁴⁴

In Geneva Ulyanov argued that Luxemburg had not taken full account of the difficulty of organising under tsarist conditions. The 'reconstitution of the editorial board was the main cause of the struggle' at the RSDRP's Second Congress, and 'our new division into minority and majority is only a variant of the old division into a proletarian-revolutionary and an intellectual-opportunist wing'.¹⁴⁵ Luxemburg dismissed this as 'prattle', and Kautsky refused to print it in *Die Neue Zeit*;¹⁴⁶ though reformism was becoming more influential among SPD bureaucrats.

In Germany, at the SPD's Bremen Congress, trade union delegates wanted to focus on winning reforms through constitutional means, though an overwhelming majority condemned the 'revisionist attempt' to 'replace our struggle to conquer political power',¹⁴⁷ and opposed any 'attempt to disguise existing class conflicts' to win the support of 'bourgeois parties'.¹⁴⁸ In Munich the RSDRP intelligent Bronstein dedicated *Nashi Politicheskiya Zadachi* (*Our Political Tasks*) to his 'dear teacher', Axelrod. He argued that Ulyanov's perspective would lead 'to the Party organization "substituting" itself for the Party', the CC 'substituting itself for the Party organization' and 'the dictator substituting himself for the Central Committee', leaving everyone else as 'disciplined carriers-out of technical functions'. The 'development of bourgeois society' led the proletariat 'spontaneously to take shape politically', and 'the objective tendencies of this process become clear in revolutionary, that is Marxist, socialism', and since '*The proletarian theory of political development cannot substitute for a politically developed proletariat*', professional revolutionaries should struggle against the proletariat's 'lack of culture', 'see to it that the upper layers 'read a little' and that the RSDRP 'politically educates and mobilises the proletariat to exercise rational pressure on the will of all political groups and parties', and did not become a 'Dictatorship Over the Proletariat'.¹⁴⁹ Ulyanov tried to recruit intelligenty in Russia.

Miron Vladimirov had been born into a Kherson province tenant farmer's family in 1879. He later entered an agricultural school, helped to organise a revolutionary kruzhek, graduated in 1898 and joined the RSDRP in 1903.¹⁵⁰

In summer 1904 Ulyanov wrote to him that the émigré 'majority' suffered from a 'lack of people, lack of literature and complete lack of information', and in Russia, 'among a whole number of Party functionaries', a 'mood has developed that makes them immerse themselves in positive work and stand completely aloof from the embittered internecine struggle'. Some Russian CC members had adopted a conciliatory attitude to 'blanket the fact that the Party is disintegrating', yet while St. Petersburg, Moscow, Tver, Tula, Siberian, Caucasian, Katerynoslav, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Riga and Astrakhan committees supported a Third Congress, the *Iskra* editors, part of the émigré CC and probably Party Council 'oppose the wishes of the majority of comrades in Russia'.¹⁵¹

In Geneva the Lepeshinskys had borrowed money,¹⁵² and opened a 'canteen'.¹⁵³ It was staffed by female comrades, though Lepeshinsky did the shopping.¹⁵⁴ When Krupskaya and Ulyanov returned in autumn,¹⁵⁵ he got his pamphlet released from the print shop and told Leibovich of the Mykolaiv RSDRP committee that the émigré CC was going to disband the forwarding office, not publish Party Council minutes and arrange a conference 'completely ignoring' the 'majority', though 12 out of 20 committees wanted a Third Congress and four more rejected the Russian CC's perspective.¹⁵⁶ Ulyanov trained comrades to return to Russia in the canteen, including a few factory workers, and counselled the intelligenty to avoid jargon and listen carefully to the workers' ideas.¹⁵⁷ The émigré 'majority' in Geneva had effectively founded the *Bolshevik* faction,¹⁵⁸ as opposed to the *Menshevik* 'minority', and the terms were coming into use in Russia, though an Odesa comrade's report to Geneva claimed that 'very many Bolshevik workers could not 'rid themselves of "conciliationist" ideas' and were 'preaching that the Bolsheviks are now doing what the Mensheviks were doing', 'boycotting the centres and not allowing them to work'.¹⁵⁹ Krupskaya replied that the Russian CC had sacked Ulyanov and Viktor Kopp censored 'majority' material.¹⁶⁰

Axelrod acknowledged to Kautsky that Ulyanov was the 'idol' of the Russian praktiki,¹⁶¹ and Gurvich knew that most committees boycotted *Iskra*.¹⁶² Kautsky invited Axelrod and Ulyanov to a unity conference, though Axelrod denied Ulyanov's right to attend as a CC member.¹⁶³ Ulyanov 'summoned' the RSDRP's 22-year-old Berlin transporter the praktik Iosif Tarshis to Geneva and told him about the proposed Bolshevik paper, and thereafter he sent Bolshevik literature to Russia 'in large quantities'.¹⁶⁴

In autumn Ulyanov reissued *Pismo k tovarishchu nashikh organizatsionnykh zadachakh* (*A Letter to a Comrade on Our Organisational Tasks*),¹⁶⁵ and read everything he could find on 'barricade fighting' and 'the technique of the offensive'. Malinovsky proposed co-opting Lunacharsky, Skvortsov and the 30-year-old intelligent Vladimir Rudnev.¹⁶⁶ The print-runs of Ulyanov's pamphlets were up to 2,000, but Lunacharsky and Malinovsky's were up to 5,000, and Bonch-Bruевич also published VPSR and syndicalist material.¹⁶⁷ There were over 10,000 Russians in Western Europe,¹⁶⁸ and Lunacharsky toured colonies of émigré SDs and lectured about 'the essence of the split',¹⁶⁹ while Ulyanov wrote to 'our friends' in Russia,¹⁷⁰ where 'legal Marxist' and liberal intelligenty now had a newspaper.

(v) The Union of Liberation

In 1901 the wealthy Russian liberal Dmitry Zhukovsky gave 30,000 rubles to the 'legal Marxist' Petr Struve to publish a paper 'devoted exclusively to the propaganda of the idea of constitutional government'. Struve's wife, Antonina, got permission to take their children to Montreux in France, while Struve worked with Finnish oppositionists, then left without a passport and reached Munich. Ulyanov refused to see him, but Struve's family settled in Stuttgart and he came to an arrangement with the SPD Reichstag deputy and printer Johann Dietz. By 1902 Struve had received 100,000 rubles from Russian liberals, and in spring his family settled in Stuttgart. In summer Dietz printed 4,000 copies *Osvobozhdenie* (*Liberation*) on ordinary paper for Western Europe, and 8,000 on very thin paper for Russia, with a note on the first page. 'We found your address in a directory, and take the liberty of sending you our publication'. The paper condemned the tsar's Far Eastern policy and tried to persuade liberals that agrarian terror was 'historically inevitable and morally justified'. Antonina posted batches to contacts in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, England, Finland and Sweden,¹⁷¹ though most copies went to the 46-year-old revolutionary-nationalist Finn Konrad Zilliacus in Stockholm. He sent smaller packets by various routes to 41-year-old Arvid Neovius in Helsinki (Helsinki), who got them to the Russian border, then couriers took them to St. Petersburg. The process took four weeks and cost 1 to 1.5 marks a kilo.

Early in 1903 Zilliacus offered an 'express service' using professional smugglers, which cost five to seven marks a kilo. In spring the Russian governor-general of Finland imposed martial law and disrupted the operation;¹⁷² though in summer the Finnish trade union organisation became Suomen sosialidemokraattinen puolue (the Finnish Social Democratic Party, or SSDP), adopted the preamble of the SPD's Erfurter Programm and joined the Second International.¹⁷³ In Switzerland 21 liberal Russian intelligenty, all from gentry families, met at Schaffhausen. They included eight zemstvo officials, three professors and two professionals, and among the eight former SDs were Struve, Berdyayev, 43-year-old Vasily Bogucharsky, 35-year-old Ekaterina Kuskova and 33-year-old Sergey

Prokopovich. They founded Soyuz Osvobozhdeniya, (the Union of Liberation), and aimed to communicate with the 'masses',¹⁷⁴ organise demonstrations and petitions and publish information to discredit the bureaucracy and autocracy. Ziliacus packed *Osvobozhdenie* into couriers' false-bottomed trunks or sent them as freight to Finland. Border guards caused no problems and the couriers deposited the trunks in Helsinki, from where they went by train to the Russian border, and Liberationists picked them up. In autumn, following a tip-off from the Russian police, Prussian police raided the Struves' home and found printed matter, stamps from several countries and addresses in Russia and elsewhere. Bebel threatened to raise the issue in the Reichstag, and the police backed off, but late that year Russian border gendarmes arrested a man carrying 106 copies of *Osvobozhdenie* and a woman with 227, raided their flats and found seditious literature. Both received prison sentences of 30 months, though the woman got bail and went to Stuttgart.

In January 1904 50 liberal intelligentsy from 23 towns and cities formally founded the Union of Liberation in St. Petersburg.¹⁷⁵ Its programme included an eight-hour day for workers and the expropriation of private land, with compensation, for peasants,¹⁷⁶ and a policy of agitating for unions of lawyers, engineers, professors, writers, and other professionals.¹⁷⁷ They wanted a constitutional regime elected by universal, equal, direct suffrage and secret ballot, recognised the right of national minorities to self-determination and committed themselves to the '*defence of the toiling masses*'. Only a congress could decide policy, though they elected a *sovet* to act between them and gave it the power to co-opt. It included four former SDs and the 'technical group' which smuggled *Osvobozhdenie*. The Moscow group were mainly liberal constitutionalists, but alternate monthly meetings were in St. Petersburg, which included Kuskova and Bogucharsky, had good relations with some organised workers in Russia and Finland,¹⁷⁸ and Kuskova wrote pseudonymous articles about workers for *Osvobozhdenie*;¹⁷⁹ though after the Finn Eugen Schauman assassinated the governor-general, then shot himself,¹⁸⁰ Finland and Russia were on the verge of war.¹⁸¹

The Okhrana's Berlin Agentura believed that *Osvobozhdenie's* office was in Russia, and the Russian interior minister asked the Berlin authorities to investigate the Struves. Stuttgart police read his post and put him under surveillance, but someone tipped him off and the family left in autumn and he edited *Osvobozhdenie* in Paris.¹⁸²

Soon after a Paris conference included representatives from the Liberationists, Ziliacus's embryo revolutionary nationalist Suomalainen aktiivinen vastarintaliitto, (the Finnish Active Resistance Party, or SAV), Հայ Զեղափոխական Ղառչակցութիւն, ՀԶԴ, (the Armenian Revolutionary Federation), the Liga Narodowa, (the Polish National League), the PPS, the VPSR and Latvijas Sociāldemokrātiskā strādnieku partija, (the Latvian Social-Democratic Workers' Party, or LSDSP). They could not agree about a joint central bureau, but recognised the principle of national self-determination, focussed on replacing the autocracy with a regime based on universal suffrage and agreed that the Union of Liberation's existence should be kept secret until after the banquets for liberal professionals began late that year,¹⁸³ to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the 1864 law reforms.¹⁸⁴ Azev had been the VPSR's delegate and he reported to the Okhrana, whose gendarmes arrested two of his rivals in the VPSR leadership,¹⁸⁵ and though a former Okhrana official denounced Azev anonymously to the VPSR CC, it ignored the warning.¹⁸⁶

After two St. Petersburg students committed suicide in prison, a mass funeral procession heard revolutionary speeches and sang revolutionary songs,¹⁸⁷ and an SD intelligentka contacted Finnish radicals.

(vi) Kollontai

Alexandra Masalin was born into the family of a Russian noblewoman and a wealthy Finnish peasant and in the 1860s she married an engineer called Mavrinsky. They had two daughters and a son, but Alexandra later lived with a cavalry officer,¹⁸⁸ Colonel Mikhail Domontovich, who had been born into a long-established Ukrainian family in 1830. He had read socialist literature as a young man, but now hoped for a peaceful change to a constitutional monarchy.¹⁸⁹ Mavrinskaya sold products from her Finnish farm in St. Petersburg, and Alexandra was born there in 1872, before her mother's divorce was legalised.¹⁹⁰ In 1877 Domontovich fought in the Russian army against the Bulgarians; but in 1879, when the tsar gave Bulgaria a restricted constitution, he advocated a more liberal one and was sent home in disgrace.¹⁹¹

Alexandra had an English nanny and learned to speak English, French and German,¹⁹² and by 1881 her tutor was the radical Maria Strakhova, who encouraged her to read Darwin and John Stuart Mill.¹⁹³ By 1887 the 15-year-old wanted to attend the Bestuzhev courses,¹⁹⁴ and though her parents feared that she would meet 'undesirable elements', and refused, she enrolled in 1888.¹⁹⁵ In 1891 she met her father's cousin, Vladimir Kollontai,¹⁹⁶ a military engineer whose Polish father had been deported to Tbilisi after the 1863-1864 rising.¹⁹⁷ In 1892 she went to Berlin, attended SPD meetings, read Marx and Engels' *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, (*Communist Manifesto*), went on to Paris and read Engels' *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats*, (*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*). In 1893 she married Kollontai, who became a factory inspector,¹⁹⁸ and by

1894, in St. Petersburg, she read works by Plekhanov and more by Marx and Engels.¹⁹⁹ Strakhova introduced her to Peredvizhnoy muzey uchebnikov, (the Mobile Museum of Educational Textbooks), which propagandised workers, and to Krasny Krest, (the political Red Cross), which supported political prisoners in Shlisselburg Fortress.²⁰⁰ Kollontai smuggled in *Kapital* and gave slide-shows for workers, and in 1895 she read Ulyanov's anonymous critique of SRs, *Chto takoe 'Druzya naroda'*, (*What the 'Friends of the People' Are*), and an abridged translation of Bebel's *Die Frau und der Sozialismus*, (*Woman and Socialism*).²⁰¹ In 1896, when she visited the huge Kreenholm Mill near the Estonian border, 'the enslavement of the 12,000 textile workers had a shattering effect'.²⁰² Ninety percent were illiterate, most contracted tuberculosis in four years, few expected to live beyond 30 and she saw a dead baby on the barracks floor.²⁰³ Back in St. Petersburg Kollontai read a 'legal Marxist' periodical, collected money for textile strikers, and met the 22-year-old RSDRP intelligentka Elena Stasova.²⁰⁴ Kollontai heard about 1,500 women strikers at the Laferme cigarette factory on Vasilievsky Island, read a leaflet addressed to Thornton workers, Plekhanov's book on Marx, *O razvitii monisticheskogo Kontseptsii istorii (Towards the Development of the Monistic Conception of History)*, and *Kapital* Volume 2,²⁰⁵ and considered herself an SD.²⁰⁶ She took Stasova's letters and packages to unfamiliar apartments, and Stasova invited her to a conspiratorial meeting.²⁰⁷ Kollontai was indignant when the hostess asked her to pump friends and relatives for money to pay for an illegal pamphlet, though she delivered illegal literature to factory workers. In 1897 her article on the 1860s radical Nicholas Dobrolyubov appeared in *Obrazovanie*; yet soon after she left her son in the care of his grandmother, took an express train to Switzerland and wrote to tell her husband that she had left him.²⁰⁸

Kollontai entered Zurich University and studied social and economic science. She sided with the SPD 'leftists' against 'revisionism' and was a 'passionate supporter' of Kautsky. She devoured *Die Neue Zeit* and Luxemburg's articles, especially *Sozialreform oder Revolution, (Social Reform or Revolution)*,²⁰⁹ and in 1899 she visited London, stayed with the Fabian reformists Sidney and Beatrice Webb,²¹⁰ and studied the British labour movement.²¹¹ She returned to Russia via Finland, promised to raise money for textile strikers,²¹² and tried to contact the Finnish opposition. From 1901 she was one of *Iskra's* main correspondents about Finland,²¹³ and she joined the RSDRP.²¹⁴ She heard Struve and Tugan-Baranovsky speak in Stasova's parents' St. Petersburg apartment, to raise funds for Krasny Krest, and 'took the floor, although this was reluctantly granted'. She argued that 'avant-garde' intelligentsy were 'Marxist-inclined' and 'Bogdanov' and Ulyanov had provided 'a theoretical basis for the tactics which had been formed underground', though she later acknowledged her mistakes.

My defence of the 'orthodox' (leftists) was too heated. It met with general disapproval and even an indignant shrugging of the shoulders. One person declared it was unprecedented impudence to speak against such generally accepted authorities as Struve and Tugan. Another thought that such a speech played into the hands of the reactionaries. A third believed that we had already outgrown 'phrases' and must become sober politicians.

The censors banned her articles supporting the "'true" Marxists' who believed in class struggle, but passed her articles about the Finnish labour movement, which also appeared in *Soziale Praxis, (Social Practice)*, in Germany.²¹⁵

Kollontai returned to Zurich, met Kautsky, Luxemburg and Plekhanov, and went on to Paris, where she met Marx's daughter Laura Lafargue and her husband Paul.²¹⁶ Subsequently Kollontai's pseudonymous articles appeared in the RSDRP's *Zarya*. Back in St. Petersburg she organised workers' kruzhs outside the Nevsky Gate, wrote leaflets, stored and distributed illegal literature and took part in fringe RSDRP activities.²¹⁷

Early in 1903 she published a book about Finnish workers,²¹⁸ which was 'greeted sympathetically by the underground militants and disapprovingly by many 'legal Marxists', and in summer she made her first public speech to students. In autumn she went abroad and felt 'closer in spirit' to the RSDRP Second Congress 'majority', though Plekhanov 'restrained' her from condemning the 'minority',²¹⁹ and she continued to focus on Finland.

In Helsinki Zilliacus formally founded the SAV,²²⁰ It aimed to provide 'energetic, active and ruthless resistance to tyranny and its instruments' by publishing literature, distributing weapons and financing a fighting squad which would operate independently, but had to consult the 'inner circle' when it wished to use the SAV's name, though it would also support 'the work which has for a long time been performed by private individuals for the assistance of the Russian revolutionaries'.²²¹ Kollontai returned to Russia,²²² then went back to Finland and agitated.²²³ She took no part in the SSDP's conspiratorial activities,²²⁴ though she worked with groups demanding universal suffrage, a restored constitution, political autonomy and legal protection from Russian violence.²²⁵ By late that year there had been 36 officially-recorded serious labour disputes in Finland,²²⁶ and the SSDP had 16,610 members in 99 branches,²²⁷ yet a priest was much more successful than the RSDRP in organising St. Petersburg workers.

3. Revolution is banging on the door

(i) The Assembly of the Russian Factory and Mill Workers of the City of St. Petersburg

Appolon Gapon was born into a Cossack peasant family. A sexton educated him as a boy, and he became a clerk and grew wealthy, but hated injustice. He married an illiterate and religious peasant woman, and Georgi was born in a Poltava province village in central Ukraine in 1870. In 1877 he entered primary school, then an Orthodox secondary school in Poltava, where a teacher gave him one of Lev Tolstoy's banned works in 1885. He 'saw clearly that the essence of religion' was 'love for one's neighbour', and in 1887, when he entered a seminary, another Tolstoyan teacher influenced him. 'All around' he saw 'misery, overwork, poverty, and sickness', and despised the clergy's 'ignorance and hypocrisy'; so he gave up his grant and tutored children from wealthy families to make a living. His imperfect conduct mark debarred him from entering a university, so he worked as a zemstvo clerk, married and took holy orders, but read illegal literature, and Orthodox officials fined him for his sermons. In 1898, after his wife died, he entered St. Petersburg's theological academy, but was disappointed, so he worked for Obshchestvo rasprostraneniya religioznogo i npravstvennogo osvobozhdeniya, (the Society for the Propagation of Religious and Moral Emancipation), and led kruzhki of factory workers in a poor district. When he visited Kharkiv to recuperate from illness, he met Poltava zemstvo workers who had been deported at 24 hours' notice for 'the honest performance of their tasks', and back in St. Petersburg workers told him about the 'publications of the revolutionary parties', though he was betrayed to the police and the academy suspended him.¹ By 1902 he worked at an orphanage, though he lived with a former girl pupil and was sacked that summer.²

In Moscow, late that year, the Okhrana's Sergei Zubatov founded Moskovskoye obshchestvo vzaimnoy pomoshchi trudyashchikhsya na mekhanicheskikh fabrikakh, (the Moscow Society of Mutual Help of Workers in Mechanical Factories), and wanted to found a similar society in St. Petersburg. He contacted a former SD who had worked at the Lessner plant in Moscow, and now worked in St. Petersburg, and organised a meeting. I.S. Sokolov from Moscow reported on the situation there,³ and a retired spy introduced Zubatov to Gapon. Sokolov gave him *Pochemu perestal ia byt revoliutsionerom?*, (*Why I Stopped Being a Revolutionary?*), by Lev Tikhomirov, the renegade former leader of Narodnaya volya, and took him to Moscow, where a journalist told him that Zubatov's organisation was a 'clever trap' to 'separate the working classes' from the intelligenty. Gapon returned to St. Petersburg and passed his examinations, though he declined a post in a provincial seminary.⁴

Zubatov paid a Menshevik painter 100 rubles a month. He attended RSDRP conferences, betrayed people and a press in Tver, which resulted in seven arrests,⁵ though Zubatov's St. Petersburg organisation collapsed in spring 1903, since its members suspected it was a police trap.⁶ Reportedly Zubatov paid Gapon 100 rubles a month,⁷ yet after Zubatov was banished from the city that summer, after the southern strike wave, the Orthodox Metropolitan appointed Gapon to the 2,000 rubles a year post of Kresty Prison chaplain. He subsequently drafted statutes for Sobraniye rossiyskogo zavoda i zavodchikov goroda Sankt-Peterburga, (the Assembly of Russian Factory and Mill Workers of the City of St. Petersburg). The police chief approved them on condition that the librarian was acceptable, a policeman attended lectures and funds were not used to support strikes. Two members could propose recruits, though they had to be of Russian descent and Orthodox Christians. A leading committee had to approve them, and anyone who did not behave responsibly risked expulsion. Gapon's draft programme made economic and political demands, including civil liberties, universal and state-financed compulsory education, a progressive income tax, the end of peasant redemption payments, a 'gradual transfer of land to the people', the right of workers to form trade unions and strike, an eight-hour day and the regulation of overtime.⁸

In spring 1904 Gapon recruited four 'honest and intelligent' artisans.⁹ They were the weaver Ivan Vasiliev, the upholsterer Nikolai Varnashev, the lithographer Alexey Karelin, who had formerly been exiled and had a high reputation among activists, especially the 'real' SDs on Vasilievsky Island, and the Menshevik supporter Dmitri Kuzin.¹⁰ 'Advanced' workers were 'isolated phenomena',¹¹ though members of Karelin's kruzhok were 'more or less conscious, having been in the party and left it', and were 'important and influential'.¹² Gapon recruited 13 more and formed a committee, including some of Zubatov's recruits,¹³ and former members of the SD intelligent Mikhail Brusnev's 1890s lithographers' kruzhok.¹⁴ Some sympathised with the RSDRP, though others disagreed on 'tactical details' of 'considerable importance'. The new recruits included Vladimir Inozemtsev from the Putilov works, Nikolai Petrov from the Narva district, the printers Vasily Kharitonov and Gerasim Usanov, the upholsterer Vladimir Smirnov and the metalworker Stepan Sergeev, who had recently arrived from Saratov. Karelin wanted to help the RSDRP to focus on the workers' kruzhki 'with the lowest consciousness', 'to which access will be difficult for party activists or to which they have no access whatsoever'.¹⁵ The committee furnished a large hall in an old Vyborg

district inn and the governor opened it. Around 150 came, and about half joined, and in a few weeks there were 300 members. Gapon sent organisers to the Narva district and 50 Putilov workers formed a branch, and by summer the total membership was 700.¹⁶ A male SD weaver argued that it was 'better to go to the Gapon organisation, because thousands of people go there' and 'have hopes in it',¹⁷ and RSDRP supporters in Karelin's kruzhok thought that Gapon's educational work was 'broader and better'. 'On Sundays after the lecture we entered into conversations with the workers, advising them what they should read. In every section there were good libraries', and 'we did a very good job cleaning up the workers' thinking'. Gapon's ideas underwent a 'gradual move to the left',¹⁸ and he wanted to raise 'political demands' when there was a crisis, and 'unite all the workers in Russia';¹⁹ so he visited Kyiv, Poltava,²⁰ and Kharkiv,²¹ and possibly Rostov-na-Donu and Ivanovo,²² though the interior minister threatened to deport him if he agitated Moscow workers.²³ Gapon returned to St. Petersburg with 750 rubles from his father, and in autumn 2,000 workers packed into a hall that seated 500.²⁴ Soon there were nine Assembly branches with about 5,000 members,²⁵ and Gapon offered to share his influence with the Okhrana.²⁶

The city's population had grown to over 1.3 million, and included about 150,000 industrial workers, with a similar number in the province.²⁷ An urban family of two adults and three or four children needed 23 rubles a month for rent and food, over and above the costs of heating, transport, clothes and entertainment.²⁸ The war had led to increased overtime in metalworking and machine-building plants, where workers put in the equivalent of 11 to 60 more days a year than elsewhere,²⁹ yet real wages had fallen by 20-25 percent.³⁰ Half went in rent, yet an average of six people lived in one room and 16 in one apartment,³¹ which usually lacked running water.³² A factory inspector noted that 'owners everywhere are replacing men by women, not only among adults, but also among the young', since they were 'more docile and steady',³³ though there were exceptions.

The 34-year-old textile worker, Vera Karelina, who had married Karelin, had taken part in the 1896-1897 strikes,³⁴ and understood why activists' wives were 'desperately anxious', since if their husband was arrested, 'not only he but the whole family will perish'.³⁵ Women had previously been excluded from the Assembly committee, but it co-opted Karelina. She formed women's sections that met weekly, talked about male factory guards' humiliating searches, and female membership grew to 500.³⁶ A tenth city branch was formed, plus others out at Kolpino and Sestroretsk. On Saturdays Gapon and up to 80 propagandists studied the history of the Western European labour and co-operative movements, and Russian revolutionary history and literature, using *Podzemna Rossii*, (*Underground Russia*), by the former SR terrorist Sergey Kravchinsky,³⁷ and Liberationist newspapers. Late that year Kuskova and other Liberationists published the legal *Nasha zhizn*, (*Our Life*). She was under surveillance, but did most of the editorial work.³⁸ The Assembly worker I.I. Pavlov recalled that most of the legal press was 'timid and vacillating', while the Liberationists' paper had 'a more determined character', and Assembly branches welcomed it and its sister paper, *Nasha dni*, (*Our Days*). Each evening workers read them over a cup of tea and got 'to the very heart of things'. They also heard an intelligent speak.

Seven years earlier I.M. Finkel had been deported for belonging to an SD kruzhok, but subsequently graduated from Moscow University. He was invited to speak at a St. Petersburg Assembly meeting and 'drew a reasonably large audience of very attentive listeners'. He 'spoke in a clear and popular manner about capital, surplus value, and the workers' trade union struggles, softening, it is true, the sharp edges, in part due to the special circumstances, in part in accord with his own revisionist views'. Karelin's kruzhok wanted to add Liberationist perspectives to their demands, so Gapon proposed to petition the tsar on the anniversary of peasant emancipation in February.³⁹ During November 2,500 joined the Assembly,⁴⁰ and Gapon went to Paris, where he had a 'long and agreeable talk' with Struve, and after he returned he included Liberationist perspectives in Assembly propaganda.⁴¹

Early in December Assembly members took part in strikes at Kozhevnikov Mill and Novo-Sampsonievsky Mill.⁴² The Putilov works, the third largest armaments factory in the world, employed 13,000, many of whom made machine guns and large cannon.⁴³ In the railway carriage shop,⁴⁴ an abrasive foreman,⁴⁵ who was a member of the revived machine workers' society, sacked the woodworker Sergunin, allegedly for incompetence, and then sacked Ukolov, Subbotin and Fyodorov.⁴⁶ All four were Assembly members and the leading member Vladimir Inozemtzev took up their case.⁴⁷ Gapon believed the sackings were intended to halt the growth of the Narva branch and called a meeting. Over 300 arrived, including members from all the branches, along with newspaper reporters, and, for the first time, supporters of the RSDRP. They discussed publishing a paper, building branches in other towns and cities, modifying the constitution, and changing its name to Obshcherossiyskaya assotsiatsiya trudyashchikhsya, (the General Russian Workers' Association), though a majority rejected this proposal. They decided to ask the Putilov managers to reinstate the four men, sack the foreman and get the prefect and factory inspectorate to ensure that this kind of thing did not happen again, or they would not be 'responsible for any breach of the peace'. Next evening the Assembly branch chairmen heard the Putilov managers' discouraging response and decided on a two-day strike, and if that failed to win concessions it would be 'gradually extended from factory to factory'. They agreed to meet on the first Sunday in January and urged members to start saving.⁴⁸ They wanted a 55 percent rise for

women and a 43 percent rise for unskilled men.⁴⁹ The Putilov workers' leaders were confident that they could stop the plant and began agitating for a strike.⁵⁰ The Assembly now had almost 8,000 members,⁵¹ and up to 100,000 supporters.⁵² In five districts 1,000 women elected their own leaders and set their own agendas.⁵³ Some *kruzhki* from mainly female workforces barred men, in case they patronised them,⁵⁴ but branches made bulk purchases of tea and sugar, paid benefits, and had one day a week 'devoted to women's meetings'. Gapon tried to contact the RSDRP leaders, but they 'held aloof'.⁵⁵ The RSDRP intelligenty had few contacts in the working class.

(ii) The RSDRP Third Congress organising committee

Avel Enukidze was born into a Kutaisi province peasant family in 1877. He later studied at Tbilisi technical college, worked at the Trans-Caucasian railway workshop from 1897 and joined the RSDRP in 1898. He moved to Baki in 1900, helped to build the city's first RSDRP organisation,⁵⁶ and was exiled to Siberia in 1903, but escaped back to Baki and became one of Nina's printers.⁵⁷ After two years in prison, *Iskra's* former Kishinev printers were tried behind closed doors, though Lev Goldman's speech, 'We are prisoners of war', was smuggled out and published.⁵⁸

The Russian CC needed money, and after admirers of the actress Vera Kommissarzhevskaya, including the Tbilisi police chief, presented her with a bouquet of 100-ruble notes, Krasin persuaded her to donate it to the RSDRP.⁵⁹ An estate administrator in Ufa and a St. Petersburg doctor made large donations, and a female Kharkiv RSDRP committee propagandist gave 5,000 rubles.⁶⁰ Baki power station strikers threatened the 36-year-old former St. Petersburg SD intelligent, Robert Klasson,⁶¹ and Krasin contracted malaria,⁶² so he accepted an invitation from the peasant-born industrialist Savva Morozov to supervise the construction of an electric power station in Orekhovo. Krasin lived with Lyubov Milovidova, his student sweetheart, who had previously married twice and had three children.⁶³ The couple married and honeymooned in Nizhni Novgorod,⁶⁴ and by spring 1904 they had settled in Orekhovo,⁶⁵ two hours from Moscow by train.⁶⁶ Krasin attended CC meetings in the city,⁶⁷ but avoided other members of the RSDRP.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, conciliationist intelligenty were regrouping in the south.

Iosef Dubrovinsky had become a revolutionary in 1895, and later led the Moscow workers' union, but was exiled to Siberia, where he contracted tuberculosis. Early in 1904 he contacted *Iskra* in Geneva, escaped via Astrakhan and led the Samara RSDRP organisation.⁶⁹ Alexey Lyubimov was 25 and was conciliatory towards the Mensheviks,⁷⁰ as was Lev Karpov, the son of a Kyiv shop assistant. He had become a revolutionary in 1897, joined the SD Moscow League of Struggle in 1898, moved to Voronezh in 1900 and helped to organise the RSDRP Northern workers' union. In 1903 he led the Russian CC's eastern bureau in Samara, and by 1904 he led its southern bureau in Kyiv,⁷¹ which wanted to end the factionalism, but opposed a Third Congress. In November, after the police arrested the Bolshevik CC members Essen, Lengnik and Krzhizhanovsky, and the 29-year Bolshevik intelligent Fyodor Gusarov resigned, Krasin, Noskov and the 18-year-old home-educated intelligent Lev Galperin ousted the Bolshevik Zalkind, co-opted Lyubimov, Karpov and Dubrovinsky, dissolved the southern bureau, accepted Plekhanov's co-options of Mensheviks onto *Iskra's* editorial board, called on Ulyanov to re-join it, forbade him to publish in the CC's name without their permission, sacked him as their foreign representative and appointed Noskov in his place.⁷²

The Liberationists' banquet campaign had begun in St. Petersburg, and the eight organisations represented at the Paris conference published their minutes.⁷³ Ulyanov was visiting Paris,⁷⁴ but returned to Geneva and wrote to Malinovsky, Zalkind and Wallach in St. Petersburg. They were to form a 'special group' to co-opt reliable people onto an organising committee for a Third Congress, make 'regular rounds' of committees, link them together and find money 'by any means short of murder'. He lambasted the 'sheer unpardonable stupidity' of Malinovsky's delaying his visit to Geneva and putting faith in the 'dirty scum' of the Russian CC.⁷⁵ Ulyanov told Caucasian Bolsheviks that the Mensheviks had intercepted a letter from the 25-year-old Bolshevik rabochy-intelligent Tsetsilia Bobrovskaya, though it had been retrieved. In Baki, after arrests of RSDRP committee members, a Menshevik co-opted others onto the committee, though Zalkind dissolved it.⁷⁶

Ulyanov spoke Zurich and Bern to raise money, then returned to Geneva.⁷⁷ He told Zalkind that a former Bundist would smuggle the Bolshevik paper to Russia for 200-300 rubles a month, and asked her permission to sign its 'manifesto' on behalf of the organising committee, or preferably the CC.⁷⁸ Soon after Ulyanov announced the publication of the Bolshevik paper, and added that a 'close circle' of Bolsheviks abroad had organised the fight against the 'most shameless splitting methods and tactics' of Menshevik agents. A transport network for the Bolshevik paper had been 'formed in part' in north and south Russia, though 'most vigorous "literary" support' was needed, since it would be 'highly detrimental' if 'only writers (in the professional sense of the term)' contributed, and the paper would be 'vital and alive' only if 'for five leading and regularly contributing comrades there are five hundred or five thousand contributors who are not writers'. One of the 'shortcomings of the old *Iskra*, one which I always tried to get rid of (and which has grown to monstrous proportions in the new *Iskra*) was that too little was

done for it from Russia'. 'Nothing could be more harmful' than leaving correspondence in the hands of the committee and secretaries, and if the new paper was to be 'a real organ of *the working-class movement*', workers must stop saying of intelligenty that 'it is *their* business to write and ours to read'. He needed '*private letters*',⁷⁹ and money. He told the 30-year-old Bolshevik intelligenty Gavril Leitensen in Paris that a four-page paper about the same size as *Iskra* would cost around 400 francs. It 'should come out fortnightly, and still better, weekly', though they had cash for one issue, plus '*promises*'. Could he find a correspondent in Belgium or do the job himself? Ulyanov asked Zalkind in St. Petersburg to check on Malinovsky and Gorky's financial support. 'Money is desperately needed. Please do everything you can at once to send 1,000-2,000 rubles, otherwise we shall be in the air and everything will be left to chance'. He asked Rozenfeld to write for the paper,⁸⁰ and begged a Russian sympathiser for 2,000 rubles a month for six months for 'editing, publishing, transport, and equipment of the most essential agents'.⁸¹

Malinovsky had claimed, in a pseudonymous Geneva publication, that Russia's 'proletarian vanguard' could take over the RSDRP from émigré intelligenty.⁸² He sent no articles for the new paper, though he wrote leaflets for St. Petersburg committee, including those about an armed rising, and he reported about his discussions with Gorky.⁸³

Gorky lived in Nizhni Novgorod, but often visited Moscow and contributed to Bolshevik funds.⁸⁴ He met the 35-year-old actress Maria Andreeva,⁸⁵ who supported the Bolsheviks.⁸⁶ She had left her husband, a high government official, and lived with Gorky,⁸⁷ though he and Ekaterina Peshkova parted amicably. Almost 500,000 volumes of Gorky's works had been printed,⁸⁸ and 75,000 play scripts of *Na dne*, (*The Lower Depths*), had been sold.⁸⁹ Zemstva distributed his works and he was convinced that the 'most attentive and serious reader' of the cheap editions of his works from Konstantin Piatnitsky's publishing house, Znanie, (Knowledge), was 'the literate worker' and 'peasant-democrat' 'searching for answers'.⁹⁰ Znanie issued 41,000 copies of a miscellany by Gorky and others,⁹¹ and after Gorky noted that the socialists had split from other Liberationists he began writing for *Nasha zhizn*.⁹² Late that year Malinovsky, Elizarova, Drabkin and other St. Petersburg committee members discussed publications with Gorky, and Zalkind reported to Geneva that he 'definitely has come over to our side and considers Ulyanov as the man capable of leading the proletariat'.⁹³ He understood the reasons for the émigré factions and supported the Bolsheviks, saying 'Down with the generals'. He had given Malinovsky 700 rubles and 'is ready to give 3,000 rubles if the new paper 'spurns trivial polemics'.⁹⁴ He would 'use all his connections' to raise money, including wealthy lawyers, engineers, doctors, bank directors, government officials and Old Believers (whose forbears had split from the Orthodox Church in the 17th century). Malinovsky suggested that he ask the industrialist Morozov to redirect his donations from the Mensheviks.⁹⁵ Ulyanov asked Malinovsky and Zalkind to send workers' letters,⁹⁶ and 'squeeze out' money from Gorky, 'even if only a little at a time',⁹⁷ and Andreeva arranged for Gorky to meet Krasin.⁹⁸ The Russian CC needed more underground presses, and Krasin, who worked at the Putilov works in St. Petersburg, was 'especially skilled' in locating millionaires and 'extracting their money'.⁹⁹ When Gorky was at Sestroretsk, someone 'warned' him to expect 'Nikitch' of the RSDRP CC, though he was surprised to see 'an elegantly dressed gentleman in a bowler hat, kid gloves and smart shoes' who offered 'the very strong and roughened hand of a working man'. Krasin 'produced quite convincing proof of his identity' and told Gorky that there would 'probably be a split' in the RSDRP, but insisted that that 'doesn't frighten Ulyanov', since he wanted to 'create a cadre of professional revolutionaries' including workers. Gorky knew Morozov was a 'regular and attentive reader' of RSDRP literature, and Krasin asked Gorky to ask him for money. Morozov promised 2,000 rubles a month, and Krasin asked for 10,000 in advance,¹⁰⁰ while Gorky gave him the proceeds of Caucasian performances of *Na dne*.¹⁰¹

Between September and December three regional RSDRP conferences had taken place in Russia. The southern conference included representatives from Odesa, Katerynoslav and Mykolaiv committees; and the Caucasian conference those from Baki, Batumi, Tbilisi and Imeretia-Mingrenalia.¹⁰² The Tver committee secretary had 'pushed through' a Bolshevik resolution, though a 'significant' minority had supported the Russian CC, and the northern conference, which met near St. Petersburg, and included representatives from St. Petersburg, Moscow, Tver, Riga and Nizhni Novgorod committees. Wallach argued for supporting the Bolsheviks, though a majority of delegates, including Malinovsky and Zalkind called on the Russian CC to take control of the organisation of the Third Congress.¹⁰³ The three conferences appointed a bureau which included Wallach, Drabkin, Zalkind, Mandelshtam and other Bolsheviks. Ulyanov was furious that there were not more, but told them which committees had an 'unqualified' or a 'conditional' right to send delegates,¹⁰⁴ though St. Petersburg committee needed reinforcements.

(iii) There are no propagandists!

In summer 1904, after Menshevik intelligenty left the St. Petersburg RSDRP committee, the police had arrested the Bolshevik intelligenty Stasova and members of the northern committee; but late that year, after a hunger-strike, they released some under caution,¹⁰⁵ and Stasova's wealthy father bailed her for 1,000 rubles. In St. Petersburg the

Bolshevik worker Alexandr Shotman was a district organiser and was 'rather afraid of her', so he 'prepared reports on work in my raion very carefully, sooner underestimating the number of members in circles and the number of meetings held than there were', so 'she wouldn't suspect that I had embellished the state of affairs'. Zalkind reported to Geneva that the organisation had improved, though Stasova was under surveillance and they needed help. The teacher Dora Lazurkina wrote to Geneva that 'workers' wives greet us coldly; at times they declare openly that they don't like our visits. And this is understandable, for we draw their husbands into party work and the results are almost always prison or exile'.¹⁰⁶ The committee had fewer than 300 ties with workers,¹⁰⁷ and while eight of the 30 former kruzhski in Petersburg district and three in Nevsky district were active, most workers called the Bolshevik intelligently 'people who understand nothing' and supported the Mensheviks. Most intelligently did not distribute leaflets¹⁰⁸ though some Bolsheviks were busy.

Nikolai Burenin was born into a wealthy St. Petersburg family 1874. He graduated from a commercial academy, considered himself a revolutionary by 1901 and joined the RSDRP in 1904.¹⁰⁹ He was adept at organising safe houses and storing literature and presses, and knew about belts and corsets for carrying fuses, dynamite and bomb-making equipment.¹¹⁰ Ulyanov wanted him to lead a fighting squad,¹¹¹ and told Stasova that he was sending Drabkin to be a secretary of the St. Petersburg committee and the Bolshevik bureau. Wallach was responsible for transport at the western border, and Ulyanov told him to 'take energetic steps for passing on his heritage in case of arrest'.¹¹² He replied that Zalkind 'does not in the least realise what a sorry and critical situation we are in', and wasted time on 'long and boring speeches'. 'The periphery, if not everywhere against us, then almost nowhere is for us. The broad mass of party workers still consider us a small group of disorganisers, without any forces of our own. Our only way out is immediately to get out a newspaper' and a Third Congress no later than the following February, without involving the Russian CC, and replacing it with an all-Bolshevik CC. Maintaining 'strict loyalty is impossible' in 'the present abnormal conditions', so Bolsheviks 'should come out openly'.¹¹³

St. Petersburg RSDRP intelligently were confused about the Assembly, and there were jeers if Bolsheviks unfurled red banners at its meetings and called out 'Down with the Autocracy!', though they got a hearing if they criticised social conditions,¹¹⁴ and one got an enthusiastic reception after claiming that Gapon agreed with him.¹¹⁵ Vladimir Nevsky, a 26-year-old Menshevik organiser,¹¹⁶ later recalled the situation.

1) the illegal Social Democratic organisation was very weak; 2) the workers' movement had long outgrown the narrow framework of illegal organisation, was bursting out, was demanding new legal mass organisations as well as illegal ones; 3) the organisers of Gapon's local branches were themselves workers; 4) the cultural and educational activities which Gaponists like Karelina and her friends took upon themselves attracted a mass of non-party workers; 5), finally, the priest's cassock was ... a magnetic force drawing the darkest, most backward mass to the assembly.

Women took part in branches 'on the biggest possible scale – something that didn't happen in our party organisation'. SD ideas had an 'enormous' influence, though 'highly developed and tested socialist workers' were 'suffocating in the narrow framework of illegal cells' and the organisation was 'spending all its strength and resources on the factional struggle', while 'putting workers on their guard' against Gapon.¹¹⁷ The RSDRP committee was in an 'extremely sorry state' since 'ties with the working masses had been utterly disorganised' by the Mensheviks, and Bolsheviks 'managed to preserve them, with great effort', only in the Town, Vyborg and Vasilievsky Island districts. One committee secretary communicated with the head of the press and the finance commission, and there was a chief writer and editor, a chief organiser, an agitator (who was also the student organiser), and four other organisers, though none were workers, and the police raided the press. Nikolai Doroshenko, a 23-year-old Bolshevik City district organiser, later recalled that 'Until the last days of December, I and my close comrades had had no occasion to visit' the Assembly and he could not 'recall a single conversation with the organised workers' about 'any of our people visiting those on Vasilievsky Island or in the Petersburg district'.¹¹⁸

The Bolshevik Drabkin reported to Geneva that around 1,200 Mensheviks had superior technical equipment and their overall position was 'incomparably better'.¹¹⁹ Mensheviks led the Narva, Nevsky, Vasilievsky Island and Petersburg district committees,¹²⁰ but they included only intelligently.¹²¹ The Menshevik organiser, I.M. Peskin, recalled 'semi-conspiratorial meetings of the maturer workers of each plant' and helped them formulate their demands; though 100 or so had 'a purely moral striving to structure everything "in a fair manner"' and wanted to 'force the owners to atone for past sins'.¹²²

Well-functioning organisations were to be found only in the Narva sector, with its 30,000 workers ... [yet] the whole social democratic organisation consisted of six or seven kruzhski of workers of the Putilov and Railway Car Construction plants (four to six workers in each kruzhsok) and the work was conducted according to old-fashioned methods, with long courses in political economy and primitive culture. True, there was a sector organisation of representatives of the kruzhski, but what it did is hard to determine.

Moreover, most of the workers belonging to our *kruzhok* were very young men, just out of apprenticeship and with no influence whatsoever in the factory milieu.¹²³

There were 35 or so workers with a toehold in large Narva district plants, though there were probably fewer than 20 in Nevsky district, along with some 'conscious, cultivated and educated workers' who had left the RSDRP, but still considered themselves to be SDs.¹²⁴ Peskin eventually heard of the Assembly by chance,¹²⁵ and the Menshevik Gurvich was also 'caught unawares',¹²⁶ though the Bolsheviks had a new organiser from the Volga region.

Saratov's population was 202,000, though the economic crisis had interrupted its industrial growth and many metalworkers had been sacked. In January the VSPR criticised the RSDRP's 'economist' perspective, and argued for strikes,¹²⁷ since factory conditions were compared to those in a *katorga* prison, and 40 percent were unemployed.¹²⁸ The RSDRP committee had six propagandists, but had lost touch with the émigré intelligenty, and the VPSR influenced workers' *kruzhki*.¹²⁹ In May the police arrested P.I. ('Ponty') Denisov and another Bolshevik when they were posting and delivering leaflets. Denisov's comrade was subsequently sentenced to three and a half years in a punishment battalion, and Denisov to exile for life in Siberia; but when the roads became slushy he escaped abroad, joined the émigrés in Geneva, and then returned to St. Petersburg, where the RSDRP committee was based in fashionable district, where it was less likely to be detected,¹³⁰ though it worked 'under drastically difficult conditions of secrecy'.¹³¹ A handful of full-timers were paid 25-30 rubles a month, others did casual labour to make ends meet, a few had jobs and some had private means.¹³² Denisov slept in the homes of wealthy liberals and professionals, and one day he set off for a secret meeting and made sure he was not followed. At the 'conspiratorial apartment' he found Olga Dmitriyevna, a committee secretary who had 'connections in all strata of society', discussing weapons with a man who appeared to belong to a 'fighting squad'. 'To hell with him and his bulldogs and Smith and Wessons', he said, 'you couldn't kill a fly with them'. He wanted Brownings, but left empty-handed.

Denisov became City district organiser and complained to Olga Dmitriyevna that there were no propagandists.

'I have told everyone on the committee a hundred times – there are no propagandists! You must get by with your own resources!' But after giving it some thought, she went on to say: 'Then again, I guess I could send you two or three students or women from the special [Bestuzhev] courses. But only under one condition: don't let them start conducting propaganda straight away. First let them read a little ... I don't think they even know our program! They have the zeal, they have all the revolutionary passion you could possibly want, but what's in their heads?' Olga Dmitriyevna sadly tapped her forehead with her finger as she spoke. ... There are plenty of them around, but they absolutely should not be sent to the workers – they'll repeat every conceivable heresy. ...'

I described the workers' request for 'bulldogs'. Olga Dmitriyevna cuts me off very sharply, before I can finish: 'You should take care of your own business! Don't squander your energies! There are others to take care of the providing of weapons. A certain person will be sent to your district for that purpose.'

After Denisov left, the police arrested him. (He was later sentenced to three years' *katorga*.)¹³³

Most émigré Bolshevik intelligenty continued to make every effort to split the RSDRP on a permanent basis, though they had a different perspectives about the role of workers.

(iv) The independent class activity of the working masses

In Geneva, late in 1904, the 39-year-old Menshevik intelligent Alexandr Piker argued that a wholly 'Ulyanovist' RSDRP would be a nightmare. 'Imagine a party whose membership has been narrowed down to include only professional revolutionaries', who managed to 'prepare, schedule and carry through a popular armed insurrection'. 'Is it not obvious that on the morrow of the revolution the popular will would appoint this party the provisional government?'¹³⁴ He argued that the proletariat could 'attain neither complete nor partial control of the state so long as it has not made the social revolution', or create 'political forms against the will of the bourgeoisie, for it will rule tomorrow', though workers could influence a 'bourgeois revolution' by exerting pressure on the liberal and radical bourgeoisie, who would otherwise 'go back to oppressive absolutism, which will suffocate it'.¹³⁵

Iskra published an article by 'A Worker' as a pamphlet, and Axelrod's preface stressed that it was vital to improve 'the mutual relations of workers and intelligenty' in Russia and those of émigré *teoretiki* (theoreticians).

Our *intelligenty* leaders have never, or hardly ever, made it their primary task to develop the consciousness and independent activity even of those workers with whom they came into fairly close contact. Worse, lately ... our *praktiki* not only haven't tried to draw conscious workers into the Party leadership but have consciously or unconsciously systematically

persecuted all such strivings on their part for independent activity from the bottom up. On this ungrateful soil an unhappy antagonism between workers and the *intelligentsia* has arisen which at present especially needs to be liquidated.

This was possible only by developing the 'independent class activity of the working masses', by 'acting as prime movers, leaders, and organisers in the struggle for the economic, political and cultural interests of the proletariat, that our "workers' intelligentsia" – engulfing the intelligenty and thus merging with them – can win Russian social democracy a position in accord with its program, its principles, its designation as the party of the proletariat'.¹³⁶ RSDRP committees in Russia needed to purge elitist intelligenty and recruit 'true proletarians'.¹³⁷

Bronstein was convinced that if 'both factions did not venture beyond the bourgeois democratic revolution, there was no justification for a split', and both would 'be compelled to assume an identical revolutionary position' 'under the pressure of the labouring masses'.¹³⁸ He wanted a 'stable party centre', and the Menshevik intelligenty suspended the Russian 'centre', 'pending further instructions'.¹³⁹ Unaligned intelligenty published *Sotsial-demokrat: rabochaya gazeta*, (*Social Democrat: The Workers' Paper*), and in it Bronstein predicted that the government's 'bestial revenge' on civil unrest would be pogroms.¹⁴⁰ The liberals were not potential allies of the working class, since Kharkiv zemstvo had given the tsar a million rubles, and many liberals had sent him sycophantic addresses to 'buy the confidence of the people's enemy with the people's own money'. Instead, the proletariat 'must issue the call to revolution'. The 'inevitability of the impending catastrophe' would enable the RSDRP 'to determine the most favourable positions, to arm and inspire the masses with revolutionary slogans, to deploy all our reserves simultaneously on the field, to train them in military skills' and 'to sound the alarm all along the line at the appropriate moment'. 'The exact moment when manoeuvres turn into a battle will depend on the numbers and revolutionary solidarity of the masses who have taken to the streets, on the thickening atmosphere of universal sympathy and support that those masses are breathing, and the attitude of the troops that the government will send against the people.' 'We must explain to the soldiers the meaning of the mass working-class action being prepared by the Party' and 'fix this knowledge in their consciousness with a continuous stream of pamphlets' and the slogan of 'Down with the war!' 'Everything else depends on the street, when the last remnants of the hypnosis induced by the barracks will dissolve in the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people'. Without the troops' support a political strike would end in a 'crushing defeat', so each strike had to be 'transformed into a revolutionary popular demonstration'. There must be agitation in the villages, but the '*main arena of revolutionary events will be the city*'.

Our general plan of action must be to tear the workers away from their machines and lathes, lead them out of the factory gates and into the streets, send some to the next factory, announce the end of work there, attract new masses onto the streets, and thus move from factory to factory and shop and shop, continuously growing in numbers and sweeping aside police barriers, attracting passers-by with speeches and appeals, absorbing new groups on the way, filling the streets, seizing control of the places suitable for popular meetings, fortifying ourselves in those places and using them for continuous revolutionary meetings with a constantly changing audience, bringing order to the comings and goings of the masses, raising their enthusiasm and explaining to them the goal and purpose of what is taking place – so that we will turn the city into an armed revolutionary camp.

He called for slogans about a constituent assembly and an end to the war,¹⁴¹ yet the *Iskra* editors sat on his article.

In Munich Helphand argued that the 'worldwide process of capitalist development' would lead to 'a *political upheaval* in Russia', which 'must have its impact on the political development of all capitalist countries' and 'shake the bourgeois world', and 'the Russian proletariat may well play the role of vanguard of social revolution';¹⁴² yet the factional split had now reached the Caucasus.

(v) A somewhat academic approach to the working masses

In spring 1904 the Bolshevik Bobrovskaya was in Geneva, though 'theoretical studies' left her 'unmoved'. She knew that illegal literature reached Russian sailors in India and China, and Russian prisoners of war in Japan, and 'wanted to be doing practical work'.¹⁴³ She believed that the autocracy could not afford spies in foreign countries, and understood that there were thousands of male and female Russian students at Berlin University. Ulyanov told her to 'discuss the details' with Krupskaya,¹⁴⁴ who asked her to liaise with comrades who were going via Berlin to Russia, and she asked Ulyanov whether she could consider herself a full-time revolutionary.

Vladimir Illyich listened to me attentively, as only he knew how to do. He replied that the right to call yourself a full-time revolutionary was restricted to those who were devoted body and soul to the party and the working class. People whose

lives blended with the life of the party had this right. A revolutionary organisation must not restrict itself to a narrow circle of leaders; [and] full-time, tireless activists, directly link to the masses, were essential.

Bobrovskaya left Geneva with the legal passport of a factory worker's daughter who had become a student.¹⁴⁵ When she arrived in Berlin she found that the police had interrogated over 100 Russian students and expelled 14 as 'undesirable aliens'.¹⁴⁶ The efforts to reconcile the RSDRP factions in the 'rather big' Russian 'colony' had failed, though Mandelshtam, a 'delegate from the centre', led the Bolsheviks and 'several intermediate groups'.¹⁴⁷ She attended lectures, especially those by the SPD leaders Bebel and Clara Zetkin,¹⁴⁸ and found that the *Iskra* 'transporters' were 'up to their ears in work' in the *Vorwärts* cellar, yet while several couriers were 'trapped in crossing the frontier', 23-year-old Dr Yakob Zhytomyrsky, a member of the network, was 'imperturbably calm'.¹⁴⁹

Bobrovskaya had little to do, so she went to Tbilisi and put herself at the disposal of the Caucasian joint committee.¹⁵⁰ Lev, Ilya, Gleb and Claudia Shendrikov had left Tashkent for Baki, where they had formed an organisation of Balaxani and Bibiheybat district workers. Mensheviks supported them,¹⁵¹ though the Bolshevik-led RSDRP committee expelled them as 'economists'.¹⁵² The committee's paper appeared in Georgian and Armenian,¹⁵³ and Bobrovskaya and Bobrovsky went to Baki and decided to split 'Nina' to make it more useful and secure.¹⁵⁴ Claudia Shendrikov attacked the RSDRP for patronising workers, while Ilya quoted from *Kapital*,¹⁵⁵ and the RSDRP intelligently could not match his eloquence and had a 'somewhat academic approach to the working masses'. Instead of demanding mits and aprons, they called for 'the overthrow of the autocracy' and 'were often interrupted by uncomplimentary shouts'.¹⁵⁶ The Okhrana had a list of SDs' names, and knew about the meetings of petty nobles, deacons' children, peasants and skilled workers, most of whom worked in the railway depot or were typesetters. A majority were Georgians, mainly from Kutaisi province, and Stepan Karpusadze was the 'general of the second district', while Leiba Pekker and Ivan Bolkvadze propagandised against the war. Zalkind had attended a Bolshevik conference in Geneva and was tasked with visiting Caucasian committees. She convinced Batumi and Guria committees that a Third Congress was needed, but they wanted more information. After mass arrests of SDs, Zalkind reported to Geneva that she had had a 'full victory in the Caucasus', and all the Bolsheviks had survived.¹⁵⁷ Soon after the Baki Bolsheviks' *proletariatis brdzola*, (*Proletarian Struggle*), carried an unsigned article arguing against a separate Georgian SD party, since 'the demolition of national barriers and close unity between the Russian, Georgian, Armenian, Polish, Jewish and other proletarians' were necessary for the victory of the proletariat.

In autumn the RSDRP intelligent Jughashvili wrote to M. Davitashvili in Leipzig, attacking the Mensheviks, accusing Plekhanov of being 'off his head' and praising Ulyanov,¹⁵⁸ though when Jughashvili returned the Tbilisi police briefly detained him as the 'leader of the Georgian workers' party'.¹⁵⁹ In November 15 RSDRP members met in Tbilisi,¹⁶⁰ and asked for Bolshevik literature from Geneva, especially that about 'disagreements in the Party'.¹⁶¹ They supported a Third Congress and elected Rozenfeld as a 'travelling propagandist' and a member of the 17-strong Bolshevik bureau,¹⁶² and the Caucasian and Samegrelo committees campaigned for a Third Congress.¹⁶³

There were preparations for a strike of Baki oilfield workers for a large rise, holiday pay, sick pay, the sacking of obnoxious administrators, a three-shift system, with demands for civil rights and the overthrow of the autocracy. By December the Shendrikovs' union had 4,000 members, compared to the RSDRP committee's 300 ties. The RSDRP argued against striking in winter, though when 50,000 oil workers came out the RSDRP seized control of the strike committee, negotiated a deal and recommended returning to work, though the union denounced them as strike-breakers. After strikers set fire to 265 oil derricks,¹⁶⁴ most factory workforces came out,¹⁶⁵ a railway workshop foreman was assassinated,¹⁶⁶ and refinery and factory managers signed the first worker-management agreement in Russia.¹⁶⁷ The workers won a nine-hour day, a pay rise, sick pay, free fuel and the end of compulsory overtime.¹⁶⁸ Bobrovskaya later claimed that the RSDRP influenced the strike with 'oral agitation' and leaflets from 'our excellently equipped secret print shop',¹⁶⁹ yet if that happened, it came belatedly.¹⁷⁰ The RSDRP committee founded Hummut, (Energy), which only Muslims could join,¹⁷¹ and it operated independently.

In Tbilisi SD workers suffered hardship, arrest and even death, though one factory workforce went on strike. An arrested railway worker told the police that almost all workers in Nadzaladevi district had joined the RSDRP, regularly attended meetings and paid two percent of their wages. The committee was responsible for four districts and led kruzhki of six to ten factory workers, including ones composed only of Russians. They distributed literature and liaised with intelligently propagandists, most of whom did not live in workers' districts. The Armenian SD organisation, now known as Dashnatksutiun, led 30 kruzhki, though some Russians had joined the VPSR. The Bolshevik intelligent Stopani escaped to Tbilisi and called a meeting of Caucasian RSDRP committees. Rozenfeld took the chair, condemned the émigré CC and *Iskra*, and called for a Third Congress, though he did not fully agree with the Bolshevik bureau. In Batumi 1,000 workers were unemployed and the Caucasian joint committee expelled Batumi committee, but it received a few hundred rubles a month and survived, and while the Caucasian committee

collapsed, 'Red Detachments' got weapons from army deserters and police stations and studied guerrilla fighting, barricades and tapping telephones.¹⁷²

The arrested workers had been transferred to Kutaisi prison, and left for Siberia in autumn.¹⁷³ Jughashvili later claimed that he reached Novaya Uda in Irkutsk province late that year.¹⁷⁴ He found 'too many rats among the politicals', so he 'hung around mostly with criminals', though he read Ulyanov's pamphlet on organisational tasks.¹⁷⁵ Reportedly Kutaisi Okhrana telegraphed Irkutsk Okhrana: 'I.V. Dzhughashvili plans to leave. Do not stop him. Render assistance'. They gave him the necessary papers and he reached Tbilisi.¹⁷⁶

The police had released the 37-year-old RSDRP engineer Sergey Alliluev and he returned to Tbilisi. The 30-year-old RSDRP railway worker Mikho Bochoridze, a Caucasian committee survivor, asked him to get a job as a print works mechanic and steal type and equipment for a press. Bochoridze was building a house,¹⁷⁷ in Avlabari district, and intended to put 'Nina' in a cellar with an entrance via a well.¹⁷⁸ Alliluev went to work in a Bakı oil refinery, and visited Tbilisi to pick up a hand-powered press from Bochoridze.¹⁷⁹ When Alliluev returned it, Bochoridze introduced Jughashvili as 'one of us', yet he gave orders about the press. The Bolshevik Tskhakaya asked Danesh Shevardian to teach Jughashvili the 'new literature' and make him renounce some ideas,¹⁸⁰ particularly that about an autonomous Georgian SD party,¹⁸¹ and though Tbilisi and Batumi SDs did not warm to Jughashvili, Caucasian joint committee survivors reportedly co-opted him,¹⁸² and sent him to Bakı.¹⁸³ The Tbilisi committee stopped supporting the Bolsheviks and switched to the Mensheviks,¹⁸⁴ though 'Nina' printed almost five tonnes of literature that year.¹⁸⁵

On New Year's Eve railway workers burst in to a liberal banquet in Tbilisi with Jughashvili, who shouted 'Down with Autocracy', and then they all left singing the Russian *Marseillaise* and a Russian version of the Polish revolutionary anthem *Varshavianka*,¹⁸⁶ though its lyrics did not mention Warszawa.¹⁸⁷

(vi) All talk and no action

By autumn 1904 the recession had caused crisis in Poland. Between a quarter and a third of workers in the provinces had been sacked, while the survivors' wages had fallen by between a third and a half, and sometimes more. By the end of the year around 100,000 were unemployed, and overall production had fallen by over a third,¹⁸⁸ though the Bund was active in the city as well as in the Russian provinces of the Pale. Funds from the USA and elsewhere had reached its émigré committee in Switzerland, and it published a paper more than once a week. They smuggled copies into Russia, where other Bund papers had disappeared, and appointed increasingly influential full-timers. The Menshevik intelligent Makhnovets visited the Bund's Riga, Grodno, Łódź and Warszawa organisations, and found that they were 'constructed from above';¹⁸⁹ much the same as those of the RSDRP.

Across Ukraine the cost of living had risen by ten percent in four years, while real wages had fallen, and a factory inspector reported that Kherson province workers were 'nervous and restless'.¹⁹⁰ Poles owned over 46 percent of private land east of the Dnieper and the plants which produced 54 percent of the region's industrial output.¹⁹¹ Kyiv's Demievka suburb was home to 20,000 and 20 industrial plants. The 33-year-old poet 'Lesia Ukrainka' (Larysa Kosach-Kvitka), had translated works by Marx into Ukrainian and Russian. Ulyanov's writings helped to polarise the RSDRP, and though Menshevik intelligently led the committee and brought in agitators from St. Petersburg and elsewhere, a liberal banquet attracted over 1,000, and SD students argued for a more radical policy.¹⁹² Kharkiv students also supported a liberal banquet,¹⁹³ and a Katerynoslav banquet demanded a constituent assembly.¹⁹⁴ Bolsheviks led a railway workers' kruzhek and seven factory workers' kruzki in the town,¹⁹⁵ though the police noted that Bundists were the largest group in the RSDRP committee and saw them as 'the heart and soul of self-defence'. Menshevik workers saw Bolshevik intelligently as 'fanatics', and 'all talk and no action,' yet one worker thought that he and others were 'considered Mensheviks simply because Mensheviks came here. If the intelligentsia here were Bolsheviks we would be Bolsheviks'; yet the committee split.¹⁹⁶ The Don RSDRP organisation polarised,¹⁹⁷ and a faction fight effectively destroyed the committee.¹⁹⁸

Odesa was Russia's third largest city, with a population of almost 500,000,¹⁹⁹ though 85 percent were immigrants and 94 percent had no house of their own.²⁰⁰ The Jewish population was over 152,600,²⁰¹ and over half of them were poor. The war had adversely affected the city's trade and industry.²⁰² The amount of capital in circulation had almost halved, and the lack of credit, bad debts and the military monopoly of the railway line to the front had caused many bankruptcies, and artisans were 'agitated and extremely dissatisfied with their lack of rights', while dock workers were 'exasperated with their constant hunger and the despotism of artel elders and ship owners'. Around 2,800 of the 20,000 inspected workers were on half pay, and 3,000 had been sacked. The Bund claimed 400 ties with workers, including many migrants from the Russian provinces of the Pale who propagandised and agitated in Yiddish, and the Bund CC recognised the city's RSDRP committee. The 23-year-old RSDRP intelligent Dr Mikhail Bogomolets corresponded with Geneva, and when a liberal banquet criticised government policy, he was probably

the doctor who called for an eight-hour day, to which the audience reportedly responded with shouts of 'Down with the Autocracy' and 'Long live the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party', and after an official tried to adjourn the meeting, students and SDs sang the Russian *Marseillaise* and other revolutionary songs. Two days later radical students addressed hundreds of students and workers and demanded a democratically elected constituent assembly and an end to the war, though as they left police and Cossacks wounded dozens and killed one woman.²⁰³ The Menshevik organiser, 23-year-old Petr Bronstein, who was evidently not related to Lev, fled abroad.²⁰⁴

In Rostov-na-Donu an RSDRP intelligent read illegal papers to railway clerks, and 'a group emerged from the more developed and energetic who, at first cautiously, only among themselves, but then ever louder began to say that our failures at the front were a direct consequence of the existing regime'.²⁰⁵ Astrakhan RSDRP committee thought conciliation was 'the only way out from the blind alley into which the Party has been led by the dictatorship of Ulyanov', the 'evil demon',²⁰⁶ though radical sailors had a toehold in the Black Sea fleet.

(vii) Tsentralka

Opanas Matiushenko was born into a Kharkiv province serf's family in 1879, though when his father could not support them by agriculture, he became a shoemaker. In 1888 Opanas entered an Orthodox Sunday school and learned to read, but left in 1890, and in 1891-1892, during the famine, when his drunken father passed out, he repaired shoes. In 1894 he worked as a caretaker in Kharkiv, and later oiled locomotives for six rubles a month for a 72-hour week. Once, when he and other teenagers pelted an interfering night watchman with sticks and rocks, the police beat him senseless, and after that he stayed behind after work and discussed injustices. In 1896 he was denounced for blasphemy, and went to work in Odesa's docks. He later became a stoker on a steamboat to Vladivostok, and stayed on as a railway machinist's assistant. By 1898 he worked in Rostov-na-Donu docks, joined Vladimir Petrov's SD kruzhok, and read works by Marx and émigré SD intelligently. In 1900 he was conscripted into the navy and assigned to the Black Sea fleet. When he arrived in Sevastopol, with all his worldly goods in a canvas bag, a sign over the entrance to the main street read 'NO ENTRY TO DOGS. LOWER RANKS PROHIBITED'. He trained as a torpedo specialist, there and in St. Petersburg, and in 1902 he was promoted to quartermaster, assigned to the tsar's yacht and then to a warship under construction in Mykolaiv which would be based in Sevastopol. Matiushenko met Sevastopol workers who knew revolutionaries, and had joined an SD kruzhok, distributed illegal literature on warships and agitated. In months kruzhki of five to seven sailors were smuggling illegal literature onto warships in sacks of sugar or wrapped around their calves, and the kruzhok leaders formed *Tsentralka* (Central), cooperated with civilian revolutionaries, distributed literature and recruited sailors.

Alexandr Petrov was born into a Kazan clerk's family in 1882. He had a good education and his siblings introduced him to revolutionary ideas. In summer 1902 he was conscripted and became a machinist on the Black Sea battleship *Ekaterina II* and agitated. Ivan Yakhnovsky was born into a Kharkiv province peasant family that barely survived the famine. He became a metal caster at a locomotive works in Kharkiv, joined an SD kruzhok, agitated, took part in strikes, was arrested, and was later conscripted into the navy.²⁰⁷ Hyrhorii Vakulinchuk was born into a sugar factory worker's family in Velki Korovents, Kharkiv province, in 1877.²⁰⁸ From an early age he and his eight siblings worked in the factory and Hyrhorii barely learned to read. By 1890 he had been conscripted and assigned to the Black Sea fleet, and though his family starved during the famine, he could not help. A decade later he met Yakhnovsky, joined an SD kruzhok and became one of the best-informed sailors in the fleet. In summer 1903 he met Matiushenko in Odesa,²⁰⁹ and joined the RSDRP.²¹⁰ The VPSR's three Odesa kruzhki included over 100 sailors who contacted VPSR and RSDRP civilians, and by late that year up to 300 sailors attended,²¹¹ though by summer 1904 Yakhnovsky was in prison.²¹² By autumn the Trans-Siberian railway around Lake Baikal had been completed,²¹³ and the government put Sevastopol and other strategically important towns and cities under martial law.²¹⁴

At Kronstadt near St. Petersburg a warship was almost destroyed by fire: parted hawsers hampered her launch, scrap steel somehow got into her cylinders, and she ran aground,²¹⁵ as did another warship at Liepāja. The Baltic Fleet of 50 vessels was ordered to sail to the Far East, over 33,000km away, and the kaiser promised to provide coal en route. Russian warships normally carried over 450,000 tonnes, but this fleet carried twice as much, so some was stored in the cabins of officers' up to the rank of commander, and in bathrooms, drying rooms, torpedo tubes, and between guns and on decks, including the mess deck.²¹⁶ The major warships were limited to 12 knots, yet officers mistook British trawlers in the North Sea for Japanese warships, and shelled them, and only strenuous diplomacy avoided an attack by the British navy. As the Baltic fleet sailed on it found most coaling stations were closed, so crews had little or no shore leave and agitators stoked their anger.²¹⁷

Around 70 percent of navy conscripts were literate,²¹⁸ and they tended to be better educated than most workers or peasants, yet one admiral ashore sent some to work in a government dockyard alongside workers influenced by

revolutionary propaganda. A sailor caught reading illegal pamphlets or attending secret meetings was liable to court martial, and an admiral could jail and transfer suspects as he pleased; yet RSDRP civilians in Sevastopol led sailors' *kruzhki*. Late that year, 300 smashed the windows of the officers' quarters and court-martial building, and some sang the *Marseillaise*, and wanted to take rifles to free imprisoned comrades. An infantry regiment intervened and petty officers fired from a warship,²¹⁹ and courts martial subsequently sent 29 sailors to *katorga* prisons or punishment battalions.²²⁰ In December Petr Bronstein returned to Odesa and noted the RSDRP's 'remoteness from the working masses and their daily interests', and their 'meagre organisational life in comparison with the recent past'.²²¹ They were 'mostly callow youths, hotheaded and resolute', and were 'uninfluential in factories'. The 'real vanguard of advanced workers' mostly 'stood aside' from the RSDRP,²²² though student unrest led to the closure of the University.²²³ He found an RSDRP committee in Kyiv, plus district committees, and propagandists led *kruzhki*, and while 'usually leaflets were distributed', 'that was about all'.²²⁴ Meanwhile the émigré factional intelligenty and their agents worked hard to take over or split more RSDRP committees.

(viii) *Vyperod*

By late autumn 1904 the Bolshevik intelligenty in Geneva needed more writers for their new paper, and Lunacharsky received an order to leave Kyiv. He went to Paris to study the differences between the factions, and led a small Bolshevik *kruzhok*, but when Ulyanov asked him to come to Geneva as soon as possible, he failed to do so. Ulyanov went to Paris,²²⁵ and Lunacharsky heard him speak in a small hall,²²⁶ though he 'said nothing very definite apart from insisting on my immediate departure for Geneva'. The Bolsheviks 'spent most of our time on internal Party quarrels', though Ulyanov 'set very little store' on the 'capture' of émigré leaders.²²⁷ He had never liked Gurvich, and while he loved Tserdobaum, he thought he was politically spineless.²²⁸

Lunacharsky went to Geneva, and he and Malinovsky, Olminsky and Worowski drafted articles.²²⁹ They received letters from workers in Russia, though their handwriting was often difficult to read. Ulyanov tried to imitate the workers' style, which was close to speech, and their way of explaining facts and arguing, and he encouraged the others to do the same. Olminsky was the chief copy-writer and administrator, and trained Karpinsky, who edited letters and wrote small notices,²³⁰ as well as being the librarian and archivist.²³¹ Lunacharsky recalled that Ulyanov 'would pick up a blue or red pencil and scribble a few theses on a slip of paper', then ask him 'whether he agreed with them or not', and if he could 'develop' them. He even offered 'advice and instructions' for a speech to students,²³² while for an important speech he gave 'all the fundamental theses' and 'insisted that I should write my whole speech and give it to him to read in advance'.²³³ One piece published under his name was 'largely Ulyanov's work', since he 'would edit it so heavily, crossing things out, rewriting extensively, putting in large new passages';²³⁴ and Lunacharsky soon left for Florence,²³⁵ to recuperate from heart problems.²³⁶

The Geneva Bolsheviks met in the Canteen d'Oline. By early December Ulyanov was very happy, because the Mensheviks in Russia were supporting the liberal banquets;²³⁷ though he criticised St. Petersburg Bolsheviks.

The workers were eager for a demonstration, the committee set a date for the 28th [November], but in many districts the organisers were Mensheviks ... and they conducted vigorous agitation throughout against the committee. The CC did not supply the committee with literature; the Mensheviks had the literature but of course did not give it to the committee, and in their districts they did not prepare for the demonstration. Three days before the demonstration the Mensheviks disrupted a meeting of the committee and, taking the advantage of the absence of three Bolsheviks, called off the demonstration; 15,000 leaflets were burnt, and when the Bolsheviks, horrified, got another meeting together, it was already too late, nothing could be done any more, and hardly any workers showed up for the demonstration. There is seething indignation against the committee, and the Mensheviks who caused all this mess are breaking away, carrying with them nearly all districts, and are receiving support in the form of literature, contacts and money.

Six northern committees, four in Caucasia and three in south Russia supported a Third Congress, and the Russian CC had acknowledged that three others did so, though they told the Odesa committee that 19 were needed.²³⁸

In St. Petersburg Elizarova was the Bolsheviks' treasurer and their contact with the émigrés,²³⁹ and her sister Maria managed to get to Geneva,²⁴⁰ where Ulyanov told around 25 Bolsheviks about the new paper and introduced the editorial board. Olminsky had always been in the 'gallery' of the 'hen-house' when it came to fighting the Mensheviks. Ulyanov read out the paper's draft programme and articles for the first issue, proposed calling it *Vyperod* (*Forward*),²⁴¹ and wanted Krupskaya to be the editors' secretary.²⁴² Gorky's 3,000 rubles had not arrived,²⁴³ so Olminsky had sold his gold watch for 1,000 rubles, which was barely enough for one and a half issues.²⁴⁴

The front page article of the first *Vyperod*, 'The autocracy is wavering', argued that a 'military collapse is now inevitable, and together with it there will come inevitably a tenfold increase of unrest, discontent and rebellion. For

that moment we must prepare with all our energy'.²⁴⁵ Hundreds of millions of rubles had been spent to defend Port Arthur, in addition to the loss of 300 million rubles' worth of warships and tens of thousands of troops, but though 'a bourgeois revolution' had begun in Russia, the 'liberal movement' was too weak to carry it through. The proletariat had to support the 'constitutional movement', though when the struggle became more acute, the RSDRP should be 'concentrated on preparing the proletarians and semi-proletarians' for 'the direct struggle for freedom'. Political assassinations had nothing in common with a 'people's revolution', and terrorists had 'no faith in the vitality and strength of the proletariat and the proletarian struggle'. The development of the crisis would depend mainly on the course of the war, yet a 'tremendous popular movement' was possible in spite of 'weak-willed intellectual elements' in the RSDRP.²⁴⁶ *Vyperod* accused the Russian CC's Krasin, Noskov and Galperin of systematic deceptions.²⁴⁷ The paper was ready for printing by late December, but bore the date of 1 January 1905 for Russia.²⁴⁸

Malinovsky returned to St. Petersburg,²⁴⁹ to lead the Bolshevik centre.²⁵⁰ Ulyanov asked him for money, 'especially from Gorky', and wanted him to 'mobilise' Kollontai and others to write so that *Vyperod* could appear weekly. 'I know by long experience that the people in Russia are devilishly, unpardonably, and incredibly slow at this sort of thing. It is therefore necessary to act, first of all, by personal example; secondly, not to rely on promises, but to see that you get the things written'.

(1) articles on questions of Russian life, from 6,000 to 18,000 letters; (2) paragraphs on the same subjects, from 2,000 to 6,000 letters; (3) correspondence of diverse length about everything; (4) interesting passages and quotations from local Russian and special Russian publications; (5) paragraphs on articles in Russian newspapers and magazines. The last three points are quite within the range of contribution by working-class and especially the student youth.

He criticised the 'idiotic prejudice among our committee-men against handing out addresses on a broad scale to the periphery of youth'. 'What we need is scores and hundreds of workers corresponding directly'; so it was 'positively essential' to give an address for *Vyperod* 'to every student kruzhek and to every workers' group'. Normal transport, 'at best, takes four months', though 50-75 percent' would now be 'delivered at postal speed'.²⁵¹ The French police noted that Ulyanov had 20-25 'student' supporters, and the Okhrana's Berlin Agentura knew about the Bolshevik paper,²⁵² while Moscow Okhrana had weakened the RSDRP organisation.

(ix) Rozhkov and Pokrovsky

Nikolai Rozhkov was born into what he called an 'insignificant and impoverished' family in Verkhoture in the Urals, in 1868. His father, a teacher, subsequently supervised several schools and then became an inspector. Both parents were 'conservative, autocratic and orthodox', yet while there was 'no lack of necessities' at home, 'there were no savings'. Nikolai later attended a gymnasium in Ekaterinburg and was influenced by the English philosophers Thomas Buckle and Herbert Spencer. He agreed with the veteran anarchist Petr Kropotkin that social progress had to be based on cooperation and mutual aid, rather than the Social-Darwinist notion of the 'survival of the fittest'. He read works by the SRs 'Petr Lavrov' (Petr Mirtov) and Nikolai Mikhailovsky, and the SD Lassalle; and he and his closest friend, August Tochisky, read the liberal Moscow paper *Russkie vedemosti* (*Russian News*).

In 1886 Rozhkov entered Moscow University. After he attended an illegal zemliachestvo meeting in 1887, his name was 'inserted in the penalty book', though he continued to attend student meetings which focussed on Tolstoy and Marx. In 1889 he married Zinaida Vovoiskaya, who was two years his junior, and when he graduated in 1890 he was a firm believer in the political importance of economic factors. He turned down an invitation to do postgraduate work, since he and his wife needed money, and got a teaching post at boys' gymnasium in Perm. In 1896, after studying the first two volumes of *Kapital*, he published two essays in the education ministry journal. He later recalled that his study of Marx produced 'an intense interest' in his ideas', though it 'did not make me a Marxist', since Marxism was 'not a complete and integrated system'. His former tutor invited him to study for a master's degree in Moscow, and he worked in the Nobility Archive and taught at the University and Military Academy to make ends meet. By 1899 he was in charge of the Archive, and became convinced that the ugly features of western capitalism could be avoided through a parliament in Russia. In 1900 he was awarded the degree and won a prestigious prize. He gave public lectures organised by zemstva in major cities, targeted them at professionals, especially teachers, and focussed on the history of towns and cities. By 1902 he was an instructor at both Moscow University and the Teachers' Institute, which trained primary teachers, and lectured on Russian history to teachers in Voronezh, Tambov, Ufa, Rzhev, Kursk, and elsewhere; though he also explained the historical materialist basis of his perspective in private meetings.²⁵³ One lecture in Moscow was the result of an invitation from the spy Anna Serebriakova, and that was his first contact with the RSDRP. In summer 1903, near Kursk, 150 or

so students boarded 25 boats, sailed down the river to celebrate the jubilee of the radical writer Vladimir Korolenko, and heard Rozhkov lecture. They ended by singing the *Marseillaise* and the slogans 'Down with the government' and 'Down with despotism', though the zemstvo considered Rozhkov's lectures 'harmful' and banned him.²⁵⁴

The government was clamping down on radical teachers, and especially SDs. Saratov province zemstvo had allocated 36,000 rubles a year for 108 new schools in 20 years, so there were now 527. Three SRs, one liberal and one SD were elected as officers of Saratov teachers' society,²⁵⁵ and though its president was not a member of any party, he sold *Iskra*, and in autumn the police deported him and many other society members.²⁵⁶

During 1903, when the Bolshevik Malinovsky was visiting Moscow illegally on RSDRP business, he met Rozhkov, who published an article on Russian history in the liberal journal *Mir bozhy*; though in February 1904, after he lectured to a Jewish audience, and ended with the hope that 'the social emancipation of Russia' would take place that summer, he was put under surveillance. He contributed to the monthly journal *Pravda*, along with Lunacharsky and other SDs, joined the editorial board, which included Malinovsky, and published a history of Russian towns and cities. In December he was appointed as head of history at Odesa University, and elected as chair of Moscow Pedagogical Institute, where SDs often spoke.²⁵⁷ His and others' agitation had taken effect elsewhere.

Most Simbirsk province teachers received 50-70 kopeks a day, which was no more than 'an unskilled common labourer on a winter day', and Chernihiv province police reported that zemstvo teachers were 'waging open propaganda' and 'exert a harmful influence on the peasantry by virtue of their negative attitude to the political and social order and criticism of any official act they deem insufficiently liberal'. Peasants generally read liberal dailies, and readership had increased ten-fold. It was 'not rare for a whole village to pool money for a subscription', then the paper was 'passed from house to house and eventually reduced to shreds'.

The education ministry employed almost 64,000 teachers, including 889 in Moscow and 86 percent of Institute members.²⁵⁸ Mikhail Pokrovsky had been barred from lecturing in 1902,²⁵⁹ on the grounds that his published works were influenced by 'legal Marxism', but in practice he supported liberal constitutionalists,²⁶⁰ and in 1903 he argued that a parliamentary system was possible. Malinovsky asked him to write for *Pravda*,²⁶¹ and by late 1904 36-year-old Pokrovsky considered himself an SD and was elected as vice-chair of the Institute.²⁶²

During 1904 the government opened teacher-training institutes for women in Odesa and St. Petersburg, where there was also a women's agricultural institute and medical institute.²⁶³ Women could receive a degree, but not the same right to a government rank as men.²⁶⁴ Seminary graduates were allowed to apply to universities from December;²⁶⁵ though censors had banned 82 newspapers and pamphlets, and many books, including Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* of 1651 and Baruch Spinoza's *Ethics* of 1677,²⁶⁶ and 133 works were removed from libraries and reading rooms.²⁶⁷ The police noted that the new rotary presses could print 30,000 copies an hour,²⁶⁸ and reported that 'universal attention' was 'utterly transfixed by the unusual growth of the anti-governmental, oppositionist and social-revolutionary movement.'²⁶⁹ Reportedly 94 of the 156 women who joined the Bolsheviks that year were intelligentki, and 44 were workers.²⁷⁰

In Berlin Tarshis and his assistants received copies of *Vyperod*, 'cut off the margins to reduce the weight, compressed the papers so that the bundles would be thinner and more compact', and 'stuffed them into the frames of pictures' and book covers, or 'dressed all the comrades going to Russia in "breast plates"'. They also sent parcels by goods train and letter-post to 'every nook and corner', though they stopped sending the Menshevik *Iskra*, and 'work went on more energetically and more rapidly',²⁷¹ as the war in the Far East was reaching a critical stage.

(x) Port Arthur

In autumn 1904 there was a record harvest in Russia, but there were 200,000 overwhelmingly peasant troops in the Far East,²⁷² and the Japanese army routed them at Lyaoyang.²⁷³ Grain exports had halved that year.²⁷⁴

During 1904 industrial output rose by around eight percent, but the Prodamenta cartel had pushed up the price of steel by around 20 percent.²⁷⁵ There were over 500,000 metalworkers,²⁷⁶ and 40 percent of young ones in St. Petersburg were workers' sons.²⁷⁷ That year there were 556 officially-recorded deaths and 66,680 injuries in metalworks across the empire, and 477 deaths and 5,574 injuries on the railways. There were over 600,000 inspected textile workers,²⁷⁸ and tens of thousands of Jewish women worked in textile and clothing factories.²⁷⁹ Their wages, which were probably the lowest in Europe,²⁸⁰ averaged 213 rubles a year; and they were almost a quarter less than that in Vladimir province and slightly less in Moscow province, though they were almost half as much again in St. Petersburg. That year textile workers received four million rubles in cash and one million in kind for their wages, though the latter practice was uncommon in 'Europeanized' districts of Russia and Poland. Nationally, adolescents formed 7.7 percent of the workforce,²⁸¹ and another 50 percent or so were in their twenties.²⁸² There were 103,800 women workers,²⁸³ many of whom had replaced conscripted men,²⁸⁴

During 1904 68 strikes involved almost 25,000 workers, or 1.5 percent of the total workforce, for over 184,000 days, though 35 percent lasted two days or less. Thirteen percent ended in victory, eight percent in compromise and 78 percent in defeat. There were at least 69 strikes in Warszawa, 102 in the Volga region, 123 in Moscow and 137 in St. Petersburg, and well over half of all strikers were in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Vladimir, Warszawa, Piotrków and Līvõmō provinces.²⁸⁵

The Kyiv, Warszawa, Moscow and St. Petersburg Okhrana security sections were the largest, and Moscow's cost over 150,000 rubles a year to run, while Kyiv's (which had cost 300,000 rubles to set up) cost 100,000 and Saratov's 36,000.²⁸⁶ Seven of the 20 former provincial Okhrana organisations had been closed, though during 1904 clerks in post office 'black offices' copied 8,642 letters and prepared about 1,000 lists of addresses. Officially, ordinary courts tried 84 political suspects, while military courts imprisoned 18 and exiled 215 to Yakutsk.²⁸⁷ Political suspects formed one third of the 11,000 deported from St. Petersburg and St. Petersburg province without trial.²⁸⁸ The Okhrana's Paris Agentura at the Russian embassy employed 40 staff and 25 spies,²⁸⁹ and the interior ministry earmarked 30 of its 109 million ruble 1905 budget for the police.²⁹⁰ That year, officially, there had been 178 demonstrations,²⁹¹ and in mid-December the tsar announced that 'all disturbances of peace and order and all anti-government gatherings will be prevented by all legal means'.²⁹² He promised to give zemstva more power, provide factory workers with insurance, stop illegal religious discrimination, promote tolerance and end some press restrictions, yet two days later the government criminalised zemstvo congresses and all demonstrations.²⁹³

A civil court had sentenced the VPSR's Sikorsky to 20 years' katorga and Sazonov to katorga for life for assassinating the interior minister, with one year in Shlisselburg and the rest in Eastern Siberia.²⁹⁴ Some members of the VPSR advocated economic terror and 'integrating terrorist activity more closely into the mass movement', and late that year Mikhail Sokolov called on Minsk workers and peasants to beat up tsarist officials, capitalists and landowners.²⁹⁵ In London the veteran SR Nikolai Chaikovsky asked Samuel Hobson, a member of the Independent Labour Party, to ship 6,000 Browning revolvers from Boston in the USA to Tallinn in Estonia, and he made the necessary arrangements with a Bundist rabbi.²⁹⁶ In Russia at least 24 of the 43 pogroms had been related to the war, particularly during mobilizations, and 93 Jews had been killed,²⁹⁷ and around 77,500 had left for the USA,²⁹⁸ though the Bund claimed 35,000 members.²⁹⁹ Reportedly the VPSR led kruzhki of up to 900 sailors and had contact with at least four soldiers' kruzhki.

The police had 11 spies in the RSDRP,³⁰⁰ though intelligenty led between six and 30 soldiers' kruzhki. Over 40 illegal organisations across Russia propagandised troops, though most of the 152 courts martial of soldiers for political activity were for earlier civilian offences. The authorities had mobilised troops against civilians 62 times, and 67 times against soldiers, and 107 of the 123 serious disorders occurred during mobilisations. Army reserves were in limbo for weeks: there was no food for their families; visits were restricted, and there was looting, riots and attacks on police and officers. Along the Trans-Siberian line some troops had refused to board trains and destroyed property, so elite soldiers guarded stations when troop trains passed through.³⁰¹ Officially, the annual rate of desertion from the army in the Far East had been around seven percent,³⁰² though since officers who reported mutinies risked court martial, at least some had probably gone unreported.³⁰³ The Port Arthur garrison had lost 17,000 dead,³⁰⁴ 11,000 wounded,³⁰⁵ and 32,000 taken prisoner, plus over 500 cannon, while the Pacific fleet had lost four battleships, two cruisers and 20 other warships, and late in December the Port Arthur commander asked the Japanese commanders for terms of surrender.³⁰⁶ Around 230,000 Japanese had been killed,³⁰⁷ yet the surrender released 100,000 others to join the main army in Manchuria.³⁰⁸

In Paris, Struve announced in the issue of *Ozvobozhdenie* dated 7 January 1905 for Russia that the 'the Russian people are still not a revolutionary force', since they were 'backward in culture, downtrodden (we have in mind particularly the Moscow and St. Petersburg workers)', and were 'not yet ready for an organised social-political struggle';³⁰⁹ though the tsar was convinced that 'Revolution is banging on the door'.³¹⁰

4. Bloody Sunday

(i) The Social-Democrats will be the leaders

By the beginning of 1905 the RSDRP claimed 10,000 members in European Russia, including 800 in Katerynoslav, 700 in Kyiv, 650 in Vladimir, 600 in Saratov, 400 in both Smolensk and the Donbass, 350 in Ivanovo, 200 in Ufa and 150 in Kremenchuk. Around 60 percent were probably workers, or under two percent of the industrial workforce.

Maria Golubeva was born in 1861,¹ into a poor Kostroma province civil servant's family. By 1878 she had become an SR and became a teacher in Kostroma in 1890. She met Ulyanov in 1891, but did not join the RSDRP, though in 1901 she distributed *Iskra* in the Volga region, and moved to St. Petersburg in 1904, and where she kept a secret apartment. Early in 1905 the Bolshevik bureau met there and she helped to organise the RSDRP Third Congress.² By spring around 2,000 of the 12,000 RSDRP members in the empire were in St. Petersburg.³ The Mensheviks claimed ties with from 1,200 to 1,300 workers, and they had more cadre, money and equipment than the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks claimed ties with 732 workers,⁴ and led 99 workers' *kruzhki*, including 17 in Petersburg district, 18 in Vyborg district, 20 in Nevsky district, 21 in Town district, and five with about 50 members in the Narva district, which included the Putilov works, plus 15 artisan *kruzhki*.⁵ The Bolshevik Drabkin announced that the criteria for recruiting workers 'should not be how well read they are, but how revolutionary, how devoted, energetic and influential'. There were 'many such, and mainly among unorganised workers, most of them very young and lacking the qualities of political leaders, although they are well read in SD literature'.⁶ The St. Petersburg committee included one worker, though the northern regional committee included none.⁷

In St. Petersburg the Bolsheviks claimed around 1,000 members.⁸ Around 100 were students who included half of the 66 agitators and most district leaders,⁹ including all 15 agitators and ten propagandists in the Town district.¹⁰ Their ties with workers were 'minimal', and none were members of the Bolshevik committee.¹¹ In the Nevsky district they led six or seven *kruzhki* of five or six members among 30,000 or so workers.¹² The 145 workers formed a minute percentage of the city's workforce,¹³ and since most had no base at work they could not recruit to an organisation that most workers perceived as of little value, so they 'did not do anything, and had no plans to do anything'. Many intelligently had not yet heard of the Assembly,¹⁴ which had between 20,000 and 25,000 members.¹⁵

On 2 January, in the Assembly's Narva district hall, 600 or so Putilov workers heard a report about the sacked men. Fyodorov was back at work, as was Ukolov, who had promised not to take unauthorised leave again, while Subbotin had left of his own accord and Sergunin had been sacked for faulty work.¹⁶ (Reportedly his injuries made it impossible for him to do a good job.¹⁷) The meeting decided to demand a negotiating committee, a pay rise, abolition of compulsory overtime, double time for volunteers, pay for strike days, no victimisation for striking, better ventilation in the smiths' shops and free medical care.¹⁸ Around 6,000 Putilov workers attended another meeting,¹⁹ and drove away an RSDRP leaflet. They voted not to work until the two men were re-employed and the foreman was sacked.²⁰ Next day 37 workers' representatives met managers,²¹ who refused their demands, so most workers walked out and many went to the Narva hall, as did members of other branches. They agreed almost unanimously to Gapon's proposal that Putilov workers should demand an eight-hour day, a 66 percent rise for men and an 87 percent rise for women. Students distributed leaflets arguing that they should 'reduce autocracy to dust', but Gapon ordered them to be torn up.²² A strike committee organised factory gate collections and bought bulk supplies of tea, sugar, bread and potatoes, while strikers took their demands to other plants. Many workers came out and Gapon recalled that 'the influx of new members' to the Assembly was 'tremendous'.

The Mensheviks had found the Putilov strike 'quite unexpected'.²³ On the 4th a Menshevik leaflet called the Assembly leaders 'servants' of the tsar,²⁴ yet the city governor was in 'a great state of perturbation'. He told Gapon that one Putilov worker had been reinstated, and asked him to stop the strike; but he refused, and the strikers backed him. Two shipyards had important war contracts,²⁵ and Putilov strikers talked with the workers while Gapon took their demands to management.²⁶ At least 1,000 came out at the Franco-Russian yard,²⁷ 6,000 at the Nevsky yard and over 3,000 from other large works,²⁸ including three cotton mills.²⁹ Next day a worker arrived at a textile mill at 7.00am. After morning prayers he lit his lamp and oiled his machine, but minutes later a workmate came in shouting 'Get dressed, comrades, we are going with the Putilov men in search of the truth'. Moments later there was a whistle and the whole workshop went to the one next door and got the workers out, then they all went to a third shop. One man who was late for work asked strikers at the gate, 'Why aren't you working?' 'We don't want to'. 'Well, if you don't want to then get out of the way'. He went in, but minutes later he heard a window break and a shout of 'Quit it. Come on out. Quit work', and everyone left. By now over 30,000 workers were on strike.³⁰ Ekaterinhof Mill and Nevsky Mill workers made the same demands as the Putilov workers,³¹ and Steiglitz Mill was

shut.³² Drabkin later acknowledged that the Bolshevik committee's 'remoteness from the broad masses, and its ignorance of their life and interests of these masses'. The intelligenty had weak ties with Putilov workers, who beat agitators and destroyed their leaflets.³³

Indeed, a vast strike movement was in progress, some unknown tremendous wave was rising, but the Bolshevik committee was living its own segregated life; having once and for all appraised the Gapon movement as Zubatovite, it was not even able to sense that the strike at the Putilov plant was no common strike but a movement linked by the closest ties to all the Gapon locals [branches], to the whole mighty strike movement of the entire Petersburg proletariat.³⁴

A worker reported to Geneva that the Putilov strikers were 'fully disciplined' and protected 'machines and other property against possible damage by the less class-conscious workers'. A shipyard worker also reported to Geneva.

'Zubatov' organisations have lately begun to crop up here, or rather are being revived under the leadership of the priest Gapon. These organisations have grown considerably in number and strength in a very short time. ...

We can now say with certainty that a sweeping strike movement is starting in St. Petersburg. Almost every day you hear of a new strike at one or other factory. The Putilov Works has been on strike now for two days. About a fortnight ago the Schau Cotton Mills in the Vyborg Quarter went on strike. The strike lasted about four days. The workers lost it. The strike may break out anew any day. A fighting spirit prevails everywhere, but it could hardly be said to be in favour of the Social-Democratic line. Most of the workers stand for a purely economic struggle and against a political one ... Today the Nevsky shipyard (Semmyannikov's) went on strike. The local branch of the Russian Factory Workers' Assembly is trying to lead the strike, but it will not succeed, of course. The Social-Democrats will be the leaders, notwithstanding the fact that they are woefully weak here.

Leaflets have been issued by the St. Petersburg committee: two addressed to the Schau Cotton Mills and one to the Putilov workers. A meeting of the Nevsky shipyard workers was held today. It drew about 500 workers. Members of the local branch of the Assembly spoke for the first time. They avoided political demands and put forward chiefly economic demands ... [and] some of those present did not like the speeches of the Social-Democrats and tried to obstruct the meeting. ... Tomorrow there is to be a big meeting. There may be two or three thousand people there. An imposing demonstration is to be expected one of these days, something like the July demonstration in the South in 1903. The Franco-Russian Society Works is on strike – about four or five thousand people. They say a strike has started at the Stieglitz Cotton Mills – about five thousand. A strike is expected at the Obukhov Works – five or six thousand.³⁵

From Geneva Krupskaya wrote to ask St. Petersburg Bolshevik intelligenty about

the proclamations with which the committee promised to deluge the city? We aren't getting them. Nor any reports. We learned from foreign papers that the Putilov plant was on strike. Do we have connections there? Will it really be impossible to get information about the strike? Only it has to come quickly. Make every effort for workers themselves to write ...³⁶

In Geneva Ulyanov convened a meeting of SDs and insisted on an impartial chair and one speaker each from the Bundists, Mensheviks, Bolsheviks, Letts and the Poles. Zasluch took the chair, and the Menshevik Tserdnerbaum spoke first. Lunacharsky replied for the Bolsheviks, then Zasluch let the Menshevik Gurvich attack him. Afterwards Ulyanov criticised Lunacharsky for half an hour,³⁷ and he warned Drabkin in St. Petersburg about the Assembly. 'I strongly recommend *extreme* caution in your relations with this association in view of the *enormous* risk of provocation'. It had 'moved slightly to the left, but it is wholly in the service of the bourgeoisie and the police'. Drabkin replied that Gapon 'misses no opportunity to discredit S-D's' and 'Exposing and fighting Gapon will be the basis of the agitation we are hurriedly preparing. We have to move all our forces into action, even if we have to squander them all on the strike'.³⁸

When Gapon and a large number of workers and students were discussing the proposed petition to the tsar, without the statutory policeman present,³⁹ Drabkin brought the first *Vypered*.⁴⁰ The workers were 'awaiting direction', yet Bolsheviks 'wasted three-quarters of our strength and time on the fight with the Mensheviks'.⁴¹ One Bolshevik worker was particularly frustrated. 'Only after coming face to face with the elemental upheaval of the strike fever that engulfed all plants, factories, and even small shops', did 'we comprehend the full extent of party disorganisation.' It was 'completely powerless in the face of the spontaneous workers' movement'.⁴² Police and gendarmes focussed on the VPSR, and one member near police headquarters monitored comings and goings.⁴³

The 6th was a religious holiday and the Orthodox Metropolitan blessed the River Neva. Artillery on Vasilievsky Island fired a salute and one shell landed near the tsar,⁴⁴ while others shattered Winter Palace windows and wounded several people, including a policeman and an admiral.⁴⁵ The governor threatened 'most resolute measures' to 'avert mass disorders', and since 'the employment of armed troops may result in casualties, the workers and the public are hereby urged to abstain from taking part in any mass gathering in the streets'. He told

Gapon that the tsar would not be in the city the following Sunday, and threatened to sack him, but he toured Assembly branches and read the draft petition. He encouraged revolutionaries to speak, so long as they did not criticise the petition or his strategy, yet some Mensheviks tried to dissuade him from a demonstration, and though he made an appointment with the Bolshevik Drabkin, he failed to turn up. That evening, with the help of SD intelligently, the Assembly leaders agreed a final draft of the petition and typed copies were made for the tsar, the interior minister, the press and the 11 branches.⁴⁶ They were 'in search of justice and protection'. 'We have become impoverished, we are oppressed, we are burdened with intolerable toil, we are abused, we are not regarded as human beings but are treated as slaves who should suffer their bitter fate in silence'. 'We have therefore stopped work and told our employers that we shall not start again until our demands are met'. The demands included 'Measures against the ignorance and the lack of rights of the Russian people', 'the poverty of the people' and 'the oppression of labour by capital'. They wanted a ruble a day rise for unskilled men and women workers, the end of compulsory overtime, the recognition of grievances against 'the lowest level of factory administration' and 'medical care free from insult'. The political demands included freedom of speech and assembly, the rights to form unions and strike, a political amnesty, equality before the law, state-funded education, cheap credit, the end of peasant redemption payments, the gradual transfer of land to the people, labour legislation for workers, an eight-hour day and the election of a constituent assembly by universal, secret and equal suffrage. 'Only two roads are open to us: one leads to freedom and happiness, the other to the grave'. 'We offer this sacrifice freely and without regret'.⁴⁷ The signatories were 'The Priest George Gapon' and 'The Worker Ivan Vasimov'.⁴⁸

On the 7th Putilov, Franco-Russian shipyard and Ekaterinhof Mill and Nevsky Mill strikers pulled out other workforces.⁴⁹ D.Ya. Odintsov, a 17-year-old apprentice in a jewellery workshop, recalled that when a striker asked them to stop work, they agreed, since the gas for lighting had been cut off. In a blacksmiths' shop on Vasilievsky Island I.A. Ovsyannikov and Izaak Petrov persuaded fellow workers to strike, as well as those in a large nearby stable and factory, and droshky (carriage) drivers.⁵⁰ The city lacked water, lighting and newspapers,⁵¹ and at least 111,000 workers from 456 plants were out,⁵² though none of the 45,000 at navy plants.⁵³ The Assembly was the 'centre of the whole movement'. When Gapon asked a crowd of workers, 'What if the tsar refuses to hear us out?' they replied, 'Then we have no tsar'.⁵⁴ He instructed his 'lieutenants' to 'carefully avoid any attack on the tsar in their speeches, and not to allow any such attack' by others, but 'to speak openly, so as to make clear that if we were not peacefully received, the whole responsibility must lie upon the Government and the monarch'. There were shouts of 'Away with the tsar!' Gapon invited the revolutionary parties to support the strike, and a few attended one branch meeting. The SDs had no arms, though SRs had revolvers. Gapon told them not to carry red flags,⁵⁵ and to march at the back of the demonstration.⁵⁶

Peskin recalled that the factional struggle was 'paralysing even the small amount of work that was being done'.⁵⁷ 'Factory life found no echo at all in the kruzhs', and the workers' 'smouldering unrest' was 'finding expression in the powerfully developing Gapon movement, in which the yearning of the working masses for broad organisation and class unity was so clearly displayed', so he reluctantly attended an Assembly branch meeting.

A kind of mystical, religious ecstasy reigned throughout the meeting; thousands of people stood shoulder to shoulder for hours in the dreadful heat and closeness, eagerly listening to the artless, extraordinarily powerful, simple, and passionate speeches of their exhausted fellow worker orators. In content, all the speeches were poor, the same phrases were repeated again and again: 'we cannot bear it any longer', 'our patience has already come to an end', 'our suffering has gone beyond all measure', 'better death than this life', 'impossible to flay three skins from a man', and so on. But all of this was said with such striking, touching sincerity, so much from the very depths of the exhausted human soul, that the same phrase spoken for the hundredth time brought tears to the eyes [and] compelled you to feel it deeply.⁵⁸

Most SDs suspected that the Okhrana was behind it all.

The surrounding streets are filled with thousands of workers. From time to time the Social-Democrats make speeches and distribute leaflets. They are received on the whole sympathetically, although the Zubatovites try to set up an opposition. When the autocracy is mentioned, the Zubatov people shout: 'We don't care about that, the autocracy doesn't stand in our way!' On the other hand, the speeches which the Zubatovists make ... contain all the Social-Democratic demands. ...⁵⁹

So many turned up to hear the petition read that they had to be let into the hall 'a few thousand at a time'. The 'revolutionary creativity of the masses themselves cleansed the petition in this sacred fire of this creativity from the police pollution of its origin', and 'made an act of individual creativity into an act of collective, mass, revolutionary creativity of the working people'. Workers dismissed SD intelligently and students' 'little papers' and speeches, and they were 'instantly expelled and often beaten up'.⁶⁰ Assembly leaders told the revolutionaries: 'No arms, not even penknives', and 'no red flags, and to be careful with red handkerchiefs' on the demonstration. When

someone shouted 'Down with the autocracy!' the crowd angrily refused to respond.⁶¹ When an SD tried to speak in the Narva hall, 'a howl went up'. 'Down with him!' 'Throw him out!'⁶² Another SD recalled that the '500 rubles we sent to the Putilov works was received reluctantly'.⁶³ City branch members confronted the Bolshevik organiser Doroshenko. 'Enough, go away, don't interfere'. It was 'impossible for me to continue my speech and I had to leave'.

The workers, most of whom were unquestionably under Gapon's influence, did not ... regard Social Democracy as their own party. More than that, it seemed to them that the clear-cut, unambiguous line of Social-Democracy hampered them in accomplishing what Gapon was urging them on to. At one of the secret committee rendezvous at which all of us party workers congregated, S.I. Gusev [Drabkin] informed us of the steps being taken by the committee and relayed its directive enjoining us to penetrate into the factories to the locals of the Gapon society and oppose to Gapon's demands the minimum programme of the party, exposing the hopelessness and absurdity of the project of marching to the palace.

Bolshevik district organisers were to bring 'organised kruzki' to a rendezvous on Sunday,⁶⁴ though Zalkind complained to Geneva that the Russian CC had failed to act appropriately.

There are not enough forces to carry on the fight and consolidate positions. Demands for people are coming in from all over. It is imperative to make a tour of committees immediately. There is no-one who can go. I am neglecting the bureau and am absorbed in local work. Things couldn't be worse. We need people. ...⁶⁵

Stasova had been secretary of the RSDRP's Russian CC, northern region bureau and St. Petersburg committee since 1904,⁶⁶ and she and Kollontai led a St. Petersburg kruzok of 25 to 30 workers studying 'geography'. Kollontai was leaning towards the Mensheviks,⁶⁷ and recalled that the Bolsheviks were 'very wary and mistrustful' about the demonstration. 'At specially organised workers' meetings, many comrades attempted to dissuade workers from participating, seeing in it a "provocation" and a trap', though Kollontai 'thought that we had to go', because it was 'an act of self-determination by the working class, a school of revolutionary activity'.⁶⁸ V. Livshits recalled that 'after long discussion' most Bolsheviks agreed that their 'plan of action would be determined by the future course of events', and then sat on their hands.⁶⁹

Most of Spassk & Petrov Mill's 25,000 workers were female, but there were few health and safety provisions, no facilities for children and only a dirty passage for breast-feeding. Lukeria Malinovskaya had become a revolutionary late in 1904, after a strike, and had attended an Assembly branch meeting where she met Anna Boldyreva, who had been deported for revolutionary activity in 1892, but had returned to St. Petersburg in 1899 and worked illegally. They both argued with workmates that women and children should demonstrate.⁷⁰

Karelin, Kharitonov, Belov and Usanov were Assembly branch leaders, and had begun to organise a lithographers' trade union. Only a few lithographers, bookbinders and pressmen had attended meetings before 7 January, yet thousands joined the strike, and at least 39 print works were strike-bound by that evening, and 5,700 print workers, mainly from the larger enterprises, were on the streets.⁷¹

The tsar had threatened to put the city under martial law,⁷² and the chief of the St. Petersburg military district claimed that he had already done so, and had made the city's military commander responsible for maintaining order.⁷³ The interior, finance and justice ministers, and police and military leaders, rejected the tsar's proposal to arrest Gapon,⁷⁴ though they ordered troops from Tallinn and Pskov to guard the railway stations and government buildings,⁷⁵ in addition to the 3,000 already there.⁷⁶ Gapon handed the petition to the justice minister, who passed it to the police chief, yet he ordered troops to disperse meetings and demonstrations.⁷⁷

On the 8th Gorky noted that the *Byulleten politsy (Police Bulletin)* was the only newspaper or periodical to appear.⁷⁸ He went to the *Nasha dni* office and discussed the demonstration,⁷⁹ though he failed to dissuade Gapon.⁸⁰ Around 96,000 workers from 174 inspected plants were on strike, as well as tens of thousands at uninspected plants,⁸¹ and according to Gapon 'not one chimney was smoking' in the industrial districts and 135,000 workers had signed the petition. He took one of the 15 printed copies to the justice minister, but he already had one. Gapon asked the engineer 'K' to liaise with Gorky.⁸² ('K' was probably Krasin.⁸³) Negotiations between Bolshevik and Menshevik intelligenty and the Russian CC proved inconclusive,⁸⁴ so the Bolsheviks hurriedly prepared leaflets,⁸⁵ though one ridiculed the idea of petitioning the tsar. 'Freedom is bought with blood, freedom is won with weapons in a fierce battle.'⁸⁶ Workers were 'extremely hostile',⁸⁷ and replaced the leaflets with messages from Gapon, who was 'everywhere', though some SD and SR workers joined the Assembly.⁸⁸ The interior minister refused to see Gapon, and sent him to the police chief, then the Okhrana lost track of him.⁸⁹ That evening, at the Free Economic Society, Gorky read Gapon's denunciation of the tsar and his call for revolution, then a man dressed like a worker appeared. He appealed for arms and money, denounced the intelligenty for being all talk and no action, then left. The audience were told it was Gapon.⁹⁰ Late that night Gorky, eight other intelligenty and one worker asked the prime minister to prevent bloodshed, but he claimed he had no jurisdiction.⁹¹ The delegates tried to meet the

interior minister to persuade him not to put troops on the streets and allow workers to demonstrate peacefully in Winter Palace Square. His staff claimed that he was not at home, and sent them to the assistant interior minister, who refused to try persuade the interior minister, who phoned the delegation, but refused to meet them.⁹²

The Liberationists' campaign had ended after 38 banquets in 26 cities, and 11 of them had called for a constituent assembly;⁹³ though the former SDs Kuskova and Prokopovich were arrested in St. Petersburg.⁹⁴ The interior minister met police and military leaders to finalise the disposition of troops.⁹⁵ Eight generals had responsibility for the different districts and the city looked like an armed camp. Troops were ordered to stop demonstrators reaching the Winter Palace,⁹⁶ by isolating the city centre from the outskirts, and they received live ammunition.⁹⁷ The interior minister banned gatherings and demonstrations and threatened military force against 'massive disorder'. By midnight there were 20 infantry battalions, 23½ guards' cavalry squadrons and eight Cossack detachments in the city, along with thousands of police, including mounted units. Gapon had written to the interior minister, outlining the demonstrators' intentions, and enclosing the petition.⁹⁸ The minister ordered his arrest, but the prefect believed that Gapon had 200 guards, so the police would not be able to cope, and he ignored the order, and another order to arrest 19 of Gapon's 'lieutenants'.⁹⁹ The governor ordered the assistant interior minister to arrest Gapon, but he feared that policemen would be killed and did nothing.¹⁰⁰ Rumours of a plan to assassinate him reached Gapon, and he spent the night at the home of Sinelovskiy, a Putilov worker, surrounded by his 'life guards'.¹⁰¹ The tsar was safe out at Tsarskoe Selo,¹⁰² and days earlier a secret memorandum had ordered St. Petersburg hospitals to prepare for many wounded.¹⁰³

(ii) The Russian revolution has begun

By the beginning of 1905 Vsevolod Eichenbaum, a 22-year-old St. Petersburg University graduate, led *kruzhki* involving 100 workers. On Friday 7 January one took him to an Assembly branch where Gapon read the petition to a large and attentive crowd. Next day Eichenbaum saw groups of 1,000 workers taking turns to listen to an assembly branch leader reading the petition, but his delivery was uninspiring, so Eichenbaum read it and explained it several times. Early on the 9th he read the petition twice in Petersburg district,¹⁰⁴ to 200,000 men, women and children.¹⁰⁵

The contingents aimed to reach the Winter Palace by 2.00pm,¹⁰⁶ and the Petersburg district set off at 9.00am. They intended to cross the Neva, though troops stopped them at Troitsky Bridge,¹⁰⁷ and negotiations began.¹⁰⁸ The SD intelligentska E. Zamyslovskaya saw Gorky and 'workers were retreating as if to make a passage for him. He silently gripped my hand, then proceeded forward, straight into the lines of the police'. After he left the infantry lined up in two rows,¹⁰⁹ and those at the rear opened fire.¹¹⁰ She heard the first volley, 'then the second, the third' and the unarmed crowd retreated.¹¹¹ When Gorky returned he saw three corpses and nine wounded men and five women.¹¹² Anna Elizarova saw Cossacks charging repeatedly, and they reportedly killed 48 men, women and children, and wounded over 100.

Small Assembly branches met in the city centre, and others in the Narva, Vyborg, Nevsky and Vasilievsky Island districts.¹¹³ At 10.00am a worker spoke to the Vasilievsky Island contingent. 'Our life is beyond endurance' and 'we must save Russia from the bureaucrats under whose weight we suffer. They squeeze the sweat and blood out of us.' 'We live ten families to the room. Do I speak the truth?' The crowd replied: 'True... true ...' The worker continued: 'If the Czar loves his people he must listen to us'. 'I am going ahead in the first rank and if we fall the second rank will come after us. But it cannot be that he would open fire on us'. A woman, a girl and another man spoke, and the crowd said the Lord's Prayer and crossed themselves.¹¹⁴ Students failed to distribute their leaflets,¹¹⁵ and when one tried to speak the crowd chanted 'We do not need students'.¹¹⁶

Pinhas Rutenberg had been born in Romny, Poltava province, in 1879. After graduating from secondary school he enrolled in St. Petersburg Technological institute and joined the VPSR, and by January 1905 he was a workshop manager at the Putilov plant.¹¹⁷ On the morning of the 9th he joined around 20,000 demonstrators at the Narva Gate.¹¹⁸ They set off about 11.00am, with a large portrait of the tsar, smaller ones of the tsar and tsarina at the front and a large white flag with a slogan in big letters: 'Soldiers! Do not fire on the people'.¹¹⁹ Some held icons, religious banners and the imperial flag.¹²⁰ Gapon was in the second rank, surrounded by guards.¹²¹ Near the Nevsky Embankment,¹²² Cossack cavalry and other troops with drawn swords barred their way,¹²³ then fired. The Assembly branch chairman was killed,¹²⁴ as was a policeman who tried to stop the shooting.¹²⁵ Rutenberg flung Gapon on the ground,¹²⁶ and he reportedly said: 'There is no God any longer. There is no tsar!' The workers agreed;¹²⁷ though three volleys failed to stop them marching.¹²⁸ After the Cossacks charged, the demonstrators scattered, carrying the wounded.¹²⁹ Krasin witnessed these events,¹³⁰ and Gapon recalled that 'K' persuaded him to go to a friend's house to discuss how to get arms. They reached Gorky's place at about 1.00pm,¹³¹ but he was not at home.¹³²

About 1,000 workers had left Kolpino around 6.30am.¹³³ Someone who began singing a revolutionary song was told: 'You are violating order; it is necessary to conduct oneself as quietly as possible'.¹³⁴ When they reached the outskirts of the city centre they saw that Cossacks had halted over 5,000 demonstrators in a narrow street off the Shlisselburg Road. After an officer told them to go forward in small groups,¹³⁵ three volleys rang out, and Cossacks waded into the crowd, though they inflicted few injuries. Many demonstrators crossed the frozen Neva,¹³⁶ then crossed back,¹³⁷ and reached the Winter Palace by 1.30pm.¹³⁸

Early that morning 15 or so City district Bolsheviks had met at the corner of Sadovaya and Chernyshev Alley,¹³⁹ and at 10.00am they walked along Nevsky Prospect, looking for crowds to agitate.¹⁴⁰ Kollontai recalled that about 2,300 cavalry and infantry had cordoned off Winter Palace square,¹⁴¹ though the crowd was 'peaceful and expectant', and 'wanted the tsar, or one of his highest, gold-braided ministers' to take the petition.¹⁴² At 2.00pm there were the usual peaceful Sunday crowds,¹⁴³ yet troops fired without provocation.¹⁴⁴

At first I saw the children, who were hit and dragged down from the trees. But I still had not grasped what was happening. I saw terror on my comrades' faces, I tried to encourage them.

'Courage, comrades, it's only stray shots' ...

We heard the clatter of hooves. The Cossacks rode right into the multitude and slashed with their sabres like madmen. A terrific confusion arose.

I have no clear idea of what happened then. It was indescribable. I don't even know how I got out of the open square. But I was one of those who managed to escape being hit or ridden down.¹⁴⁵

She recalled 'pools of blood on the white snow', 'whips, the whooping of the gendarmes, the dead, the injured'.¹⁴⁶ Gorky was nearby.

As many as 60,000 workers and onlookers were assembled round the troops and the palace, and at first everything went peacefully; but then the cavalry bared their swords and began to slash out. There was even firing on Nevsky Prospect. Before my eyes one of the crowd who was running away from the cavalry stumbled and fell after a mounted cavalryman fired at him. People were mown down on Politseisky Bridge ...¹⁴⁷

Lukeria Malinovskaya had reached the Nikolai Station, where there was 'such a crush that you couldn't run anywhere. Mounted police began forcing people apart, many workers fell under the hooves of their horses', and 'some of them were crushed'.¹⁴⁸ At least 15 print workers, mostly typographers and bookbinders, had been killed.¹⁴⁹

A student made a fiery speech on Vasilievsky Island,¹⁵⁰ yet he and other students had 'only a remote idea of how to build a barricade until a short, pale faced army officer showed them'.¹⁵¹ At 3.00pm troops were ordered to clear the streets, though after two warnings went unheeded at one barricade, the troops opened fire,¹⁵² and beat bystanders mercilessly. Workers barricaded side streets, and some fired guns, then fell back onto pre-prepared strong points, while others looted stores and destroyed a police station.¹⁵³ Two policemen were killed.¹⁵⁴ The 22-year-old Bolshevik intelligent Dmitry Sverchkov recalled that 'Everywhere there was shooting, everywhere Cossacks hunted the fleeing'. They hacked a student to pieces who had come forward and asked the troops not to shoot.¹⁵⁵

Gorky had delivered a short inspiring speech in the Public Library, and there was a collection for the families of those killed. At 3.00pm Gorky went home and Gapon told him: 'there is no tsar any more, no Church and no god'. 'History can be painted anew only with blood'.¹⁵⁶ Gapon had heard that many demonstrators were listening to revolutionaries they had formerly 'ignored or treated with actual hostility'.

'There is no use in going to the palace', they said; 'you see that the tsar will not listen to our petition. We cannot get anything from him with empty hands. We must get arms'. And in more than one place the crowd shouted, in reply, 'Give us arms'. Breaking up into smaller groups, they moved along the neighbouring streets, stopping officers who drove by in sledges and policemen ... [and] taking away their arms ...

Someone remembered that there was a small armoury shop in a by-street ... and a rush was made for it. On the demand of the crowd, the trembling porter with difficulty turned the key of the iron gate and opened it; and another porter, dumb with fright, pointed out the underground floor where the arms were stored. The door could not be opened, so a few men climbed through the window, and found within heaps of rusty old swords and ancient Caucasian daggers, which they threw out into the street. Bars of iron and anything that could serve for weapons were also removed.

An SD recalled that the crowd broke into what he believed was a scrap iron shop and got old swords. 'Everywhere you could hear the cry: 'Arms! Arms!'' 'Our agitators were listened to with enthusiasm. The organisers could go wherever they pleased'. As carriages passed, carrying the dead, crowds shouted 'Down with the tsar!' 'You only had to throw arms at a crowd like this and they would have gone anywhere you wanted', though they had none to give.¹⁵⁷ SD students distributed leaflets and workers shouted 'Long Live the Social Democratic republic!'¹⁵⁸

Peskin attended a Menshevik report-back.

The tone of the meeting was extremely cheerful, the majority of those taking part in it expressed unshakeable confidence that now the workers would at last bid farewell to their old illusions, and that open activity by workers under revolutionary slogans would begin at once on the very next day ... A number of newly-arrived comrades were sent to districts where they could help older party workers who were tired out.¹⁵⁹

The Bolshevik Drabkin had spent the morning in hiding. About noon he had heard that workers were being shot and went out, yet he could not get through the lines of troops. When he returned he heard about the Vasilievsky Island barricades.¹⁶⁰ One Bolshevik had been killed and one injured.¹⁶¹ Others walked around until 5.00pm. 'Coachmen were carrying away bodies. Crowds followed crying 'Down with the Tsar', and Bolsheviks were 'listened to with enthusiasm', then 'towards evening some telegraph poles were brought down, the street was enmeshed in wire right across. The workers were trying to build barricades', but 'soldiers became brutalised. They shot and stabbed anyone who happened to be on the street. The body of a five year-old child with bayonet wounds was brought by a family to the Obukhov hospital'.¹⁶²

That evening the industrialist Morozov was the doorman at Gorky's apartment.¹⁶³ Gorky feared a police raid and burned his red flag, then wrote a leaflet. The tsar knew that the demonstration would be peaceful, yet he 'authorised the slaughter of his innocent subjects', and 'we therefore accuse him, personally, of murdering people who had done nothing to provoke such reprisals'. 'We declare that such a regime can no longer be tolerated and we call on all citizens of Russia to begin struggling immediately, tenaciously, and fraternally against autocracy'.¹⁶⁴ He cut Gapon's hair, gave him some civilian clothes,¹⁶⁵ and took him to meet over 700 intelligentsy at the Free Economic Society.¹⁶⁶ Gapon told them that 'workmen have shown to Russia that they know how to die. But, unhappily, they are unarmed, and with empty hands you cannot fight bayonets and rifles'. 'Give them the means to procure arms, and the people will do the rest'. Afterwards 'K' and a few others gathered in Gorky's apartment and discussed 'obtaining arms'.¹⁶⁷ Gapon wrote: 'I summon all the Socialist parties of Russia to enter immediately into an agreement' and 'begin the business of armed uprising' involving 'Bombs and dynamite, terror by individuals and by masses' and 'everything which may contribute to the national uprising'.¹⁶⁸

Gorky telegraphed the *New York Journal*: 'The Russian Revolution has begun',¹⁶⁹ and wrote to Peshkova.

This morning the workers of St. Petersburg, about 150,000 strong, set out simultaneously towards the Winter Palace in order to present the sovereign with their demands for social reform.

Members of the Soc[iety] of Russian Workers, founded by Zubatov, marched from the Putilov works with church banners and portraits of the tsar and tsarina; they were led by the priest Gapon carrying a cross.

They were met at the Narva Gate by troops who opened fire with nine volleys; ninety-three of the wounded are in hospital, and it is not known how many were killed or taken off to various apartments. After the first volleys some of the workers were on the point of shouting, 'Don't be afraid; they're blanks!' but about a dozen people were already lying on the ground. Then those in the front rows lay down too, whilst those at the back wavered and began to disperse. Six more volleys were aimed at them, and also at those who tried to get up and leave.

By some miracle Gapon escaped with his life; he is sleeping at my place right now. He says that there is no longer a tsar, there is no God or church; he spoke publicly to this effect at a meeting a little while ago and he is writing the same thing too. ...

Our fellow townspeople, Olga and Anton, led the workers from the Petersburg Side. They were shot at without warning near the Troitskii Bridge; there were two volleys, and about sixty people fell – I personally saw fourteen people wounded. Including three women, and three killed. ...

[T]he Winter Palace and the square in front of it were cordoned off by soldiers. There weren't enough of them: they even had to put a navy crew out on to the street, and a regiment was summoned from Pskov. As many as 60,000 workers had gathered around the soldiers and the palace. At first everything was peaceful, and then the cavalry unsheathed its sabres and began to back away. There was shooting even on Nevskii. A man in the crowd which was scattering before the horsemen fell in front of my very eyes, and a mounted soldier shot him from the saddle. They were also backing away on the Police Bridge; by and large, this was a mightier battle than many of those in Manchuria, and it was more successful too. The figure for those killed and wounded in the districts has already risen as high as 600 and that's only for those outside Petersburg, at the gates. ...

The workers displayed much heroism today, but so far this is still a sacrificial heroism. They stood before the rifles, bared their breasts, and shouted 'Fire! We don't care – our lives are intolerable!' They were fired at. Everything is on strike, except for the horse trams, the bakeries, and the power station, which is being protected by soldiers. But the entire Petersburg side [district] is in darkness; the power lines have been cut. The feeling is growing that the tsar's prestige has been shattered – that is what is significant about the day. ...

The massacre was premeditated and organised on a grand scale. ...

And so, my friend, the Russian revolution has begun, on the occasion of which I offer you my sincere and profound congratulations. ...

Pass on this letter to V.A. Tell him that a future historian of the coming revolution will probably begin his work with a phrase like this. 'The first day of the Russian revolution saw the moral failure of the Russian intelligentsia'.

Gorky had 'heard a thousand voices curse the tsar' and 'old men, women, and children, call him a murderer'. The 'hundreds of revolutionary workers played no part'; yet they had 'emerged at the head of the movement'.¹⁷⁰

Alexey Buzinov, a skilled metalworker at the Nevsky shipyard, recalled that before 9 January he and most workmates had believed that the tsar 'would provide justice and defend us against enemies'.

And workers took to heart everything that touched on this faith. Each effort to destroy it encountered unanimous resistance. When people began to talk about the planned procession to present the petition at the tsar's palace, this faith flared up like a bright flame, concentrating in itself all the hopes of the workers for a better lot and for justice ... Anyone who allowed himself to doubt this, even if he was your work partner or friend, became for all of us a blood enemy.

On the 9th 'I was born again - no longer an all-forgiving and all-forgetting child but an embittered man ready to go into battle and win'.¹⁷¹ Workmates 'sought out the socialists, virtually courting them, even though previously they had insulted and scorned them'. Later that day Buzinov reached the apartment of a worker who was 'able to answer any question',¹⁷² and many workers went to the University for a political explanation of events.¹⁷³

Malinovskaya later had difficulty recalling her experience.

I've got no memory at all of how I and other women workers found ourselves under Liteiny Bridge where we hid and stayed until three o'clock in the morning. At home they already thought I'd been killed. I was very agitated when I got back, but was off to work before seven. The workers were in a very stormy mood. They were asking the foreman for time off to look for relatives. When some of them found the bodies of their relatives, they were told to come for them next day. But next day the dead weren't there any more. They had been taken away in order that they should not be given to the working men and women.

After 9 January, I stopped believing in God and the Tsar.¹⁷⁴

Every prison cell was full.¹⁷⁵ The police later claimed that ten men had been killed and 20 wounded at Narva Gate, five killed and ten seriously wounded near Troitsky Bridge, and 15 men and one woman killed on Nevsky Prospekt; but they denied that they knew the number of casualties near Winter Palace Square, since survivors had carried them away.¹⁷⁶ A special commission, including leading lawyers, subsequently reported that 1,216 had been killed, and over 5,000 of the seriously wounded had been taken to hospitals.¹⁷⁷ The number taken elsewhere, and those who died of their wounds, is unknown, though some people blamed the revolutionaries.

(iii) You're dragging us into the abyss!

On Monday 10 January the interior minister ordered officials in 194 cities to take 'decisive measures' to quell 'strikes and disorders'.¹⁷⁸ At least 125,000 workers from 625 St. Petersburg workplaces were on strike,¹⁷⁹ though some reports claimed there were 160,000. Troops dispersed crowds,¹⁸⁰ and gendarmes confiscated Assembly branch libraries,¹⁸¹ and records.¹⁸² Gapon changed his address, and sent 'members of the revolutionary party' to find 'the more important of my workmen' who had led contingents.¹⁸³ Peskin saw disguised spies haranguing crowds and blaming Gapon and students for Sunday's events, and the other Mensheviks went to the Assembly's Nevsky hall.

We succeeded in collecting a small crowd, began a meeting and tried in a short speech to draw the lessons of the previous day. But at the first sharp word of criticism at existing conditions, a voice rang out from the crowds: 'You're dragging us into the abyss! You should be strung up!' Although these cries were not supported by the crowd, the general mood was so listless and dismayed that after several vain attempts to rouse it, we had to close the meeting.

After the police closed the hall the Assembly leaders acknowledged that 'they had only been able to work "in Gapon's way"', making 'demands that were easily understood and within reach and keeping quiet about anything further away and political', but 'after everything that had happened, the only thing to do was to work along our lines'. Yet they had 'peculiar ideas' about Menshevik politics and believed most workers were so

extremely sluggish, stupid and politically ignorant, that they were incapable of fighting for themselves, and if we waited for them to develop, long years would pass without anything changing. It was therefore up to the most conscious, most self-

sacrificing workers to take the cause of the struggle for workers' interest into their own hands. This small group of workers should first of all go out with bombs and revolvers on the following Sunday to avenge their comrades, and to achieve through terror by a conscious minority what the entire mass of the workers had been unable to do.

Some SD workers broke into a legal print shop and produced 10,000 leaflets which argued along similar line.

*They are the murderers! Death to them! To arms, comrades, seize the arsenals, the munitions, depots, and armourers' shops. Break down the prison walls, comrades, and release the fighters for freedom. Smash up the gendarme and police stations and all government institutions. Let us overthrow the tsarist government and establish our own. Long live the revolution! Long live the Constituent Assembly of People's Representatives.*¹⁸⁴

The Bolshevik committee reprimanded Kollontai for attending the demonstration,¹⁸⁵ though she criticised the organisation's lack of roots in the working class.¹⁸⁶

Workers at the state-owned Obukhov steelworks, Baltic and New Admiralty shipyards, and the Izhora and Sestroretsk armouries, walked out in solidarity with the Putilov strikers. Many wanted a shorter working day, and some specified eight hours, plus a guaranteed minimum daily wage, the restoration of piece-work rates, the end of fines for failing to produce good work with faulty materials, pensions after 25 years' service, and several welfare demands. The military managers of Sestroretsk armoury and Izhora armoury, the Obukhov steelworks and St. Petersburg cartridge works granted some concessions,¹⁸⁷ as did the Putilov delegates, but the workforce stayed out and made new demands. That evening, as Karelina and other women left work, they berated troops with 'bitter, sarcastic jibes, saying, hey girls, they're guarding our factory gate, they can't cope with the Japanese in Manchuria, so they turn up here to show how brave they are on their unarmed working brother'. At the Laferme cigarette factory 'some girl suddenly ups and throws a bundle of leaflets into the middle of the soldiers' picket and then disappeared into the crowd'.¹⁸⁸

On the 11th the Director of the Police Department told ministers that his men could not cope with the revolutionaries,¹⁸⁹ and the tsar appointed the city police chief as temporary governor-general with orders to restore order in the city and province. When thousands of strikers tried to open a mass grave, troops drove them away. Strikers pledged to stay out until their demands were met, and more joined them, and 5,000 University students, supported by most professors, voted to strike.¹⁹⁰ Most of the 404 Bestuzhev course students were from urban families, though 81 were peasants' daughters and 84 were daughters of junior army officers,¹⁹¹ and they and women medical students also voted to strike.¹⁹²

Peskin recalled that the 'broad strike movement' was 'uninterrupted but unsystematic'.

The most frequent demand of the workers was for the eight-hour working day, but every factory and plant mounted a struggle for its own special needs, and sometimes went on strike without making any demands at all. None of the attempts by Social Democrats to put the movement in order and unite it had any success. They only succeeded in bringing in political demands ... and the longer it went on the easier this became.¹⁹³

The intelligentsy who left their visiting cards with ministers were charged with belonging to a 'revolutionary convention', planning to seize power and establishing a 'provisional government'.¹⁹⁴ Gorky had left the city in disguise,¹⁹⁵ and gone to Riga to see Andreeva, who was dangerously ill.¹⁹⁶ He wrote a revolutionary appeal,¹⁹⁷ and promised to help the Bolsheviks in 'all possible' ways,¹⁹⁸ but was arrested, taken back to St. Petersburg Fortress,¹⁹⁹ and charged with calling the tsar a murderer', advocating 'united struggle' against the autocracy, collecting money for arms and ammunition and exhorting army officers to take off their uniforms and lay down their arms.²⁰⁰

On the 12th over 6,800 workers from 72 St. Petersburg print works, mostly from larger enterprises, were on strike.²⁰¹ Alexandrovsk machine works strike leaders read out 35 demands, including a constituent assembly elected by universal, direct, equal and secret ballot, and civil liberties, though 1,000 strikers rejected the political demands.²⁰² Malinovskaya went to meetings at a worker's house 'to decide issues about strikes and our role in them'. They got leaflets 'which we kept at home overnight and took to work in the morning'. 'I had to do this activity behind my husband's back. He was very strict, and he often beat me for taking part in the revolutionary struggle. But, of course, I didn't take any notice'.²⁰³ That evening a heavy police and military guard took more corpses to suburban cemeteries.²⁰⁴ Gapon took a revolver and a liberal barrister's passport to Tsarskoe Selo station, where a woman friend bought him a ticket as another friend kept watch. Gapon changed trains four times and ended in a safe house near St. Petersburg.²⁰⁵

On the 13th the tsar gave the St. Petersburg governor-general extraordinary powers and placed the city under martial law.²⁰⁶ Elizarova was a member of the Russian CC's finance committee and was responsible for addresses for *Vyperod*. She looked after her 70-year-old mother, and could not work illegally very easily, though she was one

of the few Bolshevik intelligently who kept the Geneva émigrés informed. She told Krupskaya that the revolution was beginning. There had been spontaneous public meetings and attempts to get arms. First aid posts had been set up and there had been efforts to agitate troops. She had previously thought that Gapon was a 'suspicious character', but had changed her mind. 'The wave of accumulated public indignation took this semi-literate person, half naïve in his belief in the Tsar and half not entirely sane, to its crest, and he knew how to master the crowd'. The Bolshevik and Menshevik committees had united and issued leaflets 'under a common name'. Elizarova's maid recalled her teaching her how to print 300 leaflets by hand, and Mark Elizarov distributed them.²⁰⁷

On the 15th the Bolshevik Malinovsky contacted revolutionaries in St. Petersburg's higher military schools through the VPSR's Sergey Mstislavsky, a librarian at the General Staff Academy,²⁰⁸ and the Bolshevik committee exhorted strikers to begin an armed rising;²⁰⁹ yet the chief factory inspector reported that a return to work was likely in the Vyborg district, since the St. Petersburg metallurgy plant, which 'gives the tone' in that district, looked set to do so. The Baltic shipyard on Vasilievsky Island, Nevsky shipyard, the Franco-Russian works at Kolomensk, the Train Car Construction Company in the Nevsky district, the Alexandrovsk and Obukhov machine plants and the Pal and Maxwell mills on the Shlisselburg Road were likely to return. The police arrested agitators,²¹⁰ and the tsar sacked the interior minister and appointed a new one.²¹¹

A Bolshevik later recalled 'anarchistic strikes' on the 17th. It 'was enough for only one of the workers to shout "Down tools, lads!" for a strike to break out', and anyone who spoke against was branded a 'provocateur'. Around 160,000 workers from 650 factories were still out,²¹² though some who had won concessions returned.²¹³ At the Putilov works 56 elders presented 22 demands, but managers rejected most of them and banned mass meetings.²¹⁴ On the 18th machine-shop workers brought out others, and 5,000 pickets reportedly pulled out 16 Narva and Peterhof district factories, Voronin Mill weavers on Rezvyi Island and 1,000 at the Train Car Construction Company. The Cartridge works in Liteiny district struck to get foremen sacked and higher pay, though they went back after they got the money. At the Obukhov works 500 boiler shop workers walked out, demanding higher pay, and managers agreed. Police thought the Bolshevik Nikolai Klopov, a foreman at the Sestroresk armoury, was 'extremely dangerous', because he had 'immense authority among the workers' and had led a strike. Almost all the workforces at large metal plants, some textile mills and print shops and the Izhorsk armoury elected delegates to negotiate with management. In St. Petersburg Nevsky shipyard machine-shop workers presented demands and threatened to strike, and Buzinov recalled that fellow workers' attitude to socialists had changed.

If earlier no one saw them, or perhaps did not want to notice them in order to keep out of trouble, now everyone suddenly knew that these were smart, well-informed people. Many dug around in their past, memories began to come to light, and it turned out that someone here and there, somehow or other, had been in contact with socialists. Then too the general upheaval brought all the socialists from among the workers to the notice of the factory. Now they were paid court to, actually, even fawned over. But they were all our own – factory workers, our kind of people, not ones to hold grudges. From their side I do not recall a single reproach, personal or otherwise, for earlier threats or insults. In the workers' attitudes toward them, it began to be recognised that the socialists were the leaders of the labour movement. They were paid heed to, they were looked after in a special way, with a kind of crude but touching good-heartedness.

Many workers acknowledged their ignorance, read political papers and eagerly awaited leaflets. Groups elected delegates to find intelligently, and one group tried to hire a student. Socialists could not satisfy the demand, though non-strikers' resistance was increasing and police and troops harassed pickets. Two hundred Putilov workers had been sacked, but 1,000 from the cannon shop left after eight hours and seven other shops followed suit.²¹⁵

The tsar told the new interior minister he intended to allow the 'worthiest people' to help him formulate future laws.²¹⁶ On the 19th he received a delegation of 34 workers, mostly selected by factory managers and the police. One was a leading printer,²¹⁷ and they were all piously Orthodox.²¹⁸ The tsar spoke to the first workers he had ever met.²¹⁹ 'I believe in the honest feelings of the working people and in their unshakable loyalty to me, and therefore *I forgive them their guilt*'. He gave them 50,000 rubles for the families of those killed and wounded, or about 15 rubles apiece.²²⁰ Peskin recalled the 'indignation of the workers when they found out that "they" had sent a deputation to the tsar'.²²¹ Petersburg-Warszawa railway workshop employees struck for a day and beat up an unpopular foreman who had been a delegate, though he would not tell the managers the names of his assailants.²²²

On the 20th the governor deported suspected 'troublemakers' without trial,²²³ banned the publication of news about the labour movement at home and abroad, and stationed troops at striking factories and at others where workers' attitudes were 'doubtful'. There were mass sackings at the Train Car Construction Company.²²⁴ Next day school teachers went on strike.²²⁵

Nikolai Volsky had returned from Geneva illegally and supported the Mensheviks, since they favoured internal democracy, engagement in electoral politics and independent thought.²²⁶ When the Menshevik Evgeny Ananin

returned he found that none of the safe addresses he had known were still active, and he was obliged to stay with his father's dacha in Finland, even though he was not a sympathiser.²²⁷

(iv) Moscow

In Saratov the SD rabochy intelligent Semën Kanatchikov was in prison in 1902. He had written about his experiences, but gendarmes confiscated his manuscript, and though comrades sent him *Kapital*, he 'reverently postponed' opening it until he re-read Ulyanov's pseudonymous *Razvitie Kapitalizma v Rossy (The Development of Capitalism in Russia)*.²²⁸ By autumn Kanatchikov was in Tsaritsyn prison, and in summer 1903 he was exiled to Archangelsk province for 3½ years. He managed to take his books, and though he and four other state criminals got a copy of *Iskra* en route, they were unable hang on to it. In autumn they reached the village of Izhma, where they joined exiled SDs and fellow travellers. Kanatchikov taught an illiterate 40-year-old Ukrainian peasant, who had been exiled for smuggling illegal literature, to read. Liberal newspapers and serious journals were available and newcomers brought *Iskra*.²²⁹ Kanatchikov lectured on the Decembrists (the elite guards officers who had defied the tsar in December 1825, and were either hanged or sent to Siberia), SRs and Marxism, and was invited to Ust-Tsylma, where exiled SDs and SRs usually kept themselves to themselves, though Kanatchikov resented the way that intelligently flaunted the money and gifts from their friends and relatives. He studied the short course on economics by 'Bogdanov' and the Erfurter Programm. Most workers he had known had left the RSDRP, and though he was in touch with Mensheviks, he supported the Bolsheviks,²³⁰ and had noted that exiled SDs from Rostov-na-Donu, Katerynoslav and Caucasia had 'poorly grasped and absorbed' the reasons for the RSDRP split, though they 'didn't want a schism'. He 'assimilated the principles of organisational centralism' favoured by the Bolsheviks, and wrote to Saratov SDs,²³¹ who did not understand the split, and though the RSDRP committee had established an agrarian league, it distributed VPSR literature.²³²

In summer 1904 Kanatchikov was released under surveillance. En route he met former comrades, and listened to political discussions, and he reached Saratov by late autumn. A comrade gave him Menshevik and Bolshevik literature, including the Second Congress protocols, the critique by 'N. Lenin' and *Iskra*.²³³ Zemstvo officials organised a banquet;²³⁴ and the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks chose Kanatchikov to speak at another. He garbled and walked off the platform amid whistles and jeers,²³⁵ yet the RSDRP committee gave him a letter of recommendation and addresses in Moscow, and he left to face the 'revolutionary storm' as a 'professional revolutionary'.²³⁶

Russia's railway network covered around 65,000km, with over 750,000 workers,²³⁷ and Moscow was a key railway hub. The city was home to over a million people, including over 100,000 workers, 100,000 artisans,²³⁸ and 12,000 railway workers,²³⁹ and the strategically important Trans-Siberian line to the Far East began there.²⁴⁰ Two-thirds of print works employed over 100, and one had over 1,000. Around 60 percent of textile workers were in workforces of up to 10,000, while some metal plant workforces rivalled all but the largest in St. Petersburg. Half of the women in the city were literate, though only a quarter of female factory workers. Three-quarters of men were literate, and they included 90 percent of engravers and print workers, and the metalworkers' level of literacy was even higher;²⁴¹ yet the per capita strike rate was among the lowest in Russia,²⁴² and the Bolsheviks were struggling.

Alexey Rykov was born in 1881. He later became politically active and was arrested in 1903. On his release,²⁴³ in 1904, the Bolshevik Samara bureau gave him a false passport and addresses and sent him to Geneva, and after two months' briefing he returned to Russia to work underground. He led a successful strike at a Sormovo factory, then went to Moscow, where he pulled workers' kruzki together and got unaligned SD intelligently to work for the RSDRP committee. By the end of the year the committee was one of the largest in Russia,²⁴⁴ and claimed ties with 300 workers,²⁴⁵ and a subcommittee contacted kruzki in Pavlov, Bogordsk, Kolomna and Serpukhov.²⁴⁶

Kanatchikov arrived in Moscow around 1 January 1905. He found a room in the Zamsokvoreche district, and recalled that Rykov 'was very happy to see me, provided me with an illegal passport, gave me literature with information on the disagreements between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, supplied me with money and assigned me a time and place for my "appointment"' with the RSDRP committee. Very unusually they appointed a worker the organiser of Rohozhskaya district and put him in touch with workers. He 'began to establish new connections' and soon there were soon ten kruzki in his 'jurisdiction'. 'Sergey Petrovich', a 'diehard' Bolshevik, arrived from abroad, met Kanatchikov several times, and then took him to the RSDRP committee, where the Bolsheviks were engaged a 'serious fight' with the Mensheviks for the workers' allegiance.²⁴⁷ Mensheviks dominated the committee, but when the police arrested all but one member, the survivor co-opted only Bolsheviks,²⁴⁸ including Kanatchikov.²⁴⁹

On 9 January the leading Bolshevik Iosif Dubrovinsky, a conciliationist, was arrested,²⁵⁰ but *Russkoe slovo (Russian Word)* reported the deepening unrest in St. Petersburg, and next day it carried a story about Gapon. The paper's owners, Sytin & Company, employed 2,500 workers, and the 1,200 at the book plant stopped work at

5.00pm, two hours earlier than usual.²⁵¹ Reportedly, over 4,200 print workers, mainly from 21 of the largest firms, and tens of thousands of other workers came out, and some of their demands were based on the RSDRP programme, including free speech, a free press, an eight-hour day, the rights to assemble, form unions and strike, the recognition of May Day as a workers' holiday, and shop-level arbitration boards composed of an equal number of workers and managers and a third-party arbitrator to 'resolve disputes', including the hiring and firing of workers and supervisors.²⁵² University students voted to strike by 2,635 votes to 102, and students at the Engineering School, Agricultural Institute, Teachers Institute and Women's Higher Courses followed suit,²⁵³ so 99 percent of the city's students were out.²⁵⁴ The 160,000 workers on strike across Russia now included 45,000 in the Moscow region.²⁵⁵ Kanatchikov recalled that 'workers were coming to our organisation very eagerly, and liberals were 'eager to give us money' and provide 'conspiratorial apartments'. 'We were very short of literature and leaflets', but they 'organised mass demonstrations in working-class neighbourhoods';²⁵⁶ though the police claimed there were only 42,000 or so strikers, and that the RSDRP did little to support them.²⁵⁷

The skilled Bolshevik engineer Alliluev had left Georgia in autumn 1904 and settled in Moscow. His family could barely survive on his labourer's wages, and then ill-health stopped him working altogether. On the evening of 9 January 1905 his daughter Anna heard 'muffled voices' in the next room, and next morning Bolshevik intelligenty told Alliluev that a worker would bring leaflets calling for a strike, and he was to distribute them. He was under surveillance, so his wife Olga took the leaflets to Tula and intended to bring back cartridges; though Moscow police arrested Alliluev, then lay in wait for the messenger and arrested him. Anna telegraphed her mother, who returned without cartridges, and though the police put her in jail,²⁵⁸ another experienced SD worker arrived in Moscow.

The 28-year-old former St. Petersburg Obukhov metalworker and striker, Alexandr Shlyapnikov, had organised workers in Murom in Vladimir province in 1904. After they issued a leaflet, two provocateurs betrayed him and the police charged him with being a member of the RSDRP. He refused to talk, and accused the provocateurs of giving him illegal literature, and was freed in autumn,²⁵⁹ but put under surveillance. By 11 January 1905 he was in Moscow, and saw armed workers 'set upon policemen', then 'roamed about the town for the whole evening'.²⁶⁰ No Sytin & Company workers had gone back, though typesetters and bookbinders returned next day, and *Russkoe slovo* reported that troops had killed 76 and wounded 203 two days earlier in St. Petersburg. The Moscow strike had largely ended by the 13th, and though the printers' union survivors demanded the payment of wages twice a month, no searches or fines for lateness, a boiler to heat water for tea, a fund for ill and disabled workers and the right to elect 'elders',²⁶¹ the employers' association agreed only to standardise wages and working conditions.²⁶² Moscow Metalworks nail shop workers went on strike, bolt and repair shop workers followed and then other shops came out. Troops arrived, including cavalry, yet the strikers left peacefully and met outside the city. Next day they elected delegates to take their demands to management, including an eight-hour day, a pay rise, regular pay, lower fines, better working conditions and the sacking of four abusive junior managers. After managers conceded regular pay, lower fines and a ten-hour day in 'cold' shops, the workers went back, and the VPSR attracted some of them to their meetings.²⁶³ The Brest railway was strike-bound,²⁶⁴ yet most strikers were back by the 17th.²⁶⁵

Dmitry Postolovsky had become an SD in 1895 at the age of 19,²⁶⁶ and by autumn 1903 he was a leading member of Tiflis RSDRP committee,²⁶⁷ and supported the Second Congress 'majority'.²⁶⁸ By spring 1904 he was a conciliator between the factions, and by 1905 he was an agent of the Russian CC,²⁶⁹ though Lyubimov,²⁷⁰ Krasin,²⁷¹ and Postolovsky agreed to cooperate with the Bolshevik bureau in organising a Third Congress.²⁷²

The Bolshevik intelligent Krzhizhanovsky had got his wife Zinaida released with a cash bond and a personal guarantee, as a respectable 'senior railway official', in 1904. He left the Russian CC, though he collected donations, mainly from RSDRP members and supporters, smuggled illegal literature, set up underground presses, found contacts, procured forged passports, sent messages in code and took measures against police surveillance.²⁷³ Early in 1905 he helped to organise the Third Congress, as did Lepeshinsky, Tarshis in Berlin and Alexeev in London.²⁷⁴

On the 19th, Krasin gave an account of Bloody Sunday to an audience of students and intelligenty in Moscow;²⁷⁵ yet on the 22nd workers at the privately-owned cartridge factory in Tula, 193km south of Moscow, presented demands, and managers conceded a cut in hours, a minimum wage, a day off in lieu of Sunday overtime and a holiday on 1 May instead of 21 November.²⁷⁶ The RSDRP was unprepared for an upturn in class struggle, yet news of Bloody Sunday was reverberating across the empire.

5. Let every street become a battlefield

(i) The Volga region

Petr Denike was the illegitimate son of the Kazan marshal of the nobility and a landowning noblewoman. He attended a gymnasium, went on to the University, studied law, became a judge and married a noblewoman who had graduated from a gymnasium. George was born in a Simbirsk province village in 1887. As a boy he read radical books in his father's library, and in 1897 he entered the second form of Kazan gymnasium. In 1904 he tutored younger pupils and a cousin loaned him *Kapital*, Plekhanov's pseudonymous book on Marx, Ulyanov's pseudonymous book on the development of capitalism in Russia and *Iskra*. He worked for the RSDRP committee, which was led by Bolshevik intelligenty, though they and the Menshevik intelligenty saw the factional struggle as temporary, and it did affect who they appointed as an organiser, or put in charge of propaganda, agitation, literature shipments, correspondence, printing and hectographing. Appointees chose their own assistants, though attendance at the key meetings was by invitation only, and an anonymous CC member occasionally visited the committee. Late that year George attended liberal banquets. After news of Bloody Sunday arrived in January 1905 a University lecturer who publicly supported the student protests was sacked, and George's classmates refused to take their final examinations unless he was reinstated. The authorities appeared to back down, though after the class took their examinations they deported the lecturer. George read Ulyanov's pseudonymous *Shag vperyod, dva shaga nazad* and *Chto delat?* The latest Bolshevik publications did not arrive though *Iskra* did, and once, as the teenager carried copies under his shirt to a distribution point, his belt broke and the papers fell out. A policeman helped him to gather them up, and George carried packages openly after that. The committee appointed him as an agitator, but he recalled that the committee saw workers as 'raw material' for meetings and demonstrations. When half a dozen agitators formed a kruzhek, the committee told them to attend a meeting of up to 100 workers, where they agitated about the overthrow of the autocracy and employers, and propagandised about a future socialist society.¹ Strikes broke out,² and the committee issued 10,000 leaflets;³ yet other young intelligenty vacillated.

Ivan Nicolaevsky was born into an Orel province family in western Russia around 1860.⁴ He graduated from Orel seminary in 1881,⁵ and married a woman from a peasant-born merchant's family who had had a primary education,⁶ and they were both freethinkers.⁷ In the mid-1880s they settled in the small town of Belebei in Ufa province, western Siberia, where two thirds of population were Russian, and Nicolaevsky read a conservative newspaper and the liberal *Russkaya mysl* (*Russian Thought*). Boris was born in 1887, and in 1891-1892 he found the famine traumatic.⁸ His father taught at a state school, and Boris later attended a primary school. In 1898 he entered a boarding gymnasium in the Volga city of Samara, and got too little to eat, though he read liberal literature, was 'carried away' by Nikolai Nekrasov's 1860s liberal-radical poetry and learned about the Decembrists.⁹ After his father died in 1899 most of the family moved into Ufa,¹⁰ and late in 1900 Boris found a mimeographed anti-religious leaflet in the street. It was the first 'free word' he had read.¹¹ In 1901 deported Moscow University students told him about the revolutionary movement, and by 1902 Boris, a sister and other girls and boys from the families of merchants, downwardly-mobile gentry, officials and *raznochintsy* (educated people of an uncertain class) formed a kruzhek. A seminarian loaned them banned works by the 1860s radicals Nikolai Chernyshevsky and Dmitry Pisarev, and they loved Gorky's magazine *Zhizn* (*Life*) and knew his *Pesnya o burevestnike* (*Song of the Stormy Petrel*) by heart. Late that year, after the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of Nekrasov's death, a former SD exile showed Boris Plekhanov's pamphlet about the poet. The 15-year-old joined an SD kruzhek, and was influenced by a radical provincial paper, though it soon closed.¹² Early in 1903 he contacted striking bakers, yet they were the 'most ordinary fellows' and 'understood nothing'. In spring he was the only gymnasium pupil in a student kruzhek, including a few from Moscow and Kazan. They discussed political economy and were heavily influenced by 'Bogdanov', though Boris also learned about the VPSR.¹³ Soon after the gymnasium expelled him and some of his friends, so he rejoined his family in Ufa. He entered a gymnasium and contacted a kruzhek that included SDs and others influenced by the VPSR. He read Lavrov's *Istoricheskie pisma* (*Historical Letters*), other SR literature, SD pamphlets and journals, *Iskra*,¹⁴ Plekhanov's essays, a pseudonymous article by Luly Tsederbaum and the VPSR's *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* (*Revolutionary Russia*), though he thought terror was inexpedient.¹⁵ Early in 1904 the kruzhek aimed to create a student organisation and produced a mimeographed journal called *Zvezda* (*Star*), and when the police arrested a VPSR student carrying a copy, he inadvertently implicated Boris,¹⁶ who recalled that 'As usual, I had cleared the place of literature. We usually sealed it in a small jar. A great deal of snow had fallen, and I hid the jar in the snow. But one or two brochures had been left behind', and he was arrested. He knew the SD rules on refusing to testify, and was calm,¹⁷ but he was cocky. He lost the right to receive literature,¹⁸ and after a

provocateur failed to entrap him, he was put in a solitary cell.¹⁹ Two months later, after he threatened to go on hunger strike, his sister was allowed to bring him books including Kautsky's *Die Agrarfrage (The Agrarian Question)* and Ulyanov's pseudonymous book about the development of capitalism in Russia. Boris believed that the peasant movement had made 'an enormous impression' two years earlier, and though peasants were too 'unenlightened culturally to embrace socialism', they might support a proletarian revolution. In summer he was released on bail under surveillance, pending trial, and became 'immersed in party activities'. In autumn he got permission to go to Samara, where he lived in a 'commune'. He was aware of student kruzhki and another for railway engineers, and though he did not contact them, he had the address of a member of the Bolsheviks' Samara bureau. He joined one of its two kruzhki, which was led by Dubrovinsky,²⁰ who had a press, proposed to publish a paper and asked Boris to select material.²¹ Boris admired the SPD, though he also worked for another newspaper whose editor leaned towards the VPSR. Many SD activists were no older than 18, a few were in their early twenties and one or two were in their thirties. The RSDRP committee included no Mensheviks, though the Bolsheviks were divided between conciliators and those favouring a Third Congress.²²

On 18 January 1905,²³ in Samara, 17-year-old Nicolaevsky and other SDs went to a factory at 4.00am and pushed in after two worker-comrades, and after one blew a whistle and addressed the workforce, they walked out, only to be confronted by Cossacks. Subsequently most workers at the railway workshops, print works, steam-mills and small factories came out,²⁴ and the printers won a rise, the end of fines and an eight-hour day;²⁵ On the 20th the government closed all the secondary schools in Kazan;²⁶ though the authorities acted brutally further up the Volga.

Petr Stolypin was born into a family of landowning gentry in Dresden, Germany, in 1862.²⁷ He later entered St. Petersburg University,²⁸ and believed that monarchy was the only possible form of rule, and the assassination of the tsar in 1881 left him with a 'deep, instinctive distrust' of intelligenty. He subsequently became a marshal of nobility in Kaunas province, was governor of Grodno province by 1902 and then governor of Saratov province by 1904. He advised the tsar to break up village communes,²⁹ though Stolypin and his wife owned almost 8,000 hectares in Penza, Kaunas and Kazan provinces.³⁰ By early January 1905 there were RSDRP railway workers' kruzhki in Saratov, and others at foundries, the Bering plant, the nail plant, the oil press and butter creameries, and among tailors, joiners, artisans and school pupils; yet the Bolshevik and Menshevik intelligenty vacillated. On the 10th, after news of Bloody Sunday arrived, SR and SD students and workers at a fund-raising ball for needy students demanded 'a general protest strike'. Next day the VPSR and RSDRP committees agreed to cooperate,³¹ and about 40 SD workers agitated for a strike. On the morning of the 12th several factory workforces walked out, followed by the Ryazan-Urals railway workshops,³² the Bering plant, timberyards, flourmills, tobacco plants and print works. Barbers, shop assistants and students joined in, until 10,000 were out, though Cossacks clashed with massive street demonstrations.³³ Stolypin announced that workers who were absent for more than three consecutive days would be sacked,³⁴ yet by next day railway clerks, more printers, school pupils,³⁵ government employees and professionals were out. They demanded a constituent assembly and an end to the war, stoned Cossacks, almost captured the railway stations,³⁶ and closed part of the Ryazan-Urals line on the 14th.³⁷ SD and SR intelligenty operated separately, though both issued leaflets supporting the strikers' demands for a pay rise, an eight-hour day and relief from fines. The SRs called for a meeting on the 15th to proclaim an armed rising,³⁸ and next day some secondary pupils walked out and tried to pull out others. Stolypin threatened bloodshed, and armed workers and intelligenty did not demonstrate.³⁹ The RSDRP committee announced an armed rising, and around 2,000 strikers went outside the city to hear SR and SD agitators, though Stolypin sent troops to occupy the meeting place. On the 17th office clerks came out, and though the RSDRP committee proclaimed that 'the goals of the political strike were achieved', SRs wanted to continue. Stolypin summoned Cossacks from the Urals and put guards on the railway lines.⁴⁰ A 'whole village, almost, went to prison'. 'I billeted Cossacks in the houses of the worst offenders', left 'a squadron of Orenburgers' and 'imposed a special regime'.⁴¹ Next day Saratov factory managers made concessions, as did railway managers on the 19th,⁴² while Ryazan-Ural line strikers won a nine-hour day, a rise, and the end of compulsory overtime.⁴³ Stolypin brought in more troops and had revolutionaries arrested, yet more factory managers conceded rises and shorter hours,⁴⁴ and the strikes ended on the 22nd.⁴⁵

During January workers at a huge machine-building works in Nizhni Novgorod further up the Volga had come out for higher pay, shorter hours and improved conditions, and the management conceded a ten percent rise and a guaranteed minimum for unskilled workers;⁴⁶ yet terrorism remained influential in the Pale.

(ii) Everyone get a gun

Moissaye Novominsky was born into a Jewish family in Buky, a small settlement in Kyiv province, Ukraine, in 1878. He received a traditional Hebrew education; and in 1900, after studying at home, he entered Kyiv University. His

contributions to Jewish and other revolutionary publications earned him fame, and he joined a revolutionary student group known as *Freiheit* (Freedom). He was elected as chair of the students' committee in 1901; but was arrested in spring 1903 and charged with organizing Jewish fighting squads to combat pogroms. In 1904 he left the University and joined the Bund CC in Vilnius. He was arrested, then released on bail, and joined the editors of *Arbeiter Stimme* (*Worker's Voice*).⁴⁷ Nationally, around 38 percent of politically suspect intelligenty were Jews.⁴⁸

The Lithuanian SDP was also organising in the Pale and was open to anyone who acted in the spirit of its programme and tactics, though its 1904 budget was 1,459 rubles. *Darbininsky balsas* (*Workers' Voice*) appeared intermittently in Vilnius, as did the Polish *Echo zycia robotniczego* (*Echoes of Workers' Life*), and 40 Yiddish and Russian pamphlets in runs of up to 50,000. The LSDP budget for 1905 was around 5,000 rubles, and its 1,500 members included 150 in Riga,⁴⁹ where over 70 percent LSDSP members lived. Most of the 140,000 workers were in large enterprises,⁵⁰ and Polytechnical Institute students led 116 *kruzhki*.⁵¹ The LSDSP, Bund and RSDRP had cells in larger plants,⁵² and the Bund and LSDP formed a joint committee, though they had no roots among the peasantry.

Baltic province gentry owned 80 percent of the land,⁵³ and there were no village communes, so the peasantry's economic differentiation was not as pronounced as in European Russia, though the average size of gentry estates in Estonia, Līvõmō and Kurzeme was almost 2,500 hectares, and around two-thirds of peasants were landless labourers, as were a quarter of those in Lithuania, where gentry estates averaged just over 400 hectares.⁵⁴ On 10 January, after news of Bloody Sunday arrived in Lithuania, there was peasant unrest. The authorities imposed martial law,⁵⁵ yet peasants targeted Russian-language schools, schoolbooks, administrators and symbols of authority, including Orthodox churches and monasteries.⁵⁶ Across the Baltic region, agricultural labourers went on strike.⁵⁷ There were also strikes in Kaunas,⁵⁸ and the Riga joint committee and RSDRP announced an eight-day political strike two days later. That evening, after news of Bloody Sunday reached Vilnius, the LSDP, Bund and PPS jointly called a political strike next day. On the 11th most workers came out, though they made no specific demands,⁵⁹ and there were general strikes in Minsk and scores of other cities across the Pale.⁶⁰ The Bund organised tens of thousands of strikers, and the CC asked 24-year-old Raphael Abramovich, who had seen the preparations for Sunday's demonstration in St. Petersburg, to produce a leaflet. He wrote that '*The revolution has come!*' and called on workers to 'Attack the stores where arms are sold! Everyone get a gun, a revolver, a sword, an axe, a knife! Arm yourselves! If you are attacked by the tsar's soldiers you will be able to defend yourselves like soldiers of the revolution. Remember that life in prison is harder than dying in battle! Let every street become a battlefield!'⁶¹ On the 12th there were strikes in Mohyliv in Biełaruś,⁶² and in Tallinn, Narva and Parnu in Estonia. After students demonstrated in Iuriev, the Imperial University was closed.⁶³ In Latvia around 80,000 workers were out in Riga, Liepāja,⁶⁴ Mitau, Vāentspils, Tukāmō and other towns.⁶⁵ Peaceful demonstrators with red banners, singing revolutionary songs in Latvian and Russian, condemned the autocracy, conscription and the war.⁶⁶ A LSDP leaflet called for unity with Russian workers, autonomy for Finland, Ukraine and Poland, and a provisional Lithuanian government.⁶⁷ Some delegates at a Vilnius conference declared for an independent federal state, though many workers favoured an autonomous Lithuania and a democratic Russian regime.⁶⁸

On the 13th there were strikes in Minsk and Smorgon.⁶⁹ In Riga flying pickets closed factories, and up to 60,000, including 8,000 Jewish workers, came out, and some raided police stations to get arms.⁷⁰ Non-commissioned officers fired at demonstrators, wounding over 100 and killing 50,⁷¹ while some who fled across the River Dvina drowned when the ice gave way.⁷² According to police 22 died and 60 were wounded, 20 of them mortally, while eight soldiers were wounded and two later died.⁷³ Other reports gave 70 civilian dead and 200 wounded,⁷⁴ and 87 killed and 214 seriously injured.⁷⁵ Next day Latvian, Estonian, Jewish, German and Russian workers and intelligenty marched through Riga, and many had revolvers.⁷⁶ The 60,000 mourners were peaceful,⁷⁷ and though over 30,000 followed the red and black flags in front of the coffins, the police did not interfere in the political demonstration.

[C]ars stopped; many stores closed; thousands of sympathetic onlookers crowded the pavements, the balconies and the windows. Revolutionary speeches were made openly, in front of the police. The orators were mainly members of the revolutionary organisations, but there were also others, students, intellectuals, who were swept by the current. The masses cheered. Joy mingled with anguish filled the hearts of the crowds. The police were powerless, but the city was now under martial law. Troops were marching through the streets; sometimes they would pass leaving the crowds intact; sometimes they used their bayonets in dispersing the meetings. Often the people offered resistance; stones were thrown at the soldiers, clubs were brandished. The soldiers opened fire ...

This added fuel to the fire. The entire city was seething with indignation.⁷⁸

The strikers' demands included a minimum wage of one ruble for a nine-hour day.⁷⁹

On the 15th RSDRP intelligenty sent representatives to the Riga joint committee, which demanded an eight-hour day, higher pay and wages for strike days,⁸⁰ and a Bundist celebrated the achievement, in spite of the losses.

There is a revolution here! There is fighting in the streets. Many comrades have been killed or wounded. Like lava, crowds of thousands flow from one end of the town to the other ... This is already the third day that the shops are closed and the papers have not come out. The work is desperate, feverish. Every day proclamations are printed in 8,000 copies ... Twelve demonstrations were held on one day. A proletarian army of 25,000 under the red flag is moving about the town.⁸¹

Tallinn strikers made similar demands,⁸² and armed workers prepared to hold the city.⁸³ Next day there were strikes in Barysaw in Biełaruś, and in one district of Vitebsk province around 500 men, many of them armed, demanded the sacking of officials, a financial audit and the publication of what they believed was the suppressed 1861 emancipation manifesto which had sanctioned cutting landlords' timber. They pledged to begin cutting two days later, though troops arrived to stop them.⁸⁴

In Vilnius the mainly Jewish strikers went back on the 17th;⁸⁵ yet there were strikes in Brest, Grodno and Białystok next day, and in Narva on the 19th.⁸⁶ The Bund's *Poslednie izvestiia* (*Latest News*) later reported that Vilnius 'factories, plants and workshops, printing shops, bakeries, etc.' were 'all at a standstill. There are no papers and no bread'. In Kaunas there was a general strike of 15,000 Jewish and Christian workers. All the shops were closed and the electricity was off. A Dvinsk correspondent reported that strikes were 'engulfing' new towns every day. Our turn has come'. 'For two days now I have not been working', though 'the organisation of the strike demanded an enormous lot of time and work'.⁸⁷

In Riga, factory managers reduced the working day by an hour and granted an average ten percent rise. Agricultural labourers demanded a rise, a day of ten hours in summer and eight in winter and on public holidays, and the abolition of child labour. Strikers listened to LSDSP speakers and took leaflets with demands for civil rights and a constituent assembly. German landowners had sent their wives and children away, and stationed troops on their estates, though peasants set their mansions on fire and went on strike.⁸⁸ The political strike ended in Riga on the 24th, though factory workers demanded an eight-hour day, higher wages and pay for strike days.⁸⁹ The joint committee put out leaflets with economic demands, though managers refused to cut the working day to ten hours.⁹⁰ The Bund had led strikes in 60 cities across the Pale,⁹¹ and though the major ones were ending.⁹² Workers at the privately-owned Lange shipyards on the Baltic coast demanded similar improvements to state plants,⁹³ and strikes had broken out in Poland.

(iii) Poland

Late in 1904 Luxemburg left a Berlin prison under the amnesty,⁹⁴ and went to Warszawa.⁹⁵ The 2,000 SDKPiL members supported the Russian revolutionaries.⁹⁶ Most were in Warszawa, and many were artisans. Luxemburg argued that 'the overthrow of absolutism and the realisation of political freedom' was 'possible only by a broad general uprising of the politically conscious working masses in the entire state'.⁹⁷

In January 1905, after news of Bloody Sunday arrived in Poland, striking schoolteachers and pupils demanded that instruction be in Polish.⁹⁸ Workers demonstrated,⁹⁹ and Warszawa strikers clashed with troops on the 11th.¹⁰⁰ One Łódź factory workforce of 400 went on strike and 10,000 others came out for higher pay. Soon 50,000, or half the city's workers, were on strike, then over 100,000 in the surrounding region came out, and some kidnapped a governor, though troops freed him.¹⁰¹ On the 14th no newspapers appeared in Warszawa.¹⁰² The PPS and SDKPiL called for a general strike, and distributed thousands of leaflets calling for solidarity with St. Petersburg workers an eight-hour day and a democratically elected constituent assembly.¹⁰³ No newspapers appeared in Łódź, no large factory was working and small workshops began to close.¹⁰⁴ There were 250,000 troops in Poland,¹⁰⁵ but they were not enough to suppress the movement. The government pressured Łódź employers to concede the strikers' demands, and put Poland under martial law. Next day flying pickets in Warszawa went from factory to factory, pulling out others and forming strike committees. Bakery, transport, postal and telegraph workers were out, while students and secondary pupils demonstrated, and the SDKPiL supported them 'with its entire soul'. The Bund recruited artisans, and though the PPS had only begun to organise in factories, their members and those of the SDKPiL agitated for an eight-hour day and a minimum wage of 15 kopeks an hour, yet the SDKPiL rejected the proposal for a joint strike committee.¹⁰⁶ Around 400,000 were now out,¹⁰⁷ and 1,000 clashed with police and gendarmes in Wola district. Alcohol stores and other shops were looted, barricades went up and clashes with police became common.¹⁰⁸ Bundists addressed meetings of up to 300, and after troops attacked them, some raided gun shops and public buildings and targeted officials.¹⁰⁹ By the 16th the 100,000 strikers included shop workers, and young socialists organised a meeting of over 430 of the 1,161 University students, though police dispersed them. Socialist and nationalist mutual aid associations organised a meeting of 850 of the 1,169 Technological Institute students, though police surrounded the building, and next morning the occupiers had dwindled to 300. The Institute

closed, yet socialist secondary school pupils led a strike.¹¹⁰ Socialists organised a demonstration of 100,000 workers, though troops fired up to 60,000 rounds, and by the 19th, officially, 64 were dead and 29 mortally wounded.¹¹¹ Reportedly, 25,000 school pupils were on strike,¹¹² and all the secondary schools closed on the 20th.¹¹³ On the 24th the PPS suggested joint action to the Bund, and organised strike committees across the city. More Warszawa and Łódź workers came out on the 27th, and the PPS, Bund and SDKPiL leaflets made economic demands and called for a strike on the 28th. By the 30th 47,000 were on strike in Warszawa. A PPS leaflet demanded freedom of speech, press and assembly, equal civil rights regardless of faith or nationality, the right to form trade unions and strike, an 'independent national life', including the use of the Polish in public institutions, and a constituent assembly in Warszawa elected by universal suffrage, and equal, secret and direct ballots. PPS workers' committees in Łódź, Kielce, Częstochowa, Zagłębie, Lublin, Zawiercie and Kalisz reprinted the leaflet. In Łódź and the surrounding Piotrków province 100,000 workers were out, though 29 companies of infantry, five squadrons of cavalry and four Cossack hundreds arrived.¹¹⁴

During January, across Poland, strikers and supporters had stoned soldiers and police, and raised the slogans of 'Down with the autocracy! Down with the war!'¹¹⁵ In Radom 3,000 had come out and some closed the electric power station. Troops fired, killing 14 and wounding 50, and they also fired on 1,000 strikers trying to close a railway station, killing 25. In Radom and Kalisz provinces 10,000 had gone on strike, as had coalminers and steelworkers in the Dąbrowa basin, where one factory workforce of 6,000 had walked out as had 2,000 Częstochowa miners. Strikers carted mine and factory foremen, directors, supervisors, engineers and owners out of the gates in wheelbarrows. A strike at one mine ended peacefully, though 100 strikers with clubs and knives forced a metalworks to close. There had been a one-week strike in Lublin. In Sosnowiec striking steelworkers had shot at troops, who returned fire and killed 33. Their funerals turned into major demonstrations and 180 kilos of dynamite disappeared from a mine store. Weavers near Łódź stayed out until they had a negotiated settlement, and though the railways were under martial law, the strike continued on one private line until managers conceded a negotiated agreement. Half of Warszawa's workers had struck for pay for strike days, even though the governor had threatened anyone coercing workers to strike with up to three months in jail and a 500 ruble fine.¹¹⁶

In neighbouring Germany the SPD's *Vorwärts* had devoted a regular front page column to Russian events.¹¹⁷ Kautsky could not read Polish, but late in January translations of Luxemburg's articles had appeared in *Die Neue Zeit*.¹¹⁸ She argued that the 'Russian revolution has the most pronounced proletarian character of all revolutions to date', and that the class-consciousness of the St. Petersburg proletariat 'came into being exclusively' on account of decades of 'untiring mole work' by SD agitators. She believed that provincial Russia would soon 'be engulfed by the revolutionary wave', and 'only now does the real task of Social Democracy *begin* in order to maintain the revolutionary situation in permanence'. She had evidently been convinced by Bronstein's perspective, and noted that workers in southern Russia were 'even more outstandingly class-conscious and better organised'.¹¹⁹

(iv) Ukraine

Iury Lomonsov was born into a family of liberal minor gentry in a rural district of Smolensk province in 1876. He later entered Moscow Cadet Corps, and his views moved rightwards; but after he saw the tsar's carriage run over and kill a fellow student in 1891, they moved leftwards. In the mid-1890s he met some St. Petersburg workers, but found it 'difficult to make them understand that they would not obtain their rights without freedom of speech and assembly'. He later worked in Kharkiv locomotive works and then Poltava railway workshops, and by 1900 he had encountered Marxism. In 1903, after the Chişinău pogrom, some revolutionaries thought he might be a spy, yet in 1904, when he was a professor of engineering at Kyiv Polytechnical Institute, the police suspected him of getting a spy sacked. He saw himself as a 'nonparty Marxist' and set about linking professional unions and revolutionaries. Kyiv was Russia's third largest city and home to almost 600,000 people, including thousands of students and many skilled workers;¹²⁰ though 7,576 others lived in 1,380 apartments, rents took an average of 30 percent of their pay and the cost of living had risen by up to 15 percent in recent years. Some SD secondary pupils had organised, and though the government allowed the University to reopen, early in January 1905 students voted to strike until 1 September.¹²¹ After Lomonsov signed a declaration in favour of reforming higher education, the police chief arrived at the Institute with 200 Cossacks and infantry. Lomonsov suggested turning fire hoses on them, and the police chief was drenched and the Institute was closed.¹²² The RSDRP factions claimed 700 members between them,¹²³ though there were probably nearer 500.¹²⁴ The Bund issued 3,000 leaflets arguing for a general strike,¹²⁵ and illegal literature arrived in large quantities.¹²⁶

In Ukraine there were over 84,000 coal miners, 9,200 ironstone miners and almost 51,000 foundry and steel workers in the Donbass.¹²⁷ Coalminers' pay averaged 1.2 rubles a day, plus fringe benefits, or almost as much as

Belgian miners, while steelworkers earned two rubles a day, only slightly less than their Western European counterparts.¹²⁸ Mensheviks were dominant among the SDs at the ironworks and in the town, though SRs were influential. After news of Bloody Sunday arrived in Iuzovka, the full-time revolutionary F.P. Prusakov began to organise a protest. Ironworks managers sacked Grigory Mashchenko, though he circulated a leaflet containing an account of Bloody Sunday in the ironworks and its associated mines. On the night of 16th another leaflet demanded an eight-hour day, a 20 percent rise, an end to overtime, improvements in sanitary and working conditions and polite address by supervisors. Next day ironworkers added five more demands and eight delegates from the machine, boiler, press and castings shops took them to the director. He considered the eight-hour day a political demand, and outside his competence, but agreed that polite address was necessary and would consider other demands. Workers left at 5.00pm, and though the night shift arrived, it did no work. Three companies of Cossacks, a squadron of dragoons and a battalion of infantry were stationed near Iuzovka, and at noon on the 18th, as strikers gathered in the bazaar, three companies of troops and 140 Cossacks dispersed them, and the strikers returned having gained nothing.¹²⁹

Mykola Porsch was born into a Christianised Jewish family of German descent in Lubny, Poltava province, in 1879. He became politically active in the 1890s,¹³⁰ and settled in Kyiv in 1904. He joined the Revoliutsiina Partiiia Ukrayiny (the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party, or RPU), though late that year, after the RSDRP refused to grant the RPU autonomous status within it, a sizeable minority, led by Marian Melenevsky,¹³¹ who had been born in 1878 in the village of Fediukivka in Kyiv province, broke away.¹³² The rest of the former RPU called themselves Ukrainka sotsiial-demokratychna robotnycha partiia (the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Workers' Party, or USDRP), and tried to combine Marxism and nationalism; though their claim to have 3,000 members was probably exaggerated.¹³³ On 12 January 1905, after news of Bloody Sunday arrived in Kyiv, the RPU breakaway group joined the RSDRP as Spilka (Union), supported the Mensheviks,¹³⁴ and worked with the Bund.¹³⁵ Workers at the South Russian machine works struck for more pay, an eight-hour day and state sickness insurance.¹³⁶ They organised a strike committee,¹³⁷ and worked with SDs. Next day Greter & Krivanek machine works employees left after lunch, and on the 14th, inspired by agitators, 60 of the 94 employees at another machine works went on strike, as did almost all the workers at a foundry. They demanded better housing, food and lighting, though they returned on the 17th without having won anything. Almost all the South Russian Machine Works strikers were back by the 19th, having won some concessions, while Greter & Krivanek strikers returned after winning an hour off the 11-hour day on weekdays, a nine-hour day on Saturdays, and the right to be treated by medical personnel, no matter how far away they lived.¹³⁸ Next day the government closed all the city's secondary schools,¹³⁹ though strikes had broken out across Ukraine.

Fyodor Sergeev was born into a peasant family in the village of Glebovo, Kursk province, in 1883, but in 1888 they moved to Katerynoslav in Ukraine. Fyodor graduated from a realschule in 1901 and entered the Imperial Moscow Technical College. He joined a student protest and was expelled, joined the RSDRP in 1902, and later became a Bolshevik agitator in Katerynoslav, Kursk and the Urals.¹⁴⁰ In autumn 1904 24 of the 64 people convicted of SD activity in Kharkiv were Jews, and many were young artisans. Sergeev went to Odesa, but early in 1905 he and Lev Epshtein went to Kharkiv, where four of the eight Bolsheviks were Jews,¹⁴¹ though their only worker contacts were Russians.¹⁴² On 10 January news of Bloody Sunday arrived and there were strikes on the 11th.¹⁴³ An SD leaflet stressed that only a 'broad-based Russian family' embracing all faiths and nationalities could offer protection against pogroms and win economic and political equality.¹⁴⁴ On the 20th the government closed Kharkiv's secondary schools.¹⁴⁵ By then the locomotive workshop employees had formed a strike committee.¹⁴⁶

Katerynoslav was one of the ten largest settlements in Russia, yet the government refused to grant it city status, so it had very few educational institutions.¹⁴⁷ Days after Bloody Sunday leaflets with economic demands circulated at Bryansk locomotive and engineering works,¹⁴⁸ which employed around 10,000,¹⁴⁹ and a strike began on the 17th.¹⁵⁰ Half the railway workers came out and 19 factories closed. Next day the rest of the railway workers struck, and more factories, print works and workshops came out on the 19th, while tram workers closed the system. Workers elected delegates, and two of the eight at the Bryansk works supported the RSDRP, yet they were reportedly intent on 'holding the masses back from excesses' and 'keeping the revolutionary waves from overflowing the shores', since 'undesirable elements' might take foremen out in wheelbarrows and commit 'terroristic deviations'. The governor reported that there were 20,000 strikers and asked for troops.¹⁵¹ Managers made minor concessions, and the strikers returned on the 26th.¹⁵²

There were 33 gendarmes, 44 surveillants and 165 informers in Odesa. On 10 January, after Bundists and other SDs heard about Bloody Sunday, they agitated for a demonstration and some called for an armed rising. Most Bund literature went to Jewish artisans, students and the general public, not to factory workers, and some of them helped the police to capture the Bund's press and arrest almost 50 agitators, so there was no demonstration. A Bolshevik recalled that 'the percentage of workers in the party was small, and sometimes there were no workers at all'; yet SDs led railway workshop *kruzhki* and agitated for a general strike on the 11th. At 9.00am that day Fridrikh Faifer

and V.I. Rozanov entered the machine shop, blew a whistle and called for a strike, but workers beat them up. Rozanov escaped, though the workers held Faifer until the police arrived. They also arrested five leafletters. The SD Varvara Salita distributed leaflets calling for a strike for a shorter day and higher pay at a cotton-jute factory, and workers held her until police arrived; yet striking railway workers demanded the legal right to strike and elect delegates, equal rights for women, freedom of speech, assembly and the press, and a democratically elected constituent assembly. By the 19th, troops were stationed across the city, though ten factories struck for a day. University professors formed a branch of the All-Russian Academic Union and students interrupted a viva with shouts of 'Death to the tsar', and 'Down with the Autocracy'. A St. Petersburg University student addressed a meeting, though police arrested local students who planned another. On the 24th the University closed, though students clashed with police and soldiers for days, and pharmacists established an organisation. The SD Bogomolets reported the workers' poor living conditions in the Peresyp district to the authorities and called for an eight-hour day and toleration of unions, though days later leaflets blamed non-Russians for the anti-government activity and called on people to 'beat the Jews, students and wicked people who seek to harm our Fatherland'.¹⁵³

By the end of January workers at the Mykolaiv shipyard had elected a strike committee,¹⁵⁴ demanded similar improvements to those at state plants, and added the political demands of freedom of speech, the press and assembly and the right to strike. Troops arrived, though the management granted some concessions.¹⁵⁵

Kamensk steelworkers in the Donbass had gone on strike on 12 January. The governor sent Cossacks, and though managers threatened to sack strikers, the workers stayed out for three weeks.¹⁵⁶ During January 30 workforces in Ukraine had established strike committees.¹⁵⁷ *Iskra* later described the strikers as 'rather benighted migrants who only yesterday left the plough behind', though it had to acknowledge that 'life has absolutely changed',¹⁵⁸ and the struggle had intensified further south.

(v) The Caucasus

Nina Aladzhlova was born into a wealthy family in Nakhicheva-na-Donu in 1881. In 1897 she graduated from nearby Rostov-na-Donu Music School, qualified as a governess in 1900, joined the RSDRP in 1902 and worked in the Caucasus. She was a Sunday school teacher from 1903, though she also manufactured explosives and organised prison escapes, and she became the Caucasian joint committee's technical secretary in 1904.¹⁵⁹

In Paris the leading Georgian Menshevik intelligent Noe Zhordania, who was in his mid-thirties, attended a conference of Georgian SDs, where he denied others the right to speak for all Georgians and walked out. He married a Russian woman, and by January 1905 they were in Georgia. Phillip Makharadze, who was in his mid-thirties, edited *mogsuori* (*The Traveller*) in Tbilisi. News of Bloody Sunday arrived in Tbilisi in mid-January. Zhordania convinced the Caucasian joint committee that the Bolsheviks controlled Tbilisi committee and they expelled it. Angry workers insisted that its property was theirs, yet Mensheviks ousted Bolsheviks from Samegrelo and Guria committees. In Batumi strikers reportedly threatened railway workers and sailors who refused to come out on the 17th, though workers got hold of the committee's property and funds and formed a separate committee.

In Tbilisi province 31 percent of the population were Russian soldiers, and though SDs prepared a strike in Tbilisi, the police arrested 28-year-old Alexandre Tsulukidze, Bochoridze and Makharadze. On the 18th some railway depot workers walked out, though few Russians.¹⁶⁰ Printers, tobacco workers,¹⁶¹ tannery and soap workers, and horse-carriage drivers came out and tram workers closed the system. There were demonstrations in the city centre and clashes with Cossacks, and the *duma's* public gallery was full of strikers, SDs and other hecklers. In Chiatura, Tqibuli and Poti strikers sabotaged railway lines, and up to 300 at Samtredia station, 'shouting and whistling and firing guns' 'forcibly threw out' those still working and 'forbade all to work on pain of death'. On the 23rd the Tbilisi *duma* asked the government to let workers meet, form unions and strike, and end the system of spying janitors.¹⁶² Thousands marched through the city carrying red flags and shouting 'Down with autocracy!', and there were demonstrations in Batumi, Sukhumi, Baki, Kutaisi and other cities.¹⁶³

In Kutaisi province parts of Guria district were inaccessible to the tsarist authorities. There was freedom of speech, association and assembly, and elected committees set rents and permitted grazing on confiscated land, while all social estates, including gentry, were expected to maintain roads and churches. Revenues from rents and taxes went into a treasury for 'cultural needs', and village and rural assemblies acted as courts. Bolsheviks and Mensheviks debated at village meetings, and Niko Marr, the son of a Scot and a Gurian peasant woman, noted that most 'listened attentively' to a discussion of 'the significance of Marx in the development of scientific socialism' from 2.00 pm to 1.00 am.¹⁶⁴ There was not 'one village that was not part of the general movement'. One or more *kruzhok* of ten peasants elected delegates to a regional committee, which elected delegates to the RSDRP committee of rural workers. Peasants paid no taxes, burned the tsar's portrait and killed spies, and clergy refused

to perform their burial services.¹⁶⁵ Peasants established a militia and armed 'Red Hundreds' which burned police stations, disarmed police, soldiers and guards, routed Cossacks,¹⁶⁶ established compulsory free primary education for all children, using the Georgian language, and called for a democratically elected constituent assembly.¹⁶⁷

Meeting follows meeting, and you would be surprised how the peasants, burdened by their work in the fields, hurrying everywhere, take active part in the debates, sitting for long hours, sometimes days, at meetings. Today the court, tomorrow discussion of the principal social questions with a well known travelling speaker, the day after tomorrow decisions about local affairs: schools, roads, land, etc., etc.¹⁶⁸

Hundreds demonstrated, waving red flags and shouting SD slogans.¹⁶⁹ Guria was reportedly 'under the complete control' of the RSDRP committee, which targeted government offices and police stations. One policeman was murdered, another was wounded, two ran away and four resigned, as did every minor government official.

In the city of Kutaisi some women ran a printing press and a bookshop with a library of Russian and Georgian books and journals, and a journalist noted that Gurians were the 'most educated' of all Georgians. 'Every village has its library' and 'provides its own mail service so as to receive daily papers' from Tbilisi, Batumi and elsewhere. The population of the Ozurgeti district in Kutaisi province was between 30,000 and 35,000, and the schools averaged one pupil for every 19.6 inhabitants.¹⁷⁰ Peasants burned administrative buildings and defied Cossacks, terrified gentry sold them land, and stormy village meetings and demonstrations continued. Martial law was imposed, yet peasants presented the RSDRP's minimum programme to a governor's official,¹⁷¹ who reported that the movement 'has assumed the character of an uprising'. Peasants had confiscated state and private land and set up organs of self-government. The government sent 10,000 troops, yet artillery failed to dent the peasants' solidarity, and one general feared that his troops might fraternize with them.

The Baki authorities encouraged Azeris to murder Armenians, and though the RSDRP intelligent Jughashvili led a small fighting detachment, it failed to end the conflict, and at least 2,000 died, so the detachment went to Chiatura, where there were 3,700 manganese miners.¹⁷² They supplied half of world's output for 40 to 80 kopeks a day, slept outdoors in summer, and in the mines in winter, and their conditions were worse than katorga. They recognised the Menshevik intelligent Isidor Ramishvili as their leader,¹⁷³ though Jughashvili smuggled weapons from the Balkans and contacted Bulgarian terrorists,¹⁷⁴ including the bomb-maker Naum Tiufekchiev.¹⁷⁵ In Batumi armed peasants, including deported workers, destroyed zemstvo offices and drove away officials,¹⁷⁶ and peasants who had met SDs were the most active. Peasants were still 'temporarily obligated' to landowners after 40 years, and Mensheviks agitated for lower rents, the abolition of taxes, the refusal to obey or pay dues to landlords, and for gentry to share the maintenance of roads.¹⁷⁷ On the 24th Cossacks attacked a demonstration in Kutaisi and left three dead and five wounded, and the tsar restored the post of viceroy four days later. Over 100 Tbilisi workers who had refused to strike, almost all of them Russians, had been beaten, and some had been assassinated, though strikers went back after their economic demands were met.¹⁷⁸ Illegal literature was reaching peasants and peasant soldiers.

(vi) A little newspaper

In 1905 the Orthodox Church and monasteries owned 2.7 million hectares in European Russia, but did not insist that tenants used modern agricultural methods.¹⁷⁹ The state and the tsar's family owned 39 percent of arable land:¹⁸⁰ gentry owned 62 percent of the quarter that was privately owned, and merchants owned 15 percent.¹⁸¹ Around 55 percent of gentry had no land,¹⁸² and 30 percent of other gentry's 48 million hectares was mortgaged.¹⁸³ One family owned 1.1 million hectares,¹⁸⁴ 699 owned over 11,000, 1,098 owned 5,500 to 11,000, 4,288 owned 2,200 to 5,500, 7,766 owned 1,100 to 2,200, 13,982 owned 550 to 1,100, 61,188 owned 110 to 550, 44,877 owned 55 to 110, and 172,652 owned less than 55; though most large estates were leased to peasants in small plots.¹⁸⁵

The 8,680,000 peasant village households in 46 European provinces held land subject to repartition, and 2.3 million hectares was inherited; but the average household had farmed 10 hectares.¹⁸⁶ Peasant communes owned 70 million hectares,¹⁸⁷ peasant cooperatives over seven million, and peasant households held 151 million hectares; but while around 2.85 million held up to 5.5 hectares, 3.3 million 5.5 to 9, 3.8 million 9 to 22, 1.06 million 22 to 55 and 232,500 held more,¹⁸⁸ though 2.8 million held an average of 2.2 and 6.1 million had 'dwarf' plots.¹⁸⁹ There were fewer than half a million kulaki,¹⁹⁰ but they owned 25.7 million hectares between them,¹⁹¹ and they leased 40 million from gentry,¹⁹² including one-third of their arable land,¹⁹³ and formed a distinct social class.

The average annual yield of wheat, rye and oats per hectare was less than half of that in Germany, and the average peasant household income was 134 rubles, though 100 rubles went on in necessary expenses, and since owed 60 rubles in tax, many were permanently in debt.¹⁹⁴ Redemption arrears averaged 138 percent,¹⁹⁵ and

peasant agriculture had a deficit of 850 million rubles, the same amount that peasants were meant to pay in taxes, though cottage industry earned some 200 million rubles a year. Five million men, mainly in the fertile central black-earth provinces, had no regular work,¹⁹⁶ around 30 percent could not make a living from the land,¹⁹⁷ and 30 million were paupers.¹⁹⁸ Fewer than half the babies born in European Russia reached the age of five.¹⁹⁹

During January across Russia there were 17 officially-recorded peasant disorders, though the real figure was reportedly around 150 percent higher,²⁰⁰ and the agriculture minister sought answers from the tsar.

What shall we do when disorder spreads from the towns to the villages, when the peasants rise up and when the slaughter starts in the countryside? What forces and what soldiers shall we use then to put down a new peasant revolt which will spread across the whole country? ... [C]an we be sure that the troops who have now obeyed their officers and fired into the people, but who came from that very same people, and are even now in constant contact with the population, who have heard the screams and curses hurled at them by their victims, can we be sure if they behave the same way if such incidents are repeated?²⁰¹

The thought that peasants might act together with workers was a nightmare.

That month, officially, 1,989 strikes involved 414,000 inspected workers, or a quarter of the national total.²⁰² One third of strikers were in Poland,²⁰³ and 20 percent of St. Petersburg province workers were out for a total of 40,000 days.²⁰⁴ Inspectors deemed 120,000 strikers political,²⁰⁵ but 30 percent of all strikers were in uninspected workshops and factories;²⁰⁶ so the numbers of strikes and strikers were reportedly around 80 percent higher.²⁰⁷ Most economic strikes were in plants employing 500 or more skilled workers, and while demands for a nine-hour or eight-hour day were common, they were rarely successful. There were 750,000 railway workers, and three-quarters were government employees,²⁰⁸ and legal and illegal literature was widely distributed.

An SD noted that before Bloody Sunday newspapers had been 'considered by the broad masses, and particularly by the peasantry, as a landlord's affair', yet now every copy was 'lovingly straightened and smoothed out, given to the literate, and the crowd, holding its breath, listened to "what they are writing about the war"'. Peasant troops travelling on the railway would 'almost fight for a newspaper or other printed sheet thrown from the window of a passing train'. Peasants in villages near railway lines asked passengers for 'a little newspaper', while 'tens of thousands of revolutionary pamphlets were swallowed up', and 'nine-tenths' were 'read until they fell apart';²⁰⁹ though the Bolsheviks were losing ground to the Mensheviks.

(vii) The split, a split, and again a split

On 5 January 1905 (according to the Russian calendar) the Bolshevik intelligentsy in Bern, Switzerland, accepted the leadership of the self-appointed bureau in Geneva, and Ulyanov asked Zurich Bolsheviks to follow suit. Stasova reported from St. Petersburg about the arrest of Moscow Bolsheviks, and the former lawyer Ulyanov replied that 'Only clever lawyers should be engaged', but they must be 'made to toe the line, for there is no telling what dirty tricks this intellectualist scum will be up to'. The prisoners would have to be guided by '*revolutionary instinct*'. 'Perhaps one of the people in prison will write a short article for the paper' about the appropriate stance in court?²¹⁰ On the 7th the Bolshevik Zalkind reported to Geneva from St. Petersburg that she had received a 'confused letter' from Katerynoslav. 'They write that unless we send people and money at once we shall lose' control and there are no people: one after another are retiring and no new ones arrives. Meanwhile the Mensheviks have consolidated their position everywhere.'²¹¹

News of Bloody Sunday reached Geneva on the 10th, and Lev Bronstein and Natalia Sedova arrived that day.²¹² He went to the *Iskra* office and fainted after a Menshevik told him the news.²¹³ Lunacharsky recalled that Bronstein was 'very handsome' and 'unusually elegant', though 'his nonchalant, condescending manner of talking' was an 'unpleasant shock'. He 'regarded this young dandy with extreme dislike as he crossed his legs and pencilled some notes for the impromptu speech', yet he spoke 'very well indeed'.²¹⁴ Next day *Vyperod* acknowledged that 'Our information so far is limited to reports in the foreign newspapers, including the English *Standard*, the legal Russian press', and 'Our Tartuffes' in the Menshevik *Iskra*. (In 1664 'Molière', the pseudonym of Jean-Baptiste Mignard, had written a play about 'Tartuffe', whose name meant a pretender to piety.) *Vyperod* understood that 96,000 St. Petersburg workers from 174 factories were on strike and their slogan was 'Death or freedom!', yet Bolsheviks had 'attempted (although, it seems, very feebly) to participate'.

On the 12th *Vyperod* published information received directly from Russia.

Contrary to the mendacious government reports, blood is flowing in many parts of the capital. The workers of Kolpino are rising. The proletariat is arming itself and the people. The workers are said to have seized the Sestroretsk arsenal. They are

providing themselves with revolvers, forging their tools into weapons, and procuring bombs for a desperate bid for freedom. The general strike is spreading to the provinces. Ten thousand have already ceased work in Moscow, and a general strike has been called there for tomorrow. ... An uprising has broken out in Riga. The workers are demonstrating in Lodz, an uprising is being prepared in Warsaw, proletarian demonstrations are taking place in Helsingfors. Unrest is growing among the workers and the strike is spreading to Baku, Odessa, Kiev, Kharkov, Kovno, and Vilna. In Sevastopol, the naval stores and arsenals are ablaze, and the troops refuse to shoot at the mutineers. Strikes in Revel and in Saratov. Workers and reservists clash with troops in Radom.

'The revolution is spreading' and 'arming of the people is becoming an immediate task'.²¹⁵ The leading Menshevik intelligent Tserdobaum first wrote about Bloody Sunday in *Iskra* days later.²¹⁶

According to Krupskaya, the émigré Bolsheviks 'sought out all possible means of sending arms to Russia', yet it was 'a drop in the ocean', though Ulyanov 'thoroughly studied, and thought over everything that Marx and Engels had written on revolution and insurrection',²¹⁷ the Prussian General Carl von Clausewitz's 1832 book about the Napoleonic wars and the French General Gustave Paul Cluseret's 1887 memoir about street fighting in Paris in 1871.²¹⁸ On the 14th Krupskaya wrote to Elizarova in St. Petersburg that the Mensheviks had 'taken aim on Moscow and Nizhni Novgorod'.²¹⁹ On the 17th the Director of the Police Department in St. Petersburg ordered the Okhrana to 'concentrate all the expanding surveillance' in Switzerland, and especially in Geneva.²²⁰

On the 18th *Vyperod* argued that St. Petersburg Bolsheviks should 'participate vigorously' in the strike movement, 'even though it was initiated by a Zubatovist', and 'popularise energetically the Social-Democratic views and slogans'.²²¹ Bonch-Bruевич led the émigré CC's 'Economic Commission' in Geneva, whose nine members handled 'the technical end (printing, forwarding, and so forth), finances, transport, sending people to Russia, measures relating to arms, co-ordinating the work of all CC agents, controlling the work of each individual agent, and so on, right up to special arrangements'.²²² He recalled that Ulyanov admired the terrorist Nechaev, because he had 'possessed unique organisational talent', established 'the special techniques of conspiratorial work' and gave 'his thoughts such startling formulations that they were forever imprinted on one's memory'.²²³ Bonch-Bruевич entered Russia illegally,²²⁴ and travelled widely,²²⁵ to build a transport network.²²⁶

In Finland the Bolshevik Burenin received smuggled illegal literature at his mother's estate, which was accessible from both sides of the border by horse and train.²²⁷ He also used Alexandr Ignatiev's Finnish estate to store boxes of 'apples', 'potatoes' and a 'library', and comrades who attended musical events left with literature in their clothes and instrument cases.²²⁸ Burenin sent arms to St. Petersburg and recruited the bomb-maker Mikhail Tikhvinsky, plus Mikhail Skosarevsky and another chemist who made bombs at work.²²⁹ Bolshevik district leaders formed detachments and trained them in street fighting and barricade-building, and Drabkin led the Fighting Technical Group.²³⁰ His wife, Feodosia had been born in 1883, become a revolutionary in 1900 and joined the RSDRP in 1903.²³¹ In January 1905 she went on 'missions' across the city with her three-year-old daughter, who was puzzled by the fact that her mother's shape kept changing.²³² On the 20th Drabkin reported to Geneva about the Bolsheviks' 'terrible weakness'. The Mensheviks had 30 to 40 'young women from abroad, true and dedicated to the point of hysteria', were 'incomparably better off'. 'When can we see *Vyperod*?'²³³

That day, at Helphand's home in Munich,²³⁴ Bronstein wrote that 'the unarmed heroism of the crowd' had 'proved unable to withstand the armed idiocy of the barracks' in St. Petersburg on Bloody Sunday. A successful revolution required raiding arsenals to arm the proletariat and overcoming resistance by persuasion or force. The RSDRP had to take responsibility for technical matters, and that required 'freedom from organisational routine and the miserable traditions of a conspiratorial underground', plus 'a broad view of things; bold initiative; the ability to size up a situation; and bold initiative once again'. 'Our party has made many mistakes and committed many sins that have bordered on the criminal. It has wavered, digressed, stopped short, and shown both indecision and stagnation. Sometimes it has even acted as a brake on the revolutionary movement'. 'Let us close ranks comrades!'²³⁵ Bronstein decided to risk returning to Russia.²³⁶

On the 21st, from Geneva, Ulyanov told the Bern 'Promotion Group' that the Mensheviks had 'broken away' from the St. Petersburg RSDRP committee, formed a separate group attached to the CC, and worked against the committee. He asked them to send their 'Brief Outline of the Split' to Russia,²³⁷ though the Geneva Bolsheviks had only 260 Russian addresses.²³⁸

From St. Petersburg Elizarova corresponded with Bolsheviks in Moscow, Nizhni Novgorod, Riga, Kharkiv and Lviv, and she also wrote for *Vyperod*. On the 23rd Krupskaya wrote to her from Geneva that the 'foreign squabbles are less worrying. Relations with the Mensheviks are different. Last year, they were still close friends with whom a split was terribly hard; this year, one looks at them as strangers and all their tricks fill us with contempt towards them. They lie and play the swindler at every step.'²³⁹

In Latvia delegates from the LSDSP, Bund, RSDRP and RUP had recently met in Riga. They wanted a constituent assembly elected by universal, equal, direct and secret ballot, the release of political and religious prisoners, guarantees of personal safety, freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and the press, an end to laws against subject nationalities, the right for people to be educated in their own language, elected judges, the separation of church and state, the right to organise unions and strike, an eight-hour day, a popular army and an end to the war. Late in January the Bolshevik Tarshis reported to Geneva from Odesa that a temporary agreement with the Bund was unavoidable.²⁴⁰

The Trans-Siberian line carried military trains to and from the Far East, but on the 28th Chita railway workshop strikers demanded an end to the war and a constituent assembly.²⁴¹ Next day, near Mukden in Manchuria, the Russian army took over 12,000 casualties.²⁴²

That day Ulyanov wrote to Drabkin in St. Petersburg. 'For heaven's sake, don't trust the Mensheviks and the CC, and go ahead everywhere and in the most vigorous manner with the split, a split, and again a split'. Drabkin had sent six letters in ten days, and Malinovsky two in 30 days, yet 'Not a line' for *Vypered*, 'Not a word about the work, plans and connections. It's simply impossible, incredible, a disgrace' and he should get 'a good sound scolding'.²⁴³ Ulyanov also wrote to Drabkin and Krasin. The sixth *Vypered* was ready, yet Malinovsky had not written a line for it, and he believed that the Russian committees 'consider the bureau a "myth".' 'A nice business: we talk of organisation, of centralism, while actually there is such disunity, such amateurism amongst even the closest comrades in the centre that one feels like chucking it all in disgust.' The Bund did not 'prate about centralism, but every one of them writes to the centre weekly'. The Mensheviks had 'more money, more literature, more transportation facilities, more agents, more "names", and a larger staff of contributors', and the Bolsheviks needed a battle organisation, funds and writers.

I am for shooting on the spot anyone who presumes to say that there are no people to be had. The people in Russia are legion: all we have to do is to recruit young people more widely and boldly, more boldly and widely, and again more widely and again more boldly, *without fearing them*. This is a time of war. The youth – the students, and still more so the young workers – will decide the issue of the whole struggle. Get rid of all the old habits of immobility, of respect for rank, and so on. Form *hundreds* of *kruzhki* of *Vypered*-ists from among the youth and encourage them to work at full blast. Enlarge the committee *threefold* by accepting young people onto it, set up half a dozen or a dozen subcommittees, 'co-opt' any and every honest and energetic person. Allow every subcommittee to write and publish leaflets without any red tape (there is no harm if they do make a mistake, we on *Vypered* will 'gently' correct them). We must, with desperate speed, unite all people with revolutionary initiative and set them to work. Do not fear their lack of training, do not tremble at their inexperience and lack of development. In the first place, if you fail to organise them and spur them on to action, they will follow the Mensheviks and the Gapon, and this very inexperience of theirs will cause five times more harm. In the second place, events will teach them *in our spirit*.

Otherwise the bureau would 'go under, wearing the aureole of "committee" bureaucrats'. He agreed in advance to everything they did and wished them 'Good-bye until the Congress'.²⁴⁴

On the 30th Drabkin reported to Geneva.

The workers are also a bit confused (again under the influence of the Mensheviks' anti-revolutionary preachings) about the attitude to Gapon. Your article in No. 4 depicts the government's role very justly, but you are too lenient with Gapon. He is a shady character. I have written you this several times, and the more I think the more suspicious he seems. One cannot call him a mere crank, he was a Zubatovite and worked with Zubatovites knowing what they are and what they want.²⁴⁵

The tsar had approved a loan equivalent to 231 million rubles from German banks at 4.5 percent interest over 80 years, and it arrived by the end of January;²⁴⁶ but instead of considering a peace treaty, the tsar appointed Senator Nikolai Shidlovsky to investigate the industrial unrest in St. Petersburg.²⁴⁷

6. March separately, strike together

(i) The Shidlovsky commission

Georgi Nosar was born into the family of an educated Poltava province peasant in 1877. When his father contacted Narodnaya volya, police deported him to Siberia, and the rest of the family settled in Pereislav in Kyiv province. Georgi attended a secondary school and later entered St. Petersburg University, but in 1899 he took part in student demonstrations and was deported for three years. From 1902 he was a lawyer for the Kharkiv-Mykolaiv Railway company, joined the Union of Liberation and later returned to St. Petersburg.¹ On 9 January 1905 he and other radical professionals formed Soyuz soyuzov (the Union of Unions) at the Free Economic Society,² and he distributed wealthy people's donations to the families of those killed on Bloody Sunday and those of strikers. He reportedly joined Eichenbaum's kruzhok, and as the strikes ended the 40 or so workers formed a sovet as 'a rallying point for revolutionary workers', though Eichenbaum declined to lead them. They published *Izvestia (News)* until surveillance persuaded them to stop,³ though they stayed in touch with workers' committees in several large factories.⁴

Late in January Nosar's advice about getting pay for strike days worked for Cheshire Mill workers, and they asked Shidlovsky for the right to revive Assembly meetings to elect non-workers as deputies on his commission. Other workforces sent similar petitions, thanks to another Liberationist lawyer, though the police arrested him.⁵ On 1 February Shidlovsky issued his rules.⁶ Factory workers had to be 25 or older to be eligible to vote, and factory owners and the governor-general could screen candidates.⁷ Groups of 500 would elect an 'elector', and the electors would vote for 50 deputies;⁸ though the VPSR had lost all patience.

Platon Kaliaev was descended from a Ryazan province serf. He later became a police inspector in Warszawa, married, and Ivan was born in 1877. He subsequently attended a Russian lycée and then Moscow University,⁹ though in 1898 he moved to St. Petersburg University. By 1899 he had joined a kruzhok of SD intelligenty,¹⁰ though after he took part in a student demonstration he was sent home for two years, then deported to Katerynoslav under surveillance. In 1901 he joined the RSDRP, went to Galicia and entered Lviv University. In 1902 he went to Berlin, though the police found him carrying revolutionary literature and handed him over to the Russian police. By autumn 1903 he considered himself a terrorist,¹¹ so he went to Geneva, joined the VPSR,¹² and was a member of the combat organisation by 1904.¹³ On 4 February 1905, in Moscow, he threw a bomb at the governor-general's coach. It blew his head off, and only one arm and part of one leg were recognisable,¹⁴ while the coachman sustained multiple injuries.¹⁵ It was the first assassination of a member of the royal family since 1881, and the tsar did not attend the funeral,¹⁶ though he sacked the Director of the Okhrana and replaced him.

Alexandr Gerasimov was born into a poor family in 1861, but later became a gendarme, won several promotions, and early in February 1905 General Gerasimov was appointed as Director of the Okhrana.¹⁷ It was in chaos,¹⁸ and did not even protect informers.¹⁹ He stressed that the 'internal life of a revolutionary organisation, acting underground, is a wholly separate world, completely inaccessible to those who do not become members'. He employed 250 detectives, 220 surveillants, 200 informers, 70 case officers and intelligence analysers and 25 senior officials at his St. Petersburg headquarters. His Moscow staff was about half that size, while the Paris Agentura had four case officers, 25 agents and 40 detectives. They all used fingerprinting, photographic identification, anthropomorphic measurements, bugs, phone taps, bullet-proof vests, tear gas and 'tranquillising' guns.²⁰ The new St. Petersburg governor-general insisted that gendarmes should know how revolutionaries worked,²¹ and the tsar appointed Petr Rachkovsky, a former revolutionary, as Director of Political Research. He sent staff who disliked him to distant parts, replaced them with raw recruits,²² and created a new command centre;²³ though winning the hearts and minds of young intelligenty proved difficult.

There were 21,500 male university students in Russia, and more at institutes of higher education, and most were the first in their families to become undergraduates.²⁴ On 7 February St. Petersburg University students voted 2,378 to 66 in favour of a democratically-elected constituent assembly, freedom of the press and assembly, and the right to form parties and unions and strike.²⁵ They agreed to boycott classes until autumn, so more intelligenty propagandists became available, illegal literature was widely diffused and outdoor rallies attracted workers.²⁶

About 50 Putilov workers attended SD kruzhki.²⁷ When delegates presented mainly economic demands to management, they conceded 11, compromised on seven, but rejected an eight-hour day and other demands, so there was a strike. Nevsky shipyard delegates had negotiated a return to work, yet the workforce felt 'obligated to support our comrades of the Putilov factory who are seeking political rights', and stayed out.²⁸ On 10 February there were mass sackings at the Ekaterinhof Cotton Spinnery, and the military managers at the navy's Obukhov

steelworks threatened similar action. The interior minister announced the election date for the Shidlovsky commission,²⁹ and barred police, inspectors and managers from interfering in the process.

The Mensheviks claimed 400-500 members,³⁰ and they and the Bolsheviks flooded factories with leaflets and sent scores of agitators. SDs at the Putilov plant persuaded workmates to vote,³¹ and on the 13th they were among the first Russian workers to take part in a free election.³² Metalworkers voted on a shop by shop basis, then at factory level, and over 145,000 workers in 208 factories elected 372 electors.³³ Nevsky shipyard workers called on their seven electors 'to establish guarantees and determine the rights of deputies in relation to the factory administration', since the commission 'can only be successful if the worker-deputies have the right to meet and speak freely and are guaranteed inviolability of the person'.³⁴

The former Assembly members who became electors were mainly middle-aged skilled men, and some favoured terror.³⁵ They claimed that 35 percent of voters supported them,³⁶ while five percent voted for liberals and right wingers,³⁷ though the RSDRP claimed the support of 20 percent and that 40 percent more were sympathisers.³⁸ The weaver Iakov Mikhailov had been an SD since the 1890s. He had suffered prison and exile and had returned to St. Petersburg after four years of military service late in 1904. After Bloody Sunday he got a job and became politically active. Nikifor Titov, a veteran of socialist workers' kruzhs, had joined the Assembly in 1904 and the RSDRP early in 1905. He became an elector for the Russian Spinnery. Ivan Simonov worked at the Train Car Construction Company. He had read little, but was a good speaker, and had formerly supported the government, but after Bloody Sunday he joined the Assembly, and then the RSDRP after he became an elector. The Liberationist supporter Semën Nikolaev attributed his election to attending the Kornilov School, and he believed that he 'stood out from the mass by my intellectual development'.

Nosar asked Shidlovsky to reopen the Assembly branches, but he refused. Many voters had declined to elect non-worker electors, though Nosar persuaded the weaver, Petr Khrustalev, to let him take his place, and he chaired a meeting of electors from seven industries who made demands designed to ensure the fair election of deputies. Explosives workers and metalworkers endorsed these demands and threatened to strike if they were rejected.

Liberal Moscow women had organised a St. Petersburg branch of the All-Russian Union for Women's Equality. Five women at the Russia-America Rubber Factory and two large textile mills had become electors,³⁹ including one from Sampsonovskaya Mill. After Shidlovsky ruled that women were ineligible to be deputies,⁴⁰ the liberal women helped them to write a protest.⁴¹

At the factories and places of manufacture in St. Petersburg there are more women workers than men. In the textile industry the number of women increases every year. The men transfer to factories where the wages are higher. The workload of women workers is heavier. The employers take advantage of our helplessness and lack of rights; we get worse treatment than our comrades and we get less pay. When the commission was announced our hearts beat with hope: at last the time has come, we thought, when the women workers of St. Petersburg can speak out to all Russia, and make known in the name of their sister workers the oppression, insults and humiliations we suffer, about which the male workers know nothing. Then, when we had already chosen our representatives, we were told that only men could be deputies. But we hope that this decision is not final.⁴²

It was,⁴³ though the Bolsheviks organised against the commission.

Petr Romyantsiev had met Krupskaya in 1891. He was later imprisoned, but released in 1896 and met Krupskaya again. He led the Poltava RSDRP organisation, but was deported, and met Krupskaya in Ufa in 1900. The Russian CC co-opted him late in 1903, and in February 1905, in St. Petersburg, he led the campaign to boycott the commission.⁴⁴

On the 15th there were lockouts at Nevsky shipyard, the Obukhov and Franco-Russian works, New Cotton Spinnery and Russia-America Rubber Factory, which employed 6,000, including Peskin. The 600-700 skilled men had a 'low cultural level', yet agitation was 'intensively and successfully conducted'. The 'backward representatives of backward workers more than vindicated my hopes', and 'lent themselves to the general fighting mood' at the electors' assembly, where they 'revealed such consciousness and understanding of the meaning of all Shidlovsky's ventures, that I simply did not recognise them'.⁴⁵ The electors refused to elect deputies until the government promised to grant civil liberties, hold commission meetings in public,⁴⁶ issue uncensored minutes, release workers imprisoned since 1 January and grant immunity from arrest for those 'freely discussing their needs'.⁴⁷

By the 18th there were over 35,000 strikers from 33 plants. Shidlovsky met some electors' demands, but claimed to be powerless to grant others. One worker unmasked Nosar at an Assembly textile workers' branch and he was arrested, though other workers leapt to their feet shouting 'We don't need elections!' 'Down with autocracy!' Next day there were almost 53,000 strikers from 91 workplaces.⁴⁸ Shidlovsky recommended that the commission be dissolved,⁴⁹ and the tsar agreed next day.⁵⁰ By the 21st there were 47,500 strikers from 53 workplaces, and by the 23rd there were 35,000 from 23, though several large workforces elected 'elders',⁵¹ and formed 'factory commissions'. The Bolsheviks generalised the idea,⁵² though the Mensheviks lost a key activist.

The undoubted leader of the Putilov Plant deputies was the fitter K. 40-45 years old, very intelligent, and very well read in his time, especially in belles lettres and literary criticism. He was thoroughly informed on issues of Russian socio-political literature and was himself the writer of very sad and beautiful poetry. He was an excellent orator, speaking a thoroughly literary language, and was a particularly fine reciter. He gathered people around him, usually in a tavern, on the streets, or especially at his home, and either spoke or gave them a dramatic reading. His home was constantly crowded with people ... K. himself had at one time been exiled from one of the central provinces and had worked at the Putilov Plant for about three years. He had belonged to the Zubatovist society from the very beginning and even after everything did not break his ties with it ... but had too little initiative and was insufficiently active. When he was pushed, he temporarily took an interest and displayed a rather wide-ranging activism, but then quickly tired of it and, as always, drank.

'K' was probably Alexey Kondratev.⁵³ Nosar was deported, though Liberationists got him back to St. Petersburg and he hid in their apartments and slept in empty railway carriages.⁵⁴

Print employers had offered employees a 10-hour day, 18 kopeks an hour extra and several kopeks more on piece work, given a minimum level of output; but a 22-strong workers' deputation insisted on a nine-hour day, higher pay, lower productivity norms and an equal say in resolving disputes. On the 13th typographers' representatives voted by secret ballot to reject the offer, and days later they demanded better sanitation and ventilation, free health care and medicine, polite address, paid summer holidays of one to four weeks, depending on seniority, and the end of searches. After the employers refused, around 900 workers from three medium-sized presses began a three-day strike on the 28th, and the employers made some minor concessions.⁵⁵ Railway workers refused to link economic and political demands: 'They didn't read this to us and we don't want it'.⁵⁶

The Liberationist Prokopovich was the main organiser of the clerks' and book-keepers' union, and several SDs, including Sverchkov, supported it. It claimed 5,000 members in Moscow, 2,500 in St. Petersburg, about 1,700 in Rostov-na-Donu and 1,500 in Kyiv, and branches in 13 other towns and cities. The government, municipal and zemstvo employees' union included a strong Bolshevik contingent, and the formation of unions accelerated, though the railway workers' union was the largest.⁵⁷

During February 13 percent of St. Petersburg province's inspected workers had struck for a total of 600,000 days,⁵⁸ and almost 40 percent were deemed politically motivated.⁵⁹ St. Petersburg factory inspectors had recorded over 20 'sackings' and 'cartings' of unpopular foremen, and after two cartings at the Putilov works other foremen became more polite. Ten of the 12 Shidlovsky electors at the Nevsky shipyard were among a sovet of 20 elders and 20 alternates (replacements),⁶⁰ who negotiated a minimum wage.⁶¹ The city's industrial production had almost returned to normal:⁶² the government mechanical workshops worked an eight-hour day,⁶³ and some Assembly leaders were released. Many factories could not fulfil urgent orders, so they were placed abroad,⁶⁴ and almost 6,000 print workers from 59 firms, or around one third of the total, had gone on strike,⁶⁵ and the workers at the Cartridge works, who also made medical instruments for the army, and a furniture factory, had an eight-hour day.⁶⁶

Stasova's relatives received her literature and coded letters from Geneva at their home addresses. She reported that Zalkind sometimes made 'blunders that have to be smoothed over by others';⁶⁷ and though Zalkind believed that most of the RSDRP were clear about the causes of the factionalism⁶⁸ During February the RSDRP committee had spent 240 rubles on printing and 850 on arms.⁶⁹

(ii) The border regions

In 1905 Odesa pharmacists worked 14-hour days and 15 night shifts a month. On 3 February, after employers refused to concede higher pay and a shorter day, 80 workers at 30 pharmacies went on strike, and days later they won a double shift system. Tin workers, tobacco workers, tailors, printers and hundreds of sugar factory workers came out, and dockworkers struck soon after. A Menshevik leaflet supported the strikers, who won half an hour off the day and other concessions. University students leafleted a lecture, sang revolutionary songs and shouted anti-government slogans, while SDs made speeches. Some of the 5,000 bakers had formed a union with the help of the VPSR, and demanded an eight-hour day, a rise, better working and living conditions, a joint arbitration committee, freedom to print, meet and strike, a democratically-elected constituent assembly and an end to the war, and employers who refused to concede eight hours were strike-bound.⁷⁰

On 29 January there was a strike at Pinsk railway workshops in Bielaruś and another in Minsk by 1 February. Moscow railway workers issued an ultimatum, and walkouts began next day, though they allowed military trains through. In Ukraine Kharkiv workshops came out on the 3rd, and those in Voronezh on the 4th. The Moscow managers had conceded by the 7th, though there were strikes in Luhansk in Ukraine.⁷¹ In Kyiv 138 factories employed 10,377 workers and there was a Polish trade union paper.⁷² Few supporters of either RSDRP faction were workers, and both faced competition from Polish and Ukrainian SDs and Bundists, though the intelligent

Krzhizhanovsky and other Bolsheviks formed a 'Vyperod' group,⁷³ which included Alexandr Schlichter. He had become an SD in 1891, at the age of 23, and supported the Second Congress 'majority' in 1903.⁷⁴ On 7 February 1905 he agitated at the railway workshops, where about a third of the 2,600 workers were women, and they made 40 economic and welfare demands.⁷⁵ Schlichter had to ask them to listen to a director, but famine loomed, so the management paid up.⁷⁶ On the 8th 300 pharmacy workers went on strike for a four-day week, a pay rise and polite treatment,⁷⁷ and that day the government empowered all railway managers to introduce a nine-hour day, increase piece rates and recognise workers' elected delegates.⁷⁸ Schlichter was sacked and left for Moscow,⁷⁹ but Minsk printers had won a nine-hour day, and other factory workers had won a ten-hour day. Factory workers had struck and won a ten-hour day and a rise of ten percent in Kovno and Kishinev.⁸⁰ In Radomyshl, between Kyiv and Zhytomyr, Bundists had organised a one-day strike of about 350 Jewish workers and a few gentiles.⁸¹ In Dvinsk 25 Bund leaders agreed to strengthen the committees, spread leaders evenly, give literature to the 'non-Jewish proletariat', issue guidelines for temporary united fronts with non-SD organisations and establish armed groups of workers led by veterans who would train them. In the USA a fund-raising leaflet pointed out that the Bund 'must prepare not only for pogroms, but also for the last attack on absolutism, when all the workers of Russia' would 'break the chains of political coercion'. Browning revolvers were purchased in Liege. Russian policemen printed anti-Jewish leaflets. One claimed that all Jews were socialists and rich: 'soon a new time will come, friends, when there will be no Jews. The root of all evil, the root of all our misfortunes is the Jews'.⁸²

In the Volga region, Saratov flour-mill managers had reneged on an agreement, and strikers demanded an eight-hour day and a 25 percent rise. Gantke metalworkers came out and there were strikes in Saratov province towns. Saratov RSDRP committee consisted almost entirely of intelligenty,⁸³ and after railway, telegraph, sawmill and print workers came out, 9,500 from 90 workplaces were on strike by the 8 February. The RSDRP and VPSR committees, and the workers' committee, issued leaflets making economic and political demands,⁸⁴ including an amnesty for political prisoners, a constituent assembly and an end to the war.⁸⁵ The strikers made only economic demands,⁸⁶ and after factory owners made concessions, the strike petered out.⁸⁷ Bolshevik workers in Kharkiv and Rostov-na-Donu had formed Vyperod groups.⁸⁸ They had contacts in some railway workshops and three went on strike. Vyperodists issued a leaflet in the strikers' name, which made economic demands, though after the strikers went back, white-collar employees demanded a grievance procedure, freedom of assembly and the right to elect representatives. The Southern Railway's lines connected European Russia with Siberia, Ukraine and the Caucasus, and on the 11th management agreed to an eight-hour day and the election of workers' representatives, and promised freedom of assembly within a month.⁸⁹ That day the government withdrew its concessions to railway workers, banned permanent workers' organisations, imposed martial law on the railway network,⁹⁰ empowered managers to imprison workers for up to a week and impose sentences of from four to eight months on those who failed to show up for work or who left without an acceptable reason, though some railway workers continued to organise. Representatives from some lines converging on Moscow asked the engineer V.N. Pereverzev to draw up a programme for a politically unaligned national union. He believed the 'improvement and defence of the economic, legal and cultural interests of railway employees and workers of all categories' could be won only under a democratic regime, and showed his draft to the VPSR and both RSDRP factions.⁹¹ On the 17th the government introduced a nine-hour day in all railway workshops,⁹² and semi-legalised intelligenty unions next day.⁹³

In Yenakieve, after two weeks of a well-organised strike early in February, Petrovsky factory workers won 15 of their 20 demands, including a ten percent rise, and Hartmann machinery workers in Luhansk won a nine-hour day and higher pay. In Kyiv calls for political freedom and a constituent assembly had brought stormy applause at a large public meeting. The authorities banned similar events and threatened railway workshop strikers with prison, though after managers conceded a nine-hour day the strike ended. On the 18th, after 110 men and 210 women at state wine firms went on strike, police and troops arrived to guard the premises. On the 21st the South Russia Machine Works employees struck, demanding a 30 percent rise and a nine-hour day. Managers closed the plant, sacked many strikers and reinstated only those who agreed to accept existing pay and conditions. Some shop owners insisted that staff work from 7.00am until after midnight, though representatives of 3,500 clerks and office workers demanded that they close at 8.00pm. By the 25th some shop owners had conceded a five-day week, and though medicine was hard to come by, some pharmacists returned to work. On the 28th over 1,200 sugar refinery workers, including several hundred women earning 36 kopeks an hour for a 12-hour day without lunch-breaks, went on strike for a ten kopek an hour rise. Some print shops closed, domestic servants closed a hiring hall and hairdressers demanded four hours off their 16-hour day, but while arsenal workers presented demands, they did not strike. In the Skvyra district of Kyiv province, landowners brought in strike-breakers and there were clashes.⁹⁴

In Ukraine troops had quelled strikers in Katerynoslav province.⁹⁵ In Kharkiv six of the 18 SDs known to the police were Jews and 260 tailors from 33 workshops had demanded a wage rise and other economic concessions and gone on strike for 11 days;⁹⁶ though factory strikers won a ten-hour day, Mykolaiv shipyard workers, mechanical

workshops and foundries had won a nine and a half hour day,⁹⁷ factory workers had struck in Rostov-na-Donu;⁹⁸ and though Voronezh agitators combined political and economic demands, workers rejected them.⁹⁹

On 1 February an anonymous article in the Baki Bolsheviks' *proletariatis brdzola* hoped the RSDRP Third Congress would 'adopt Comrade Ulyanov's formula' on membership which had been defeated at the Second Congress. On the 8th the Caucasian joint committee printed a leaflet in Georgian which argued that 'Russia is a loaded gun with the hammer cocked ready to go off at the slightest shock', and 'revolution is inevitable'. It exhorted workers to '*rally around the Party committees*', and included a message from an army officer in the Far East. 'On the insistence of my superior I recently delivered a speech to the men. No sooner did I begin to talk about the necessity of standing fast for the tsar and country than the air was filled with whistling, curses and threats', so he 'hastened to put the greatest distance between myself and the infuriated mob.'¹⁰⁰ Batumi SDs proclaimed a general strike, and workers in other towns protested against the deteriorating economic situation and the use of military force. There was considerable violence,¹⁰¹ and Tbilisi RSDRP committee polarised on a factional basis.

Prokofy Japaridze had been born in Azerbaijan in 1880. He joined the RSDRP in 1898 and later moved to Baki,¹⁰² though relations between his and Jughashvili's supporters became poisonous. Grigory Alexinsky tried to 'restore order', and clashed with Jughashvili, and Zalkind had a similar experience. (She went to Paris to complain to Ulyanov, who reportedly called Jughashvili a 'stupid Georgian'.)¹⁰³ After Muslims and Armenians rioted in Baki, martial law was imposed, and the RSDRP committee denounced the 'fratricide'.¹⁰⁴ On 13 February a committee leaflet blamed 'agents of the tsarist government' for having 'incited the politically unenlightened among the Tatars against the peaceful Armenians'. Next day 8,000 people walked from the cathedral to the mosque, yet there was no RSDRP banner, though the committee claimed that 'many thousands of Armenians, Georgians, Tatars, and Russians' took 3,000 of their leaflets.¹⁰⁵ A British diplomat noted that 'assassination of police officials continues on a large scale. Hardly a day passes without a victim being recorded'.¹⁰⁶ The Menshevik Zhordania denounced the Bolsheviks as arrogant intelligently,¹⁰⁷ and a crowd reportedly supported his slogan of 'Down with Ulyanov!' Bolshevik workers called the RSDRP committee leader a dictator, because he 'decided which policemen, priest, or landowners were to be "bumped off"'.¹⁰⁸ On the 18th a general imposed martial law in Guria, and nine days later he was appointed as governor of Kutaisi.¹⁰⁹ During February factory workers struck in Baki

In Siberia factory workers had struck in Perm.¹¹⁰ There was unrest at Krasnoyarsk and elsewhere along the Trans-Siberian line.¹¹¹ Workers in Tashkent and other cities had gone on strike,¹¹² while Irkutsk strikers threatened to stop supplies to the army.¹¹³ Chita workers came out again, and Vladivostok miners won an eight-hour day.¹¹⁴ Over 130,000 of the 600,000 Russian troops had already been killed, wounded, captured,¹¹⁵ or had deserted.¹¹⁶

In Ukraine, Poltava printers had won a nine-hour day, and factory workers had struck and won a ten-hour day.¹¹⁷ Officially, that month, there had been over 1,000 strikes by over 291,000 inspected workers, or 17.6 percent of the total, plus over 90,000 uninspected workers,¹¹⁸ and 109 officially-recorded peasant disorders, though the real figure was reportedly around 150 percent higher.¹¹⁹ The tsar had legalised some public political discussions.¹²⁰

Iuzovka ironworkers and 1,000 associated coal miners earned 60 kopeks a day, though the cost of living was high, and agitators from the ironworks urged miners to elect two delegates to draw up demands. A few SDs, SRs and anarchists issued two editions of a newspaper and drew up 55 demands, and ironworkers and miners added others. Four ironworks workshops closed and one mine workforce elected a 24-man strike committee, with Grigory Mashchenko and Ivan Obishchenko, a Bolshevik who had come from Rostov-in-Don, as joint secretaries. On 21 February Obishchenko handed 28 demands to the director, who promised to respond in 24 hours, but failed to do so, and the workers walked out. On the 28th the director accepted five demands, partially accepted six and would consider six others. Some workers wanted to 'deal with' him and a foreman. The strikes spread, and the provincial vice-governor, the prosecutor of the circuit court and the gendarme commander arrived, and the local police accused Obishchenko and Mashchenko of raising political issues. Next day the governor tried to get the strikers to elect new delegates, and was met with whistles and jeers, so he threatened to close the works if they did not return to work in three days. On the 30th shopkeepers agreed to feed the strikers' families, and few ironworkers turned up for work on 3 March, so the director closed the works. The police made arrests, but activists exhorted strikers to stop drinking alcohol and a workers' militia kept the peace. Workshops met every morning and there was a general meeting once a week. When police menaced them, 5,000 went to a church and carried on. After one miners' meeting decided to close the drainage pumps and ventilation, the vice-governor announced that the ironworks would close permanently, and the governor put the province under martial law. From the 7th to the 9th strikers were paid off and 651 out of 13,700 were blacklisted. Deportations began, and the strike ended, though agitational leaflets circulated,¹²¹ and Cossacks shot some miners.¹²²

During February Odesa bakery workers had won a ten-hour day.¹²³ Early in March Odesa SDs led around 2,000 skilled men at the railway workshops, who elected 22 delegates to take demands to management. They included the SD fitter Nikolai Raikh, the Menshevik lathe operator Fyodor Golubkov and the Bolshevik joiner Ivan Avdeev.

The demands included an eight-hour day, the end of compulsory overtime, free medical care, the recognition of workers' elected representatives, a joint negotiating committee, making the anniversary of serf emancipation on 6 February a holiday, the right to strike without reprisals, freedom of the press, speech and assembly, equal rights for women and a democratically-elected constituent assembly. On 3 March workers in several workshops elected delegates and demanded a 20 percent rise in piecework rates. Next day the manager claimed he was powerless to grant that concession, and the delegates reduced it to 15 percent. On the 5th one SD exhorted workers to strike, and over 800 did so, though they returned to work when managers promised to back-date a revised pay scheme, and on the 19th the interior minister allowed factory workers to meet to discuss their needs;¹²⁴ but the émigré Bolsheviks were frustrated.

(iii) Reply without fail

On 2 February 1905 Ulyanov told Drabkin that '*not one* of the St. Petersburgers (shame on them) has given us a *single* new Russian connection'. 'Take a lesson from the Mensheviks, for Christ's sake.'

Issue No. 85 of *Iskra* is chockfull of correspondence. You have been reading *Vyperod* to the youth, haven't you? Then why don't you put us in touch with one of them? Remember, in the event of your being arrested we shall be in low water unless you have obtained for us a *dozen* or so new, young, loyal friends of *Vyperod*. A professional revolutionary must build up dozens of new connections in each locality, put all the work into their hands while he is with them, teach them and bring them up to the mark not by lecturing them but by work. Then he should go to another place and after a month or two return to check up on the young people who have replaced him. I assure that there is a sort of idiotic, philistine, Oblomov-like fear of the youth among us. I implore you: fight this fear with all your might.

Ulyanov told Drabkin that 18 'Social-Democratic and other revolutionary parties', including the VPSR and PPS, were to discuss 'an agreement for an uprising' in Geneva. Malinovsky's presence was '*essential*', and Mandelshtam and other bureau members had to visit a 'neutral or Menshevik committee'.¹²⁵ (*Oblomov* was the title of Ivan Goncharov's 1859 novel about a young noble intelligent of that name who rarely left his room, and only moved from his bed to a chair. He was incapable of making any important decisions, or undertaking any significant actions, and he was the epitome of a 'superfluous man'.)

The SPD had earmarked 35,000 marks for the Russian revolutionary parties,¹²⁶ and had asked Axelrod to distribute 10,000 marks,¹²⁷ yet he gave nothing to the Bolsheviks, the Latvian SDSP or the Bund.¹²⁸ On 3 February Bebel suggested that a tribunal of himself and four other non-Russian SDs might help to heal the rift in the RSDRP,¹²⁹ and the Mensheviks nominated Kautsky and Zetkin. In Russia only four RSDRP committees supported *Iskra*, and the Bolsheviks accused the Mensheviks of forming separate groups 'attached to' the Russian CC.¹³⁰

Krasikov was secretary of the Bolshevik 'promotion group' in Paris, and Fotieva had received the first *Vyperod* there early that year. Maria Ulyanova told her that 14 Mensheviks had arrived in Odesa, and the Bolshevik Knipovich had formed a propaganda group of four Mensheviks and four Bolsheviks. The Geneva émigrés were working 'at a lively pace', and it was 'interesting and fruitful, I don't know about later'. Leipzig comrades were sending mainly *Iskra* literature to Russia, though London was 'locked in silence', and she needed Russian addresses. She asked Fotieva to post literature to Russia - 'no more than one or two parcels a day' to 'avoid trouble at the frontier' - and there was hope of some money; while 17 Mensheviks had been arrested in St. Petersburg, and 'everything is pointing to the formation Menshevik and Bolshevik committees everywhere'.¹³¹ Soon after the St. Petersburg Mensheviks broke from the committee and formed a group 'attached to' the Russian CC.¹³²

The Russian CC usually met in different places in Moscow, and on 9 February they met in the apartment of Gorky's friend, Leonid Andreev. They agreed to reconvene that evening, and Krasin left for Orekhovo, but when he returned he saw spies outside the building, so he stayed with his brother overnight.¹³³ The CC had co-opted three Menshevik intelligenty - 20-year-old Viktor Krokmal, 30-year-old Dr Vladimir Rozanov and the 40-year-old former SR Ekaterina Alexandrova - and they agreed to remove Ulyanov as their official émigré contact; though the police arrived and arrested them all, including Andreev.¹³⁴

Gapon had got the address of a smuggler, took a train from St. Petersburg to Pskov, booked to Warszawa, got off at Vilnius and travelled to Dvinsk. Polish peasants, Latvian SDs and Jewish smugglers bribed border gendarmes to let him cross the border, and he went to Berlin,¹³⁵ then on to Geneva,¹³⁶ as did the SR Rutenberg.¹³⁷ Gapon wrote to Plekhanov that he considered himself an SD, yet he joined the VPSR, learned to fire a pistol and prepare dynamite, and called for revolutionary unity.¹³⁸ He told Ulyanov that the recent strikes had 'rallied at least a million workers', though they were 'hustled back to their home towns and villages', and the discussed how to get arms

into Russia with Burenin, then Burenin and Gapon went to London to meet the veteran SR Chaikovsky.¹³⁹ Gapon left the VPSR,¹⁴⁰ and invited representatives of most Russian revolutionary groups to a meeting in Geneva. The Mensheviks did not respond to Gapon's invitation, and while Bolshevik and Bundist delegates arrived, they soon left,¹⁴¹ though on 8 February *Vyperod* supported Gapon's proposal that the RSDRP and VPSR should 'march separately', but 'strike together'.

On the 15th *Vyperod* noted that its editors were preparing a report for the Third Congress. They had been 'promised the report of a comrade who helped to organise *hundreds* of workers for armed resistance in the event of an anti-Jewish pogrom in a certain large city' and an article on 'street fighting from another comrade who has made a study of military science. It is of the utmost importance that the greatest possible number of comrades undertake such and similar work *at once*'. Ulyanov wrote to Bolshevik organisations in Russia.

We have just received the news that St. Petersburg, Tula, Moscow, the North, Nizhni-Novgorod, the Caucasus, and Odessa have declared for the Congress, and other places will, of course, follow suit ...

Important questions will be discussed at the Congress: organisation and the attitude towards the periphery organisations, the insurrection, arming of the workers (installation of dynamite workshops), agreements with the Socialist-Revolutionaries for an uprising, support of the revolutionary peasant movement, and many other issues. Reports on work among the troops and the peasantry are of the utmost importance. Make the widest possible use of contacts with officers, students and so on ...

Ulyanov wanted the Congress to agree that 'Terrorism must be merged in actual practice with the movement of the masses', and that a 'Special military organisation may be useful'. As and when there was 'political freedom, our Party can and will be built entirely on the elective principle' and though this was 'impracticable for the collective thousands of workers that make up the Party', a 'good many of the comrades working in Russia', including the Bolshevik committees, favoured 'a *single* centre in *Russia*'.¹⁴²

On the 20th Ulyanov asked Drabkin in St. Petersburg: 'did you accept on the committee the six workers mentioned? Reply without fail. We advise you by all means to accept workers on the committee, to the extent of one-half at least'. Preparations for the Congress had to be in Bolshevik hands and it was 'tremendously important to give special attention' to Kyiv, Rostov-na-Donu and Kharkiv, where workers and intelligently supported *Vyperod*. 'At all costs delegates from these committees should be brought to the congress with a consultative voice. The same applies to the Moscow print-workers', and 'I strongly advise carrying out agitation among all 300 organised workers' for 'sending one or two delegates to the congress with a *consultative voice*'. Mandelshtam and Zalkind should 'collect 300 rubles for two workers' delegates (or some Maecenas will make a special donation for it)'. He liked two of the Bolshevik bureau's leaflets, though he insisted that the writers' group should be separate from the committee, so they could send a delegate 'with a *consultative voice*'. Drabkin could tell the Bolshevik bureau about this, or, 'better still, *do all this yourself without any reports at all*'.¹⁴³

Ulyanov planned an '*interim combat committee*' to collect money, begin 'clarifying manpower, informing the masses' and prepare for a conference to form a '*Russian Combat Committee*'.¹⁴⁴

Three days later *Vyperod* discussed the changing role of the RSDRP in Russia.

In the initial stages of the movement a Social-Democrat had to carry on a great deal of what almost amounted to cultural work, or to concentrate almost exclusively on economic agitation. Now these functions, one after another, are passing into the hands of new forces, of wider sections that are being enlisted in the movement. The revolutionary organisations have concentrated more and more on carrying out the function of real political leadership, the function of drawing Social-Democratic conclusions from the workers' protest and the popular discontent.

This did 'not mean that consistent training and systematic instruction in the Marxist truths are to be left in the shade', but 'In war-time, recruits should get their training lessons directly from military operations' and lead thousands of *kruzhki* 'springing up everywhere without our aid, without any definite programme or aim, simply under the impact of events'.

Never has a revolutionary class been so well off for temporary allies, conscious friends, and unconscious supporters as the Russian proletariat today. There are masses of people; all we need to do is get rid of tail-ist ideas and precepts [waiting for a lead from others], give full scope to initiative and enterprise, to 'plans' and 'undertakings', and thus show ourselves to be worthy representatives of the great revolutionary class. Then the proletariat of Russia will carry through *the whole great Russian revolution* as heroically as it has begun it.

On 10 March *Vyperod* contained a translation of Cluseret's memoirs about street fighting,¹⁴⁵ and preparations for dominating the Third Congress continued.

Praskovia Kouliabko had supported the Second Congress 'majority' in 1903, and worked in Odesa, Yaroslavl, Moscow, St. Petersburg and the northern committee.¹⁴⁶ She arrived Geneva early in March 1905 and Ulyanov interrogated the 58-year-old. She and the treasurer of the émigré Bolsheviks' mutual aid fund were tasked with receiving and dispatching Congress delegates. Tarshis arrived from Berlin, and they returned with him later that month;¹⁴⁷ though terrorism remained influential in Russia.

(iv) Beat, cut, choke the lackeys of the tsarist government

Early in 1905 Gorky had been transferred from St. Petersburg Fortress to the House of Preliminary Detention on account of his poor health.¹⁴⁸ Workers at Obukhov metalworks, Nevsky shipyard and other plants protested at his continued imprisonment. So did the audience at a Kyiv performance of one of his plays, and Riga Polytechnic students. In Germany 269 of the foremost scientists and writers also protested,¹⁴⁹ as did other western European intellectuals and politicians.¹⁵⁰ Gorky's publisher Piatnitsky paid 10,000 rubles bail,¹⁵¹ and he was released on 14 February. He had to promise to co-operate with the police,¹⁵² and not leave the city, yet the governor-general deported him,¹⁵³ and he went to Riga,¹⁵⁴ accompanied by a spy. He wrote to a friend that he would 'make every effort' to turn his trial into 'a merry wake for the autocracy' which 'has now become a criminal association intent on the oppression of Russia',¹⁵⁵ and he told Piatnitsky it was 'indispensable for me to be tried'.

If they decide to end this stupid affair by administrative action, I will make it burst out again more fully and in a brighter light, and I will obtain justice for myself and dishonour for the Romanovs and those who follow them. If the trial takes place and I am convicted, that will give me an excellent opportunity to explain to Europe why I am a 'revolutionary' and what reasons I have for my 'crimes against the established order'.¹⁵⁶

He added: 'Bring the cartridges for the Browning with you if you have them',¹⁵⁷ then left for Finland.

There had been strikes in the Finnish capital, Helsinki, on 11 January,¹⁵⁸ and on 19 February a 9,000-strong demonstration demanded universal and equal suffrage. On the 24th between 5,000 and 10,000 people, out of a population of 100,000, demonstrated, but when 5,000 demonstrated next day the police intervened.¹⁵⁹ The Senate did not let the Okhrana act independently and insisted that trials of suspected revolutionaries were held in Finnish courts.¹⁶⁰ Many policemen were SDs, and they arrested Russian spies, helped revolutionaries escape, made extradition difficult and aided the transport of bombs and dynamite. By March Gorky lived in Kuokkala, raised funds for both the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks,¹⁶¹ and financed VPSR fighting squads in every large town and city in North West Russia,¹⁶² though the police had a spy in the organisation.

Nikolai Tatarov, the son of a Warszawa Greek Orthodox priest, was born in 1877.¹⁶³ He became Savinkov's classmate,¹⁶⁴ and was arrested in a student demonstration in 1892. After three more arrests he was exiled to Siberia in 1901, where he met former leaders of Narodnaya volya, joined the VPSR and set up an underground press in Irkutsk; though in 1904 a friend persuaded him to be a spy, and by 1905 he was in St. Petersburg. Azev helped him become a CC agent, though he kept him out of the core of the combat organisation.¹⁶⁵ The assassination of the former governor of Moscow in February had brought the VPSR recruits, but thanks to Tatarov the police arrested Moiseenko, Rutenberg,¹⁶⁶ and 15 others, and disabled the combat organisation;¹⁶⁷ yet a dozen or so peasants joined VPSR fighting squads of up to 100 in Saratov and Penza provinces.¹⁶⁸

In Estonia agricultural labourers' strikes and arson continued.¹⁶⁹ The VPSR's *Revolutsionnaya rossiya* saw the unrest as the precursor of an imminent agrarian revolution,¹⁷⁰ and exhorted peasants to 'Drive the landlords and the rich villagers out of their warm, profitable places; beat, cut, choke the lackeys of the tsarist government – beat them without mercy, just as they have no mercy on you.' The land 'ought to belong to the whole people, and be employed equally, but only by those who themselves work upon it, and in such quantity as each himself may cultivate'. Labourers should strike, renters should demand better terms, and if a landlord refused, they should take his hay and grain, pay no tax, boycott courts and drive away the police. If troops came, they should negotiate, but if that failed they should disarm them.¹⁷¹ Workers carried out at least half of all assassinations, women formed almost a third of VPSR members, and 30 percent of all VPSR members were Jews;¹⁷² yet in March, when the Kaunas governor suggested that strikers beat Jews, they refused.¹⁷³

Novominsky wrote the Bund CC's leaflets, contributed to and edited its illegal papers, and wrote books, short stories and literary essays,¹⁷⁴ and was aware of the 'general agrarian movement'. Central European peasants also looted mansions and food stores, and 'no penalty was able to stop the revolts', while border province peasants and

labourers went on strike. 'Every day the papers had to note: such and so many policemen, captains, chiefs of police, gendarmerie officers, etc., were killed'.¹⁷⁵ Disorders in Dmitryev, Kyiv province, spread to Chernihiv and Orel provinces. Small 'initiative groups' moved from village to village, agitated, and groups of up to 700, some of them armed, took grain; though troops made peasants kneel in the snow for hours and flogged them so badly that they could not walk and had to be carried away. Some committed suicide.¹⁷⁶

Peasant disturbances continued in Georgia, and there were clashes with Cossacks, leading to deaths on both sides; yet on 8 March the Kutaisi province viceroy released 120 prisoners. On the 13th a newspaper reported that around 1,000 peasants had demanded the return of redemption payments, the end of 'temporary obligation' to landlords and some of the large landowners' land. Most Gurians wanted primary pupils to be taught in Georgian, and secondary pupils in Russian, with free compulsory education up to the age of 16. They also wanted the separation of Church and state, Church and state land to go to the landless, no taxes for those with an annual income of less than 5,000 rubles, a progressive tax for those getting over 5,000, the abolition of hidden taxes and tariffs, freedom of speech, print and assembly, the right to strike, inviolability of the person, abolition of internal passports and the standing army, the establishment of courts and administrations accountable to the people, the return of exiles without trial and a constituent assembly.

On the 22nd Tbilisi shop assistants went on strike and at the end of March a demonstration was reportedly 7,000 strong. The *duma* called for a conference of Caucasian peasants and workers to consider the region's needs, while SDs argued about which factional committee was legitimate and which owned the Avlabari press and the funds. Tbilisi factory workers, students, teachers and pharmacists had gone on strike, and civil servants had come out for higher wages, longer holidays, better medical care and pensions, and stopping the one percent of their wages to support the war, while teachers wanted autonomy and the withdrawal of spies from schools. Shop assistants struck, and printers, railway workshop employees, tram workers, cooks and servants came out. Large demonstrations took place outside the city, including one of 7,000.

Caucasian RSDRP committees who opposed the Bolsheviks sent delegates to Mtsketa and Zhordania took the chair. Delegates stressed the importance of wider recruitment, especially from 'the village proletariat and semi-proletariat'. They established a Caucasian bureau and agreed to publish a Georgian paper, support cooperatives and participate in elections. They condemned agrarian terror, but agreed to form a military technical commission, led by 24-year-old Noe Ramishvili, to prepare an armed rising.¹⁷⁷ Kutaisi RSDRP committee included no workers, though the Baki and Batumi committees included one and Tbilisi had several.¹⁷⁸ Tbilisi Bolsheviks voted to send Shahumyan to the Third Congress, but he was arrested.¹⁷⁹ A railway strike in Elizavetpol had spread to Baki,¹⁸⁰ where Japaridze had been active, and he, Tskhakaya and six Russians became Congress delegates.¹⁸¹ The Bolshevik Rozenfeld visited Kursk, Orel, Kharkiv, Katerynoslav, Voronezh, Rostov-na-Donu committees, and also became a delegate;¹⁸² and Bronstein's perspective was becoming increasingly influential.

(v) To make the revolution permanent

In January 1905 Bronstein had got hold of a Russian student's passport and left Geneva.¹⁸³ If the Russian police captured a fugitive from Siberia it meant a sentence of *katorga*,¹⁸⁴ so Sedova went ahead to arrange accommodation and contacts.¹⁸⁵ En route, in Vienna, Bronstein visited the Austrian SD Viktor Adler, shaved his beard and moustache,¹⁸⁶ then left for Munich,¹⁸⁷ and went on to Kyiv.¹⁸⁸ He met Krasin, who was visiting RSDRP committees,¹⁸⁹ and found that he had contacts in workers' rooms, engineers' apartments, Moscow industrialists' mansions and literary *kruzhki*, and he had 'practical possibilities that were quite closed' to other SDs. He was responsible for fighting squads, buying arms and preparing explosives, and the secret press in Baki printed Bronstein's leaflets clearly, which he found 'extraordinary'.¹⁹⁰ Krasin was open to 'permanent revolution' and wanted a Bolshevik-Menshevik merger.¹⁹¹

In Geneva Helphand generally agreed with Bronstein, and admonished the Menshevik leaders Tserdobaum and Axelrod. Ulyanov 'rings all the time in your ears, Ulyanovism sits in your heads, and whatever one may say to you, you can only comprehend it in terms of pro or contra Ulyanov'.¹⁹² Early in March the émigré Mensheviks published a Bronstein pamphlet.¹⁹³ Helphand's introduction noted that Russia had no sizeable bourgeoisie, so SDs should place 'the proletariat at the centre and head of the revolutionary movement' and 'prepare it for the civil war that will follow the overthrow of the autocracy'. 'We must make use of all revolutionary and oppositional tendencies', but 'preserve our own political independence', and (echoing *Vyperod*) 'March separately, but strike in unison'.¹⁹⁴ *Iskra* carried a Bronstein article arguing for 'an uprising of the whole people' to win a provisional government and a constituent assembly.¹⁹⁵ Peasants should tell soldiers they were 'the people's sons who live on the people's money', so they 'dare not shoot' them, and if 'fire burst out all over Russia at one and the same time', 'no force will

put it out'. In Russia Krasin reprinted the article as an RSDRP CC leaflet, then took Bronstein and Sedova to St. Petersburg to meet Alexandr Litkens, the chief medical officer at the Imperial Military Academy, where Krasin met underground comrades,¹⁹⁶ while Litkens' Bolshevik sons ran a safe house.¹⁹⁷

In Geneva Helphand noted that Ulyanov 'divides tactics into two stages – the revolutionary and the parliamentary' – though he showed a '*lack of revolutionary confidence*'. 'Ulyanov thinks of tactics from the point of view of overthrowing the autocracy and the direct victory of the revolution, whereas I regard the matter from the point of view of organising the proletariat's social-revolutionary army' to 'make the revolution uninterrupted (permanent)'. Helphand believed 'parliamentarianism' had to be 'transformed into class struggle'.

In St. Petersburg the SD intelligent Goldendakh worked with trade unionists,¹⁹⁸ though Helphand's ideas influenced his kruzhok, and they gravitated towards the Mensheviks,¹⁹⁹ who supported preparations for an armed rising followed by a provisional revolutionary government.²⁰⁰

The RSDRP Russian CC invited the Bolshevik bureau to meet them;²⁰¹ yet when SRs, liberals and guards officers asked Drabkin what forces the Bolsheviks had to offer, he could promise a few hundreds, while the VPSR promised 10,000,²⁰² though they had only three workers' cells in the Putilov works.²⁰³ Drabkin, Krasin and Romyantsiev ignored the Menshevik-led Party Council, though they knew that the Third Congress would not be legal unless delegates from three-quarters of active committees attended,²⁰⁴ and elections had to take place in ten days; so Krasin visited more committees,²⁰⁵ the northern regional organisation disbanded and the constituent groups called themselves committees.²⁰⁶ Arrests in Saratov had hit the Bolsheviks hard, so Mandelshtam and others won only qualified support for the Congress;²⁰⁷ though after the Bolshevik Mikhail Leshinsky left his Moscow prison he went to Katerynoslav and managed to become a delegate.²⁰⁸

In Geneva Tsederbaum wrote in *Iskra* that he expected that 'sober political calculation will prompt our bourgeois democracy' to act in the same way as their predecessors in Western Europe; though Bronstein argued that the revolution was 'moving the proletariat into the forefront and giving it hegemony'.

Only the proletariat can ensure the victory of the uprising and the triumph of the revolution as a whole. Other groups of the urban population, as well as the peasantry, will play their role in the revolution to the extent that they follow the proletariat, support it, facilitate its work. Neither the peasantry, nor the petty bourgeoisie, nor the intelligentsia will play an independent role in the revolution at all comparable with that of the proletariat.²⁰⁹

'Only the Social Democracy, acting through workers', could 'make the peasantry follow its lead'.

But once in control, the proletariat party will not be able to confine itself merely to the democratic programme; it will be obliged to adopt Socialist measures. How far it will go in that direction will depend not only on the correlation of forces in Russia itself, but on the entire international situation as well. Hence the chief strategic line of action demands that the Social Democracy, while fighting liberalism for the leadership of the peasantry, shall also set itself the task of seizing the power even during the progress of the bourgeois revolution.

A 'complete victory' meant 'either a proletariat in power, supported by the peasantry, or a direct step to such power',²¹⁰ for 'those who have led the working class';²¹¹ so the RSDRP CC should order committees to establish a 'military organ' to 'make the revolution permanent', and assassinate government officials and military officers.²¹²

Nationally, during March, 73,000 workers,²¹³ or 4.4 percent of the inspected workforce, had struck on 225 occasions,²¹⁴ and inspectors deemed 27 percent of strikers politically-motivated.²¹⁵ In the first quarter of the year they had deemed 411,000 strikers economically-motivated and 399,000 politically-motivated;²¹⁶ yet the Menshevik *Iskra* complained that while 'The masses were learning how to think under party tutelage', they 'would not listen to the party's instructions on how to act'.²¹⁷ That month peasants had sent 60,000 petitions to the tsar, with no effect, though Liberationist intelligently agreed that meeting the peasantry's needs would require the confiscation of land 'where necessary', at a fair price,²¹⁸ and demanded the direct, secret and universal suffrage of men and women to a legislative assembly.²¹⁹ The SPD had given the VPSR 1,000 francs.²²⁰ There had been 103 officially-recorded peasant disorders and the government had mobilised second-line Cossacks against civilians.²²¹

In another battle at Mukden, early in March, the Russians lost 273 officers and 8,126 men killed, 1,585 officers and 49,426 men wounded, while 8,000 were missing and 21,000 had been captured.²²² The Japanese had lost 15,892 men killed and 59,612 wounded, though as the Russians retreated 64km.²²³ Some had had no food for days, and died by the roadside,²²⁴ though others shot officers who pointed revolvers at them.²²⁵ By late March the army, and the tsar's regime, were in serious danger, and the convergence of ideas about the need for military organisation and terrorist tactics made the merger of the RSDRP factions appear possible.

7. One party, two conferences

(i) Chair-warmers and keepers of the seal should all be smoked out

Vladimir Adoratsky had joined the RSDRP in 1904, in his mid-twenties,¹ and after he heard Ulyanov speak at a meeting in Geneva to celebrate the anniversary of the Paris Commune he became a Bolshevik. Ulyanov led an intelligently *kruzhok* that studied RSDRP statutes, but seemed bored. In spring Adoratsky left for Russia with albums and ink blotters made from thin layers of illegal literature, entered Kazan University and worked for the RSDRP committee. In March 1905 he returned to Geneva, where Ulyanov acknowledged that he should not have left *Iskra's* editorial board.² Krasin also arrived, and though the Mensheviks and Party Council opposed a Third Congress,³ *Vyperod* announced that the Russian CC and the Russian Bolshevik bureau would organise one, and published Malinovsky's draft rules.⁴ Krasin and other intelligenty were moving closer to Ulyanov's perspective, and acknowledged that the election of delegates in ten days would cause anomalies,⁵ though Maria Ulyanova believed that 'Boggy committees' – conciliationists - would be 'in the majority, most probably'.⁶

Ulyanov had criticised Odesa Bolsheviks for failing to put workers in touch with Geneva, and he asked Olga Vinogradova to 'Keep on writing, for it is not often we have news about the *day-to-day* (the most interesting) aspect of the work'.⁷ He told the RSDRP committee that it was a scandal that no worker had written for *Vyperod*, and Krupskaya asked the Bolshevik intelligentka Knipovich to get Ulyanov a Congress mandate from the committee.⁸

Mikhail Vasiliev had entered Moscow University in 1895, aged 19.⁹ He attended SD *kruzhki* in 1896, and joined the RSDRP in 1898.¹⁰ He became a teacher in Baki in 1903,¹¹ and favoured the Second Congress 'majority',¹² though he was not a 'firm' supporter. In spring 1905 he arrived in Geneva and recognised some Russians by their dress and bearing, and they directed him to the Bolsheviks' restaurant-cum-library. There were many more Mensheviks than Bolsheviks, but Vasiliev had known Olminsky in Russia, and Bonch-Bruevich and others helped him to find an inexpensive but comfortable room. Ulyanov interrogated him about the situation in St. Petersburg, Baki and the Caucasus, and how he crossed the border, and suggested that he write a survey of the Russian strike movement for *Vyperod*. Vasiliev criticised the Mensheviks,¹³ and became a Bolshevik agent.¹⁴ As Congress delegates passed through he met Zalkind and Malinovsky, though some Menshevik delegates stayed there.¹⁵

Vasily Lossev had joined the RSDRP in 1902, in his early twenties, and led students' and workers' *kruzhki*. From 1904 he was a member of the Viatka committee, and in 1905 he became a Congress delegate from the Urals.¹⁶ En route, Berlin seemed like a 'colossus', and London 'dumbfounded' him. Most delegates had never seen Ulyanov, but he interrogated Lossev about the Urals. 'Are there large factories? How many workers are employed? How many workers are Party members? Their Morale? etc., etc.' The questions 'poured out like a horn of plenty, and it was necessary to give brief and precise responses'.¹⁷

When Ulyanov and Krupskaya arrived in London,¹⁸ the first item on his agenda was 'Armed uprising'.¹⁹ The 24 Bolshevik delegates claimed to represent two émigré groups and 21 committees, though some were from splinter groups.²⁰ The only member of one committee had elected himself, and a committee which was entitled to two delegates claimed four.²¹ The Caucasian joint committee claimed eight votes, and though the mandates commission accused them of 'disorderly behaviour', they agreed,²² and they also allowed Jughashvili, who claimed to represent a non-existent committee, to stay without the right to speak or vote.²³ The Bolsheviks met in Alexeev's attic and sat (and sometimes later slept) on piles of English and Russian newspapers.²⁴

On 12/25 April, the day the conference opened, *Vyperod* argued that since on Bloody Sunday 'the Russian working class, under conditions of political slavery, was able to mobilise over a million proletarians for staunch, disciplined, collective action', and 'given the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship, we will mobilise scores of millions of the urban and rural poor' and 'make the Russian political revolution the prelude to the socialist revolution in Europe'.²⁵

Plekhanov had refused to attend and there were only eight Menshevik delegates,²⁶ and they argued that they had had insufficient time to elect more.²⁷ They claimed to represent 14 committees, and after the Bolshevik majority rejected this, the Mensheviks declared the Congress illegal,²⁸ and left for Geneva. Tskhakaya, who had not met Ulyanov before, opened the proceedings.²⁹ Ulyanov was elected to the chair, with Krasin and Malinovsky as deputies.³⁰ The average age of the delegates was 30.5, over a year younger than in 1903, and they had been active for around 7.5 years.³¹ The organising committee had been unable to contact the Kazan committee, so Ulyanov proposed that Adoratsky, who was in Paris, should be its delegate with the right to speak but not vote, and though the delegates agreed, they were unable to contact him.³² Krupskaya had a consultative vote,³³ and Ulyanov's mandate from Odesa arrived next day.³⁴ A letter from Tbilisi committee claimed that the Caucasian delegates did

not represent most SDs in the region, and condemned the 'private conference of party members' in London and the Menshevik conference which was taking place in Geneva, and refused to send delegates to either.³⁵

In London the delegates met in different places each day,³⁶ often in the back room of a pub or a restaurant,³⁷ and some attacked the Russian CC's conciliatory attitude to the Mensheviks.³⁸ Krasin acknowledged the 'general apathy, mistrust, scepticism, and obstruction', though he had tried to counter both the Mensheviks' and Ulyanov's efforts to undermine the CC. The Baki press had produced nine tonnes of literature in two years, and 35-40 agents had distributed over 40 tonnes during 1904,³⁹ including ten tonnes sent via Tilsit, Memel, Archangelsk, Odesa, Batumi and Galicia.⁴⁰ This had cost 6,000 rubles a month, though committees had not sent money regularly.⁴¹

The delegates accepted Ulyanov's proposal that an RSDRP member 'accepts its Programme, supports it financially, and participates through personal work in one of its organisations'.⁴² Malinovsky insisted on the importance of discipline and denied that comrades in Russia were 'slowing down the development of the revolutionary mood of the masses',⁴³ though in many St. Petersburg factories 'it was enough for some one of the workers to cry "Boys, drop your work!" for a strike to begin', so the RSDRP must fight 'anarchist strikism'.⁴⁴

Ulyanov had given Lunacharsky theses about the technical preparations for an uprising and 'insisted that he write his speech and 'give it to him to read in advance'.⁴⁵ Lunacharsky argued for fighting squads of 15 to 40 to defend workers from Black Hundreds, rob banks and post offices, and 'initiate and plan the insurrectionary struggle'.⁴⁶ Bronstein was not a delegate, though Krasin submitted his theses which criticised Ulyanov's conception of an uprising, especially the idea that 'the provisional revolutionary government will appear only *after* the final victory of the armed uprising and after the overthrow of autocracy'.

No – it arises in the very process of the uprising and takes the most active part in the conduct of the uprising, insuring the latter's victory by its organised action. It is naïve to think that the Social Democracy will be able to take part in the provisional revolutionary government the moment the autocracy is completely overthrown; when the chestnuts have been removed from the fire by other hands than ours, nobody will ever dream of sharing them with us.

Ulyanov responded that 'One cannot engage in a struggle without expecting to capture the position for which one is fighting'.⁴⁷ They were not dealing with an uprising of 'uncivilised masses', but of 'politically conscious masses capable of carrying on an organised struggle'.⁴⁸ He wanted a proletarian-peasant alliance to bring about bourgeois-democratic reforms, with or without the bourgeoisie, and an alliance between industrial workers and proletarianised peasants to struggle against the urban and rural bourgeoisie.⁴⁹ Detective Constable Herbert Fitch of the Special Branch was hiding in a cupboard and later claimed that he heard cheers after Ulyanov demanded 'bloodshed on a colossal scale', first in Russia, and then 'from one side of Europe to the other'.⁵⁰

One delegate believed the uprising should begin 'when agrarian disturbances had reached their peak', and a Saratov delegate denied that 'the masses are already armed with ideas, and that we have merely to put guns in their hands', since 'we have still much to do in the way of preparatory agitation'. Others accused Ulyanov of putting propaganda at the top of the 'immediate tasks' and 'technical groups' last, and of showing 'too little concern with the weakness of Social Democracy';⁵¹ while Tskhakaya was against a premature rising and wanted a '*modus vivendi*' with the Mensheviks.⁵² A majority resolved that a 'democratic republic' could be established 'only as a result of a victorious popular uprising whose agency will be a provisional revolutionary government',⁵³ and they would support 'energetically all revolutionary measures taken by the peasantry to improve their position', including the confiscation of gentry, state, church, monastery land and that granted as a favour.⁵⁴ They acknowledged that the proletariat 'will inevitably be the most active participant' in an uprising, but only if 'solidly united into a single and independent political force under the banner of the Social Democratic Labour Party, which will direct its struggle both ideologically and practically'. All RSDRP organisations had to 'take the most energetic measures to arm the proletariat' and 'develop a plan for the armed rising', led by 'special groups of party workers'.

Delegates voted to abolish the Menshevik-led Party Council.⁵⁵ Ulyanov would lead the émigrés in Geneva,⁵⁶ while Rykov, who disagreed with Ulyanov on several issues and spoke for many Bolsheviks in Russia,⁵⁷ would lead the Moscow committee, and Malinovsky, Romyantsiev and Krasin would lead the Russian CC in St. Petersburg. Krasin proposed making the Russian CC the permanent supreme RSDRP body,⁵⁸ and a majority of delegates agreed. It would control the technical preparations for fighting squads,⁵⁹ and Krasin would organise arms.⁶⁰

Japaridze claimed the number of workers on Baki committee was not a problem, but Zalkind wanted more workers on the Tbilisi committee, and more democratic behaviour by intelligentsy in Russia; and since city centre committees were often cut off from workers in the districts, they should consult them more regularly and co-opt some of them.⁶¹ Ulyanov insisted that 'Chair-warmers and keepers of the seal should all be smoked out' but argued against co-option,⁶² though a majority agreed with Zalkind.⁶³ Ulyanov wanted to 'reorganise a considerable number' of committees. 'To place workers on the committees is a political, not only a pedagogical, task. Workers have the

class instinct, and, given some political experience, they pretty soon become staunch Social-Democrats. I should be strongly in favour of having eight workers to every two intellectuals.' The 'full assertion of the elective principle' was 'unfeasible under the autocracy', though the principle 'could be applied to a much larger extent than it is today', were it not for the 'diffuse form and actual disorganisation, for which the Party is indebted' to the 'Right Wing of Social Democracy' (the Mensheviks). The 'inertness of the committee-men has to be overcome. (*Applause and booing.*)' Malinovsky wanted to 'make every effort to strengthen the ties between the party and the masses' by

raising still wider sections of proletarians and semi-proletarians to full Social-Democratic consciousness, by developing their Social-Democratic activity, by seeing to it that the greatest possible number of workers capable of leading the movement and the Party organisations be advanced from among the mass of the working class to membership on the local centres and on the all-Party centre through the creation of a maximum number of working-class organisations adhering to our Party, by seeing to it that working-class organisations unwilling or unable to enter the party should at least be associated with it.⁶⁴

Some delegates called for committees to 'plunge down to the lower depths' of the working class, while others favoured 'extreme caution' before accepting any workers, though they denied that there was friction between workers and intelligently. Malinovsky acknowledged that only 'insignificant steps' were possible in the underground, and Ulyanov conceded that new committee members should be supervised. He had helped to draft a motion calling for 'the broadest possible application of the electoral principle in party life', which fell by 12 votes to 9.5, but he voted with the majority who wanted to stop peripheral intelligently taking over committees.⁶⁵ Delegates resolved to attract agitators and propagandists, but also 'the largest possible number of class-conscious workers since they are the people most closely associated with this movement and who bind it most closely to the party. The inadequacies of such political leaders among the workers' was 'explained precisely by the relative domination up to now of the party centres by intellectuals'.⁶⁶

Krasin noted that most émigré Bolshevik and Menshevik intelligently had produced no pamphlets or books for workers for two years,⁶⁷ and were 'impeding the further development of the Party along proper lines'.⁶⁸ The delegates agreed that the chief editor of the RSDRP's central organ would have an automatic right to attend future Congresses, and that all Party organisations had to keep the editorial board fully informed about their activities every fortnight. Delegates instructed the CC to 'organise a literary-propaganda group' to produce an 'overall propaganda programme' and a 'series of popular brochures' on the main issues, including tactics and organisation. They should give 'particular attention to pamphlet literature for use among the peasantry', which should be published in Yiddish and other languages. They resolved that the Menshevik *Iskra* was no longer the RSDRP central organ, and the CC were to establish another; though they rejected Ulyanov's proposal to condemn Plekhanov and expel the Mensheviks.⁶⁹

Delegates agreed that the new CC should include Hermann Danishevsky of the Latvian SDSP, Dzierzynski and 36-year-old Adolf Warszawski of the SDKPiL, and Abramovich and 39-year-old Arkady Kremer of the Bund.⁷⁰ Delegates agreed to allow committees 'to enter if necessary into temporary combat agreements' with SR organisations, under CC scrutiny, and they should 'make every effort to reach agreement' with other SD organisations with the aim of 'coordinating local work' and 'preparing the ground for the unification of all Social Democratic parties'. The Russian CC had to 'take all steps to prepare and work out the conditions for unity' with the Mensheviks and present them to the next Congress, but delegates voted to 'dissolve' Menshevik organisations that refused to accept their resolutions and 'approve as committees parallel organisations which accept the authority of Congress'. Delegates gave the émigré CC financial powers, the authority to instruct the Russian CC to meet them abroad at least every four months, call conferences of local organisations and invite delegates to future Congresses.⁷¹ The conference ended on 27 April/10 May.⁷² Tskhakaya, Krupskaya and Ulyanov sailed to Boulogne, where the police searched their baggage, though Ulyanov refused to let them see the conference minutes, and then they went on to Geneva.⁷³

In Geneva the Menshevik conference delegates claimed to represent nine committees and four periphery organisations.⁷⁴ Some viewed the idea of unity with the Bolsheviks as naïve,⁷⁵ though a majority believed it was possible and necessary and called on the Bolsheviks to make a similar acknowledgement, yet they rejected the London conference decisions.⁷⁶ They conferred with other émigré activists and leaders, elected a commission to link Menshevik groups in Russia, called for a legal Third Congress and accepted the offer 'from the ranks of international social democracy' to mediate with the Bolsheviks. They agreed it was impossible 'to ensure a simultaneous rising throughout the country at a pre-determined date and to prepare for it by means of a clandestine organisation', because of the 'weak organisations of the leading ranks of the proletariat and the inevitably spontaneous character of the revolutionary movement of the broad masses'. A successful uprising would depend on 'a continuing ferment among the masses and growing disorganisation of the forces of reaction', and the

'masses' 'must be brought swiftly into conflict with tsarism if our victory is to be assured'. They resolved to 'extend agitation' and strengthen the masses' awareness of 'the inevitability of revolution' and 'the need to be ready for armed resistance at all times and the possibility of transforming it into a rising at any moment'. They wanted 'the closest links' with the 'fighting proletariat', and would agitate for a democratic republic, a 'partial, episodic seizure of power' and 'revolutionary communes' for 'disorganising the government'. The RSDRP 'should not aim to seize power or share it' with a provisional government,⁷⁷ but must 'remain the party of the extreme revolutionary opposition' and exploit representative institutions as an 'independent class party'. They would focus on trade unions and linking 'the proletarian movement in the cities with the revolutionary movement in the countryside' to 'the fullest possible extent', and 'intensify agitation among rural workers'.⁷⁸ They wanted elections in all RSDRP institutions,⁷⁹ and hoped that a bourgeois revolution in Russia were to 'leap over' into Western Europe.⁸⁰

A month earlier the Menshevik *Iskra* had included a letter from the Ufa, mid-Urals and Perm RSDRP committees which criticised Plekhanov's articles, and he responded in *Iskra* on 1/14 May.

Imagine that we all granted the Central Committee the still controversial right of 'dissolution'. This is what would happen. In view of an approaching Congress, the Central Committee would everywhere dissolve all the elements that were dissatisfied with it and would install its minions everywhere and ... would without difficulty secure an entirely obedient majority for itself at Congress. Congress, made up of the minions of the Central Committee, cries 'Hurra' to the latter in concert, approves all its successful and unsuccessful activity and applauds all its plans and initiatives. Then we will have neither a majority nor minority in the Party because then the Persian shah will have been brought to life.

Such a Congress would be 'a hangman's noose drawn tight around the neck of our Party'.⁸¹ Meanwhile, economic struggles continued in Russia.

(ii) One has to hunt for workers with a lamp

In Latvia, the day before May Day 1905,⁸² on the orders of the LSDSP CC,⁸³ Riga workers left their factories at noon. Next day the streets were full of Cossacks and other troops, and the LSDSP did not demonstrate, though some dispersed military patrols with bombs. Nearby peasants went from farm to farm, carrying red banners and singing revolutionary songs.⁸⁴ They also assembled in Lutheran churches, and after LSDSP speakers addressed them from the pulpit, they marched to zemstvo buildings and confiscated arms and other property from German landowners.⁸⁵

In the Pale Bund meetings to promote May Day attracted 500 in Chişinău, 2,000 in Minsk and 3,500 in Dvinsk,⁸⁶ and on the day half a dozen cities saw demonstrations of up to 20,000.⁸⁷ Most Jews feared pogroms, and preferred to strike instead. Jews were murdered in Chişinău,⁸⁸ though if troops had not interfered, Jewish fighting squads could reportedly have 'easily beaten the mob'.⁸⁹ A core of 1,100 had organised up to 10,000 others to deal with Black Hundreds and police, attack gangs protecting strike-breakers, close businesses during strikes, protect meetings and demonstrations and release imprisoned comrades; yet after every defeat in the Far East, some troops in European Russia joined pogroms.⁹⁰

In Ukraine, in spring, about 500 women's tailors in Kyiv had struck for regular wages and an end to piecework, freedom of speech and assembly, the right to publish and go on strike, and a constituent assembly; though they soon returned to work and SDs and SRs were arrested. The Ukrainian SDRP and Bund organised a two-day strike in Bila Tserkava beginning on May Day, while the Bund planned an armed demonstration and a general strike in Kyiv and published 1,500 leaflets. Fewer than 40 attended Bund meetings, but they decided to demonstrate at two machine works and form a fighting squad. After the authorities hinted that there might be a pogrom the Menshevik-led RSDRP committee backed off, and the VPSR split on the question of an armed rising, so there was no May Day demonstration, though the Bund reportedly led every Jewish worker out on strike in Berdychiv and Cherkasy. At Passover around a quarter of Kyiv's Jews applied for alms. Soon after bakery workers went on strike and the Bund led a 12-day strike at 150 bakery suppliers.⁹¹ There were rumours about a pogrom in Kharkiv,⁹² though demonstrators clashed with troops.⁹³ Cherkasy 'Workers' Will' complained about the RSDRP committee: 'all the higher posts are occupied by intellectuals. One has to hunt for workers with a lamp'. 'When a worker, even if an "advanced" one, suggests some means of improving the agitation, he is told to mind his own business and do as he is told, so that the voice of every worker in this so-called "workers' party" is reduced to nil'.⁹⁴

In the Donbass plans to beat up Jews, students and other intelligently circulated in Iuzovka and Luhansk, so dozens of SDs met outside Luhansk and resolved to organise fighting squads if the slogan 'Beat the police' proved ineffective. A leaflet called on workers to 'conduct yourself peacefully, don't smash machines and other factory property, don't loot stores, don't attack Jews'. Pogroms were in 'the interests of the bourgeoisie', not the working

class, and would disappear along with capitalism. On May Day police and Cossacks patrolled Luhansk and Katerynoslav and quashed a few disturbances.⁹⁵ In Luzovka 'Maxim' had organised a five-hour event, designated speakers and topics and drafted a political resolution. Around 100 men and women attended, and Bondareva gave a rousing speech and there was a collection for arms. A fighting squad with 150 members and a 70-strong Jewish fighting squad agreed to tackle pogromists together.

Mensheviks led the mineworkers' union, though Bolsheviks were trying to establish a rival union in Luhansk. An attempt to revive the Donetsk RSDRP committee failed, though Katerynoslav Bolsheviks reported to Geneva that they were getting 'more and more contacts' in the mineworkers' union. 'We have our own man there. Only Luzovka remains in the hands of the Mensheviks. If we had more people we could win Mariupol and Kryvyi Rih by sending one person to each'. There were two SDs among the 17,000 workers at the Druzhkovka metallurgy works, but when they appealed to Katerynoslav and Horlivka for help to organise a strike they were told to manage on their own. Thirty Vosnesensky miners resolved to build a workers' party, arm, prepare a general strike and replace mine and factory administrations with workers. The Luzovka Bolsheviks stopped agitating at the ironworks, where there was a counter-revolutionary group, and focused on the town. 'Comrade Sonia' reported to Geneva that the Mensheviks had 25 propagandists, while the Bolsheviks' had eight or nine, few ties to 'society' (better-off people) and little money. Alexandrov Bolsheviks had no good agitators and nobody was in charge of propaganda, yet they were expected to support comrades in Luhansk, Taganrog, Nikopol and the 'as yet unformed mine union'. Police discovered 15,000 items of literature, type, ink and the RSDRP rubber stamp.⁹⁶

In the Volga region Samara workers had been 'in a state of heightened agitation' and SDs agitated for May Day. On the day police shot demonstrators and made arrests, and Cossacks waded in; yet when Nicolaevsky was released two days later the city was strike-bound. SDs listed workers' mainly economic demands and agreed that the strike should last until the employers conceded,⁹⁷ though the Bolsheviks complained to the Russian CC that 'Once again your voice is nowhere to be heard. It is as though we were adrift without a rudder. Things cannot go on like this any longer. Unless you take active steps to keep us informed, it will be absolutely impossible for us to put your point of view across'.⁹⁸ Saratov RSDRP committee challenged both the Bolshevik and Menshevik conferences.⁹⁹ It and the VPSR committee and the workers' committee had issued leaflets with economic and political demands and called for a strike on May Day. The evening before SDs invited SRs to an organising meeting, and on the day two meetings of around 250 agreed to hold a joint meeting outside the city that evening. Around 900 turned up, and SRs and SDs called for a political strike. Next day a strike began, though SDs tried to call it off, claiming the political aims had been achieved,¹⁰⁰ though intelligently-worker relations were different in the two major cities.

The Bolshevik intelligent Sergey Mickiewicz had worked underground in Moscow, Nizhni-Novgorod, Saratov and Tver since 1903.¹⁰¹ He was in his mid-thirties by spring 1905, and later recalled that 'sympathy for the revolution began to infect the broad mass of the intelligentsia' in Moscow, including white-collar employees, concierges and even some policemen, so it was easier to find places for meetings, literature storage and presses.¹⁰² The number of strikes had fallen by April, but there were mass meetings and a wide distribution of socialist literature.¹⁰³ The only evidence that the police had against the Bolshevik intelligent Bogdan Knunyants was possession of an RSDRP leaflet, yet they sentenced him to four months in prison without trial.¹⁰⁴ Bolsheviks and Mensheviks on the RSDRP committee often cooperated. They had two presses, 100 propagandists, five district committees, and 1,000 kruzhek members, including some soldiers, and 40 kruzhki of workers from the Bromley, List, Dobrov and Ganter factories and the electricity plant.¹⁰⁵ In the first half of April 23 of the 32 police surveillants were assassinated.¹⁰⁶ On the eve of May Day the Bolsheviks called a general strike,¹⁰⁷ and on the day there were strikes, demonstrations,¹⁰⁸ and street meetings; though armed men pulled the student Varvara Yakovleva from a demonstration and jumped on her breasts.¹⁰⁹ Thousands heard socialist speakers in Sokolniki Park outside the city,¹¹⁰ and sang revolutionary songs,¹¹¹ until troops dispersed them.¹¹² Some typographers subsequently got their employers to agree to make May Day a holiday, but they declined making Sunday another, and some newspaper typographers went on strike.¹¹³

In St. Petersburg Putilov workers had walked out early in April for the funeral of three colleagues who had been killed at work, though managers closed the plant for a fortnight to weed out 'troublemakers'. Thousands of workers attended the funeral of a young Pal Mill worker killed by a foreman, and revolutionaries denounced the autocracy and called for an insurrection, while the police stayed behind the cemetery wall. Some mourners left singing revolutionary songs and attacked the troops guarding Pal Mill with stones, bricks and guns until late at night, and police found revolutionary leaflets on some of those they arrested. Mensheviks carried out extensive agitation for May Day, including factory meetings, and issued 100,000 leaflets arguing for a demonstration, while the Bolsheviks wanted meetings, celebrations, and discussions about a two-day strike and an uprising. On the day some printers and bakers came out, and though police and troops dispersed demonstrators, others met in woods, cemeteries and factories. Demonstrators beat up two policemen on Vasilievsky Island, but retreated when Cossacks arrived. Next day workers at Pal Mill, Lessner and St. Petersburg metalworking plants and the Train Car Construction Company

went on strike. Most SD-influenced workers came out, and 4,500 took part in a 'review of the revolutionary army',¹¹⁴ while Nevsky shipyard workers marched out singing revolutionary songs.¹¹⁵ The Menshevik Peskin recalled that workers would 'listen sympathetically' to speakers and 'willingly read' SD leaflets, and were 'extremely interested in party slogans' and 'very often approved of them', but had 'not felt it necessary at all to take part in putting them into effect'. They 'looked on the party as something very good, self-sacrificing, and caring toward workers', but it was 'of the intelligentsia' and undemocratic, and they insisted that 'We want to be masters in our workers' party, we do not want to carry out only the technical functions in it. It's time to bring an end to playing godparent, which has become such an established practice in the party that intellectuals make a career in it'. They also insisted that elections 'must be made the basis of all party organisation from top to bottom.' Peskin argued with workers' organisations and trade unions for legal economic struggles, and some metalworkers tried to implement an eight- or nine-hour day.¹¹⁶ The SD intelligentka Sedova propagandised at St. Petersburg Pipe Works on Vasilievsky Island, though someone betrayed her,¹¹⁷ and she and others were arrested in woods outside the city.¹¹⁸ They did not know her relationship with Bronstein, so when she began a six-month prison sentence he did not visit her.¹¹⁹

From Geneva Maria Ulyanova told Elizarova in St. Petersburg that their brother Vladimir was willing to compromise with the Mensheviks, and Ulyanova told other Bolsheviks in St. Petersburg, Moscow and elsewhere, how to get *Vyperod*. At least a third of Vladimir Nevsky's letters were 'written so badly' that they were illegible, so she told him to do a chemical test before writing. Ulyanova subsequently left for St. Petersburg, where she worked with Elizarova on technical matters on the committee and was secretary of the Vasilievsky Island district committee. She also led a textile workers' *kruzhok* and edited workers' correspondence for *Novaya zhizn*. Police confiscated its press, but she found a new one, and taught Bolsheviks and Mensheviks how to operate and protect it.¹²⁰ When Zalkind returned from London she became the committee's organisational secretary,¹²¹ though when Rykov returned he was detained.¹²² When Leshinsky returned he told the CC that Vladimir Makowsky was ill: 'by force we have made him leave work for a month since we would otherwise have to put him in a psychiatric hospital'. Soon after the police jailed Leshinsky.¹²³ Lepeshinsky returned via Katerynoslav.¹²⁴ Krasin also returned, and his job as an engineer in charge of the city's lighting system was perfect cover,¹²⁵ though the Russian CC met in Vilnius, and when a majority became conciliators, Zalkind left. Other CC members toured committees ahead of her, though she claimed that she won many for the Bolsheviks.¹²⁶

Across European Russia 200,000 workers had struck in almost 200 places on May Day,¹²⁷ and there was increased activity in getting weapons and forming fighting squads, though SDs in Poland argued about an armed uprising.

(iii) Poland

Maximilian Horwitz was born into a middle-class Warszawa family in 1877. He later studied at Ghent University in Belgium, graduated in 1898, joined the labour movement, and then returned to Warszawa and joined the PPS. He was arrested in 1899 and exiled to Siberia in 1901, though he escaped to Switzerland in 1902. In 1904 he represented the PPS at the Second International Congress in Amsterdam. Early in 1905 he returned to Warszawa,¹²⁸ and attended a meeting of the city and regional workers' committees, without the approval of other CC members. They agreed to struggle for an elected constituent assembly and to collaborate with the Bund and Lithuanian SDP in Vilnius,¹²⁹ and aimed for 'the co-ordination of the revolutionary movement of the whole proletariat in all parts of the Russian empire'.¹³⁰ They elected a new CC, mainly from the 'Young Faction', though Piłsudski led the fighters.¹³¹ *Robotnik (The Worker)* announced: 'Let us form fighting squads and obtain arms and other weapons and we shall soon have political freedom.'¹³²

In Germany Rosa Luxemburg disagreed with the PPS. 'The class struggle of the proletariat is and must be, in all its forms, and so also in the revolutionary collision, an independent movement of its entire mass'. The 'socialist party cannot play the role of nursemaid' by 'obtaining weapons for the mass of workers, behind their backs', and the masses 'can only and should arm *themselves in the course of the struggle*, by their own decision, through their own urge to acquire weapons', by '*acquiring them through the strength of their movement*' and winning 'partial victories over the government'. Russian soldiers were part of the working class, and victory would come when many of them joined with rural workers and the urban proletariat. Given agitation, a section of the army would 'come over to our side' and another would 'vacillate at the moment that the people takes up the struggle for freedom and the order to murder us is given'. Terrorism had 'as much effect on the government as a midge bite'. 'For every policeman eliminated in Russia, a hundred thousand applicants are waiting to take his place and for every senior police sergeant at last twenty-five thousand'. Mass action 'disorganises the government' and '*organises* the political force that will overthrow absolutism and build the new order', though a '*bourgeois* revolution', made by the working class, would be a '*workers*' revolution'.¹³³ German newspapers called her 'bloody Rosa'.¹³⁴

In the Polish countryside nationalist and Catholic agitators fostered anti-war sentiment, and draft evasion was common, while 20 percent of large village communes demanded civic accountability and the use of the Polish language. By mid-March there had been 129 agrarian strikes in Siedlce province and 358 in Lublin province. Around 500 agitators were arrested, and threatened with court martial, though the rest of the countryside was fairly quiet. Agitational literature from the SDKPiL's émigré committee arrived in Kraków in Galicia, and Dzierzynski asked the RSDRP for propaganda aimed at troops. Warszawski and the 34-year-old intelligent Bronislaw Smutny had taken over some of Dzierzynski's responsibilities in Warszawa, and though many activists were arrested,¹³⁵ bombs halted a 12-man police patrol.¹³⁶ Early in April troops fired on a funeral, killing four Jews and wounding 40,¹³⁷ and days later Jewish workers went on strike.¹³⁸ The PPS's Jewish Section had between 500 and 1,000 members in Warszawa, Łódź, Pabianice, Kalisz, Białystok, Grodno and Vilnius, and over 100 in other cities, and 31 SDKPiL delegates in Warszawa favoured 'internationalism', particularly in relation to Jewish workers, though they criticised the Bund's 'programmatic exclusivity'.¹³⁹ Dzierzynski and 26-year-old Czeslaw Hanecki arrived secretly. After the SPD leader Bebel called on Germans in Poland and Russia to join socialist parties, Luxemburg persuaded the SDKPiL to reprint his speech.¹⁴⁰ The Puławy garrison heard rumours that 500 soldiers from line regiments and 200 from artillery regiments were to be sent to the Far East, and Dzierzynski and Warszawski left Warszawa to lead the SDKPiL's southern committee. They counselled patience, but after two regiments threatened to act, Cossacks crushed them. Dzierzynski and Warszawski escaped, though one committee member was exiled to Siberia for 15 years.

Before May Day up to 5,000 people attended Bund meetings in Warszawa, and Bundists distributed 20,000 leaflets in 'Jewish languages' and 10,000 in Polish.¹⁴¹ The PPS issued 22 leaflets, and the SDKPiL 27 and 75,000 to peasants. Inflation had devalued workers' wages, and 3,000 weavers in the Łódź region went on strike, demanding the removal of troops. Five hundred thread factory strikers had previously returned, negotiated for a month and won nothing, so they came out again. Managers threatened to close the mill, but half the workers sat in and took inspectors hostage, but freed them when troops arrived. The mill was closed and 40 agitators were arrested. In Częstochowa 6,000 workers struck for the release of 16 'political prisoners', though dragoons killed two strikers.

On May Day the SDKPiL, PPS and Bund led a general strike in Warszawa,¹⁴² and the city was brought to a halt by 10.00am. In spite of police warnings the SDKPiL organised a huge demonstration, which included 40 percent of all May Day demonstrators in the empire. Police killed 26, seriously wounded 34 and arrested 45, though when someone bombed a Cossack patrol, five civilians died. Most were women and teenagers, and almost all were Catholics. The SDKPiL called for a general strike and mass terror in Warszawa province, and though the PPS and Bund refused their support, 31 percent of workers struck. Łódź workforces came out and demonstrations attracted just under half of the city's workers. Tens of thousands demanded better wages, and when this was refused, they occupied factories. There were skirmishes with police, who broke up 27 demonstrations. Six people were shot, and their funerals took on a revolutionary character, though the police wounded 13 mourners.¹⁴³ The peasants' union adopted a programme of struggle against the autocracy and demanded peasant representation in a Warszawa parliament. On 12 May Łódź workers went on strike,¹⁴⁴ and the authorities allowed Poles to buy land in western provinces, permitted Polish to be spoken in private schools and legalised unions.¹⁴⁵

(iv) Unions

In January 1905 342 St. Petersburg University staff had signed a declaration opposing bureaucratic interference, and it circulated across Russia.¹⁴⁶ In February 150 members of the Voronezh teachers' society blamed their low status and the peasantry's dire situation on the government, and a spy reported on the meeting's 'revolutionary and criminal character'. In March 256 St. Petersburg teachers and educational activists signed a proposal for improvements in public education, and aimed to form a national teachers' union.¹⁴⁷

In St. Petersburg apprentice shop assistants worked up to 19 hours a day. Some lived in less hygienic conditions than prisoners, and by spring some shop assistants had formed a trade union.¹⁴⁸

The academic Rozhkov had been in Geneva on RSDRP business early in January 1905, and soon after Bloody Sunday he read about it in the newspapers. He joined around 3,000 people denouncing the tsar in the main square, collected three small bags of silver and gold coins for the RSDRP, and then returned to Moscow. In March the Pedagogical Institute staff met at the University and 300 teachers and 400 others attended, including male and female students, secondary school pupils, and 50 unskilled workers in their dirty clothes, who Rozhkov had invited from his classes at the Russian Technical Society. The Institute's meetings subsequently developed in an SD direction, so the city authorities banned public meetings and the government issued a similar decree. A meeting took place at the Institute late in March, but when delegates arrived for the next meeting at the University a week late the police prevented them from entering and briefly detained Rozhkov. The meetings continued under cover

of the University's Agricultural Society, and Rozhkov had become convinced that the entire liberal bourgeoisie was counter-revolutionary, and leaned towards the Bolsheviks. The Institute supported the Voronezh teachers,¹⁴⁹ and Rozhkov joined the union of government, municipal and zemstvo employees, and met a leading Bolshevik.¹⁵⁰

Virgily Shantser had worked for *Iskra* in Moscow in 1901, and was exiled to Siberia in 1902, but later escaped to Moscow and joined the Bolsheviks in 1904.¹⁵¹ He also joined the RSDRP committee,¹⁵² and reportedly he and two other Bolshevik intelligentsy, Vasiliev and Mandelshtam, led the EC by December.¹⁵³ In spring 1905 39-year-old Shantser persuaded Rozhkov to join the Bolsheviks.¹⁵⁴ The Institute staff supported radical resolutions from teachers in Kaluga and elsewhere, and over 1,000 teachers had signed the St. Petersburg programme by April.¹⁵⁵

On 8 April Moscow RSDRP committee announced a 'party union' of railway workers,¹⁵⁶ and next day delegates from 14 intelligentsy unions founded a branch of the Union of Unions.¹⁵⁷

In St. Petersburg around 300 delegates from printing, lithography, bookbinding and letter-casting shops attended a meeting early in April.¹⁵⁸ The typographer August Tens spoke about Western European unions, and the delegates agreed to form a union and elected a bureau to draft a charter. Five were male typographers, including Tens, and though the woman proof-reader Zoia Voronova had been elected, she withdrew. Ivan Liubintsev, who had worked in the SD underground in Nizhni Novgorod in the 1890s, and spent two years in prison and three in exile, before he arrived in St. Petersburg in January 1905 as a Bolshevik, was elected as the union bureau chair in spring. On 10 April newspaper typographers refused to work on Sundays, so there were no Monday papers.¹⁵⁹

The RSDRP intelligentska Kollontai recalled that 'underground activity went forward with new energy and strength' in St. Petersburg. She helped Russian and Finnish comrades organise, and wrote for the Bolsheviks.¹⁶⁰ The Moscow Union for Women's Equality organised a union of female domestic servants in St. Petersburg,¹⁶¹ and a conference opened on 10 April.¹⁶² Over 1,000 attended, but when Kollontai ridiculed the 'idyll of cooperation between revolutionary socialist women and bourgeois feminists', they 'yelled at me that I was "playing into the hands of the Black Hundreds" and "indulging in hooliganism"', though a woman worker who had formerly supported Gapon agreed with her. The printers' union had promised to accept women apprentice typesetters, yet subsequently sought to limit their numbers.¹⁶³ Its bureau established a national network of branches from all social classes;¹⁶⁴ and Kollontai, the typesetter Soloveva, the weaver Antonovna, the tailoress Marusya Burko, the textile worker Anna Semenova, Klavdiya Nikolayeva and other workers propagandised them.¹⁶⁵

On 11 April the Moscow Pedagogical Institute helped to organise an All-Russian teachers' conference in home of the wife of a rich merchant who owned a liberal daily paper, and the 152 delegates from 30 provinces included 58 from Moscow and St. Petersburg. The 'solid group' of Bolsheviks was twice as large as that of the VPSR, and Rozhkov was elected as chair. M.Ia. Frumkina, a Bundist from Minsk, demanded that the meeting supported the RSDRP minimum programme, and though that fell by 96 votes to 23, a majority supported a democratically-elected constituent assembly and socio-economic reforms. The SDs dissented, but recruited many delegates.¹⁶⁶

On the 12th Artillery Department plants across the empire introduced a nine-hour day.¹⁶⁷ On the 15th the tsar revoked the powers of provincial governors to force strikers to return to work, and of governors to suppress strikes without judicial proceedings. On the 17th he granted religious toleration, pardoned 1,600 dissenters,¹⁶⁸ and put an end to the most oppressive disabilities on Old Believers and members of another dissident sect.¹⁶⁹

On the 20th 50 to 60 delegates from ten railway lines met secretly in Moscow, though only three were from lines outside the city. VPSR and RSDRP representatives attended without a vote, but while the RSDRP had more delegates than any other revolutionary organisation, SRs and liberals together outnumbered them.¹⁷⁰ Delegates called for a constituent assembly, civil liberties, an amnesty for political prisoners, an end to martial law and the death penalty, and an eight-hour day.¹⁷¹ They elected a bureau by secret ballot, though only the seven elected learned the result. They included Pereverzev as chair, another engineer as vice-chair, a legal advisor, a telegraph technician and an accountant. Three sympathised with the VPSR, one with the Mensheviks and one with the Bolsheviks, while another (who soon left) was an anarchist. The bureau published a programme in a legal paper with a circulation of 20,000.¹⁷²

On Sunday the 22nd St. Petersburg typographers did not work. They demanded a day of rest on New Year's Day, and two days at Christmas and Easter, plus 12 more religious holidays. Most newspaper proprietors accepted many of their demands, though one threatened to replace them with machines, and some reneged on the 23rd. Next day the printers' union bureau presented a draft charter to shop representatives. It barred employers and managers from joining the union, but it was open to all print workers, whatever their nationality or religion.¹⁷³ It called for measures to 'escape from our present economic slavery' and laws to 'guarantee the free and full development of all the spiritual forces of the individual personality'.¹⁷⁴ A larger bureau was elected to draw up a constitution,¹⁷⁵ and print workers and others established a central bureau of St. Petersburg trade unions.¹⁷⁶

From Geneva *Vyperod* welcomed the railway workers' union, though Moscow Bolsheviks aimed to 'wrest the leadership' from the liberals and SRs. Neither RSDRP faction had many ties with railway workers, so the 'party union' remained a 'skeleton organisation', though the VPSR had a large base.¹⁷⁷ The Bolsheviks tried to 'sort out' the

'purely proletarian' and 'bourgeois liberal and radical' elements,¹⁷⁸ though one believed it would take time to reach the same political level as the Saratov organisation, and for sympathisers and Mensheviks to become 'our men'.¹⁷⁹

That month, officially, there had been 454 strikes and 80,000 strikers, or 4.9 percent of inspected workers,¹⁸⁰ and three percent of the total workforce.¹⁸¹ Reportedly there had been at least 104,000 strikers overall, and 75 percent had come out for political reasons.¹⁸² Since January up to one million inspected workers had struck in over 100 towns and cities, and tens of thousands of others in the coalfields and on the railways.¹⁸³

The government had promised to reform peasant law,¹⁸⁴ and had written off part of the peasantry's one million ruble debts;¹⁸⁵ yet during April peasants were responsible for 103 of the 144 officially-recorded disorders,¹⁸⁶ and 47 were deemed serious,¹⁸⁷ while there were 111 attempts to assassinate officials in Guria.¹⁸⁸ On 1 May *Revolutsionnaya rossiya* called on peasants to 'take possession of the land', 'seize the fields and have them ploughed by the commune; use the pastures and forests on state-owned and appanage land, and on the gentry estates,' pending a constituent assembly. Peasants and workers would make the revolution, led by intelligenty.¹⁸⁹

On 4 May in St. Petersburg a Nevsky shipyard SD fighting squad bombed a tavern and killed 11 Black Hundreds, though one SD died. Both were of peasant origin.¹⁹⁰ Next day around 50 peasant delegates met in Moscow,¹⁹¹ and endorsed the Moscow Agricultural Society and zemstvo employees' proposal for 'self-defence from the exactions and violence by any authority not elected by the population'.¹⁹² The 'calamitous condition resulting from land shortage', 'unbearable requisitions and taxes' and 'the illiteracy of the population and its lack of rights', could not 'be corrected by the existing bureaucratic administration'; so they planned provincial, district and county organisations and elected officers for a national peasants' union.¹⁹³

The veteran SR Breshkovskaya had gone to the USA and spoken to audiences of up to 3,000,¹⁹⁴ especially in large east coast Jewish communities, where many Russian émigrés had settled,¹⁹⁵ and raised \$10,000 for the VPSR.¹⁹⁶ Back in Geneva she argued for sending propagandists to 'activate' peasants and factory workers, and 'Release that flood of mass terror and the tsarist regime is finished.' In May, together with a student and a peasant, she smuggled dynamite into Russia, and propagandised with slogans like 'Sacrifice yourself and destroy our enemies. To the People! To Arms!'¹⁹⁷ The assassin Kaliaev had denounced the autocracy at his trial,¹⁹⁸ by a special court of the Senate in St. Petersburg, which sentenced him to death,¹⁹⁹ and he was hanged at Shlisselburg Fortress on 10 May.²⁰⁰

The Bolsheviks needed money. During a strike at a textile mill in February, Savva Morozov's family had removed him as manager. After strikers threw stones at troops, who shot 11 of them,²⁰¹ he proposed a profit-sharing scheme,²⁰² and his family removed him as a director. In May he went to Switzerland and then Cannes,²⁰³ for psychiatric treatment, and when Krasin visited him he handed over his cash and an envelope addressed to Andreeva, saying 'This is all I have'. 'I won't need anything any more'.²⁰⁴ Next day he shot himself.²⁰⁵ He had had an affair with Andreeva, and the police believed he had settled a life insurance policy worth 100,000 rubles on her.²⁰⁶ Her partner Gorky left Yalta without police permission,²⁰⁷ and the last *Vyperod* was dated 5 May.²⁰⁸

Moscow RSDRP committee had recently consisted of a secretary, a chief propagandist, seven district organisers, 100 propagandists with ties to over 1,000 workers;²⁰⁹ though Mensheviks and Bolsheviks organised independently.²¹⁰ On the 14th St. Petersburg police arrested the RSDRP committee.²¹¹

The Bolshevik *Proletary* (*The Proletarian*) appeared in Geneva.²¹² Ulyanov was the chief editor, and the editorial board included Lunacharsky, Olminsky, Worowski,²¹³ and Karpinsky,²¹⁴ while the support staff were Krupskaya, Velichkina, Fotieva and 29-year-old Iwan Teodorwitz,²¹⁵ who joined the RSDP in 1902 and had become a Bolshevik by spring 1905.²¹⁶ *Proletary* insisted that the autocracy's days were numbered.²¹⁷

(v) Tsushima

News of Bloody Sunday had reached the Russian Baltic fleet at Madagascar on 22 January (according to the Russian calendar).²¹⁸ Some sailors agitated, and one crew of 400 mutinied. The admiral selected 14 at random to be shot and imprisoned others. There were courts martial on several ships and the admiral ordered the worst offenders to be sent home. When sailors mutinied again, a boarding party shot them. Officers ate good food, while sailors were offered diseased cow. A senior officer who had beaten a captain into insensibility was dismissed the service, while four sailors who stole some of the officers' champagne were sent to a punishment battalion for three years. In spring, when the temperature was around 30 degrees, a supply ship brought fur-lined coats. Sickness was rife, and some sailors drowned while trying to swim ashore, while others committed suicide, and there were funerals every day. The officers heard that Mukden had fallen, but were ordered to carry on to the Far East.²¹⁹ There had been little gunnery practice, to conserve ammunition, and crews had practised only one manoeuvre. When the fleet passed Singapore on 8 April Japanese agents reported its strength and direction to Tokyo.²²⁰

After 16 months of war the Japanese economy and human resources had been bled white, and the USA and British governments refused to give more credit.²²¹ The Russian government had raised a risky internal loan of 200 million rubles, and it subsequently secured a foreign loan of 150 million for from nine months to a year,²²² though it began working out a negotiating position for the peace talks proposed by the US president.²²³

On 14 May there was a naval battle in the Straits of Tsushima, between Korea and Japan.²²⁴ The Japanese warships were between two and three knots faster than the Russians', and had more guns, though their average size was smaller, yet they sank five Russian battleships and captured three and one cruiser, and interned four and sank four. They captured one destroyer, interned another and sank five.²²⁵ They also sank three transports and five minelayers, and another minelayer surrendered.²²⁶ A wounded admiral surrendered, while another warship crew threatened to throw their admiral overboard, then surrendered next day.²²⁷ Only one cruiser and two torpedo-boat destroyers limped back to Vladivostok.²²⁸ The Russians lost 4,830 men killed, while almost 7,000 were captured and 1,862 interned. The Japanese lost three torpedo boats, 110 men killed and 590 wounded.²²⁹ It was the first naval victory of an Asian power over a European power in modern times,²³⁰ and Japan controlled the Western Pacific.²³¹

The battle of Tsushima became public knowledge in St. Petersburg on 16 May.²³² Nevsky, Obukhov, Alexandrovsk and Putilov metalworkers' delegates met in the Nevsky shipyard canteen and founded a mutual-aid fund and a trade union which focussed on economic issues, but reserved the right to take a political stand. Other factory workers walked out after eight or nine hours, and those at the Train Car Construction Company and plants in Vyborg district struck for an eight hour day, though Vasily Smesov, a 22-year-old who had recently returned to the Siemens & Galske Electro-Technical works and encountered socialist ideas, was arrested for striking. The navy's Izhorsk armoury worked up to 12 hours, but on the 19th workers walked out after nine and stayed out until management conceded the principle. Many Tsushima sailors had been stationed in Kronstadt, and some St. Petersburg workers noted the '9,000 more residents killed in naval battle!' 'Will there ever be an end to this criminal war, to these bloody sacrifices?' 'Down with the criminal government. Down with the criminal war. We demand peace'.²³³

That day the tsar received details about Tsushima,²³⁴ and newspapers published them on the 23rd.²³⁵ Next day the Union of Unions called on 'all the Russian people, societies and organisations' to convene a constituent assembly an 'end, as quickly as possible, to the war and to the existing regime'.²³⁶ The tsar appointed the St. Petersburg police chief as assistant interior minister,²³⁷ and he prosecuted professional associations, considered workers' meetings a cover for RSDRP *kruzhki*, deployed police, gendarmes and troops, and approved courts martial and executions;²³⁸ yet the Admiralty introduced a nine-hour day for most plants,²³⁹ and workers formed unions.

Saratov railway activists had defeated SDs' attempt to alter their union's VPSR-oriented programme, and other SRs formed non-aligned unions. SDs organised unions of printers, office clerks and railway clerks, and dominated metalworkers', tailors' and carpenters' unions, though Bolshevik and Menshevik intelligenty criticised them.²⁴⁰ Teachers' union branches had been established in the central black earth provinces, and thousands of peasants had refused to meet their obligations to the government until it met their demands for land and liberty.²⁴¹ Intelligenty and 'conscious' young peasants formed peasants' union branches, mainly in provincial capitals and larger centres,²⁴² especially in the Don Cossack region and Kursk, Tula and Saratov provinces.²⁴³ VPSR intelligenty were stretched by the demands of building district union branches, but SRs addressed 600 Moscow workers, and fighting squads and garrison contacts emphasised activism.²⁴⁴ The police understood that 'Very often the peasants do not have enough allotment land, and cannot during the year feed themselves, clothe themselves, heat their homes, keep their tools and livestock, secure seed for sowing' or 'discharge all their taxes and obligations: to the state, the *zemstvo* and the commune'.²⁴⁵ There were 15 police agents in the VPSR,²⁴⁶ and they knew that émigré VPSR and RSDRP leaders were negotiating about joint terrorist activity. Arrests almost destroyed the VPSR campaign, and weakened the agrarian movement,²⁴⁷ and a state of reinforced security was in force in Vilnius, Smorgon, Grodno and Melitopol.²⁴⁸

During May there were 299 officially-recorded peasant disorders,²⁴⁹ while over 1,000 strikes involved almost 220,000 inspected workers, or 13.3 percent of the total,²⁵⁰ and 8.1 percent of the industrial workforce.²⁵¹ Inspectors deemed half of the strikes politically-motivated.²⁵² There had been 143,000 strike days in Petersburg province,²⁵³ and strikes in several Baltic cities.²⁵⁴ Elsewhere Morozov Mill weavers had won an 8.5 hour day, an eight percent rise and the end of fines,²⁵⁵ and Kyiv sugar workers had won an eight-hour day.²⁵⁶

In Moscow *Russkoe slovo* reported the number of wounded troops arriving in the city, though the paper's owners, Sytin & Company, had made a profit of 188,300 rubles in the financial year ending that spring. On 25 May the paper carried a first-hand account of Tsushima provided by the Japanese embassy in Vienna. In the next ten days the paper summarised reports of strikes across Russia, and the censors threatened to ban it, yet its circulation reached 150,000 and its total readership was reportedly close to one million, so distributors ignored the censors' threats;²⁵⁷ and revolutionary ideas had convinced a minority of sailors in the Black Sea Fleet.

8. *Kniaz Potemkin Tavritchesky*

(i) Odesa

By 1905 the VPSR had four groups in Odesa,¹ and while the RSDRP had somewhere between 550 and 1,500 ties with workers, the Mensheviks had a slight majority. Merchant seamen worked up to 20 hours a day and their pay lagged far behind the cost of living, so early in April they asked for a 70 percent rise, overtime pay, sick pay and shorter hours. On the 8th the crews of one shipping company went on strike and gave managers three days to make an offer. Next day another crew demanded negotiations, but 19 were sacked, and the port was largely strike-bound by the 10th. The governor deported strikers, and though some managers sacked 'instigators', others negotiated. Days later hundreds of bakers went on strike and flying pickets brought out others by persuasion or force. Most bakeries were closed by the 21st and the price of bread rocketed. Late that month the bakers won a ten-hour day, other concessions and a negotiating committee.

There were rumours of a pogrom, so Bundists got guns, knives, clubs, whips and sulphuric acid, and collaborated with Bolshevik and Menshevik fighting squads. They both formed a strike committee with the VPSR; but after an SD called the VPSR petty bourgeois and capitalist, and an SR shot him, the Bolsheviks withdrew.

By 6 May over 10,000 workers were out from the docks, shipyards, workshops, factories and the large machine-building plants in Peresyp district. Most demands included shorter hours, better pay and conditions and polite treatment. Some wanted to elect foremen and have delegates who could meet in company time, while others demanded a democratically-elected constituent assembly and an end to the war. After strikers threatened to bomb a leather works, the workforce came out, but the governor ordered the police to arrest the strike leaders and sent Cossacks and other troops to work in the strike-bound municipal slaughterhouse. Henn factory strikers wanted to free political prisoners, but hooted RSDRP agitators who called for an end to the war. Some tore 'Proletarians of the world, unite' from SD posters, yet many chose SDs as their workplace representatives. By the 8th many strikers at small firms had won concessions, printers had a ten-hour day and granary workers had been promised an eight-hour day. By the 20th most strikers were back at work, though foundry workers beat up scabs, and telegraph, telephone and hospital workers, dock workers and labourers at a railway depot stayed out.² In early June iron, cotton and railway workers were still out,³ and jute workers joined them, as did 3,700 from 13 enterprises, including several large metalworking plants. Peresyp district strikers, led by Ivan Alexeev, who was politically unaffiliated, discussed a general strike and whether to ask the RSDRP for arms. On the 8th 33 strike leaders were invited to negotiate with employers at Peresyp police station, but were detained.⁴

After 14 months in Tver prison the 30-year-old Bolshevik Konkordia Gromova was released on 1,000 rubles' bail and deported to Mykolaiv, but escaped to Odesa. The police had confiscated the Bolsheviks' press, and arrested the London Bolshevik conference delegates. She saw a procession of men, women and children,⁵ and thousands surrounding Peresyp police station, who tore down the railings and released the strike leaders. They marched through the district, growing in numbers, shouting 'Down with the police' and 'Long Live the General Strike,⁶ and singing the *Marseillaise*,⁷ as they carried the leaders home.⁸

Anatoly Berezovsky, the son of a successful Odesa shopkeeper, was a University student, and had distributed Menshevik leaflets in Peresyp district, trying to persuade workers that the 'criminal monarchy' caused their suffering.⁹ Most Mensheviks were 'trying to direct the movement along peaceful lines', and while the Bolsheviks argued for an insurrection, they were 'not strong enough to get the movement into their hands'.¹⁰ Another Menshevik student, Konstantin Feldmann, had found it difficult to convince workers to strike, yet many factories had closed and others had cut hours and wages, so the Mensheviks had a 'more favourable field' for agitation.¹¹ On the 10th 30 strike leaders told Ilya Levin, a Menshevik pharmacist's assistant, that they were committed to a general strike. He refused to give them any arms, though an SR supplied bombs and revolvers. SR and SD strike leaders met on the 12th, but were arrested.¹² Next day 500 angry strikers,¹³ and other around 500 workers, went to the Henn factory. Cossacks arrived and an officer ordered the crowd to disperse,¹⁴ but they demanded the release of the leaders. The Cossacks charged, strikers threw stones,¹⁵ and knocked an officer off his horse. Shots were fired from the crowd,¹⁶ and strikers overturned trams and carts to form a barricade. Fyodor Medvedev, an SD sailor who had gone underground after a barracks riot the previous winter, stood on top of the barricade, waving a red revolutionary pamphlet and shouting 'Comrades!' He was shot,¹⁷ and after the third volley wounded dozens of strikers, and killed several, survivors carried their corpses to the slaughterhouse.¹⁸ More barricades appeared, and strikers clashed with police and troops across the city, and appealed again to the RSDRP for arms. More troops arrived, but strikers stopped a train and disabled the locomotive, and when Cossacks saw a large defiant crowd

they galloped off.¹⁹ Up to 2,000 dockers used rocks and guns against the police, and excoriated SRs for not providing enough arms, while many SDs had left the city or were hiding.²⁰ The police pressurised some factory and railway managers to compromise. Feldmann recalled: 'All Peresyp had risen by now, and we called the crowd to a meeting. Thousands of workmen from all parts of the town streamed to it, and soldiers 'showed entire sympathy'. They called a general strike for next day in memory of the fallen,²¹ and that evening strikers closed the gas and electricity plants and the lights went out.²²

On the 14th, after Mensheviks and Bundists proclaimed a general strike,²³ the city governor called on 'peaceful citizens' to avoid 'accidents' and 'abstain from joining the crowds'. Trams and buses had stopped running, and though the barricades were 'toy fortifications' defended by two or three dozen people with stones, Cossacks did not attack them. Feldmann saw 'immense crowds' moving along the main street, and comrades told him that the assistant police chief and a superintendent had been killed. Strikers had gone to 'fetch away' workers from the water works and factories outside the city,²⁴ and 1,500 tried to seize a foreign-owned bank building. Armed strikers toured workplaces, urging workers to come out, though some troops reportedly did not shoot and some police used blanks. Workers, teenagers and young children overturned trams and uprooted telephone poles to build more barricades, disarmed police and beat them, sometimes to death, and some employers granted a nine-hour day.²⁵ Feldmann recalled that Peresyp workers 'told us that the temper of the people was despondent, that the masses were clamouring for weapons, and refusing to go into the streets unarmed'. As he walked home he heard a 'deafening explosion', met Cossacks brandishing their deadly whips, and the fleeing crowd told him what had happened.²⁶ A policeman had arrested a young Jew who exploded a bomb, killing himself, a passer-by,²⁷ and the policeman, while another policeman who ordered the crowd to disperse had been shot 14 times.²⁸ Around 100 police spies had defected, and after the police 'burnt' (informed on) 20, they were killed. (Most others fled, though seven were later exiled to Siberia.) A spy in the VPSR committee reported that they planned to blow up the railway to Kyiv. The would-be saboteurs were arrested, though 2,000 workers attacked the line. Cossacks killed two, yet workers built more barricades and dynamited police headquarters, killing a spy and wounding four officers.²⁹ A Bundist wrote to the Bund's paper. 'The mood was such, that, throughout, those who attacked were not the Cossacks but the workers'. Workers, 'pursuing the police, broke down the gates behind which the police were hiding'. 'In their fury they struck such fear into the police that often it was enough to show them a revolver to make them flee. Our organisation can consider this Tuesday its day of triumph'. 'Almost only Jewish workers took part in the clashes', and other 'members of our organisations played a role everywhere'.³⁰ On the 15th railway workshop workers struck, but while a Bolshevik believed that the strike was 'completely divorced from party leadership'.³¹

(ii) All the way for the common weal

RSDRP and VPSR navy sailors' *kruzhki* had cooperated in Sevastopol, independently of their civilian comrades, since the beginning of 1905.³² After Bloody Sunday pamphlets urged sailors to shoot officers,³³ and martial law was imposed in the Yalta district.³⁴ In February officers tried to send hundreds of sailors deemed politically unreliable away, but they refused to board the train.³⁵ By spring there were revolutionaries on every warship and together they outnumbered civilian comrades ashore.³⁶ *Tsentralka*, the sailors' leaders' organisation, issued 'resolutions of the Black Sea sailors' calling for the 'abolition of the autocratic regime' and a democratic republic, 'led by a constituent assembly elected by direct, equal, secret and universal suffrage'.

In April the new armoured cruiser *Kniaz Potemkin Tavrichesky* arrived in Sevastopol.³⁷ The crew was mainly Ukrainian, and included the SD Opanas Matiushenko and Lieutenant Oleksandr Kovalenko, a leader of the Ukrainian SDP.³⁸ RSDRP civilians wanted the SD sailors to organise a mutiny, but when they enquired if it would harm the revolution if they did so immediately, the civilians asked them to wait until other crews were ready.³⁹ Early in May the SD sailors told the civilians that they had reached the 'limits of patience', and 'many of us are prepared to go all the way for the common weal', since they hoped a mutiny could spark a widespread insurrection. They informed the RSDRP émigré centre, and asked St. Petersburg and Warszawa committees for support, though not the Menshevik-controlled southern committees;⁴⁰ and they hoped for support from the garrison.

Just under two rubles a month was the minimum needed for a soldier to survive at a reasonable level, but privates got 22.5 kopeks and had to buy soap, spoons, boot brushes, polish, blankets and bed linen; so many sold some of their bread for 30 kopeks.⁴¹ On 7 May soldiers in Sevastopol protested against their conditions, and members of two warship crews refused to shoot them, while the crew of the *Ekaterina II* threatened to scuttle the battleship.

On the 10 June Matiushenko climbed a hill outside the city, gave a password to a woman and received directions to a cemetery, where he joined over 100 sailors and a few men and women civilians for a *Tsentralka* meeting. The

SD Alexandr Petrov, who had been expelled from the navy, but had stayed in Sevastopol, called for an uprising across the south, and the SD Vakulinchuk, an artillery quartermaster on the *Potemkin*, pointed out that workers and peasants were taking action, and the meeting decided to organise a mutiny in 11 days' time.

There were 50 revolutionaries and 150 sympathisers on the *Potemkin*, plus 563 raw recruits who were either politically indifferent or loyal to the tsar; so the stoker Fyodor Nikishkin, an experienced agitator, called them to 'Bible meetings'. On the 11th the captain announced that 39 sailors and one officer would be transferred, though only one was a revolutionary. Next day the *Potemkin* set out for Tendra Island, and arrived on the 13th, but instead of buying provisions locally, an officer sailed 50km to Odesa,⁴² and next day the *Potemkin* surgeon pronounced the meat he brought fit to eat, once the maggots were washed off, and it was made into soup. When the crew refused to eat it, the captain ordered them on deck and accused them of disorder, though an overwhelming majority still refused to eat the soup. The captain ordered soldiers to shoot 30, yet after Matiushenko appealed to them they lowered their rifles. Some sailors armed themselves and there were shouts of 'Long live freedom! Down with the war! Down with the tsar!' Matiushenko told the captain: 'Get off the ship. This is the people's ship and not yours'; and he fled. After an officer shot Vakulinchuk, Matiushenko shot the officer, and then another. Their bodies were thrown overboard, along with the captain, who was still alive, and the crew arrested 12 other officers. The crew elected a committee,⁴³ to maintain order, control funds, communicate with civilian revolutionaries and hopefully negotiate with the government. Most of the 25 members were machinists, gunners and telegraph operators, and they elected Matiushenko as chair. They hoisted a red flag and sang the *Marseillaise*, but Vakulinchuk died.⁴⁴ The *Potemkin* set sail for Odesa and weighed anchor outside the harbour at 10.00pm.⁴⁵ The ship's 'purse' held 24,000 rubles and the committee decided that gang leaders would go ashore next day to buy provisions and coal, taking Vakulinchuk's body with an 'inscription appealing to the people', and tell RSDRP civilians what had happened. A sailor wrote an appeal to the Cossacks and other troops, claiming that the 'Government is abolished', so they should 'join in the struggle for freedom'; but if there was resistance, *Potemkin's* guns would destroy the city.⁴⁶

Early on the 15th sailors took Vakulinchuk's body ashore and civilian revolutionaries rushed to the harbour.⁴⁷ Berezovsky met a 'tremendous crowd' shouting 'Death to the Tyrants! We will die for freedom!', and after he argued for a strike under the protection of the *Potemkin's* guns there was a 'deafening roar'. 'The sailors were withdrawn from their work on the ships. Hundreds of whistles were sounding wildly, deafening everyone. The crowd flowed like a wave from side to side, attracting everyone into their ranks as they moved along', and the *Potemkin* sailors invited revolutionary delegates on board.⁴⁸ At 10.00am Feldmann was in the city centre with other agitators and saw a 'vast, eager crowd' going to the harbour. His student uniform made him conspicuous, so he changed into 'ragged workmen's clothes', and when he heard about the mutiny he got an RSDRP worker to row him out to the *Potemkin*. Berezovsky and a Bundist were already there, and the ship's committee, which now had 30 members, let Feldmann stay. They believed that up to 200 sailors supported them, and Feldmann proposed an 'executive sub-committee' of those 'most devoted to the revolution'. The committee wanted 'moral support', and sent a delegate to Sevastopol to inform the rest of the fleet.⁴⁹ The civilian SDs wanted the committee to lead a demonstration ashore, and to call on soldiers to join them, though the sailors refused to risk the 'most reliable and boldest' men,⁵⁰ and decided to wait for other warships to arrive.⁵¹ At 4.00pm Gromova heard that the *Potemkin* committee would not provide arms or leadership,⁵² and though a young Menshevik woman suggested that the sailors should take control of the town, other SDs asked the crowd to go home.⁵³ Some soldiers and police gave 'hoodlums' vodka, and they badly beat one agitator and shot another, while police shot workers and started a pogrom in Moldavanka district.⁵⁴ Workers rolled casks of vodka into the sea, though troops drove them back with considerable loss of life.⁵⁵ By evening several thousand civilians were near the harbour, and some plundered warehouses. Cyclists distributed leaflets blaming Jews for the unrest, but workers threw one cyclist into the harbour, and Bundists shot another. After a policeman tried to incite the crowd against a Jewish speaker, Bundists agitated workers to beat him to death. Strikers attacked soldiers and Cossacks, while bomb-throwers and snipers killed a police inspector and injured Cossacks;⁵⁶ though that night over 1,000 people were shot or burned to death.⁵⁷

The previous day, in Sevastopol, the crew of *Ekaterina II* had sung prayers half-heartedly, and when a few began singing *Bozhe, Tsarya khрани!* (*God Save the Tsar!*), the rest whistled and howled. On the 15th the captains of two battleships, including the *Ekaterina II*,⁵⁸ were ordered to stay in port, though they had already disabled their engines, since they feared a mutiny. That night, in St. Petersburg, the tsar ordered reports from Odesa to be censored, imposed martial law in Sevastopol and Mykolaiv,⁵⁹ appointed a provisional governor-general and ordered him and the military commander to take 'very decisive measures to suppress the uprising', including blowing up the *Potemkin*. The orders reached Odesa by 3.00am on the 16th.⁶⁰

Berezovsky, Feldmann and a Bolshevik called Boris were on the *Potemkin*, but Matiushenko was sure of the support of only 100 sailors.⁶¹ Feldmann got to sleep at 5.00am, but was soon woken by the surgeon who insisted that Vakulinchuk's body be buried, since it was a flashpoint in the battle ashore.⁶² Delegates of the 'organised part

of their comrades' from two garrison regiments boarded the *Potemkin* and offered to mutiny if the committee took 'decisive action'.⁶³ They wanted them to shell the military council in the theatre unless the political prisoners were freed, the pogrom was stopped, troops were withdrawn and the arsenal surrendered. The committee wrote to ask the French Consul to get the Russian authorities to agree to those demands, allow Vakulinchuk's body to be buried and let the *Potemkin* load coal and provisions; though volunteer petty officers below decks were agitating to get rid of the revolutionary landsmen. Feldmann and another SD spoke to the committee for two hours, then Feldmann dressed as a sailor and went ashore with the priest and the SD engineer 'K' (probably Dorofy Koshuba). Vakulinchuk's body was charred and stinking, and they got permission to bury it, then heard shooting. Troops and artillery were arriving from Chişinău and Mykolaiv, so the sailors left a guard near the corpse and sailed back to the *Potemkin*. Feldmann and Berezovsky argued for action ashore, and the committee called a mass meeting. Matiushenko later claimed that 300 sailors were ready to shell the theatre, and told others that if they disagreed they should shoot the committee or hand them over to the authorities. At 5.00pm the *Potemkin* fired three blanks and one live round, but thanks to a petty officer it missed the theatre and hit a barracks. Feldmann and others went ashore and threatened further shelling, and though the military commander refused to negotiate, he let them return to the warship.⁶⁴ There were 10,000 people in the harbour,⁶⁵ and the authorities, who had 2,000 troops, announced that they would disperse meetings of 20 or more. Troops fired on Vakulinchuk's funeral procession and killed, wounded or arrested several sailors. The others did not retaliate,⁶⁶ though someone threw a bomb which seriously wounded 22 loyal soldiers.

Odesa Okhrana knew that, except for their fighting squads, Mensheviks and SRs were lax about security, and they found a press, dynamite and the address of a man called Galperin. They raided his lodgings and found bombs and dozens of fake passports, and after they subjected him to 'extreme' interrogation he named the rest of his organisation and they were arrested.⁶⁷ Later that evening the *Viekha*, a small unarmed navy ship, steamed into the harbour, and the captain boarded the *Potemkin*. The committee arrested him,⁶⁸ and put other officers ashore, while the crew boarded the *Potemkin*.⁶⁹ Machine guns were firing on shore and the committee sent a sloop to investigate. A soldier from a navy battalion assured the *Potemkin* crew of their solidarity, though the sailors stayed on board.⁷⁰ That night up to a quarter of the city burned to the ground, at least 2,000 died and 3,000 were seriously wounded.⁷¹

In Sevastopol several warships had been ordered to sail to Odesa. Reportedly about ten of the battleship *Rotislav's* crew were 'class-conscious', and knew they were being sent against the *Potemkin*, so they agitated, but were arrested. There was a near-mutiny on the battleship *Georgi Pobedonosets*,⁷² and revolutionaries organised as did those on another battleship,⁷³ though they did not co-ordinate their actions.⁷⁴

At 7.00am on the 17th the *Potemkin* committee learned that the flotilla was on its way. Feldmann argued against firing first, because that would drive sailors and officers together, though the crew unfurled the battle flag and the warship steamed out of the harbour.⁷⁵ At 9.00am, as the flotilla neared Odesa, the *Potemkin* signalled 'Surrender or we will fire'. The flotilla retreated, but drew up in battle order, and just after 1.00pm it neared the harbour. The *Potemkin* steamed towards the middle of the first column, and though two battleships did not move, the crews of others were in disorder, and the admiral ordered them to steam back to Sevastopol at full speed. The *Georgi Pobedonosets* steered straight at the *Potemkin*, then stopped, and the crew telegraphed a request 'to send some comrades on board'. 'Things are going badly here. We are not all agreed'. Committee members went over, armed to the teeth, and put the senior officers ashore.⁷⁶ The *Potemkin* accompanied the *Georgi Pobedonosets* into the harbour, and its crew elected a committee, though several volunteer petty officers refused to serve. The SD Simon Deiniga worried about the 'conservative part of the crew' and suggested swapping over half of each, and the *Potemkin* sent 60 or so across. By this time Feldmann and Berezovsky were 'hopelessly hoarse', and Matiushenko had 'almost entirely lost his voice', so they decided to go ashore to fetch civilian SD agitators.

On the 18th the civilian funerals passed off peacefully in Odesa,⁷⁷ and some soldiers promised to join the *Potemkin* mutineers if they bombarded the city. The committee sent Feldmann ashore, and an armed delegation of Berezovsky, Kovalenko and the surgeon went to the *Georgi Pobedonosets*, though the *Potemkin* surgeon announced that almost all its crew wanted to surrender, and he and some of the sailors prevented Berezovsky and Kovalenko from speaking. They returned to the *Potemkin* with sailors who reported that petty officers had persuaded half the crew to go to Sevastopol and surrender,⁷⁸ yet when the *Potemkin* hoisted its battle flag the crew of the *Georgi Pobedonosets* ran it aground. Some *Potemkin* sailors, led by petty officers, pressured the committee to surrender. Matiushenko recalled that civilian SDs 'did not show sufficient activity and determination', while most soldiers and sailors were 'not class-conscious', and had 'no experience whatever of revolutionary struggle'. After the *Potemkin* went to sea,⁷⁹ Feldmann recalled that Matiushenko 'lost his head completely' when most of the crew panicked, though most began 'passionately arguing against surrender'.

Soon after the *Pruth*, whose crew included revolutionaries, sailed into Odesa harbour, intending to join the *Potemkin*, and freed its officers, who left for Sevastopol,⁸⁰ while the *Potemkin* steamed towards Romania.

(iii) Constanța

Khristian Rakovsky was born into a wealthy family in Kotel, Bulgaria, in 1873. His father was a democrat and his mother was related to a well-known revolutionary.⁸¹ Romania annexed Bulgaria in 1878,⁸² and Khristian's family moved to the village of Gherengic in the Constanța district of Romania in 1880. He later entered Gabrovo gymnasium in Bulgaria, and was briefly expelled for political activity in 1887 and for organizing a riot in 1890. He considered himself an SD, and helped to print works by Marx and Engels and an illegal paper, *Zerkalo* (*The Mirror*).

In autumn he went to Geneva University, joined a socialist circle,⁸³ and led others with Luxemburg. They met Polish and Armenian revolutionaries and contacted socialist students elsewhere.⁸⁴ In summer 1891 the former St. Petersburg University student, Dimitar Blagoev, established *Balgarska rabotnicheska sotsialdemokraticheska partia* (the Bulgarian Social Democratic Workers' Party).⁸⁵ In winter Rakovsky wrote to members of the Geneva and French labour movements and the organisers of the International Congress of Socialist Students. 'On all the most difficult problems', he consulted Plekhanov, who encouraged Bulgarian socialist students to produce a journal. Rakovsky contributed to Bulgarian SD journals and newspapers, translated Gabriel Deville's work on Marx and some of Plekhanov's articles.⁸⁶ *Balgarska sotsialdemokraticheska partiya* (the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party) was founded in 1892, and *Partidul social-democrat al muncitorilor din românia* (the Romanian Social Democratic Party) in 1893, though intellectuals dominated its leadership and it joined the Second International.⁸⁷ In autumn Rakovsky helped to organise the Second International Congress of socialist students and edited the Geneva-based Bulgarian-language magazine, *Sotsialen democrat* (*Social Democrat*). He contributed to other Bulgarian SD publications, supported Blagoev's breakaway *Bŭlgarski sotsialdemokraticheski sŭyuz* (the Bulgarian Social Democratic Union),⁸⁸ and was expelled from the University,⁸⁹

He went to Berlin, enrolled at a medical school, contributed to the SPD's *Vorwärts*, befriended Wilhelm Liebknecht, and was a Bulgarian delegate to the Second International Congress in Zurich, where he met Engels.⁹⁰ Back in Berlin he joined Russian socialist students and argued about SR politics and Marxism.⁹¹ Six months later the Berlin police expelled him, so he returned to Switzerland and attended Zurich University, then moved to Montpellier University in France in 1894.⁹² He met socialists and Elena Riabova, a Russian SD student,⁹³ and in 1896 his doctoral thesis earned him a high reputation.⁹⁴ He wrote for *La Jeunesse Socialiste* (*Young Socialist*) and *La Petite République* (*The Little Republic*), opposed reformists, supported the Anti-Ottoman rising in Crete, Macedonia and Dashnak, and was a delegate to the Second International Congress in London. In 1897 his *Russiya na Istok* (*Russia in the East*) criticised Russian foreign policy, especially towards Romania, described Russian rule in Bessarabia as an 'absolutist conquest', and Russophile Bulgarian papers attacked him. Rakovsky married Riabova, but was conscripted, and served as a doctor in a Romanian cavalry regiment in Constanța in 1899, rising to the rank of lieutenant.

In 1900 Rakovsky joined his wife in St. Petersburg. He criticised Struve, and distributed *Iskra* in 1901, though his wife died in 1902, and the crackdown on socialists forced him to return to France. He worked as a doctor in Beaulieu, Haute-Loire, but in 1903, after his father died, he lived in Paris,⁹⁵ and met Lev Bronstein. Rakovsky worked with Russian socialists, and attended the RSDRP's Second Congress,⁹⁶ but supported neither faction.⁹⁷ In Bulgaria revolutionary SDs formed *Blgarska rabotnicheska sotsialdemokraticheska partiya*, *Tesni Sotsialisti* (the Bulgarian Workers' Social-Democratic Party, Narrow Socialists), while revisionists formed *Balgarska rabotnicheska sotsialdemokraticheska partia*, *Shiroki Sotsialisti*, (Broad Socialists),⁹⁸ though Rakovsky regretted that the 'orthodox' Marxists and the 'revisionists' had split. In 1904 he worked as a doctor and lawyer in Romania, wrote for the socialist *România Muncitoare* (*Working Romania*), which provoked successful strikes, and for *L'Humanité*,⁹⁹ and attended the Second International Congress in Amsterdam.¹⁰⁰

By 1905 he had returned to Bulgaria, and defended peasants in court cases, but was deported to Constanța.¹⁰¹ When the *Potemkin* arrived,¹⁰² Rakovsky assured the 700 sailors that they were safe,¹⁰³ organized rallies in their support and tried to persuade them to sail to Batumi to help strikers.¹⁰⁴ Their bread and millet was running out, and they had enough coal for three days' steaming, but the *Potemkin* headed to Crimea. Matiushenko and Feldmann caught petty officers sapping the crew's morale, but let them go. Next day the warship arrived in Feodosiia, and a government leaflet that threatened 'strong and stern measures' drove the crew together. The city authorities had orders not to supply coal, yet Koshuba tried to bring a collier alongside; but soldiers fired at them, and the *Potemkin* sailed away, so Koshuba and Feldmann were captured. On the way to Sevastopol Koshuba asked his guards to kill their officers, but they refused. When they arrived they found that over 3,000 sailors were in prison, rifles had been removed from the barracks, shells taken out of the warships, infantry put on board and mutineers imprisoned on the *Pruth*. According to Feldmann, Koshuba's was 'the only voice that rang out as bold and hearty as ever',¹⁰⁵ though news of the mutiny had reached the Bolsheviks in Geneva.

(iv) Send a torpedo boat to find me immediately

In Geneva, by summer 1905, *Proletary* received up to ten letters a day from Russia, mainly from workers.¹⁰⁶ Mikhail Vasiliev wanted to return until his wife arrived from Baki, where the Okhrana had given her no peace.¹⁰⁷ After news of the *Potemkin* mutiny arrived on 16/29 June,¹⁰⁸ Ulyanov told Vasiliev that the CC had ordered him to go to Odesa.

It is feared that the Odesa comrades do not know how to profit from the revolt that has burst out on board. Try to get on board the ironclad, cautiously. Persuade the sailors to act resolutely and fast. Make them get ready to sail. If necessary, do not hesitate to bombard the government offices. We have to secure the city. Next, immediately arm the workers and agitate energetically among the peasants. To do this, mobilise the greatest number of the Odesa organisation's activists. Appeal to the peasant, by word of mouth and pamphlets, to take over gentry land and unite with the workers and fight together.

Next, it is necessary to do everything possible to take over the fleet. I am sure that the majority of ships will rally to the *Potemkin*. But it is necessary to act energetically, boldly and fast. Then, send a torpedo boat to find me immediately.

(Ulyanov later admitted that the order was not from the CC.)

Vasiliev had holidayed in the Odesa region three years earlier, but since then propaganda had been effective in the Batumi garrison in Caucasia. Workers had struggled heroically and the Mensheviks had become influential. Vasiliev thought he could rely on the peasantry, and intended to take the *Potemkin* there. He travelled via Austria, used a general's son's passport to cross the Russian border, and then a crudely forged internal passport.¹⁰⁹ He reached Odesa at night, but the *Potemkin* had set sail,¹¹⁰ and he looked for Bolsheviks next morning.

Minei Gubelman had been born into a Siberian peasant family in 1878. His father was a furrier who became a teacher, and his mother was a fisherman's daughter. As a young man Gubelman worked as a bookbinder, but in 1898 he qualified as an assistant pharmacist. He joined the RSDRP, and formed what was possibly the first SD workers' kruzhok on the Transbaikal railway. He was conscripted in 1899, but after his discharge in 1901 he visited Berlin and Paris and met many leading SDs. In 1902 he joined Chita RSDRP committee and he helped to form a Transbaikal railway workers' union in 1903. He supported the Bolsheviks, and was in Odesa by 1905. Vasiliev contacted him, though there was a pogrom, so he reported to Geneva and left for Moscow.¹¹¹

On 18 June/1 July *Iskra* welcomed the Odesa SD civilians' plan to 'take over the town, declare the state power overthrown and organise a democratic self-government of citizens' 'similar to that military republic which the *Potemkin* sailors have set up on their ship', to provide the rising with a 'political centre' and give it 'political organisation'.¹¹² The RSDRP should implement this strategy 'gradually all over the country with the perspective of a last assault on the centre of government'.¹¹³

On 20 June/3 July *Proletary* argued for better communication between revolutionaries.

Let it be realised by one and all, now and without delay, how vital it is to unite and co-ordinate the local uprisings which are breaking out all over the country. Taken separately, these outbreaks are ineffectual. The organised force of the tsarist government can crush the insurgents group by group, if the movement continues to spread from town to town and from district to district as slowly and sporadically as it has been doing until now. But united, these outbreaks can converge into a mighty torrent of revolutionary flame, which no power on earth will be able to withstand.

The slogan that 'the spontaneous process of expansion and intensification of the revolutionary movement, powerfully impels', was 'Armed uprising of the people!'¹¹⁴

Lengnik went to Odesa,¹¹⁵ and reported that two male Bolsheviks were ill, Knipovich's movements were restricted by her gender, Drabkin spent his time gossiping and Vladimir Tsederbaum was on holiday. Ulyanov felt it was 'no use crying over spilt milk', but expelled one Odesa Bolshevik who favoured collaborating with other organisations.¹¹⁶ The *Potemkin* returned to Constanța, but days later the crew scuttled the ship, then scattered.¹¹⁷

Odesa ship owners subsequently established a registration scheme for merchant seamen, and let them elect foremen. The military commander approved and 2,000 sailors signed up. Many metallurgy and print workers had a nine-hour day and better pay and conditions, and Henn workers had won a joint disputes board. The fire had destroyed most port buildings and dozens of ships, causing millions of rubles' worth of damage, while railway links were disrupted. Polish industrialists were wary of extending credit to Odesa businesses, foreign firms demanded cash up front and banks had stopped lending, while merchants and industrialists were wary of trading through the port, so they went to Mykolaiv and other ports. Odesa's exports fell sharply, and about 20,000 dockworkers and day labourers were unemployed. Factory owners reimposed the old conditions, and though some strikers were freed, hundreds were deported without trial. The Bolsheviks were 'shattered'.¹¹⁸

On 28 June/11 July Ulyanov wrote from Geneva to the RSDRP Russian CC.

The general opinion is that there is no Central Committee, that it does not make itself felt, that no one notices it. And the facts confirm this. There is no evidence of the C.C.'s political guidance of the Party. Yet all the C.C. members are working themselves to death! What is the matter?

In my opinion, one of the principal causes of it is that there are no regular C.C. leaflets. Leadership by means of talks and personal contacts at a time of revolution is sheer utopianism. Leadership must be public.

'If you are short-handed, then put third-rate forces on the job, even tenth-rate ones, but attend to the political leadership yourselves, issue leaflets first and foremost'. They should find six agents, enlarge the CC and establish regular contact with Geneva.¹¹⁹ *Proletary* argued for forming and uniting unions 'under the leadership of the party';¹²⁰ yet the Bolsheviks in Russia were struggling.

(v) Very weakly organised and not prepared for an armed rising

By 1 June 1905 there were 300,000 troops in Poland,¹²¹ and 900 Jews were killed or injured in Białystok, mostly on the main streets, though almost 400 armed Jews defended the side streets. Chaim Helfand wrote in the Bund's *Folks-tsaytung (People's Paper)*: 'When the *pogromshchik* is met by death at every door, at every window', then 'he knows that the pogrom is a war in which you can not only kill but be killed. That frightens the hooligans; it frightens the police', and delays the soldiers. 'At stake are our lives – and still more our honour and human dignity. We must not let ourselves be slaughtered like oxen.'¹²²

In Łódź Cossacks had recently killed one striker and injured two others, though there were somewhere between 8,000 and 12,000 strikers.¹²³ On the 5th Bundists and Polish socialists demonstrated peacefully, yet Cossacks killed five Christians and two Jews. On the 7th up to 50,000 people marched in the funeral procession,¹²⁴ with 14 red flags, shouting revolutionary slogans and hearing socialist speeches.¹²⁵ Soldiers fired at them,¹²⁶ though some broke through cordons of police and troops and found that the police had buried the two Jews secretly.¹²⁷ The PPS leaders were convinced that a revolution had to be 'directly linked to the victory of revolution in an all parts of the Russian empire,¹²⁸ and Piłsudski went to Łódź.¹²⁹ On the 8th Cossacks killed 18 demonstrators and wounded 20,¹³⁰ though 10,000 demonstrated at the funerals.¹³¹ Martial law was imposed,¹³² and while the socialist parties argued about a general strike, Jewish workers had only bricks and stones in an attempt to defend their barricades.¹³³ There was a general strike by the 10th.¹³⁴ Jews and Poles built more barricades and disarmed Cossacks, police and spies, and army commanders sent Jewish and Polish troops out of the city.¹³⁵ The governor had increased the garrison to 20,000, and allowed commanders to act on their own initiative. The 400 casualties included three soldiers,¹³⁶ though the 151 dead included 79 Jews, 53 Poles and 17 Germans. Barricades were built in the Jewish quarter and elsewhere overnight, and battles lasted until morning. An *Iskra* correspondent reported that 'The heroic conduct of the Jews in the clashes with the police and the army units arouses admiration everywhere'. 'Legends are circulating about yesterday's battle between the Jews and the Cossacks' and the Jews were 'some kind of Samsons'.¹³⁷ Around 18,000 workers were on strike, and from 8,000 to 12,000 for some time thereafter, yet the socialist organisations were disrupted.¹³⁸ On the 18th troops killed five SDKPiL workers returning from Łódź and wounded others, and Łódź workers erected barricades on the 22nd, though there were over 1,000 casualties by the 25th.¹³⁹ Around 1,945 school pupils had been expelled,¹⁴⁰ yet waiters had won a 9½ hour day, a ten percent rise and two weeks' annual holiday.¹⁴¹

The SDKPiL leader Dzierzynski established worker-agitator *kruzhki* in all the districts of Łódź and called on the SPD to agitate the 60,000 German workers in and around the city, while Tsederbaum gave him control of the local RSDRP military organisation. There were sympathy strikes in Kielce, Radom, Puławy and Białystok,¹⁴² though 50 Jews were killed.¹⁴³ Demonstrators clashed with troops in Kalisz, and there were armed conflicts in Dombrowo, Zawierce and Częstochowa,¹⁴⁴ where there was a general strike, and there was a one-day strike in Lublin. The Dąbrowa coalfield was almost completely strike-bound, and the few working miners implemented an eight-hour day unilaterally. In Warszawa almost two-thirds of workers were on strike and the socialist parties cooperated. There were demonstrations, barricades and skirmishes, though 689 were arrested,¹⁴⁵ and 172 shot dead.¹⁴⁶ Agrarian strikes had flared up across Poland, though in Częstochowa, Radom, Lublin and elsewhere the SDKPiL relied on the PPS and Bund for printing, smuggling and other technical assistance, and it borrowed weapons for its 'armed defence' units from the PPS in Radom; yet its Lithuanian organisation was suffering from 'simple exhaustion', and the leaders blocked cooperation with other parties.

The Lithuanian SDP's rural supporters, who were mainly young farmers, tried to recruit small-holders, labourers and landless peasants, encouraged strikes against Polish landlords,¹⁴⁷ and distributed arms. The LSDP Congress usually included the outgoing CC and the editors, and 13 to 20 delegates elected by regional organisations, though

the outgoing CC sometimes had to nominate them. Delegates usually elected a CC of three to five members, with alternates, and while most were well-educated, some were workers. The LSDP Congress denounced the RSDRP as 'detrimental to the interest of the Lithuanian proletariat', because of its centralised structure and failure to acknowledge the right to national self-determination.¹⁴⁸ The Bund and SDKPiL also wanted 'freedom and autonomy' in the RSDRP, and agreed to support each other at international congresses. When Dzierzynski addressed 40 Warszawa district SDKPiL leaders outside the city, he saw cavalry approaching and told comrades to give him anything compromising and escape, though he and others were imprisoned.¹⁴⁹

Earlier in June 17 delegates at the Latvian SDSP Congress in Riga had claimed to represent 7,000 members, including 2,750 in 273 Riga kruzhki,¹⁵⁰ five local committees, the outgoing CC and the editors of *Cīņa (Struggle)*, which was printed in Riga and had 12,000 subscribers, or around one per 166 citizens. (*Iskra* and *Proletary* had 20,000 subscribers in Russia, or one per 6,500.) Delegates heard that in 12 months the LSDSP had distributed over one million leaflets, 5,000 copies of each of five booklets and 3,000 copies of two booklets produced by its Zurich branch. It had organised large street demonstrations and forest meetings and resisted the police. Delegates agreed that a general strike in rural districts would be effective at a critical moment of the political struggle, and though their main focus should be on raising workers' class-consciousness and leading economic struggles, workers should be ready for an armed rising and a guerrilla war.¹⁵¹ In Riga the LSDSP's relations with the 600 RSDRP members were not very friendly, and *Iskra* criticised the LSDSP for being too moderate, though the LSDSP congress rejected the dictatorship of the proletariat, noted that 'the proletariat of central Russia is still very weakly organised and an uprising would be 'irresponsible'. They voted for a programme based on the SPD Erfurter Programm, and called for the use of Latvian in schools, courts and municipal and government offices. They favoured agitating civilians and troops, organising strikes and demonstrations,¹⁵² and demanded 'autonomy for all separate nationalities within a democratic Russian republic'.¹⁵³ Subsequently, hundreds of Latvian peasants attended churches and an LSDSP agitator spoke before the sermon. When the clergyman began the prayer for the tsar, peasants left and beat up gentry, and Sessau peasants shot a German baron who had attacked them with a whip. LSDSP meetings made collections and destroyed the tsar's portrait, lists of conscripts and emblems of Russian despotism in town halls.¹⁵⁴

In Germany key elements of the SPD favoured reformism. By 1905 366 cartels dominated many industries, and though trade unions had more bargaining power,¹⁵⁵ 6,404 workers had been locked out after the western May Day.¹⁵⁶ Three weeks later delegates at an SPD trade union congress in Cologne condemned the political mass strike as ineffective in winning political reforms.¹⁵⁷ They wanted 'peace and quiet', banned the discussion of mass strikes and criticised the SPD left and the 'revisionist' Bernstein,¹⁵⁸ though members in Stuttgart, Leipzig and elsewhere protested.¹⁵⁹ Kautsky had recently argued for the establishment of a 'United States of Russia',¹⁶⁰ and told Axelrod in Geneva that when Germans asked him 'why Russian Marxists were quarrelling in the middle of the Russian revolution', he could 'only answer: because Axelrod and Plekhanov think Ulyanov is an intriguer, and from what I know about him, they're probably right'. Kautsky did not defend the Mensheviks,¹⁶¹ and neither faction hegemonised the growing number of trade unionists in Russia.

(vi) The general situation is not very bright

In June 1905 delegates at a teachers' union conference St. Petersburg claimed to represent 4,668 members from 34 provinces. They included 33 of the education ministry's 865 employees in St. Petersburg, two of the 165 in Moscow, and 31 SDs claimed to represent almost 1,000. Police harassment forced the delegates to go to Finland, where they voted to retain their moderate programme by 109 to 40. The SDs walked out, yet the rest damned the tsar's proposed consultative assembly and wanted the emancipation of Jews and the end of capital punishment and the war,¹⁶² free and compulsory primary education, free secondary and higher education, the freedom to teach 'in the native tongue of the local population in all types of schools', and the transfer of responsibility for ministry schools to democratically-elected local organisations.¹⁶³

The Bolsheviks claimed 1,000 or so members in St. Petersburg. They had ties with 50 workers in the Narva district, they had none at the huge Putilov plant,¹⁶⁴ and early in June Putilov and Nevsky shipyard workers went on strike.¹⁶⁵ On the 14th the government called up reservists, and a Bolshevik leaflet argued for a struggle against the 'internal enemy'. At Sestroresk armoury 200 workers walked out to see off reserves at the station, and in St. Petersburg Obukhov workers stopped paying rent and organised 'apartment commissions' against evictions, while Shlisselburg district workers refused to pay 20 percent more rent and demanded a 20 percent cut. On the 16th Nevsky shipyard strikers protested against the war, demanded guaranteed incomes for soldiers' families and formed a workers' council, as did Alexandrovsk machine works' employees.¹⁶⁶ Next day, after news of the *Potemkin* mutiny and of thousands of navy sailors rioting at Kronstadt and Liepāja arrived, St. Petersburg SDs and SRs formed

a joint committee.¹⁶⁷ On the 20th Obukhov workers signed an anti-war petition and struck in solidarity with the *Potemkin* mutineers. Other workers came out, and an Alexandrovsk works foreman received a 'sacking'. Putilov workers struck over the dismissal of 180 smiths and demanded a nine-hour day, a 20 percent rise and the right to elect deputies. Next day Laferme cigarette workers struck for the same demands, though the Nevsky shipyard lathe operator Vasily Tsytarin, one of three Bolshevik 'movers', was arrested for inciting attacks on the police.¹⁶⁸

Stasova was one of the five Bolsheviks responsible for the northern bureau and links with the military organisation,¹⁶⁹ and a secretary of the RSDRP committee. She wrote to Geneva. 'I beg you to set forth to me the plan for the general organisational work that you consider correct. I would also like you to explain at length what you see as my personal responsibilities'. 'I have to give orders to people, for no one here is doing it'. 'The general situation is not very bright, and I expect little improvement'. Nobody was 'energetically running things, clearly formulating principles' or 'giving definite direction' by 'well-publicised pronouncements that could govern committees', and 'my voice is not authoritative enough'. Bolsheviks were working, but were 'not conscious and not solid', and some believed that they had wasted time fighting Mensheviks so they had joined them.¹⁷⁰ There were factional struggles elsewhere.

Since early 1905 Kyiv SDs had given 1,400 rubles a month to the RSDRP committee.¹⁷¹ In June the police suspected Mikhail Tikhvinsky of belonging to the Union of Unions, though they evidently did not know he was a member of the Bolshevik military organisation.¹⁷² SDs planned an 'armed demonstration' and propagandised army reservists, but on the 20th police arrested 19 at a meeting organised by two women agitators.¹⁷³

In the Donbass the Katerynoslav Bolshevik secretary claimed that 'Nearly all the factory district', including the Bryansk steelworks, was 'in our hands', and 'in the Town district, where earlier we had nothing, there are now sixty of our own men'.¹⁷⁴ The terrorist Natan Bogoraz had completed his exile in Siberia and arrived in the Donbass, and a coalmine director let him lecture miners about the peasants' union.¹⁷⁵ Some went on strike: one workforce voted to arm for a general strike and a struggle for control of the mines and factories; and around 400 peasants declared their solidarity with Luzovka ironworkers, though SDs were still fighting the 'anti-revolutionary organisation'.¹⁷⁶ Bolshevik, Menshevik and Bund agitators arrived in the region, and there were strikes at Bryansk and Kamensk steelworks.¹⁷⁷ The Katerynoslav Bolsheviks had a press and claimed 200 ties with workers, though the Mensheviks probably had more,¹⁷⁸ so the RSDRP organisation as a whole was about the same size as those in St. Petersburg and Odesa. On 22 June an SR lambasted SDs for being out of touch intelligently 'who wear yellow shoes, hats costing 2.50 rubles, and other expensive things'. They did not 'notice that peasants go barefoot and wear cheap caps', yet they 'attempt to lead the movement'. RSDRP workers acknowledged that their lack of theory, centralised organisation and underground activity left them ill-equipped to lead a mass movement, and though Kamenskoe strikers sympathised with them, they also supported managers who incited them to attack 'yids and democrats'.¹⁷⁹ Soon after 500 Katerynoslav schoolchildren, aged nine to 13, went on strike, and a 12-year-old told them that 'We must first of all fight to achieve those working conditions which will allow us the possibility of also getting an education, of having time for our own development, of growing up as human beings. The first demand we must make of our bosses is for free time for study'. He explained the relationship between labour and capital and argued that the working class's ultimate goal must be socialism, which he carefully defined, then explained the need for a constituent assembly elected by universal, direct and equal votes in a secret ballot. Schoolchildren and shop workers formed a joint committee, but soon returned.¹⁸⁰

In the Caucasus Menshevik intelligentsy were winning the factional struggle, though the situation of the peasant army in the Far East was desperate.

(vii) Freedom has descended on us unawares

In spring 1905, in Georgia, the Tbilisi RSDRP committee had supported the Mensheviks' Geneva conference resolutions,¹⁸¹ and a warrant for the arrest of 'Iosif Dzhughashvili' arrived on 1 May, but he soon found out about and left for Gori.¹⁸² On the 12th 1,500 Russian workers assembled in a Tbilisi Orthodox Church to pray for the tsar, then marched to the viceroy's palace carrying icons and singing hymns.¹⁸³ During May the Georgian governor of Baku was assassinated,¹⁸⁴ and Jughashvili wrote to Ulyanov in Geneva.

I'm overdue with my letter, comrade. There's been neither the time nor the will to write. For the whole period it's been necessary to travel around Caucasia, speak in debates, encourage comrades, etc. Everywhere the Mensheviks have been on the offensive and we've needed to repulse them. We've hardly had any personnel (and now there are very few of them, two or three times fewer than the Mensheviks have), and so I've needed to do the work of three individuals. ... Tbilisi is

almost completely in the hands of the Mensheviks. Half of Baki and Batumi is also with the Mensheviks ... Guria is in the hands of the Conciliators, who have decided to go over to the Mensheviks.¹⁸⁵

He begged for 'two or three good organisers for Baki and two writers for the Caucasian joint committee.

In June the Bolshevik Vinogradova reported to Geneva from Batumi that they had 'no resources, no bases, nothing', and Tskhakaya confirmed that the situation in Batumi and Guria was 'very bad', while Tbilisi and Kutaisi were in 'Menshevik hands', so the Caucasian joint committee was 'an HQ without an army'. Jughashvili told Ulyanov that it had a 'distant acquaintance with the workers' and the Tbilisi organisation had no base, while Mensheviks had triumphed because they were better organised.¹⁸⁶ A Caucasian joint committee pamphlet praised the Bolsheviks' '*proletarian firmness*', criticised the Mensheviks' '*intellectual wavering*', and called the Tbilisi committee the Mensheviks' 'obedient slaves'.¹⁸⁷ Tskhakaya told the Bolshevik F.M. Knunyants that Jughashvili was a 'dried-up seminarist', then left Tbilisi. When she arrived there she found he was 'small, skinny, dark' and spoke 'barely audibly'. 'Looking at me from head to toe, he asks why I've come, what I want of him. I hand him Mikha's note. He reads it and again looks me over from head to toe. - 'You? A propagandist?''¹⁸⁸

In the countryside 10,000 troops could not control the peasants,¹⁸⁹ and the authorities withdrew them from Kutaisi province, fearing SD propaganda.¹⁹⁰ In the villages important decisions were taken at public meetings, mainly by former city workers and intelligently, and an 'advanced worker' noted that 'freedom has descended on us unawares'. Workers formed 'study groups', and Bolsheviks and Mensheviks debated 'the part played by the workers and by Marx in the elaboration of scientific socialism'. One meeting began at 2.00pm and most of the audience stayed until 1.00am. A police inspector feared he would 'be compelled to carry the red flag' in a procession.¹⁹¹

After the Bolshevik Tsulukidze criticised Mensheviks, legal Marxists and nationalists, the police briefly detained him, though he died of tuberculosis in Kutaisi on 8 June,¹⁹² and the police were warned to stay away from his funeral. There were at least 20,000 mourners,¹⁹³ and they sang the *Marseillaise* on the 26km journey to his native Khoni.¹⁹⁴ A strike committee controlled the railway and telegraph, gendarmes were disarmed, the police chief was distraught and the governor-general suffered from nervous exhaustion.¹⁹⁵ SDs proclaimed a general strike and factory and zemstvo workers came out.¹⁹⁶ On the 20th Tbilisi shopkeepers struck and the viceroy imposed martial law.¹⁹⁷ After two Russian non-strikers at the Trans-Caucasian Railway workshops were assassinated, the rest came out for half a day. Every bazaar was closed and the city дума met by candlelight. On the 25th around 2,000 people attended the дума to discuss the provincial zemstvo. After SDs proposed calling for universal, equal and free elections, the дума members postponed their meeting for four days, then left. The viceroy appointed a general as the temporary governor-general of Tbilisi district, and the police discovered bomb factories, including one with 500 packs of nitro glycerine and 24 bombs. On the 29th 400 workers arrived at the Tbilisi дума and broke open the door. Their numbers rose to around 1,500, and after they ignored a general's order to leave, Cossacks killed 60 and wounded 200. A one-day strike was announced, and the Bolshevik committee called for 'Blood for blood and death for death'. There were protests in Kutaisi, Batumi, Gori and Sukhumi.¹⁹⁸ The tsar had ordered Caucasian troops to be sent outside the region,¹⁹⁹

In June, nationally, the peasant movement was active in 20 percent of rural districts,²⁰⁰ and that month, officially, there were 492 peasant disorders. Over 64 percent of the 155,000 strikers in inspected plants were deemed politically-motivated,²⁰¹ and since April there had been three political strikers for every two economic strikers,²⁰² and during June there had been strikes across the strategically vital central industrial region, so production of war materiel was threatened and the war was going very badly.

When news of the *Potemkin* mutiny reached demoralised troops in the Far East, generals privately acknowledged that 'cultural backwardness' was a major problem and 'Fundamental reforms' were needed.²⁰³ Strikers at Novorossiysk on the Trans-Siberian line stopped all traffic except mail trains, overturned a coach full of troops, and threw stones and fired guns, though troops killed 13 strikers.²⁰⁴ The army in the Far East was one third larger than that of the Japanese,²⁰⁵ though around 400,000 Russians had been killed or wounded, and the war had cost almost five billion rubles.²⁰⁶ The tsar appointed a new general staff, whose chief reported directly to him,²⁰⁷ yet the government could barely raise a loan.²⁰⁸ Japan was near the end of its resources, and both parties agreed to the US President's suggestion of peace negotiations.²⁰⁹ The Russians kept this secret,²¹⁰ and the tsar sent more troops to Manchuria,²¹¹ though hostilities ceased.²¹² George Kennan, the radical US journalist who had exposed the brutality of Russia's exile system in the 1890s, used money from US capitalists to distribute revolutionary literature to freed Russian prisoners of war,²¹³ and the tsar secretly appointed a team to negotiate peace.²¹⁴

9. Two Tactics of Social-Democracy

(i) The Ivanovo sborka

Olga Varentsova was born in Ivanovo in 1862, where her father, a former serf, owned a small textile factory. She later studied on the Higher Courses for Women in Moscow, joined SR *kruzhki* in the 1880s, but later supported *Iskra*, joined the Northern Workers' Union in 1901, became a member of its CC and its chief secretary, and a member of the RSDRP Yaroslavl committee. From 1903 she worked in Astrakhan, Vologda and Egorevsk, and by 1905 she had built a library of SD literature in Ivanovo.¹

Ivanovo was home to 80,000 people, and the 27,000 textile workers included 11,000 women, and formed 70 percent of the workforce in some mills. Masha Kapatsinkaya, a bookshop assistant, stored illegal literature and was one of at least eight women who kept a safe house hid comrades, and the police believed that Elizaveta Sergeevna's basket of dry bread, apples and other goods contained illegal literature and weapons, and that she liaised with SDs in Moscow, Riga, Orel and Tallinn. Daria Chernikova and her husband had an illegal press at their home. Daria taught two men to cast metal type, and kept a safe house.²

Matrena Razumova was born into a peasant family in a Kostroma province village in 1882, and after her father died her mother worked in an Ivanovo textile mill. By 1893 Matrena was a nanny, but in 1897 she worked in a mill and taught herself to be literate. A young man introduced her to revolutionary ideas,³ and her brother gave her socialist pamphlets. She joined a clandestine *kruzhok* and then the RSDRP in 1904,⁴ during the strikes, as did the mill worker Maria Ikrianistova.⁵ By 1905 Razumova was an organiser,⁶ and five male SDs arrived.

Vasily Frunze was a former Kherson province soldier who became a doctor's assistant, and Mikhail was born in the town of Pishpek, Semireche province, Turkestan, in 1885. His father soon died, but Mikhail attended primary school and later encountered revolutionary ideas at a gymnasium. In 1904 he entered St. Petersburg Polytechnical Institute, joined students' and workers' *kruzhki*, then the Bolsheviks,⁷ and became active in Shuya and Ivanovo.⁸ He attended a St. Petersburg demonstration and was deported, but by early 1905 he was in Ivanovo.⁹

Yevlumpy Dunayev was born into a peasant family near Ivanovo in 1877. His mother soon died, and in 1885 his alcoholic father tried to drown him, so the eight-year-old left home and became a shepherd. By 1892 he had taught himself to read, though he could not write well. In 1895 he worked in an Ivanovo mill, took part in a strike in 1897, joined an illegal workers' organisation in 1898, was arrested, spent almost three years in a St. Petersburg prison, including a year in solitary, which made his weak chest worse, and had returned to Ivanovo by 1905.¹⁰

Nikolai Podvoysky had joined the RSDRP in 1901, aged 21, and worked in Ukraine, Yaroslavl, Kostroma, Baki, St. Petersburg and elsewhere, and by 1905 he organised in Ivanovo. So did 23-year-old Fyodor Samoilov, who had supported the Second Congress 'majority' in 1903.¹¹ When the highly experienced 44-year-old St. Petersburg worker Fyodor Afanasev arrived,¹² the RSDRP organisation had 350 ties with workers,¹³ and 30 Bolsheviks reportedly led up to 600 in 20 *kruzhki*.¹⁴

In spring agitators told mill workers that the autocracy had to go, though there were cries of 'No politics!',¹⁵ yet factory inspectors saw to it that wages rose by up to 15 percent.¹⁶ On 9 May a workers' meeting made 26 demands, including a minimum wage, the right to meet, discuss grievances and write about them in newspapers, the end of night work and overtime and the abolition of factory police.¹⁷ On the 12th one mill workforce went on strike and 12,000 others followed.¹⁸ Their demands included better conditions, an eight-hour day, a minimum 20 rubles a month, pay for strike days, the right to sit while working and read newspapers during breaks, plus factory nurseries and pensions.¹⁹ Next day a huge crowd assembled outside the town hall and workers handed their hectographed demands to the inspector and the workers accepted his offer to mediate on condition that their representatives were not arrested. On the 14th the governor allowed 10,000 strikers to meet,²⁰ outside the city.²¹ Dunayev was a popular speaker,²² yet there were cries of 'We want peaceful struggle, not revolution'. The SDs became 'exceedingly circumspect', but began to educate the strikers at daily meetings, and argued that an elected committee should conduct negotiations.²³ Nineteen of the 26 mill workforces elected delegates, two elected women, and one elected seven women and one man. The peasant Elena Razorenova had worked in Ivanovo since she was 14, and Anna Smelova, who was from a poor peasant family, had worked there ten years and now kept illegal literature and weapons in her flat. The SDs Razumova,²⁴ and Ikrianistova, and two other women, were elected as delegates.²⁵

On the 15th 151 delegates established a *sborka* (assembly).²⁶ Most were textile workers, but the small *presidium* (executive) included a few metalworkers and engravers. An inspector advised them to stick to economic issues, and they decided to strike, maintain order, prevent separate actions and negotiations, and decide collectively if and when to go back. On the 17th the authorities banned public meetings, so the *sborka* met at the strikers' camp on

the riverbank. At least 40,000 were out,²⁷ and they made political demands including holidays on the anniversary of serf emancipation in February and on May Day,²⁸ the right to join unions, inviolability of persons and homes, and a constituent assembly on the basis of universal and equal suffrage.²⁹ On the 20th they organised a militia to oppose Black Hundreds, and kept outlying plants informed.³⁰ On the 22nd a Bolshevik leaflet urged them to be peaceful, though next day the governor banned the militia and the employers refused to make concessions.³¹ On the 26th an RSDRP activist reported that 'we feel we are on another planet',³² though scabs had got several mills working.³³

Early in June the provincial governor sent for more troops,³⁴ and cavalry attacked a strikers' meeting on the 3rd. They met resistance, but killed 28 and wounded dozens.³⁵ Some strikers went on the rampage,³⁶ and the sborka could not ensure order.³⁷ The governor imposed martial law and Cossacks 'snatched up anybody and everybody'. On the 13th the employers offered a ten percent rise, then 15 percent on the 15th, but the strikers demanded the release of prisoners and the right to hold public meetings. The police offered a 1,000 ruble reward for Dunayev, though he wore disguises and slept in the woods or a cemetery. On the 21st factory contingents sang revolutionary songs 'in a demonstratively threatening manner', demanded their employers' addresses and money to send them telegrams, since they refused to meet the sborka. On the 23rd Cossacks and infantry surrounded a mass meeting and Dunayev suggested a sit-down demonstration. Reportedly 30 militia with revolvers broke cobblestones behind the Cossacks' backs, ready to throw at them, but then the governor arrived. Next night the employers' dachas were burned, merchants' windows were broken and 42 buildings were destroyed. On the 25th strikers reportedly attacked 71 shops and caused 100,000 rubles' worth of damage, though 180 were arrested and many more were injured. Next day two employers agreed to cut an hour off the working day, pay a significant rise and meet other demands. A mass meeting of strikers defeated a proposal for a partial return to work, though Cossacks harassed them on the 27th. There were 180 rubles in the strike fund, so the leaders tried to negotiate a return, and next day the governor was ordered to apply 'every repressive measure'. Some strikers returned on 1 July, and others looted food shops, so morale plummeted. On the 18th the strike ended, and the sborka disbanded, though many workers had won a modest rise and other concessions. Some vowed to continue the struggle,³⁸ yet Daria Sergiecheva, who kept an RSDRP press in her flat, was sacked. Smelova remained active, and Razumova distributed illegal literature and weapons, then went underground and got a job in another town,³⁹ while Dunayev became an RSDRP organiser.

Meanwhile, a strike of around 10,000 had broken out in Kostroma. On 6 July 108 members of the 'deputies assembly of strikers' had elected an executive of 12 and a finance committee, and issued a joint bulletin with the RSDRP. An inspector recognised their leaders, and though he demanded the removal of anyone unconnected to the factories and those under 25, the strikers refused. Employers negotiated separately, and late in July, after they conceded an hour off the working day, the strike ended. Bolshevik propaganda in favour of an armed rising had gone largely unheeded in both disputes,⁴⁰ though individual Bolsheviks organised elsewhere in the region.

On 9 July, the six-month anniversary of Bloody Sunday, the Bolshevik Shlyapnikov, students and a noblewoman from St. Petersburg had led a large armed demonstration in Murom in Vladimir province. They took the police chief hostage, and forced others to retreat, though Shlyapnikov was arrested and sent to Vladimir Katorga Prison.⁴¹

During July, after workers at Tula cartridge factory south of Moscow went on strike, managers imposed a lockout and sacked 141 leaders and others.⁴² Since January the Bolsheviks' organisation in Nizhni Novgorod, east of Moscow, had risen from 100 to 150, and from 40 to 127, in Voronezh south of Moscow.⁴³

(ii) Moscow

In summer 1905 young SRs in Geneva had published a leaflet advocating the socialisation of industry, and the VPSR CC decided to organise a rising after harvest, as a prelude to an urban general strike.⁴⁴ In Russia VPSR delegates from the north west, central and Volga regions lacked literature and wanted 'travelling agents' to lead committees, build branches at regional, provincial, district and village level, establish a technical bureau to set up presses, publish a paper and build the peasants' union.⁴⁵ Peasant women rioted and threatened troops, and though police beat them, Voronezh women sent two delegates to a peasant conference to demand 'political rights'.⁴⁶

On 1 July the VPSRs' *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* called on workers and navy sailors to seize power in Odesa.⁴⁷

[The] revolution will be achieved mainly by the efforts of the workers – the proletarians and peasants. They should take from this revolution all that the social conditions permit them to take – the most important of these conditions being the extent of their own consciousness. They should not restrict the scale of this revolution in advance for the benefit of the bourgeoisie, but on the contrary they should turn it into a permanent one, oust the bourgeoisie step by step from the positions it has occupied, give the signal for a European revolution, and then draw new strength from there.⁴⁸

Early in July Moscow Okhrana stopped paying the former Assembly leaders, and they complained that 'enemies of the government' were persecuting them, and that their homes were not safe.⁴⁹ There were between 10 and 15 factory committees in the city, and the RSDRP committee claimed 1,435 members. It had nine organisers and 30 of the 100 propagandists were workers. District organisations including 400 and district conferences attracted 50 to 60 delegates, and there were 95 *kruzhki* with 20 to 25 workers in each.⁵⁰ The committee had received 4,200 rubles a month since January,⁵¹ including almost 10,000 in June, thanks to Gorky and his friends, and funded other SD organisations. The committee had five presses, and Malinovsky wrote many of the leaflets,⁵² while Krasin had founded a publishing house called *Kolokol (The Bell)*, thanks to 50,000 rubles from a millionaire who had promised 100,000 more if it also printed for the VPSR.⁵³

The 27-year-old Bolshevik Viktor Nogin chaired the central bureau of trade unions in Moscow,⁵⁴ and when over 1,000 workers attended a meeting organised by Black Hundreds, a majority forced the chair to hold an election. Nogin won, the workers ejected the reactionaries and went on to discuss the ongoing struggle.⁵⁵

The leading bureau of the railway workers' union was based in Moscow. Its members were mainly white collar workers and professionals, with a few blue collar workers.⁵⁶ They represented 19 lines and had contacts with three others, though ten were unrepresented. The bureau formed a committee of 167 delegates from different grades, and on 22-24 July a congress attracted delegates from 20 lines, including three led by SDs, while representatives of the RSDRP, Bund and VPSR had advisory votes. A PPS member reported that Polish railway workers had joined the union two months earlier, on condition that a general strike would not end until Poland achieved autonomy. A majority of delegates favoured that demand, and though the RSDRP delegates announced that they and their supporters would leave the union if it was agreed, the Congress decided to agitate for a general strike until their demands were met.⁵⁷

On 31 July a peasants' union congress met in a Moscow *zemstvo* hospital and then moved to a barn.⁵⁸ There were over 100 delegates from 28 provinces. Most were moderately affluent, though only one came from the western region, and about 25 RSDRP, VPSR and unaligned intelligentsy attended without votes. The delegates agreed that private property in land should be abolished, and while the Orthodox Church and the tsar's family should get no compensation, others should be partly compensated.⁵⁹ A Bolshevik who called for the abolition of the autocracy did not receive wide support,⁶⁰ though a majority favoured a constituent assembly.⁶¹ SDs proposed to greet 'our brothers the factory workers, who have for so long been spilling their blood in the struggle for the people's freedom', since without them 'peasants will achieve nothing', though peasants shouted that 'without the peasants the workers can achieve nothing',⁶²

From January to the end of July 42,700 Moscow workers, mostly from large metalworks with SD or Zubatovite traditions, had gone on strike,⁶³ and 9.8 percent of inspected workers in St. Petersburg province had struck for a total of 454,000 days.⁶⁴ In July, nationally, 42 percent of the 152,000 inspected strikers were deemed politically-motivated,⁶⁵ and they represented 9.1 percent of the inspected workforce.⁶⁶

At military camps in European Russia, including one near Moscow, soldiers met in forests and ravines and talked of mutiny, while in Smolensk, 360km south-west of Moscow, and in other cities, soldiers attended public meetings and fraternised with civilians, and troops had mutinied in Kherson in Ukraine. There were at least 38 revolutionary soldiers' *kruzhki*, and the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks called for more, and though the Bund wanted non-party military organisations,⁶⁷ it had fighting squads of its own.

(iii) Beat the police!

Simon Kaplan was born into one of only three Jewish families out of the 125 in a Minsk province village in 1888. His maternal grandfather was a scholar, his uncle was a rabbi in Chişinău and his father had attended rabbinical school, but became a farmer, with one permanent labourer, though he hired others at harvest. He took a St. Petersburg Hebrew paper, and encouraged Simon and the other children to read British and US literature. In 1896 the barn and house burned down, and the family salvaged only their cattle and tools. Simon went to live with an uncle during the week, to attend a state primary school, which was the only one for ten villages. He was the only Jew among 200 Russian peasants, and one called him 'a Christ-killer'. He learned Russian and taught 'dim-witted boys', and after the teacher gave him a key to the library, he read 'everything'; and he was one of 11 pupils who completed the course. In 1900 he went to Slutsk, 60km south of Minsk, where half of the 15,000 population were Jews. The Jewish quota for the gymnasium was full, so he attended a state secondary school for Jewish boys, where synagogue attendance and military training were compulsory. He noticed that Russian peasants blamed the devil when they had to sell a cow or a horse to pay taxes, and Simon's parents looked down on them, yet in lean years their own grain surplus was worth less than 500 rubles. By 1902 Simon was 'in revolt against starvation, against continually

seeing my parents worry about meeting tax bills, and about whether we should eat meat once or twice a week'. His paternal grandfather, who had built distilleries, had given most of his money to one of Simon's uncles who had attended Rabbinical School, and had become the only Jew in a cavalry regiment in St. Petersburg and then Moscow. He later land from a prince, 60km north of Minsk, and his timber business brought him thousands of rubles a year.

It took 14-year-old Simon five days to walk to Gornoye, and he lied about his age to get a job at 25 rubles a month. The Swedes and Letts who felled trees could earn almost 200 rubles a month, though they had to buy provisions at inflated prices from Simon's uncle's store. They cut logs in summer, but could not move them because of the mud until the sound of horse-manure exploding in autumn signified that it was 25 degrees centigrade below zero. (It could reach 50 below in winter.) When the head of the prince's family died, Simon's uncle suggested that Simon should help to run the business and share the profits. He supervised transporting logs to Katerynoslav and other southern towns, where most became railway sleepers. His first year's profit was 900 rubles and he stayed at the best hotels; but the winter of 1903 started late, logs rotted, his cash was running out and he had to stay in cheap lodgings. He took a train to Warszawa, stayed with his brother, a teacher, and saw his first electric light and motor car. Some young Jewish men tried to persuade his brother to be a delegate to a Zionist Congress in Basel, though they failed. The flat was overcrowded, and Simon was broke, so he went back north.

By spring 1904 he was in Baranovici, a key military centre 100km south-west of Minsk. He told his landlady he was a tutor, and she let him have a room on credit and found him pupils; but after he discovered that she ran a brothel, he lodged with a master tailor. Most evenings he read in the public library, and met 'Zhama', who had no visible means of support, spoke about capitalism, banged on the table and declared that 'The day is approaching when Tzarism will be no more!' Other youths were speechless, but Simon invited him to share his room. He was a Bund organiser from Minsk and was recruiting artisans who worked 16 hours a day for a pittance. He ordered Simon to organise a strike in his landlord's workshop, so he told the tailors they had 'nothing to lose but their chains' and listed 'minimum demands' of a 72-hour week for eight rubles and more lamps. In days the hollow-chested tailors had 'joined the movement', and the boss met their demands, but he sacked Simon.

By summer he had joined around 100 Bundists who controlled the town's labour market. Police were not safe there and strangers who asked questions and noted names were left 'in need of medical attention'. Activists met in the woods and had to walk there singly and give a password to the sentry. Zhama, who led the six-person Bund committee, spoke against the Zionists, but praised Mensheviks. There were soon over 1,000 Bundists in a population of 25,000, and Simon taught workers to be literate, and though the committee met in his room, he was not allowed to take part. Late that year, the night before the tsar was to inspect troops going to the front, Koizol asked Simon to distribute thousands of leaflets. The last two who had done this were on their way to Siberia, so Simon was told how to act if he was followed, given a secret password and eight addresses, and a young woman worker helped him. Next day troops left with old rifles in railway waggons labelled 'EIGHT HORSES – FORTY MEN'.

After Bloody Sunday in January 1905, Zhama left and Koizol became the Bund organiser. Simon recalled that

instead of coaxing a prospective comrade for days to have him join we were now receiving applications by the hundreds and from most unexpected sources. Not possessing any facilities for mass meetings we planned temporarily to expound economic and political education ... to individuals and groups of not more than a dozen each at various secret houses ...

The groundwork was being prepared for a spring campaign, for it was widely anticipated that a revolution of national scope would take place then. As our best material was still deemed the working classes and as they were not available for pep talks during the week because of their long hours, we had to limit those meetings to Friday and Saturday nights; the remainder of the time we spent in the process of self-education under the direction of Koizol.

He was one of the most enlightened individuals I have ever known, for in addition to his fluency in German, English, and French he was well versed in philosophy from Aristotle to the most modern ...

He ordered us to study prorevolutionary philosophy as well as contradictory principles. He was not a hard-shelled socialist and willingly permitted expression of diversified opinions.

One night they saw two men in grey uniforms walking away and another hiding behind the trees.

By July there were strikes and arrests in Baranovici. The Bund's public meetings stopped, though there were no major disturbances, so martial law was not enforced harshly. Kozol sometimes went to Minsk to get a large suitcase of leaflets and pamphlets, but one day, as he got off the train, an SR threw a bomb, killing three army officers and wounding several soldiers and civilians. The police opened Kozol's suitcase, found the literature, accused him of throwing the bomb, and he was rapidly court-martialled and hanged. Some 'hotheads' demonstrated at his funeral, carried a black flag with his name in red letters and 'Glory to the fallen comrade', and sang 'The Dirge of the Revolution'. Workers lined the route to the cemetery, but when the police chief and half a dozen mounted police appeared, all except two dozen, 'mostly girls', scattered. One threw a missile at the police and they charged.

Kaplan joined the Bund committee and went for the literature, but one day he was arrested at the railway station. The police searched his room and found nothing incriminating, yet they deported him to his home village, so he went underground. The 'Secret Six' members of the Bund CC bought arms and ammunition from the USA, and Kaplan took 30 Browning revolvers in two suitcases to young gentiles in Rivne in Ukraine, then went to live with a brother in Zhytomyr. Bundists offered him a false passport, but he declined. Jewish youths in Volhynia province, west of Kyiv, who had set up 'protective societies' to counter pogroms with propaganda and armed force, heard about a planned pogrom in a nearby town and Kaplan joined one of the five armed groups of six who went there. They saw hundreds of peasants entering the town and then heard screams. The Bund committee member who was to give the orders had not turned up, and the youth in his place refused to budge. Near dawn, as Kaplan and his comrades walked home, they passed a wagon carrying corpses. They later learned that the leader of a club-wielding mob had told the fighters to surrender their revolvers and leave, or be torn limb from limb, and though they handed over their guns and climbed onto a roof, the mob followed and flung them onto cobblestones below.⁶⁸

There were struggles elsewhere in Ukraine. Kyiv Bundists had influenced strikes in small workplaces, including among the 1,000 shoemakers and dressmakers, and though the police beat agitators, crowds tried to get two released and injured two policemen. The battle cry became 'Beat the Police!' Print workers locked out 650 others, though 100 Jews were killed and 406 injured, and 100 Jewish homes were looted.⁶⁹ The Bundist Mirna Karsin, who had escaped from Kharkiv four years earlier, returned, though few Jewish workers took her leaflets.⁷⁰ Young Bundists organised a one-day strike in Berdychiv, and closed shops and bazaars. One night crowds called for an end to the autocracy, though police and troops wounded many of them.⁷¹

Around 30,000 Jewish soldiers had fought in the Far East.⁷² In Chmielnik, central Poland, 3,000 Jews used rocks and clubs to attack troops taking 16 reservists to the front.⁷³ In ten months the Bund had received 26,380 rubles,⁷⁴ though in six months Minsk Bolsheviks had grown from 150 to 400.⁷⁵ Jews had gathered money for arms, formed fighting squads of up to 150 and cooperated with gentiles.⁷⁶

Across European Russia the harvest was 15 percent lower than the previous year,⁷⁷ and it was seriously low in two-thirds of provinces, especially in the central black earth region.⁷⁸ In Ukraine peasants harvested landlords' crops, cut trees, withheld rent, burnt manor houses and fought police and troops with axes. They were no match for Cossacks.⁷⁹ During July, officially, there were 248 peasant disturbances,⁸⁰ and émigré Bolsheviks took note.

(iv) The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry

By July 1905 the *Potemkin* mutineer Matiushenko lived in Bucharest with professor Zemfiry Ralli, a veteran anarchist. Using a fake Bulgarian passport, Matiushenko went to Geneva to meet Ulyanov,⁸¹ who paid the greatest attention to what he said,⁸² though he refused to join the Bolsheviks and returned to Bucharest.⁸³

On 20 July/2 August Ulyanov told Lunacharsky that the Russian CC 'suffers from a lack of tenacity, resourcefulness and sensitivity' and an 'inability to take advantage from every trifle in the Party struggle'. It 'has a lofty contempt for us "foreigners" and keeps all the best people away from us or takes them from here. There is not enough ferment, stimulus or impulse. People are incapable of acting or fighting by themselves'. People in Geneva were 'not used to independent political work', so a "'conscientious stupidity" or "stupid conscientiousness" prevails'. 'They're good fellows, but no damn good whatever as politicians. They lack tenacity, fighting spirit, nimbleness and speed'; though the 'multitude of Russian tourists' might be 'aroused, drawn in and guided'.⁸⁴

Ulyanov published *Dve taktiki sotsialdemokratii v demokraticheskoi revoliutsii* (*Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in a Democratic Revolution*) as 'N. Lenin', and dedicated it to Gapon. It argued that revolution 'will teach us and will teach the masses', but 'shall we be able to teach the revolution anything?' The Mensheviks supported 'the immediate organisation of an uprising', and the 'unification of all local revolutionary forces', though their 'differences on principles' with the Bolsheviks were not 'entirely eliminated' and unity was impossible unless both factions accepted majority decisions. The RSDRP had to be 'At the head of the whole people, and particularly of the peasantry – for complete freedom, for a consistent democratic revolution, for a republic!' and 'At the head of all the toilers and the exploited – for socialism!' The 'transformation of the economic and political situation along bourgeois-democratic lines' was 'inescapable', and the 'complete victory of the present revolution will mark the end of the democratic revolution and the beginning of a determined struggle for a socialist revolution'. 'The more complete the democratic revolution, the sooner, the more widespread, the cleaner, and the more determined will the development of this new struggle be'. 'Instructions have been issued for *most energetic* measures to be taken to arm the proletariat and ensure the possibility of direct leadership of the insurrection,' though 'a socialist revolution is out of the question until the masses become class conscious, organised, trained and educated by the

open class struggle against the entire bourgeoisie', only the 'people' could win a 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry'.⁸⁵ Adoratsky left for Kazan with the pamphlet.⁸⁶

Ulyanov wrote an introduction to a Russian translation of the Erfurter Programm, and Kautsky wrote a preface. He argued that the autocracy could not solve the agrarian problem, though the weak industrial proletariat needed peasants' support, and a bourgeois revolution was impossible. (The pamphlet sold over 200,000 copies in Russia in a month.)⁸⁷ Kautsky argued in *Die Neue Zeit* that that 'revolution in permanence' was 'precisely what the workers of Russia need', because the 'military collapse of Russia has significantly shaken the European equilibrium'.⁸⁸

Luxemburg opposed SDKPiL cooperation with the Bund because 'this rabble need us, we don't need them'.⁸⁹ The Russian revolution was 'developing according to all the rules', and Kautsky agreed,⁹⁰ though the RSDRP leaders were hopelessly ill-equipped, since they had been abroad too long, far removed from practical work, and had a 'peculiar kind of Marxism'.⁹¹ At the International Socialist bureau Bebel called for an urgent meeting to discuss socialist unity in Russia,⁹² though the Bolsheviks declined.⁹³ Plekhanov had announced that the Mensheviks' views on organisation were 'bad from start to finish',⁹⁴ and resigned from *Iskra* and Party Council,⁹⁵ though the International Socialist bureau recognised him as the RSDRP delegate.⁹⁶ Ulyanov later recalled that 'Bolshevism' 'took definite shape in the spring and summer' of 1905,⁹⁷ though Mensheviks were influential in the Caucasus.

(v) Baki

St. Petersburg police had arrested Eva Gordon, Mark Broido and other members of the intelligently Socialist group early in 1901,⁹⁸ and taken them to the House of Preliminary Detention; but Gordon subsequently became ill and was allowed to go home to Vilnius.

My poor little town was terribly upset. Such a thing has never yet been recorded in the local annals – the daughter of honest, respectable Jews in prison for mysterious crimes, under police supervision – the old men shook their heads in disapproval, but the young ones fairly danced with joy. During the few years I had been away the little town had changed considerably. There was now a printing press, a tobacco factory, a leather works – and so there was also some 'proletariat'. And it somehow happened, in the most natural and simple manner, that with my arrival there appeared the first workers' group, soon increased by some leather workers, exiled for taking part in a strike at Smorgony, a leather manufacturing centre nearby. Somehow or other, after six months our group was thirty strong, and we met regularly for study and discussion and kept the townspeople in perpetual alarm by holding meetings in the open, outside the town boundaries.

After the St. Petersburg police sentenced the Sotsialist women to Eastern Siberia for five years, and the men for eight, without trial,⁹⁹ Gordon and Broido left together; though when they reached Siberia they discovered that Broido was to go to Yakutsk province, and they had to return 3,200km to join other state criminals setting off from the capital.¹⁰⁰ They married in Krasnoyarsk transit prison in 1902, and when they reached Kirensk he worked at the state distillery and she tutored three girls. After they argued with the governor he sent them and their two small children to Yakutsk, where 200 state criminals organised discussions, pooled information and literature, including a copy of *Iskra*, though the latest news was three months old.¹⁰¹ In August 1903 the Irkutsk governor-general announced that if an exile violated official instructions they would go to the frozen north, and he withdrew the 300 rubles for the return of those who completed their sentences, so they were effectively condemned to Siberia for life. In February 1904 54 men barricaded themselves in a house and demanded the right to meet and for the financial support to be reinstated. The deputy governor surrounded the house with troops, but ordered them not to fire. Early in March, when the occupiers killed two soldiers, soldiers killed one of them, and the rest surrendered, and they were sentenced to various terms in Siberian katorga prisons in summer.¹⁰² In autumn they heard about the revolutionary mood among Russian workers, and early in 1905 Mark and others escaped. Eva followed, and thanks to Blumenfeld and other Mensheviks, they were reunited in London. They went to 'Iskra', the Russian émigrés' Whitechapel club, heard about Bloody Sunday and decided to return to Russia. En route in Geneva they met two Baki Mensheviks and decided to go with them.

In Baki the Broidos and another intelligent lived with a 65-year-old woman who 'spent most of her time transporting illegal literature' in the Balakhany district, where there were 16,000 workers, while the Menshevik couple lived in Bibi-Aybat district, where there were 6,000 workers. The propagandists had no links with émigré leaders, insufficient literature and 'a sad lack of educated personnel for propaganda and agitation'. A 'more or less class-conscious Tatar' translated the Broidos' leaflets, though the printer knew no Tatar, so copies had to be hectographed. The Mensheviks worked with the Shendrikovs' workers' union, which met at dusk in fields outside the city. It was a democratic, 'semi-political and semi-professional' organisation, and focussed on economic issues,

though it supported political activity and published three or four leaflets and a paper each week. Eva joined the union and her landlady taught her what to do.

When I had to go alone somewhere or travel by post-coach, I used to improve my general appearance by stuffing my pockets with sunflower seeds, and assuming that could-not-care-less look that goes with them. Soon I began to use these trips for transporting illegal literature: I tied the leaflets into a kerchief and put the bundle at the bottom of a basket that I slung over my arm; over it I put some brushes, a kettle, a candlestick, any kitchen-ware that came to hand and on top of it all the inevitable bag with sunflower seeds. Installed in the coach, I cracked these seeds with great gusto, inviting my neighbours to help themselves straight from the basket.

The work was dangerous, since the oil magnates used Tatars as police, and most of them were a law unto themselves. After some went 'nosing around' a flat that had many visitors, and housed the illegal press, Eva deputised as a printer.¹⁰³ The union attracted thousands of members,¹⁰⁴ and though few had 'a thorough theoretical training', they soon had 'a considerable number of practical leaders who had learnt the basic tenets of the theory and practice of the social-democratic movement from life itself'. Three of them 'lifted the floor-boards in a back room of a house', and 'chopped at the hard clay' for three weeks.

At night they loaded the loose earth into sacks and carried it away to a distant field. When the cavity under the floor was large enough, we installed our press literally 'under ground'. Then we tidied the room above it, placed a cupboard to mask the entrance to the cavity and felt quite safe! But even though, bit by bit, we somewhat enlarged the underground space, it was still a terribly airless and cramped place to work in. After a bare couple of hours at the press, our printer used to come up tottering with fatigue.

They made several improvements, installed some ventilation and recruited a serious-minded worker.

Lazarev, a hammer-smith in his early thirties, had become an SD during the previous year's strikes. He was illiterate, but his wife had had a primary school education and read to him. He absorbed 'new ideas like a sponge', had ingenious ways of explaining them and was 'passionately bent on learning to read'. The press weighed 150 kilos, yet he lifted it onto his shoulder and in half an hour it and its equipment were hidden; though Eva recalled that the pressures grew in proportion to their success.

I had to visit two or three different places between seven o'clock and midnight: I might be called upon to help in settling a dispute with the management in one factory, teach a group of workers somewhere else, and attend a factory meeting in yet another place. Possibly also discuss the publication of a special leaflet for a particular occasion, or negotiate with representatives of other labour groups. In the mornings we usually wrote for our paper, composed leaflets and read proofs; during the mid-day break one might have to hurry off to find and consult some key worker. If there was a special, urgent leaflet to bring out, one might have to go to our printing-press, lend a hand with setting, printing, and correcting, and not infrequently carry away a few hundred copies of the freshly printed leaflet for immediate distribution. As our organisation grew while the number of professionals remained static, the tempo of our work became quite feverish.¹⁰⁵

Fortunately another comrade arrived.

A. Zvezdov had grown up in the Georgian countryside and later became an apprentice at a Baki pottery. One day he found a book in a student's room that 'tore the tsar, the landowners and the priests to pieces', and they discussed politics and 'disposed of the family as our first course'. In spring 1905 SD gymnasium pupils shared Zvezdov's lodgings and 'set about my education'. They told him about Bloody Sunday and that the tsar and landowners who robbed peasants were 'one gang', and he attended an SD kruzhek on May Day.¹⁰⁶ Soon after a young Menshevik factory worker got frustrated with his manager, posted armed guards at his office door, told him he would get no food or water until the dispute was settled and threatened to dynamite the factory if he called for help. The negotiations took less than an hour,¹⁰⁷ and Georgian SDs were also forming fighting squads.

In July Tbilisi RSDRP's *borba proletariata* included an anonymous article on insurrection. It argued that recent events in Łódź, Odesa, Liepāja and Tbilisi were 'harbingers of the approaching storm', though insurgents needed '*the technical guidance and organisational preparation of the all-Russian uprising*'.

Hence, our committees must at once, forthwith, proceed to arm the people locally, to set up special groups to arrange this matter, to organise district groups for the purpose of procuring arms, to organise workshops for the manufacture of different kinds of explosives, to draw up plans for seizing state and private stores of arms and arsenals.

Fighting squads would 'quickly capture various stores of arms, government and public offices, the post office, the telephone exchange, and so forth,' and 'we must utilise the services of the military men in the organisation'.¹⁰⁸ Noe

Ramishvili had built bomb factories in Tbilisi, and squads attacked Cossacks, though Samegrelo RSDRP committee complained to *Proletary* that the Mensheviks had 'completely paralysed' their 'healthy young organisation'.¹⁰⁹

Iskra reached Baki, where around three-quarters of plants were strike-bound, including refineries, and the oilfields. The RSDRP committee planned a general strike,¹¹⁰ and the Bolsheviks Bobrovskaya, Bobrovsky and Rozenfeld controlled the committee press.¹¹¹ A man who spoke Persian arrived, organised workers' kruzhski and agitated. A young SD called Vanechka sheltered a Menshevik organiser, and when the police raided his lodgings and found a copy of *Iskra* in the visitor's pocket, Vanechka claimed the coat was his and went to prison for three months. More Menshevik intelligently arrived, but Eva Broido believed few stayed because of the difficult conditions and, 'in our thoroughly democratic organisation', they were 'not as dominant as elsewhere'. Once, when she was carrying copies of *Iskra*, she had a scary encounter with police, and comrades sent her on a fortnight's leave, yet recalled her after ten days. The police had arrested the 'entire inter-district meeting of 80 including all our intellectuals', so she produced the paper to divert suspicion from those in prison. After the strikes ended Tatars burned half the derricks and drills,¹¹² Muslim-Armenian clashes destroyed huge areas of the oilfield, and many workers lost their homes and jobs.¹¹³ Bobrovskaya was sure the governor was fostering ethnic hatred and that the police had armed the Tatar gangs; but after four days of bloodshed, 'fearing the growing indignation of the workers', he arranged 'a procession of the united Tartar and Armenian clergy'. The gangs disbanded and peace was restored. Bobrovskaya was summoned to Moscow,¹¹⁴ as another rabochy-intelligent left.

Moscow police had shadowed the Bolshevik Kanatchikov, and changing apartments and passports did not help;¹¹⁵ so in summer he was transferred to the St. Petersburg committee, where he was appointed as the organiser of the factory district near the Narva Gate. His first leaflet was a polemic against liberal attempts to divert the labour movement,¹¹⁶ and many workers remembered him, so he found it easy to make contacts, and the district organisation appointed him as their committee representative. The *Potemkin* mutiny had led to a 'more intense' mood among workers, and Putilov workers were 'constantly on strike', yet RSDRP organisers were 'unable to provide them with an adequate supply of literature',¹¹⁷ and workers in one of the largest textile mills refused to listen to agitators advocating an eight-hour day.¹¹⁸ Late in July the Bolshevik Zalkind reported to Geneva that the committee was 'Able to work, but not conscious and not solid'.¹¹⁹

In Baki Menshevik intelligently explained the reasons for the factions to workers and debated with Bolsheviks, and Eva Broido recalled that 'whole factories or even districts came over to us'. One worker denounced a Bolshevik: 'You lorded it over us like the bloody bureaucrats you are; you bully us and order us about and we have to obey! We have had enough of it! We, too, want to have a share in the running of it!' The Bolsheviks belittled the Mensheviks' successes with 'peasants and small-shopkeepers', and even though the union grew, Eva 'could not bear this torture' and she and Mark left for Moscow. Eva found the Art Theatre's productions were 'a daring condemnation of life under tsarism' and 'had a deep revolutionary influence on the young', and Gorky's *Na Dne* 'shook' her 'so profoundly' that she 'avoided seeing it again for twenty years'. The links between the RSDRP and the workers were weaker, and the Mensheviks were particularly feeble; so the Broidos moved to St. Petersburg, where they joined the Menshevik organisation and established a workers' club near the Putilov plant,¹²⁰ just before the tsar's highly limited experiment with democracy got underway.

(vi) We shall not stop half-way

On 6 August 1905 the interior minister announced that the State Duma would be a consultative body with 412 deputies. Workers would elect theirs in a two-stage process, though they had to be men aged 25 or over, while younger workers, all women and members of several subject nationalities, poor peasants, agricultural labourers, students, servicemen,¹²¹ and townspeople whose annual rents were less than 1,320 rubles would have no vote. The tsar removed the proposal that deputies had to be literate, and the restrictions on intelligently and Jews,¹²² and gave deputies the right to free speech,¹²³ and to ask ministers questions. Better-off peasants would have 43 percent of the seats, large landowners 34 percent and the urban bourgeoisie 23 percent.¹²⁴ In St. Petersburg just over 7,000 men in a population of 1.4 million would vote in the first stage, which would elect electors to choose deputies,¹²⁵ though wealthy men in 26 cities and wealthy landowners would elect deputies directly.¹²⁶ Next day the government banned public discussions about reforming the autocracy.¹²⁷

Shantser, Malinovsky and other Bolsheviks edited *Rabochy (The Worker)*, which was printed on a secret press in Lesnaya Street.¹²⁸ They called for a boycott of the elections, a coalition of workers, peasants and the 'revolutionary intelligentsia' against the tsar, and mentioned the negotiations for an RSDRP Congress.¹²⁹ Krasin had negotiated with the Menshevik Kopp in Geneva about transporting literature to and from Russia, yet Bolshevik material was going missing. Ulyanov was furious about the unity negotiations and told the Russian CC that 'If you do not send

3,000 rubles, we shall go under'.¹³⁰ *Proletary* noted that the proletariat was doing the fighting, while the bourgeoisie was 'stealing towards power', yet claimed that 'we shall win for Russia a republic, with full liberty for all oppressed nationalities, for the peasants and the workers', and the Bolsheviks would 'use all the revolutionary energy of the proletariat for the boldest and most far-reaching struggle for socialism' and 'the complete emancipation of all toilers from exploitation', though only 'the boldest and most widespread organisation' of a 'revolutionary army' could guarantee victory.¹³¹ Ulyanov told Lunacharsky that his absence was 'a tremendous loss' and asked him to write 'a brief outline of the history of the split'.¹³² Malinovsky, Krasin and Postolovsky subsequently sent 1,000 rubles to Ulyanov, but warned him that *Proletary* might not get enough funds to continue.¹³³ They brought T.T. Ehlukidze from Moscow to organise Delo, a legal print shop, with the veteran SD Brusnev and his sister as official publishers. Krasin financed it and it had a modern press.¹³⁴

A Russian correspondent of the Menshevik *Sotsial-demokrat* acknowledged that 'conscious workers' were 'too accustomed to relying on the top of our organisation', and believed 'that most of the work will be implemented without their knowledge'; yet 'we need to distribute responsibility for important functions to the widest circle of workers'. The 'lower groups and organised cells' needed 'the greatest possible independence', so 'we need to put widely into practice the elective principle'.¹³⁵ Tserdobaum argued in the Vienna *Arbeiter Zeitung* (*Workers' Paper*) that Russian workers and peasants should form 'non-affiliated' 'agitational committees', elect an alternative State Duma to confront and possibly oust the official one.¹³⁶

The Bund, SDKPiL and PPS decided to boycott the 'comedy' of the elections.¹³⁷ Most Union of Unions congress delegates in Terijoki, Finland, called on its 50,000 members to boycott and to demand the democratic 'four tail' formula; though three favoured participating and the Union split.¹³⁸

Ulyanov wrote to the Russian CC about the ties between the Bund and Հայաստանի Սոցիալ-դեմոկրատական աշխատողների կազմակերպություն (the Armenian Social Democratic Workers' Organisation), which the CC had not allowed to sign the resolution adopted in Geneva. Since it was 'purely foreign and has no serious links within Russia', Armenian workers in the Caucasus 'who wish to help a really Social-Democratic movement' should 'have dealings only with the Caucasian organisations' of the RSDRP, which published literature in Armenian. A week later he wrote that 'from the democratic revolution we shall at once, and precisely in accordance with ... the strength of the class-conscious and organised proletariat, begin to pass to the socialist revolution. We stand for uninterrupted revolution. We shall not stop half-way'.¹³⁹ Bronstein was evidently winning the argument.

Elizarova reported to Geneva that *Proletary* had not arrived in St. Petersburg, and Maria Ulyanova was 'running around like one possessed' from early morning to late at night and showing signs of 'edginess and overwork'.¹⁴⁰ Stasova also had problems. She had married an army doctor who had been a RSDRP contact since 1902, though he had not joined, so their relationship had become difficult by 1905.¹⁴¹ In July she was 'ordered to Geneva' and handed over her 'technical responsibilities' and her committee secretaryship to two engineers,¹⁴² and arrived in Geneva in August,¹⁴³ to organise the transport of literature.¹⁴⁴ She recalled that Ulyanov favoured killing gendarmes, Cossacks and Black Hundreds, throwing boiling water at soldiers and acid at police, blowing up their buildings, and stealing government funds;¹⁴⁵ though there were signs of increasing cooperation between trade unions in Russia.

The teachers' union bureau in St. Petersburg told its 7,000 members in 400 groups about the peasants' union,¹⁴⁶ which had published 20,000 copies of *Zemlya i Volya!* (*Land and Liberty*).¹⁴⁷ Agricultural labourers had struck, burned and looted gentry estates in Kyiv, Volhynia, Podolia, Kharkiv, Poltava, Chernigov, Saratov, Samara, Orlov, Kursk, Tambov, Moscow, Nizhni Novgorod and Penza provinces and the Don Cossack region.¹⁴⁸ Officially, there had been 155 disturbances,¹⁴⁹ and peasants had made almost 1,000 land-seizures.¹⁵⁰ The VPSR had published *Krestyanskaya gazeta* (*Peasant Gazette*),¹⁵¹ and in Saratov province, after two consecutive bad harvests, peasants burned large landowners' estates and carted off seeds, grain and livestock.¹⁵² The VPSR Saratov committee agitated peasants and contacted organised workers, and district and factory cells issued leaflets, while Bolsheviks and Mensheviks cooperated on the six-strong RSDRP committee. All the districts had an organiser for each factory, and there was an armed fighting squad, an agrarian group, and groups in Balashov, Nikolaevsky Gorodok and elsewhere in the province. The Bolshevik centre co-opted the conciliator P. Goldenburg, and he left for St. Petersburg.¹⁵³

In the Caucasus Menshevik intelligentsy had accepted the Bolsheviks' definition of RSDRP membership, but while the Bolsheviks Makharadze and Jughashvili favoured boycotting the State Duma elections, the Caucasian joint committee decided that participation would provide opportunities for propaganda about the 'fabrications of popular representation', so they would work with the petit-bourgeoisie. The tsar appointed a new Kutaisi province governor and sent a regiment to eastern Georgia.¹⁵⁴ Late in August 2,000 people entered Tbilisi city hall, and after the councillors left, SDs occupied the building and led a discussion. Four days later Cossacks stormed the hall, killing at least 60 and wounding 200, and a one-day strike paralysed the city.¹⁵⁵

In the six months to the end of August the SDKPiL émigré committee had smuggled 54,000 pamphlets into Poland,¹⁵⁶ yet Warszawa factories had laid off workers, shops were emptying, and up to 20,000 faced a crisis, while

factory managers in Warszawa province had sacked 25 to 30 percent of their workers.¹⁵⁷ During August, officially, 539 strikes across Russia had involved 78,000 (or 4.7 percent) of inspected workers,¹⁵⁸ and 2.9 percent of the total workforce. There had been almost 109,000 strike days in St. Petersburg,¹⁵⁹ and 68 percent of at least 104,000 inspected and uninspected strikers were deemed politically-motivated,¹⁶⁰ but few revolutionaries had arms.

(vii) John Grafton

After Bloody Sunday in January 1905 representatives of the RSDRP and the Bund had met others from SD organisations in Geneva. Ulyanov knew nothing about the Latvian and Lithuanian parties, so he asked the Bundist Grinberg about them. The Bundists soon withdrew, but returned to check the minutes, and found that the others had agreed to purchase arms and bring them to Russia on a 'special ship'.¹⁶¹

The Finnish revolutionary nationalist Zilliacus, who had smuggled 16 tonnes of illegal literature to Russia, met the Japanese military attaché in Copenhagen in Denmark and he promised financial support. Zilliacus also won the backing of the veteran SR Chaikovsky in London, and soon after 200 Browning revolvers from the USA and 300 Mauser rifles from Hamburg reached Stockholm. By spring Zilliacus had 15,500 1871-vintage rifles, 2.5 million cartridges from Switzerland, and 2,500 revolvers and three tonnes of explosives from England. He organised a conference in Geneva,¹⁶² sponsored by the Japanese military attaché, to plan an uprising.¹⁶³

Zilliacus published the fact that peasants in many Russian provinces owed over one million rubles in redemption payments and worked for four days a week to pay taxes and repay usurers. There were 40,000 Russian troops stationed from the Baltic provinces to the Black Sea coast, though the Finnish garrisons had not been reinforced, and the Finnish SAV worked with Russian revolutionaries.¹⁶⁴ In April 30,000 Finns demonstrated against the Russian police in Helsinki, and soon after up to 36,000 demanded universal and equal suffrage.¹⁶⁵ The Russian government repealed the conscription law for Finland, and restored the irremovability of judges, yet the governor-general suspended the Finnish constitution.¹⁶⁶

Leading Bolsheviks attended Zilliacus's conference in Geneva, but left before it ended.¹⁶⁷ Delegates from the SAV, VPSR, PPS, LSDP, Georgian socialist-federalists and the Biefarús socialist organisation wanted a 'complete transformation' of the empire 'in accordance with democratic, republican principles', on the basis of a universal, direct, equal suffrage' with a secret ballot, and constituent assemblies in Finland, Poland and the Caucasus. In May Zilliacus and the SAV hoped to bring about a simultaneous insurrection in Finland and Russia, then 'convene a constituent assembly in Helsinki',¹⁶⁸ where up to 10,000 demonstrated for universal and equal suffrage for men and women in June, and the government sent more troops.¹⁶⁹

Skosarevsky of the Bolsheviks' St. Petersburg Technical Group was sent to Geneva to be briefed on Bulgarian contacts, reported back, returned, and brought back large quantities of Beckford safety fuses from Chetnik insurgents,¹⁷⁰ and a blueprint for a 'Macedonian' bomb,¹⁷¹ which he took to St. Petersburg. Toy makers outside the city made iron castings into bomb-casings, while Burenin organised the production of explosives in a 'camera workshop' and at Ignatiev's Finnish estate near the border.¹⁷² St. Petersburg Bolsheviks procured guns, trained fighters and organised a committee to lead an uprising, yet they needed more arms.

The Japanese military attaché bought the 22-year-old, 300 tonne *John Grafton* in London, allegedly on behalf of a wine merchant, while Zilliacus bought wine and two steam yachts, and hired an Englishman who had run guns to Venezuela and a Lett as captains. Krasin wanted to have all the arms they could bring, so he sent Burenin and Gorky to meet Gapon in Finland, and he agreed to help.¹⁷³ In July Burenin went to Wallach's safe house in Rīga, presented his credentials and enquired about a secluded harbour within reach of St. Petersburg and Moscow. Wallach suggested Nargo, a thinly-populated island, 12km off Tallinn in Estonia.¹⁷⁴

The Japanese attaché had acquired three machine guns and 30,000 cartridges, though Ramsgate customs officers confiscated them. *John Grafton's* crew went from London to Flushing in Cornwall, and a temporary crew brought the vessel, renamed *Luna*. The arms left London in a steamer, allegedly bound for China, met the *Luna* off Guernsey at the beginning of August and the arms were transferred. One yacht arrived north of Copenhagen with the crew roaring drunk and the captain barricaded in his cabin; so Zilliacus shaved his beard, dressed as an English clergyman, went to the yacht, restored order and sailed to Göteborg in Sweden. The 'millionaire' captain of Zilliacus's other yacht and his German pilot had drunk some wine in Copenhagen and the pilot was arrested. Zilliacus arrived, took charge of the yacht and sent a new captain for the other one, though he attracted attention, so he dressed as a member of the Royal Southampton Yacht Club. A Finn reported that there was no sign of preparations for receiving the arms in St. Petersburg,¹⁷⁵ though the Okhrana knew about Zilliacus's activities.

Arkady Harting, the Director of the Paris Agentura, was also responsible for northern Europe. He had a secretary, a typist, a French detective who also worked for the Sûreté, and another detective who was too old for field work.

In Geneva one of the six Okhrana detectives worked for the Swiss police and another was unfit for service. Harting went to Copenhagen and established a unit to monitor Japanese activity in Scandinavia. He hired two detectives for Paris, one for Geneva, one for rural France, one for Antwerp, two for London and three for Berlin.¹⁷⁶ His Swiss and London agents were inactive, though he had agents and police contacts in English, Dutch, Belgian and German ports, as well as in Birmingham and Geneva, and in several arms companies. Thanks to the Dutch police and the spy Zhytomyrsky in Berlin, Harting had previously thwarted Wallach's attempts to smuggle arms through Baltic and Bulgarian ports, and he knew about the current operation.¹⁷⁷

Early in September the *Luna's* crew found nobody at the rendezvous off the Finnish coast, so they sailed north and unloaded some arms at two locations.¹⁷⁸ Reportedly, only Bolsheviks went to find the ship,¹⁷⁹ and got 15,000 rifles, 3,000 revolvers and tonnes of dynamite, most of which went to St. Petersburg.¹⁸⁰ According to another account, Zilliacus sent 500 rifles to Russia, though few reached Burenin.¹⁸¹ Yet another report claimed that 400 rifles had been hidden and 300 reached Zilliacus, who brought 300 Mausers and 200 Brownings to Wallach. Harting reported that the ship was due to dock at Pietarsaari in the Gulf of Bothnia, and the Russian navy sent a battleship, which forced her onto a sandbank.¹⁸² Most of the arms were still on the ship, though the crew managed to unload some, then blew it up. The name *John Grafton* had not been completely removed, and the police found 9,000 rifles.¹⁸³ The Bolsheviks had given Gapon an illegal passport and St. Petersburg addresses, and he hid in 'working-class slums, under a false name'. The VPSR addresses turned out to be 'mythical',¹⁸⁴ and he was briefly detained,¹⁸⁵ then went abroad.¹⁸⁶ Reportedly the VPSR had asked the Bolsheviks to help to transport the arms, and Wallach had agreed to hide them.¹⁸⁷

A veiled woman had warned the VPSR St. Petersburg committee about two spies. They were 'a certain T---, an ex-convict' (Tatarov), and Azev, yet the committee refused to believe her.¹⁸⁸ The police officer in charge of surveillance told a surveillant in Saratov about Azev's dual role, and the information reached the VPSR CC.¹⁸⁹ Azev bluffed his way out of it,¹⁹⁰ but the CC told the combat organisation to 'rest on its arms'.¹⁹¹ Saratov police interrogated VPSR leaders, and left SDs alone. VPSR and RSDRP leaders agreed to boycott the Duma elections,¹⁹² but the issue split parties and individual SDs across Russia.

(viii) The bullet, the ballot box, or both?

By summer 1905 Krasin rented a room in St. Petersburg, though the police knew he lived mostly in Kuokkala in Finland.¹⁹³ Bronstein worked with St. Petersburg Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, but after a spy betrayed the Mensheviks he had settled in Finland.¹⁹⁴ Krasikov was a member of St. Petersburg RSDRP committee,¹⁹⁵ and Ulyanov told him that there was nothing wrong with printing Bronstein's leaflets if they were 'fairly good and vetted'.¹⁹⁶ Ulyanov received the Russian CC's two-month-old decisions about the State Duma elections, and congratulated them for 'a popular exposition which is not boring', though he was against breaking up electors' meetings.¹⁹⁷ In Geneva, Goldendakh argued that Western European capitalists supported the autocracy, and it could adapt, so SD unity was vital, and they should use the elections for 'widespread agitation'.¹⁹⁸ In Russia the Bolshevik Rozenfeld visited western and central RSDRP committees, arguing for a boycott and an insurrection.¹⁹⁹ Malinovsky told Ulyanov that 'the thousands and thousands of rubles which we have sent you are a loan that we plan to recover', since the CC 'will soon be bankrupt', and he refused to send details of the Congress or entertain an insurrection.

In Germany the SPD Congress in Jena decided that a general strike was permissible the following May Day if 'the possibility to do so is at hand',²⁰⁰ but only as a defensive tactic. Bebel denounced the minority as syndicalists, and left-wingers replaced the right-wing editors of *Vorwärts*.²⁰¹ The SPD leaders had given up trying to reconcile the RSDRP factions, and had split the money between them, and though Ulyanov had told the Russian CC he could not leave Geneva, he believed the émigré intelligentsy might 'manage without me somehow for a week or two',²⁰² and went to address the SPD Congress.²⁰³

In the Baltic provinces, on the six-month anniversary of the Rīga massacre, late in July, builders, cabinetmakers and metalworkers had held large demonstrations outside factories. During the harvest 30,000 agricultural labourers in three districts of Kurzeme went on strike for a ten-hour day, the end of payment in kind, a rise, separate rooms in the barracks and payment for women labourers,²⁰⁴ since men's contracts obliged their wives to work for 30 to 40 days a year for no wages.²⁰⁵ The labourers demonstrated in front of over 30 town halls, 'solemnly committed to the flames the portraits of the tsar, passport copies and many official papers', confiscated crown funds and donated them to the Latvian SDSP, and many won a 12-hour day and a five to ten percent rise.²⁰⁶ After martial law was imposed, the government called up reservists, but there were political strikes in Rīga.²⁰⁷ Many Estonians had joined the LSDSP,²⁰⁸ which had almost 8,500 members, and though Germans controlled Rīga council, LSDSP workers demanded a democratic council and a constituent assembly.²⁰⁹ Troops mutinied in Rīga, Liepāja and other Latvian

towns,²¹⁰ though some about to the front took part in pogroms.²¹¹ Agricultural labourers stayed out for two weeks, demanding that the German barons' estates be sold or rented,²¹² while revolutionary agitators distributed propaganda, there were armed clashes with police and troops,²¹³ and strikes in a quarter of the mainly German-owned estates.²¹⁴ During August and into September there were an average of around 40,000 strikers each day in Latvia, yet the LSDSP was 'taxed to the limit to bring the struggle to a successful conclusion'.²¹⁵

In the Russian provinces of the Pale there had been armed clashes between SDs and police in Vilnius and Kaunas.²¹⁶ Grodno Bundists published articles about how to build barricades and organised meetings and soldiers' kruzki.²¹⁷ The Bund invited eight Mensheviks, eight Bolsheviks, and other SD parties, to Riga,²¹⁸ and the SDKPiL, LSDSP, RUP were also represented on 7 September. The Menshevik V.N. Gutovsky was an observer, and rejected joint activity, while the others voted to boycott the Duma elections,²¹⁹ and agitate for a general strike,²²⁰ though they were convinced that only an armed rising could bring about a democratic republic.²²¹

In Geneva Ulyanov and Bonch-Bruевич set up the publishing house 'Demos',²²² using Gorky's money, and its editorial board included Gorky's friend, Ivan Ladyzhnikov, and Stasova.²²³ Ulyanov learned that the Russian CC had discussed the peasant movement, yet not acted. He complained that *Proletary* was not being distributed, read or discussed in Russia, and he wanted it to be digested and applied in 'absolutely all organisations and study kruzki of the Party, down to the very lowest';²²⁴ though Menshevik intelligently wanted more propagandists and agitators.

(ix) Science in the morning, revolution after dusk

By autumn 1905 Gorky's commitment to revolution had deepened. 'Only socialism renews life in this world, and it must become the religion of the working man'. 'We don't need an independent workers' party separate from the intelligentsia, but we must involve the largest possible number of conscious workers in the party, workers whose minds are unprejudiced and whose class consciousness has developed, become clear, and created a new man'.²²⁵ His leaflets sought to convince workers and intelligentsy that the government's lack of confidence made further demands appropriate and necessary. The authorities dropped the charges against him, though eight Georgian Bolsheviks guarded him at public meetings in Moscow and St. Petersburg.²²⁶

Wladimir Woytinsky was born into a 'fairly well-to-do' St. Petersburg professor's family in 1885. His father had 'moderately liberal leanings', though 'without any serious interest in politics'. The children had private tutors, and Wladimir entered a gymnasium in 1899, and used a private library with 'an excellent collection of books on economics, statistics, and history'. In 1901 he noted that the assassinations of ministers were 'openly applauded', and in autumn 1904 he enrolled at St. Petersburg University to study law, which included economics and statistics, though the lectures were dull. Many students had socialist ideas, and kruzok members hung postcards of terrorists, as well as those of Gorky and Tolstoy, in their rooms. Woytinsky read some Marx, but had reservations; though SDs and SRs had desks in the canteen entrance to collect money and distribute smuggled illegal literature.

Over winter Woytinsky's father took him on a tour of Germany, and then Wladimir went to Italy alone. He read about the planned St. Petersburg demonstration early in January 1905, and was surprised that the revolutionary parties were not involved. In Munich, the day after Bloody Sunday, he saw newspaper headlines of 'BLOODSHED IN ST. PETERSBURG' and 'REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA'. It 'changed the whole course of my life', and when he returned to St. Petersburg, 'Down with the Tsar' was the 'slogan of even moderately liberal kruzki'. He attended a meeting of 3,000 University students, and heard that SRs had smuggled Gapon abroad in disguise.²²⁷

That summer the Menshevik *Iskra* had appealed for students to end their strike in autumn, 'seize' the universities, 'systematically violate' rules, 'drive out inspectors and spies of every type, open the doors of the auditoriums to all citizens who wish to enter them, and transform the universities into centres for popular assembly and political meetings'.²²⁸ In August the academics' union called for universities to be open to qualified women, and though the education ministry refused, universities admitted women auditors without the right to take examinations;²²⁹ and the tsar returned much of the responsibility for running higher education to the university staff,²³⁰ banned police from entering their buildings,²³¹ and allowed students to have independent organisations.

In St. Petersburg cheap SD classics were available in the bookshops,²³² and there were 104 RSDRP students at the University.²³³ Delegates travelled 130km to Vyborg in Finland,²³⁴ as did students from Moscow and other universities. On 1 September six of the 23 delegates represented politically-unaffiliated students, though a majority called for an end to the strike, cooperation with the revolutionary parties, turning university buildings into centres of anti-government agitation and preparing an armed rising. Soon after St. Petersburg, Moscow and other universities elected liberal rektors, though the statutory three percent limit on Jewish students remained in force.²³⁵

On the 7th St. Petersburg University and Polytechnical Institute reopened.²³⁶ Woytinsky wanted to join the RSDRP, and a Marxist student he knew took him to meet A.Ia. Kaplan.

He seemed surprised but took me to another student, very short, very dark, with an unusually long beard and bright eyes. The gnome did not waste words, but bluntly asked me, 'You want to join the RSDRP?' These letters meant nothing to me, but he explained that they stood for the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party. When I said I did, he asked whether I was a Bolshevik or a Menshevik. I confessed my ignorance about the difference between the two factions. 'That is simple', he replied. 'The Bolsheviks are for the revolution while the Mensheviks seek a compromise with tsardom and are ready to betray the workers'. Obviously the gnome was a Bolshevik. Since I had no intention of betraying the workers I told him according to his definition I was a Bolshevik.

Kaplan gave him *Chto delat?* and *Dve taktiki*. Woytinsky was 'not the least bit interested in the dispute' between the factions, and did not like the idea of a strictly centralised organisation controlled from the top.

Days later Bolshevik students told him that he had been 'elected as a member of the committee and assigned to represent the party in the forthcoming students' meetings'.

The committee brushed aside my objection that I was unfamiliar with the party's views ... When I asked whether I was to represent the entire party or only its Bolshevik faction, I was told, 'We have a common line – to open the university in the interest of the revolution and to keep it under control. You will represent both factions. The fight is between us and the Socialist Revolutionaries'.²³⁷

On the 13th over 2,000 students filled the main auditorium,²³⁸ and Woytinsky occupied the chair on a 'small elevated platform', and a 'conspicuous brown curtain hung behind the speaker's pulpit, over the huge frame of the Tsar's portrait, destroyed in January'. He recalled that the 'black suits of the polytechnic schools mingled with gray University jackets'.²³⁹ 'We had neither agenda nor speakers', so he suggested that they 'discuss the current political situation, and turned the meeting over to the floor'. The discussion was 'utterly chaotic', and some speakers were 'wholly inarticulate'. An SR advocated continuing the strike and propagandising peasants, while Woytinsky called for a constituent assembly and revolution, and when a young SD worker, Petr Starostin, appealed for support, he won the vote by 1,702 to 243.²⁴⁰ The meeting elected a soviet with proportional representation from parties, and the SDs had a majority.

Next day's *Iskra* targeted students. 'Let every hall where the moderate discourse of the professor has been heard in the past from now on ring like a bell with the voice of the revolutionary: in educational institutions let only one science be taught – the science of revolution!'²⁴¹ Woytinsky recalled that St. Petersburg students had already 'arranged to have a dozen speakers from various leftist organisations on whom we called intermittently'.²⁴²

On the 15th 3,000 of St. Petersburg's 10,000 higher education students ended their seven-month strike, but half of them skipped classes, attended mass meetings at the University and agitated students attending lectures with revolutionary songs.²⁴³ When more workers turned up to the University, Woytinsky organised evening lectures. The workers were not interested in the rival parties, though they valued the meetings for education and self-expression, and some recited their own poems. On the 19th students demanded the removal of restrictions on the admission of women and Jews.²⁴⁴ Workers and revolutionaries debated and organised,²⁴⁵ and asked students to stay away so more workers could attend.²⁴⁶ Some of the city's Menshevik intelligently favoured boycotting the State Duma elections,²⁴⁷ though Gurvich and Piker discussed Bronstein's idea of an 'unbroken revolution',²⁴⁸ and decided to form workers' committees and call a workers' congress.²⁴⁹ Mensheviks led most major unions, while other SDs led up to a dozen.²⁵⁰ Obukhov plant managers threatened workers who attended political meetings, and the police tried to arrest a Bolshevik speaker, but the crowd drove them off with cobblestones, then echoed the slogan, 'Down with the Autocracy!', and spilled out onto the Shlisselburg Road singing the *Marseillaise*.²⁵¹

On the 20th students fraternised with striking printers, threw stones at the police who were trying to clear the streets,²⁵² and at the windows of working newspaper presses. Troops confronted them, though no papers appeared next day. The RSDRP claimed 8,000 members,²⁵³ and many sympathised with the Bolsheviks. Gymnasium pupils went to the University, sat among students, workers and revolutionaries, and sang the *Marseillaise*. 'Huge hats inscribed "Your contribution means arms for us" were passed from hand to hand'.²⁵⁴ Next day over 2,000 students forced their way into the Law Auditorium and 1,000 workers joined them. There were a large number of troops across the road, and though they did not interfere, the rektor closed the University.²⁵⁵

On the 22nd the police dispersed striking printers who had broken windows and threatened non-strikers at several presses. They reassembled in Tver Street, though 'Cossacks with their swords unsheathed and infantry with their guns cocked formed a tight circle around the crowd', then closed in. 'Shots suddenly rang out from the crowd, and a gendarme tottered on his horse and fell.' The crowd ran, but mounted Cossacks chased them and a 'terrible scene' ensued. Next day striking printers stoned print works and broke gates, and around 1,000 confronted gendarmes with bricks, cobblestones and a few guns.²⁵⁶ The police chief allowed the printers' soviet to meet, but

on the 24th demonstrators threw rocks at police, who claimed to have heard two gunshots, and 144 of the 197 people they detained by that evening were under 18.²⁵⁷ The police threatened to shoot at students' street meetings, and the rektor closed the University indefinitely; though 4,300 of the 4,700 students stood firm.²⁵⁸ University halls were filled with up to 10,000, and the Polytechnical Institute regularly drew crowds of between 2,000 and 3,000. A University student later recalled that it was 'Science in the morning, revolution after dusk'.²⁵⁹

Alexandr Voronsky had been born into a priest's family in Tambov in 1884. He later entered a seminary, joined the RSDRP in 1904, led a student 'rebellion' in 1905 and was expelled; so he went to St. Petersburg to be a Bolshevik agitator. Other young men and women agitators had been expelled from seminaries or secondary schools, though most were undergraduates, and the 'real nucleus' was 'not more than fifteen', since 'very few were willing to get up at four or five in the morning, crawl along the deserted, badly-lit streets, sneak cautiously through the factory gates, and hide from the police after the meetings, sometimes hanging about until the dinner hour before it was safe to slip back into the street'.²⁶⁰

The Bolshevik CC met in Golubeva's apartment,²⁶¹ almost daily,²⁶² and her children reportedly 'slept on bombs'. Drabkin led the fighting organisation, though he was able to meet his wife and daughter only briefly in safe houses. A. M. Bulygin and his wife oversaw dynamite production, and two other Bolsheviks, posing as a married couple, bought a dacha in Finland to make bombs.²⁶³

Subsequently the Sanitary Works, Cartridge Works, Office for the Manufacture of Government Paper, furniture factories and oil-mills had won an eight-hour day,²⁶⁴ while shop assistants, pharmacists, jewellers and bakers had organised unions,²⁶⁵ though the struggle developed somewhat differently in Moscow.

(x) The Moscow print workers' sovet

In spring 1905 the Bolshevik intelligenty Rozhkov and Skvortsov had travelled to Finland to attend a conference organised by Malinovsky, which worked out a programme for workers' kruzhs; and in summer Rozhkov and Skvortsov joined the Moscow literary-propagandist group which included Pokrovsky, other SDs and non-party teachers. They travelled all over Russia to organise mass meetings and promote their programme, and Rozhkov recalled that it 'enlivened, widened and deepened' his work. He often spoke in Yaroslavl, Ryazan, Tula, Serpukhov, Torzhok, Vladimir, Shuya and Moscow; and on 7 September Moscow University students voted by 1,202 to 517 to open it 'solely for revolutionary agitation among the masses' and a 'revolutionary base'.²⁶⁶

In summer some Moscow print workers had drafted a charter for Fond uluchsheniya usloviy truda trudyashchikhsya v tipograficheskikh predpriyatiyakh, (the Fund for the Improvement of the Conditions of Labour of Working Men in Typo-Lithographical Enterprises). They barred employers and managers from membership, and copied the St. Petersburg printers' union's aim to 'assist members materially during strikes and unemployment'. On 5 August the owner of one large print works agreed to a nine-hour Saturday shift and the end of fines.²⁶⁷ On the 11th around 400 workers at Sytin & Company's plant voted in favour of some of the illegal union's demands, which included a nine-hours on weekdays and eight-hours on Saturdays and before holidays, sick leave at half pay and maternity leave at full pay, plus a rise of 30 percent for those earning nine to 20 rubles a month, 20 percent for those earning 21 to 30, 15 percent for those earning 31 to 45 and 10 percent for those earning more. They wanted their elected representatives to be immune from dismissal, and asked for a response in two days, though they subsequently accepted the company's request for a delay. On 13 September Sytin & Company agreed to a nine-hour day, full pay for one week of sickness followed by half pay for up to two months, and a five percent rise for typographers on piece work, beginning on 1 October, though the Company purchased labour-saving machinery. On the 19th the typographers collected their wages and went on strike, and most other print workers joined them. Union members raised 20 demands including a decisive say on hiring and firing of skilled men and apprentices, plus improved health and safety standards and working conditions. Most other print workers supported them,²⁶⁸ though they changed the demand for an eight-hour day to nine hours and added equal pay for equal work by men and women,²⁶⁹ a higher piecework rate and payment for punctuation marks.²⁷⁰ The union leaders published a leaflet:²⁷¹ 'We must have the right to meet freely, to discuss our affairs freely' at 'any time and place'. Managers 'cannot hold us back; our vital interests are at stake, and we must defend them'. 'The strike must continue until all our demands are satisfied or our strength has given out'.²⁷²

The bakers' union had won a strike in spring, though the employers subsequently reneged on the agreement, so the bakers came out again on 24 September.²⁷³ The police tried to keep strikers inside the huge Phillipov bakery, but they threw cast-iron pans, cake moulds and bricks at them until Cossacks stormed the building. Students supported strikers, and clashes with police and troops led to over 100 casualties.²⁷⁴

That day delegates to the professional union's first conference in Moscow came from 19 unions and mutual aid societies, watchmakers and the factory committees of five large machine-building plants. VPSR and liberal delegates represented seven unions, mostly in the white-collar and service sectors, and RSDRP delegates represented nine unions and five factory committees. Bolsheviks influenced metalworkers and some bakers and joiners, while Mensheviks influenced printers, Brest Railway workers, tailors, tobacco workers and woodworkers.²⁷⁵

On the 25th 110 deputies from 34 printing plants met in a school allocated by the police chief.²⁷⁶ The typographers' union called it a *sovet deputatov* (a council of deputies). Most rejected 'politics', and one caused a commotion when he declared that 'before we pull the hats off the heads of our bosses, it is necessary to pull the hat off the big boss in St. Petersburg'.²⁷⁷ The sovet confirmed the union's demands, agreed to negotiate collectively, approved a meeting next day and reported back to their members. Sytin & Company offered a rise of 7.5 percent, and two more kopeks for setting 1,000 characters, half pay for strike days, no reprisals and an end to body searches;²⁷⁸ yet the strike continued. Printers clashed with police,²⁷⁹ and Cossacks.²⁸⁰ Shots were fired, strikers died and about 100 were arrested.²⁸¹ By evening 50 print works were strikebound,²⁸² and police shot at a strikers' street meeting.²⁸³ A few precious-metal workers formed a strike committee and issued demands, and 1,500 came out.²⁸⁴

By the 26th there were strikes in other industries. Cossacks fired into a crowd and killed ten people,²⁸⁵ and the police interfered in a meeting of Bolshevik-influenced carpenters, though they went on strike and formed a sovet. Up to 9,000 metalworkers, mainly from machine-building plants, came out.²⁸⁶ The printers' sovet demanded free nurseries and polite address.

Some printers went back on the 27th,²⁸⁷ though striking bicycle workers encouraged others to join them,²⁸⁸ and workers from the Brest Railway workshops presented a list of economic demands and walked out. The railway union bureau held back workers on several other lines with difficulty, and eventually decided to call a general strike; yet the Bolshevik-led RSDRP committee believed the strike wave was ebbing.²⁸⁹ It sanctioned strikes on the railways, but rejected agitation for a general strike by seven votes to two, yet 1,000 RSDRP workers voted unanimously the other way.²⁹⁰ Next day Cossacks and police wounded 17 strikers and killed four, while police arrested a student carrying RSDRP leaflets and a revolver.²⁹¹

On 30th railway workers at the Kursk and Kazan line workshops decided to strike, though union leaders asked them to postpone it until the State Duma opened.²⁹² The workers went on strike all the same, as did bakers, woodworkers, machine tool makers, textile and tobacco workers, who struck for economic and political demands. Strikers held boisterous meetings at the University, marched through the streets, stoned the police and sang the *Marseillaise*.²⁹³ All the large print works and many smaller ones were strike-bound, yet only 616 'members' of the typographers' union had paid dues.²⁹⁴ Metalworkers and others at plants in at the New Port, and in the Shlisselburg and Vyborg districts and Kronstadt port workers came out. Putilov works' armament orders were low, and managers closed the plant, and other employers imposed lockouts.²⁹⁵ The typographers' union announced that workers in firms with fewer than 30 staff could elect a sovet deputy, and larger workforces one per shop.²⁹⁶

In Kostroma, Ivanovo and other towns in the central industrial region, elected deputies and 'factory commissions' were already common;²⁹⁷ and union and other forms of struggle had generalised in border regions.

Most RSDRP members in the Pale were Bundists. There were 100 or so in several towns, 250 in Kazan, 300 in Kharkiv and Rostov-na-Donu, 500 in Kyiv and 1,000 in both Katerynoslav and Odesa, plus 500 in Nizhni Novgorod on the Volga.²⁹⁸ They co-operated with Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in meetings, demonstrations, political strikes and self-defence,²⁹⁹ and some Bolshevik and Menshevik organisations merged.³⁰⁰

In Ukraine hundreds of Mensheviks and Jews had protested against the murder of a Jew in Odesa, police and Cossacks injured and arrested almost 100.³⁰¹ Drabkin left St. Petersburg and persuaded Odesa RSDRP committee to lead legal trade unions, and argued that opposing the Mensheviks' 'economist' (syndicalist) tendencies was important, but developing the movement was 'unthinkable under an autocratic regime' without an armed rising.³⁰² The government owned two-thirds of the railway network,³⁰³ and the southern rail-making plants were almost as efficient as those in Belgium. A Paris bank sent engineers to inspect Donbass metallurgical plants, and they recommended a merger,³⁰⁴ even though there had been 40 strikes in the region in four months, and 400 peasants supported the luzovka ironworkers.³⁰⁵ In Katerynoslav the Bryansk steelworkers' union demonstrated against the State Duma elections, and workers from another factory, the railway depot and arsenal joined them, and they burned the announcement before police and troops broke them up.³⁰⁶ During September some Donbass workers called for civil and political rights and a democratic republic, as did some in Poland.³⁰⁷ The owners of hairdressing shops in Kyiv had refused to close at 8.00pm, so employees had done so by force. Sign-painters had won 'polite treatment', a 15 percent rise, guaranteed weekly pay, greater educational opportunities for youngsters and early closing times on Christian and Jewish holidays,³⁰⁸ and sugar refinery workers had won an eight-hour day,³⁰⁹ while 4,000 people attended a meeting at Kazan University on 20 September.³¹⁰

In the Baltic provinces the Latvian SDSP claimed 18,200 members,³¹¹ including 7,200 in and around Rīga, 3,000 in Liepāja, 2,500 in both Jelgava and Līvõmõ, 2,000 in Vāentspils and 500 elsewhere. The LSDSP's 52 full-time organisers and agents included 17 attached to the CC, 14 in Rīga, six in Liepāja, three in both Jelgava and Vāentspils, two in Tukāmõ and seven attached to the Līvõmõ committee. Kruzhki of ten to 20 workers regularly met one of the five to 15 'district representatives' whose secret flying 'station-commune' included an agitator or an agent, and a co-opted district representative. Three underground presses could print 100,000 sheets a month, and members distributed leaflets and papers, set up meetings and took contributions.³¹² The LSDSP had helped to organise 39 trade unions with 32,000 members,³¹³ and on 30 September workers in Rīga, Mitau, Liepāja, Vāentspils, Tukāmõ and other Baltic towns and cities came out on strike with the slogan of 'A constitutional assembly based upon universal, equal, direct and secret ballot'.³¹⁴

Far Eastern miners, Samara printers, Tbilisi tram workers and Baki oil-drillers had won an eight-hour day,³¹⁵ and across Russia, from July to September, 143,000 strikers in inspected plants had been deemed economically motivated, while 151,000 were politically motivated.³¹⁶ Just over two percent of inspected workers were involved in 261 strikes in September,³¹⁷ yet over 38 percent of almost 38,000 strikers were deemed political.³¹⁸

Since May there had been 750 officially-recorded peasant disturbances in 250 districts,³¹⁹ and there were 71 in September,³²⁰ and the peasants' union claimed 100,000 members,³²¹ in at least 42 provinces.³²² There were 720,000 peasant troops in European Russia, and the tsar had sent 18,000 reserves to the Caucasus,³²³ and put the Trans-Caspian region and Kaunas province under martial law.³²⁴ Over 70 Cossack regiments had suppressed domestic disturbances,³²⁵ but since summer almost a million soldiers had met Bolsheviks on the Trans-Siberian line,³²⁶ and secret peace negotiations had been underway since summer.

In July the Japanese had captured Sakhalin Island.³²⁷ The Russian and Japanese governments agreed to send delegates to a peace conference,³²⁸ and the US president hosted them in the US navy's Portsmouth shipyard in Kittery, Maine.³²⁹ The London journalist Maurice Baring had left St. Petersburg for Manchuria in August, and heard that there would be a big railway strike. He was told that if he wanted to see political meetings he should get off in Chita; but he went on to Harbin, and on his return he was convinced that a strike at Samara was revolutionary.³³⁰ The Japanese government ratified the Treaty of Portsmouth on 14 September, and the Russian government did so secretly on 1 October.³³¹ The war had cost Russia at least 2.35 billion rubles,³³² and probably nearer 2.45 billion.³³³ The government owed about ten billion francs,³³⁴ the equivalent of over three billion rubles, and there were clear signs of convergence between the activities and ideas of peasant soldiers, insurgent peasants, revolutionaries, radicalised students and organised workers.

10. The political general strike

(i) We have suffered a fiasco and must not repeat it

By October 1905 Moscow University had enrolled women as auditors and external students.¹ There were up to 50,000 mourners at the rektor's funeral on the 3rd,² including many workers,³ and some carried red banners and sang the *Marseillaise*.⁴ There were 26 trade unions in the city.⁵ Engineers, cabinetmakers, tobacco workers and others elected deputies,⁶ and some railway workers came out, including those at Kazan and Yaroslavl line workshops and Kursk line guards, though Brest line managers sacked machine shop workers and rehired only those who promised not to strike.⁷ After the Bolshevik Mikhail Vasiliev agitated at List's metalworks for 15 minutes, 'older workers turned obstinate', but 'younger ones impetuously demanded a walk-out and did not shrink from using a certain amount of force'. A large crowd picketed other plants, but police and gendarmes dispersed them. A few reached Tsindel Mill, and though Vasiliev got a serious sabre cut on his forehead, he escaped. The RSDRP committee 'strained every nerve to turn the printers' strike into a general strike',⁸ and the railway union bureau telegraphed members to come out next day. Bolshevik intelligently issued a supporting leaflet, though there was no response.⁹ The tsar was told that 'anarchists' had persuaded railway workers to strike and hold up the return of 7,000 troops from the Far East,¹⁰ and he secretly ratified the peace treaty with Japan and ordered reserves to be demobilised.¹¹

On the 4th Sytin & Company gave their printers a nine-hour day, a seven to ten percent rise and half-pay for strike days.¹² Newspapers reappeared, yet over 12,000 workers were on strike.¹³ The railway union bureau announced that Kazan line workers would come out next day. On the 5th the peace treaty was publicly announced,¹⁴ though there was no response from railway workers, so the bureau accepted the plan of two Kazan line SRs to call a strike the following day. The demands included civic freedoms and an elected constituent assembly. Engine drivers closed the Kazan line, and that night two SRs led strikers to neighbouring stations and called on workers to come out.¹⁵ An SR railway union leader and machinists commandeered a locomotive and drove to Petrovo, where the stationmaster was a union member, and telegraphed every station in Russia announcing a general strike, and by the 7th all the Kazan line engine drivers were out.¹⁶ Two SRs and several strikers were arrested, but others successfully demanded their release.¹⁷ Bolsheviks in one railway workshop consulted the RSDRP committee, comrades from the Yaroslavl and Kursk lines and a leading SR, then formed a strike committee and encouraged drivers to sabotage locomotives.¹⁸ At the University over 4,000 students debated what to do, and 1,202 of the 1,719 voted to reopen the University as a 'revolutionary base'.¹⁹ Next day crowds of railway staff, mainly young men and women clerical workers, went to nearby stations to persuade others to strike, though the police detained the bureau members.²⁰ Some metalworkers went back, though 2,000 stayed out, and Mensheviks tried to consolidate the sovet of carpenters and metal, railway and tobacco workers.²¹

Strikes had broken out across the central industrial region. Tula printers had come out on the 4th.²² Vladimir seminarians went on strike on the 7th,²³ and railway workers were out in Arzamas, Kashira and Venev. Ryazan-Ural, Bryansk, Smolensk-Dankov and Nizhni Novgorod by the 8th. Strikers cut telegraph wires, broke signals, blocked tracks, sabotaged locomotives and electricity stations, and commandeered presses to print bulletins, though they let workers' trains through.²⁴

On the 9th a congress of mutual aid organisations in Moscow turned into a national conference of trade unions.²⁵ Delegates supported the railway strike and raised political demands.²⁶ Railway union delegates demanded a pay rise and an amnesty for political prisoners,²⁷ and workers on the Voronezh, Kyiv and Brest lines came out. Only the Savelovo line was open on the 10th.²⁸ The Menshevik chair of the railway union strike committee also chaired the municipal strike committee, which was composed mainly of professionals.²⁹ A majority Bolshevik committee intelligently opposed a general strike, and one member had noted that, after the failure of the call in June, 'we have suffered a fiasco and must not repeat it'; yet when the RSDRP intelligently called a city-wide meeting,³⁰ 400 members turned up and voted for a general strike. Petr Bronstein recalled that Menshevik-led committees had been 'taken practically unawares by the spontaneous growth of the general strike' and were 'hardly keeping up with developments', and SRs and the Union of Unions also voted in favour of a general strike; so the Mensheviks printed a leaflet calling for a general strike when it was well underway.³¹

On the 11th a Bolshevik leaflet asked Moscow workers to 'Lay down your tools and take up arms', yet they were not armed themselves. Over 2,000 railway workers closed postal and telegraph offices, though Cossacks broke up pickets with whips and troops guarded key buildings. Grain was in short supply, the price of meat had doubled, milk, candles and kerosene were unavailable, electricity supplies had dwindled and trams had stopped running. The University and Technological Institute lecture halls were full of workers wanting to know how to win the 'real

business', while not letting students 'stuff us with politics'. Delegates to a liberal party congress wondered if 'freedom will be realised by violent or peaceful means', but rejected negotiations with the government and supported strikers.³² That day the tsar announced the electoral *curiae* (groupings) in the State Duma elections.³³

On the 12th the liberal congress established Konstitutsionno-Demokraticheskaya Partiya (the Constitutional Democratic Party), which included the Union of Unions and the Union of Liberation. The 'Kadets', as they became known, demanded a national legislative assembly elected by universal, equal, direct and secret ballot, legally guaranteed civil rights, the compulsory expropriation, with compensation, of land for the peasants, and the restoration of constitutional autonomy in Poland and Finland.³⁴ The 26 CC members included nine professors,³⁵ and the former SD intelligentska Kuskova.³⁶ The tsar decreed that strikers at enterprises of 'public or state importance', including post, telegraph and railway workers, would go to jail for up to 16 months;³⁷ but the general political strike had spread to Smolensk,³⁸ and troops inflicted serious casualties on crowds in Kursk, Riazan and Yaroslavl.

On the 13th the army was ordered to give no quarter to revolutionaries. In Moscow troops failed to get the railways working and there were too few to guard all the stations and trains.³⁹ There had been over 400 arrests, yet the movement continued,⁴⁰ and the mainly female municipal clerks' committee worked with the RSDRP. The Bolshevik organiser Andrey Sokolov recalled that radical students, intelligentsy and SRs dominated University mass meetings, while Bolsheviks and other SDs predominated at the Technological Institute, where students' blazers were 'drowned in a sea of workers' jackets'; though both institutions were 'passageways through which the noisy, variegated crowd poured in a veritable torrent from early morning to late at night'.⁴¹ Ministers ordered the University authorities to keep non-students out, or close,⁴² and the police chief ordered the governor-general to close illegal meetings 'with all means'.⁴³

By the 14th water and electricity were off.⁴⁴ The former Assembly leaders were freed, and Karelin, Kharitonov, Belov and Usanov formally founded a print workers' union. Thousands met at the University and approved an SD motion calling on workers to begin 'breaking into gun shops and seizing arms from police and soldiers'.⁴⁵ Over 1,000 workers and students talked through the night.⁴⁶ Next day the Savelovo line closed,⁴⁷ and after the Stock Exchange supported martial law, gas workers walked out. The 33,000 strikers included about 20 percent of the city's industrial workers, and a third of its metalworkers, mainly from large factories. Dragoons beat workers and intelligentsy who tried to enter a municipal building with open swords, Cossacks cut students and beat them unconscious with whips, while horses trampled on the fallen and police beat them where they lay. Forty were wounded. Some men, reportedly including police, attacked 2,000 strikers picketing butchers with sticks and knives. University classes were suspended,⁴⁸ and Black Hundreds besieged students who stayed there.⁴⁹

On the 16th water workers and unskilled railway workers and technicians went back, but many other workers came out.⁵⁰ That evening, at the University, railway workers resolved to strike until all their demands were met.⁵¹ Next day the police chief sent troops to reopen the electricity plants and gas works, but strikers 'mixed up the switches'.⁵² Around 19,000 workers were still out,⁵³ and strikes had been underway in St. Petersburg for a fortnight.

(ii) St. Petersburg General Workers' Committee

On 1 October 1905 St. Petersburg typesetters had gone on strike in sympathy with their Moscow counterparts,⁵⁴ and next day, when workers, students and intelligentsy followed the former Moscow University rektor's coffin to Nikolaev Station, the RSDRP organised 600 to join them.⁵⁵ Mourners seized red flags from trams, sang revolutionary songs, and while some dispersed when police approached, others skirmished with police and Cossacks. Around 2,000 marched along Nevsky Prospect, paused briefly in Palace Square, took off their hats, knelt, and sang a hymn in memory of the victims of Bloody Sunday, though mounted police attacked them when they reached the University.⁵⁶ They threw stones, and Cossacks opened fire, killing some,⁵⁷ but took 30 casualties.⁵⁸ Around 3,000 dock workers at the New Port came out for higher pay, shorter hours and control over piecework, hiring and firing.⁵⁹ Print workers from 20 firms were out and students supported them. Thirty more print workforces came out,⁶⁰ and that evening Moscow printers' union members attended a print workers' meeting.⁶¹ When one delegate asked for a sympathy strike, 3,000 printers took a collection and voted to stay out for three days, and though other strikers went back, delegates from five trades formed a committee.⁶² Bolshevik intelligentsy argued for elected strike leaders,⁶³ and the crowd at the Polytechnical Institute reached 2,000.

Printers began a solidarity strike with Moscow on the 3rd.⁶⁴ They closed most print works and tried to close the General Staff's press, and next day 2,000 picketed the government press. Troops inflicted casualties and drove them back, but Obukhov metalworkers came out singing the *Marseillaise*,⁶⁵ and political strikes broke out all over the city. Hundreds of spies had been identified, and one detective had been murdered, so others refused to enter workers' districts.⁶⁶ Nevsky shipyard workers struck, and pickets brought out workforces from nearby factories and

mills. There were bloody clashes with police near the shipyard and the Alexandrovsk metalworks,⁶⁷ yet strikers marched along the Shlisselburg Road singing the *Marseillaise*, pulled out workers from most large plants, broke Pal Mill's windows and forced the gates open, though Spassk & Petrov Mill managers had closed the gates. Strikers stoned a tram, stopped it and threw rocks and shot revolvers at police and Cossacks, who killed and wounded several of them. Strikers built barricades, though some raided liquor stores.⁶⁸

On the 5th Obukhov strikers resolved to stay out for five more days and demanded freedom of speech and the press, the right to strike and join unions, inviolability of the person and the home, an amnesty for political prisoners and the right to campaign in State Duma elections and elect representatives by universal, direct, equal and secret ballot. The strike committee outside the Nevsky Gate demanded a nine-hour day, a 20 percent rise, an extra ruble a day for unskilled workers, freedom to meet, an end to police interference in strikes, a 50 percent cut in rent,⁶⁹ and an end to compulsory overtime. They exhorted 'Comrade Men and Women Workers' to demand the same civil rights as students and zemstvo workers. That evening 12,000 people, reportedly including 7,000 workers, met at the University,⁷⁰ and Menshevik and Bolshevik workers were about equal in number. Troops fired on striking government printers, killing two and wounding 21, and police patrolled Shlisselburg Road all night.⁷¹ Next day most strikers went back,⁷² yet three factory workforces stayed out. The arrested Obukhov strikers were freed, and 600 Narva district workers saluted St. Petersburg and Moscow workers for defending the right of assembly; yet Bolshevik intelligently warned that 'premature outbursts of discontent' could provoke repression, and a political strike would be 'untimely and capable of harming the interests of the conscious proletariat'. They wanted workers to prepare for a general political strike,⁷³ and a mass meeting at the University set a date for the end of sympathy strikes.⁷⁴ The government had organised a conference of railway workers to discuss pensions, and though union leaders had called for a boycott, rank and file railway workers elected delegates.⁷⁵ They were mainly salaried employees, but they elected a Bolshevik as vice-chair,⁷⁶ and replaced the 'high brass on the platform'. That evening workers who wanted to know about the Moscow strike 'stormed' the University'.⁷⁷

On the 7th railway workers near the city came out.⁷⁸ Next day, after a member of the city's foremen and technicians' union at St. Petersburg Pipe Works was sacked, others protested at being given 'police duties'. Around 5,000 barbers demanded a shorter day and one day off a week, and 8,000 workers discussed economic grievances in the Military Medical Academy cafeteria. That evening Franco-Russian machine-builders and other Nevsky Gate workforces met in the cafeteria and elsewhere.⁷⁹ More printers came out, and railway workers' leaders decided to found a national union. They telegraphed their demands for an eight-hour day, civil liberties, a political amnesty and a constituent assembly, all based on the RSDRP programme, along all lines. On the 9th railway union delegates telegraphed the demands along all lines.⁸⁰ Secondary school teachers and shop assistants organised, but Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and SRs opposed a general strike. Next day Obukhov strikers went back,⁸¹ though almost every other worker stayed out.⁸² The central bureau of trade unions organised,⁸³ and 50 to 60 former Shidlovsky deputies met in railway union members' apartments, or at their press, and printed an appeal for a sovet. Nosar led at meetings in the Free Economic Society,⁸⁴ while Mensheviks supported a railway strike,⁸⁵ and called for a city-wide sovet.⁸⁶

On the 11th 50 agitators proposed electing one sovet deputy for every 500 workers, and Obukhov and Putilov metalworkers elected members of their strike committees and former Shidlovsky elders.⁸⁷ The railway pension delegates support a general strike,⁸⁸ and though other trades deliberated, students collected money for arms and SRs advocated terror.⁸⁹ University law students gave SDs 478 votes, Kadets 105, a nonaligned faction 98, and SRs 85, though 60 percent of science students supported SDs. That evening 10,000 railway workers met at the University.⁹⁰ The SD student Woytinsky was invited to the Military Medical Academy,⁹¹ where 'all the orators of all the parties' spoke of moving beyond 'anarchist strikism',⁹² and workers asked him if they should strike.

Since I did not know the answer, I sent a messenger to the party headquarters for instructions and meanwhile called on representatives of the plants to report on the local situation.

My messenger returned with a note: 'The committee is in session. Instructions will follow in half an hour'.

Meanwhile, the local people were making their reports: 'Our workers have made up their minds. Whatever the parties decide, they will strike ... Everyone will surely join ...'

Seated at the chairman's table, in the pit of the amphitheatre, I watched the faces turned towards it. No doubt, no hesitation – the same expression of firm decision and exaltation on all.

It was close to midnight. The audience waited for words that would summon its feelings. 'Your turn, Comrade Petrov', called the chairman. I no longer needed a directive. 'What can I add, comrades? The decision has been made. The general strike is on. This is the hour!'

As I spoke, a young man rushed to the chair and handed a note to the chairman. He read it, reached out to pass it to me, then put it aside. No resolution was voted after my speech. The crowd applauded. The chairman closed the meeting and handed me the note: I read: 'committee of the RSDWP, Bolshevik Faction. Instruction to speakers: Discuss the pros and cons of the general strike'.

The Bolshevik committee supported the railway strike late that night.⁹³

Next day workers from Nevsky shipyard, the Alexandrovsk and Atlas plants and all the major Nevsky district mills were out.⁹⁴ No trains left for Peterhof, the tsar's residence,⁹⁵ and only the line to Finland remained open.⁹⁶ The assistant interior minister told the tsar that 6,000 workers were armed and 300 had formed groups of eight to ten to patrol the streets from 8.00pm to 6.00am.⁹⁷ The tsar gave him dictatorial powers and ordered him to crush the strike. He began to draw in the reliable military units stationed around the city – battalions, companies, even selected platoons'; and though he did not try to reopen the railways, and ordered troops to 'proceed under their own power',⁹⁸ he put the city's military units under his control and issued an order. 'If necessary, do not fire blank salvos and do not spare the cartridges'.⁹⁹ He also ordered police chiefs in provinces that were experiencing a revolutionary upsurge to 'act in the most drastic manner', 'not stopping at the direct application of force'.¹⁰⁰ That evening the Bolshevik Sverchkov went to the University. He had never seen so many people in one building before, but students kept 'perfect order'. 'The Assembly hall, all the lecture theatres, the long corridor, all the staircases and landing' were 'packed with the assembled masses. Each trade meeting (the union leaders had invited not only union members but all individuals belonging to the given trade) had a separate location.' The main hall was assigned to the office workers' union, and Sverchkov, who worked at the Hope Insurance Company, was elected as chair.¹⁰¹ Nosar reported on the Moscow sovet,¹⁰² and Sverchkov began reading a list of offices that were out, then received a note. 'The power station is about to stop work and the lights will go out. Take action to avoid disorder'.

Students were already going along the rows giving out from boxes on their shoulders candles which had been cut in half. Someone lit a candle, after him another, then a third. Thousands of lights began to glow around the hall. I looked down from the high platform and a feeling of rapture bubbled in my heart: it seemed that we were holding a requiem for the defunct autocracy.

He received another note. 'The university is surrounded by troops. Cossacks and police are approaching. Take action to prevent panic if they appear at the doors of the hall'. He asked for calm, though police and Cossacks did not enter. 'A resolution with political demands was passed. I asked that the assembly hall be cleared so as to make space for the meeting of another union which was waiting its turn. We left singing the workers' *Marseillaise*'.¹⁰³

The Bolshevik Skrypnik was responsible for Nevsky district and for preparing an uprising.

The organisation was to consist of detachments of armed workers with as many members from all the factories as there were arms – that is the whole organisation was to be put on a military footing. I ensured that each district had its own organiser, its own basic combat unit of eight to ten men and its own cache of weapons, in addition to the central arms dump. A series of lectures was arranged on the techniques and tactics of barricade-building and street fighting.

The 'mass of the workers would only listen to words of revolution and demanded that the Party should respond', but after the Bolshevik committee 'submitted everything to agitation', Skrypnik resigned.¹⁰⁴ The RSDRP CC called on workers to support an insurrection, and the 'comparatively raw' Moscow district organisation agreed, though Nevsky and other 'advanced' districts did not.¹⁰⁵

On the morning of the 13th many tram drivers and factory and office workers in Vyborg, Petersburg and Moscow districts came out. The post office ceased to function, businesses and shops closed and the price of meat and consumer goods began to rise.¹⁰⁶ Electricity workers pledged to support the RSDRP and 'fight, weapons in hand, for the people's complete liberation'. Obukhov workers declared a political strike for a democratic republic and a constituent assembly, and elected more deputies. Typesetters insisted that newspapers should be uncensored, and printers resolved to 'transform the army of the striking working class into a revolutionary army', organise 'detachments of armed workers', arm 'the rest of the working masses, if necessary by raiding gun shops', and 'confiscate arms from the police and troops'.¹⁰⁷ Soldiers, including some officers, appeared at revolutionary meetings. The justice minister had to hire a horse to get back from a meeting with the tsar,¹⁰⁸ and workers refused to send his telegraphs.¹⁰⁹ That evening up to 40 deputies met at the Technological Institute,¹¹⁰ though only 15 had been elected,¹¹¹ and some represented fewer than 200 workers.¹¹² Most were from the Nevsky district and were politically unaligned,¹¹³ though they elected the Menshevik S.S. Zborovsky as chair.¹¹⁴ The deputies formed *Komitet obshchikh rabotnikov*, (the General Workers' Committee), to 'strengthen and unify our movement, represent the St. Petersburg workers to the public', and 'decide actions during the strike, as well as its termination'.¹¹⁵ They called on workforces to elect deputies on the basis of one per 500 workers and join the general strike.¹¹⁶ The postal and telegraph union did not have full voting rights, and though the office workers' union had 6,000 members, its leaders decided that 'our representation could not be equivalent to that of the industrial proletariat', and elected six deputies, including Sverchkov. A 'significant proportion, often a majority,' of those who voted for RSDRP deputies

were non-party and some were SRs.¹¹⁷ The city was in darkness,¹¹⁸ though 3,000 met at the University and workers clashed with troops overnight.¹¹⁹ Next day telegraphs were disrupted,¹²⁰ and 80 or so Komitet deputies represented 40 workplaces,¹²¹ with 40,000 workers.¹²² Around 1,000 members of the teachers' union voted to strike and closed all 350 schools,¹²³ and the assistant interior minister ordered the closure of higher educational institution halls.¹²⁴

Sergey Malyshev had been born in St. Petersburg in 1877. He joined an SD *kruzhok* at the Obukhov plant in 1898, and the RSDRP in 1902. In 1905 he had helped to organise a dock workers' union,¹²⁵ and on 14 October he was one of 14 Komitet deputies who went to the city *duma*.¹²⁶ Police and soldiers stopped them,¹²⁷ but eventually let them in. The 26-year-old Bolshevik Bogdan Knunyants recalled that 'Many of us were completely hoarse from speeches at meetings, and the "moral" fathers very likely thought with horror that we had lost our voices from drunkenness. In addition we were all in coats and galoshes and were irritated by our long wait and our encounter with the police.'¹²⁸ Most deputies were absent, but a few met the workers, asked them to leave and decided to do nothing.¹²⁹ The assistant interior minister had filled theatres and higher educational institutions with troops, but the Imperial Ballet and most textile workers were out.¹³⁰ Hundreds of workers with knives, knuckledusters and revolvers met on the University embankment, though RSDRP agitators argued that they were too few to be effective, so they should go home and prepare for an organised uprising.¹³¹ Woytinsky was 'called to an industrial precinct'.

On the way I stopped at home and changed my clothes, putting on high boots, a Russian shirt, an overcoat, and a worker's cap – an outfit I had acquired after my first outdoor meeting. In this disguise, accompanied by loyal workers, I plodded from factory to factory, addressing crowds in courtyards and workshops. I told them again and again what I believed to be true: that Russia was already on strike and that the Tsarist regime was bound to collapse.¹³²

Pharmacists, chocolate workers,¹³³ workers at large and medium-sized metalworks and mills were out, along with more tram drivers, and agitators roamed the streets, closing shops. The Baltic shipyard, Putilov and Franco-Russian plants were on strike, and 2,000 Obukhov workers passed a Bolshevik resolution to refrain from 'individual clashes with the police and troops, since we must enter into a decisive battle when this is to our advantage and not to that of our enemy'. That evening the University crowd was around 50,000, and the overflow went to the Art Academy;¹³⁴

By the 15th navy ministry printers, port and customs workers, Imperial Theatre actors,¹³⁵ and 60 telephonists were on strike. At the State Bank 192 employees voted,¹³⁶ with eight against, for the end of the autocracy and for an elected constituent assembly.¹³⁷ The assistant interior minister promised to open three municipal buildings for public meetings,¹³⁸ though he told the University authorities he would use troops to end 'revolutionary gatherings',¹³⁹ and threatened to deport shop owners who closed without permission.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless shops, restaurants, cafes and taverns stayed closed, and food prices were rising sharply. Most textile works were working, yet a crowd of strikers, or an appeal by a Komitet deputy, could close a mill better than leaflets.¹⁴¹ Most glass, tobacco, brewing and confectionary employees were working,¹⁴² though most municipal offices and the water works stayed closed. Lawyers demanded that courts close, and hospital staff gave 20 percent of their pay to the Komitet. Troops patrolled the city centre, yet political groups held meetings, and strikers, many of them armed, marched unimpeded through suburban streets.¹⁴³ About 200,000 workers, nearly half of those in the city, had elected Komitet deputies.¹⁴⁴ That evening 226, representing 96 factories, five trade unions and the railway union strike committee, elected Nosar as chair, because he was unaligned,¹⁴⁵ and gave Mensheviks, Bolsheviks and SRs three delegates each, but no votes.¹⁴⁶ Deputies from 40 large plants, two factories and the print workers', shop assistants' and office clerks' unions demanded that the *duma* regulate food supplies to workers and end them to police and gendarmes. They wanted meeting places, funds for arming workers,¹⁴⁷ and the immediate withdrawal of troops from the water works, or they would turn off the supply. The Komitet sanctioned closing newspaper kiosks and limiting the opening hours of food shops. They asked strikers to encourage others to come out, with force if necessary, and meet at the higher educational institutions.¹⁴⁸

Lev Bronstein, Sedova and their daughters had moved further into Finland and lived an isolated boarding house.¹⁴⁹ Bronstein had heard that St. Petersburg SDs and SRs led a few hundred workers, and influenced thousands, though they suffered from the 'occupational disease of clandestinity' and factionalism, so a '*non-party* organisation' was 'absolutely essential'. He had heard that the Mensheviks wanted a 'revolutionary workers' council of self-management',¹⁵⁰ and that the revolutionary parties planned 'decisive fights' on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday the following year. He knew that strikes were 'sweeping farther and farther' and there was 'a danger that the movement, not being controlled by a central organisation, would die down without any results'. He had a plan for 'an elected non-party organisation', with delegates each representing 1,000 workers, yet when he arrived in St. Petersburg on 15 October he found that the Mensheviks had 'launched the slogan of an elected revolutionary organisation on the basis of one delegate to 500 men'.¹⁵¹ Mensheviks were 'preponderant' at the Komitet, yet the 'general direction' of policy 'proceeded in the main along Bolshevik lines'.¹⁵² Afterwards Krasin invited him to a

meeting.¹⁵³ Malinovsky, who was a deputy,¹⁵⁴ and Alexinsky and Shantser from Moscow,¹⁵⁵ 'resolutely opposed' the 'elective non-party workers' organisation' and insisted that if the Komitet failed to accept the RSDRP programme and leadership, their deputies would leave.¹⁵⁶ Bronstein was amazed at their 'utter helplessness', though Bolshevik workers did not fear political competition.¹⁵⁷ Woytinsky recalled that the city was 'in the hands of striking workers', and around 15,000 met at the University. A 'flying meeting' of 600-800 students believed that the assistant interior minister would not have 'enough cartridges for all of us'. Student leaders stayed at the University overnight, and Woytinsky slept on a table in the president's office.¹⁵⁸

The railway strike had reached Finland two days earlier,¹⁵⁹ and 88 infantrymen guarded Finland Station in St. Petersburg; but by the 15th a company of guards, three battalions and two squadrons of other troops and Cossacks stood guard. Many citizens had left for Finland, but Viipuri railway workers stopped trains on the 16th.¹⁶⁰ Radicals and revolutionaries beat gendarmes and police in Tampere, took over the town hall, raised a red flag and established a strike committee,¹⁶¹ and the Okhrana ordered gendarmes to take resolute action everywhere.¹⁶²

On the 17th 7,000 strikers met at Nevsky shipyard in St. Petersburg and the 10,000 at the Obukhov works included some from neighbouring metal plants. One strike committee called the Komitet the Sovet rabochikh deputatov, (the Soviet of Workers' Deputies), and the name stuck.¹⁶³ The police estimated that 50 deputies were SDs and 25 were SRs,¹⁶⁴ and when troops and police dispersed them, they went to a women's college.¹⁶⁵ They elected an executive committee,¹⁶⁶ including two workers from each of the seven districts, two from each of the four largest unions,¹⁶⁷ and three each from the Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and SRs,¹⁶⁸ though they had no vote.¹⁶⁹

Petr Zlydniev had grown up in Mykolaiv, but later moved to St. Petersburg. He had been a Shidlovsky deputy,¹⁷⁰ and was a sovet deputy from the Obukhov works and probably a Menshevik.¹⁷¹ Bronstein was seen as a leading Menshevik,¹⁷² and though he spoke on behalf of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks,¹⁷³ most deputies wanted the sovet to be unaligned.¹⁷⁴ They advised workers not to pay rent or cash for goods until after the general strike ended,¹⁷⁵ threatened shop owners with the destruction of their property if they stayed open and encouraged workers to form armed squads for self-defence and ultimately for an uprising. An RSDRP CC intelligent and one deputy told others from both factions that apart from the few dozen revolvers they had already distributed, no more were available, since a shipment had been seized at the border, and the authorities had taken rifles from gun shops and disarmed unreliable troops.¹⁷⁶ The CC believed that the strike was lost. 'Mass arrests will probably begin tomorrow. Persons who spoke openly in meetings will be taken first.' The CC 'decided to regroup all party workers, shifting everyone who has worked in St. Petersburg to the provinces. You are asked to alter your identity papers and, if possible, your appearance, and not to appear at any more meetings.' According to Woytinsky 'all hell broke loose' at this 'cowardly and cynical' policy, and sovet deputies unanimously supported his proposal to carry on the strikes.¹⁷⁷ Postal and telegraph offices, banks, courts and schools were closed,¹⁷⁸ and political strikes had generalised across the empire.

(iii) W'Why do we listen to the Bolsheviks?

In September 1905 Kyiv University had ignored the quota on Jews,¹⁷⁹ though students voted 873 to 581 against admitting outsiders to meetings.¹⁸⁰ On 1 October the funeral of a popular attorney turned into a demonstration, and a Jewish woman was killed. Up to 5,000 met at the University, and on the 4th a speaker at the Polytechnical Institute gave a political speech in Yiddish, while others called for independence for Ukraine and Poland.¹⁸¹ In Kharkiv about 300 workers at the locomotive workshop, the largest plant in the city, effectively hired and fired workers, and the police dared not enter this 'autonomous republic' which was led by the Bolshevik A.N. Artemev. Railway workers led the city's labour movement and organised successful strikes. Shop assistants, pharmacists, jewellers and bakers formed unions, and crowds assembled at higher education institutions.¹⁸² Elected worker-deputies and 'factory commissions' were common,¹⁸³ and seminarians went on strike on the 5th.¹⁸⁴ Kyiv seminarians came out on the 7th,¹⁸⁵ and 3,000 barricaded themselves in the University next day, though ten people who tried to break into the armoury were killed.¹⁸⁶ On the 9th locomotive builders roamed the city, 'convincing' shopkeepers to close. Black Hundreds beat Jews and killed a University student, but hundreds of locomotive builders set up barricades and supported students,¹⁸⁷ who decided to boycott the State Duma elections.¹⁸⁸ The Bolshevik worker Schlichter had returned and was elected as the local railway union leader,¹⁸⁹ though a new army commander ended the cooperative arrangement.¹⁹⁰ About 4,000 met at the University,¹⁹¹ and Schlichter called for a general strike, though a majority of railway workers were opposed.¹⁹² Agitators from Moscow arrived on the 10th, and railway workers went on strike next day. They closed several lines and demanded a democratically-elected constituent assembly. Around 3,000 people barricaded themselves into the University, but those who tried to break into the armoury were shot.¹⁹³ Next day the governor ignored orders to close all the higher education institutions. On the 13th the South Russian machine builders came out, and a crowd estimated at 10,000, including a dozen army

officers, met at the University. Schlichter was in the chair and reportedly claimed there was a constituent assembly in St. Petersburg and troops supported revolutionaries. More factory workers came out and newspapers stopped appearing next day. A general strike was declared, and revolutionaries closed schools, shops and factories. That evening martial law was imposed and public meetings were banned. Next day arsenal workers went on strike, and the Bund, SDKPiL, Spilka, Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and SRs formed a joint committee. Large crowds clashed with police and troops, though there were many arrests, and shops reopened and trams start running again.¹⁹⁴

In the Donbass 4,000 coalminers had walked out of two mines near Luzovka early in October, and formed a strike committee, as had Luzovka ironworkers.¹⁹⁵ On the 6th a foreman was chased out of Katerynoslav railway workshop,¹⁹⁶ and a soldier was executed for trying to kill an officer.¹⁹⁷ On the evening of the 8th the lights went out in the town's theatre, leaflets were scattered and gunshots wounded a policeman.¹⁹⁸ On the 10th railway workers heard about events in Moscow and St. Petersburg and went to the main railway station. Cossacks dispersed them, but they commandeered a train, went to the industrial suburb of Nizhnedneprovsk and pulled out 3,000 workers. Next day 1,500 strikers refused to disperse at Katerynoslav station.¹⁹⁹ Cossacks fired at them, though 700 built six barricades covered with earth, put wire obstacles on both sides and dug ditches around them. Cossacks captured one barricade, though bombs thrown from rooftops killed and wounded several before they captured the others.²⁰⁰ Workers set up undefended barricades in the factory district and harassed military patrols with guns and bombs. An officer, a soldier and 28 civilians were killed, and an unknown number wounded,²⁰¹ though 21 were taken to hospital.²⁰² After Cossacks and infantry fired at school pupils,²⁰³ other pupils went on strike. Shops closed and trams stopped. A train travelled along the main line, pulling out workers.²⁰⁴ Higher technical students, including many from the Mining School, came out. Representatives of 45 Katerynoslav organisations, including Bundists, SDs, SRs,²⁰⁵ socialist Zionists and 'progressive' Kadets had formed a 'central election coalition committee' by the 12th.²⁰⁶ Anatoly Kulichenko, a peasants' union activist, noted that 'the revolution can be felt'. Next day the governor allowed a gigantic funeral procession to go ahead. Alexandrov steel mill, rail-rolling mill and mechanical works employed almost 4,500,²⁰⁷ and strikers clashed with police and Cossacks and took over telegraph offices, while workers, peasants, intelligentsy, youths and old people manned barricades.²⁰⁸

In many other cities post offices and most factories, docks, warehouses, shops, offices, zemstva and banks were strike-bound, and some crowds attacked gun shops and took arms, felled telegraph poles and overturned trams as barricades with cobblestones piled up behind.²⁰⁹

The railway strike had reached Poland by the 11th.²¹⁰ Over 800 mainly textile and factory workers in Łódź were members of the SDKPiL,²¹¹ and more workers came out on the 14th.²¹² In Warszawa troops shot 44 besieging a prison, and though the Polytechnical Institute and Veterinary Institute closed, there was a general strike there and in Łódź. Strikes broke out in railway depots and workshops; and a crowd stormed Kalisz jail to free prisoners.²¹³

In the Volga region there had been no newspapers in Saratov since 1 October.²¹⁴ The mainly intelligentsy RSDRP committee and liberals supported a worker-peasant alliance, and cooperated with SRs in forming unions,²¹⁵ organising strikes and disseminating illegal literature. Railway, metal and flourmill workers went on strike, but newspapers reappeared on the 6th.²¹⁶ When news of the national railway strike arrived, railway clerks invited SR and SD speakers to a mass meeting which proclaimed a general strike, vowed not to return until after the State Duma was elected, and formed a strike committee that included SDs, SRs and liberals. On the 10th railway strikers visited the main factories, pharmacies, offices and zemstvo buildings, calling for a strike, and more enterprises came out. SRs and SDs addressed mass meetings, collected money to buy arms and formed a joint fighting squad. The Okhrana reported that the revolutionary organisations had taken 'the leadership of the strike into their own hands'.²¹⁷ Railway workers came out on the 12th,²¹⁸ and a general strike ensued. Workers' demands included a constituent assembly, political freedoms, and economic improvements. Cossacks and police left several dead and wounded,²¹⁹ and though around 3,000, mostly strikers, beat up 10 Cossacks, when reinforcements arrived they detained 185 strikers and held 33 without charge. The Menshevik Ivan Liakhovetsky chaired a huge meeting which voted to destroy the police and autocracy and construct a democratic republic. That evening 10,000 people occupied the Duma, and elected a strike committee that included one Menshevik, two Bolsheviks, SRs and liberals. By the 14th the authorities had sent police and troops to likely places for mass meetings and arrested strike leaders. Shops reopened, some factories returned and liberals abandoned the strike.²²⁰

In the Baltic region the Vilnius railway workers' strike had escalated into a general strike, organised by the Lithuanian SDP and Bund. On the 16th a mass meeting asked the governor to take the Cossacks off the streets, but troops shot three Jews and wounded 30. The funeral turned into a mass demonstration and speakers denounced the tsarist regime in Lithuanian, Yiddish, Polish and Russian.²²¹ In Latvia the Riga governor threatened strikers with three months in prison and propagandists with deportation on the 12th, yet no trains ran to Moscow.²²² Almost all the factories in Riga, Dorpat, Łódź and Minsk, and Chişinău mechanical works, were out. Kaunas match factory workers had won a ten per cent rise but stayed out.²²³ On the 13th a bomb exploded under the Riga governor's

window and another at police headquarters, killing three staff and two soldiers.²²⁴ After the RSDRP committee told the Russian CC that they planned to take Ust-Dvinsk Fortress, the CC sent Skrypnik, who told them they were being impatient.²²⁵ In Estonia a mass meeting in Tallinn had called for peaceful reform, though on the 16th troops fired into a peaceful crowd, wounded 200,²²⁶ and reportedly killed 90. The official explanation was that the commander was drunk, and liberals diffused the situation by calling for an enquiry. On the 15th the joint Rīga committee ordered a general political strike,²²⁷ and the governor recognised the committee's authority. Around 60,000 came out and newspapers appeared without censorship, including *Dienas Lapa (The Daily Paper)*, edited by the LSDSP's Janis Jansons.²²⁸ In Estonia troops fired on a peaceful demonstration in Tallinn on the 16th, killing around 60 and wounding 200,²²⁹ and a general political strike began in Orenburg,²³⁰ Kaunas and other Lithuanian towns.²³¹ On the 17th a political general strike was declared in Iuriev and Vitebsk, and there were strikes in Liepāja, and Kovno and Dvinsk, and in Białystok, Warszawa and Płock in Poland.²³²

Early in October Odesa RSDRP committee had been weakened by arrests, though it had a large press and met at least once a week in the houses of sympathetic intelligenty. It heard workplace reports, sent speakers to factories and other meetings, and co-opted the Bolshevik Tarshis as City district organiser.²³³ Trade was booming and martial law had been lifted. Railway workers elected a strike committee of almost 50, who elected the Bolshevik lathe-operator Avdeev as chair. They drew up economic, civil and political demands, including a constituent assembly, and a mass meeting approved them. Secondary schools with many Jewish pupils went on strike. The University reinstated students expelled for striking the previous year, ignored the maximum quotas for Jews and all non-Russians, closed two right-wing student associations, rehired three liberal professors, ended inspections, allowed students to meet and organise and called for political and civil liberties. Around 1,500 men and women, mainly students, heard political speeches and debated at the University. Students and some professors called for the overthrow of the autocracy and a constituent assembly, passed round a hat for arming 'warriors' and collected 6,000 rubles. On the 10th up to 90 percent of 10,000 at the University were workers. They heard lectures on liberalism and socialism, planned demonstrations and organised armed groups.²³⁴ Students flew a red flag and defenestrated three policemen. Barricades went up and shots were fired at troops, who returned to their barracks, while police were disarmed. The Okhrana told the interior minister that workers would sack the city and he ordered that the leaders be court martialled and the revolt put down by force.²³⁵ Between 600 and 900 Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and SRs in the joint 'battle group' defended workers, students and Jews. Small armed groups went from house to house arresting thieves and plunderers, then took them to a factory, photographed them, and told them that they would be shot if they were seen with Black Hundreds again. They also extorted money from wealthy citizens,²³⁶ raided gun shops, and attacked police and soldiers,²³⁷ and the governor caved in.²³⁸ Factory workers agitated at the railway depot and workshops, and white collar workers led machinists out on strike. Trains stopped arriving from Moscow,²³⁹ and branch lines closed. More workers, students and intelligenty joined the strike and the leaders met at the University,²⁴⁰ where they endorsed demands for a constituent assembly and political freedoms,²⁴¹ and declared a general political strike.²⁴² The joint Bolshevik and Menshevik committee controlled the electricity plants, and some invaded the дума, demanding money for the strikers.²⁴³ Mensheviks led the united front,²⁴⁴ and called for a soviet,²⁴⁵ though four of the 15 deputies and the militia leader were spies.²⁴⁶ By the 12th there had been 156 casualties in two days.²⁴⁷ The strike leaders limited the strike to three more days, except for railway workers, yet strikers broke up a counter-demonstration with gunfire and the city was put under martial law. Troops surrounded the University, and a general told workers and students that they could leave unmolested, if they gave up their arms,²⁴⁸ but the RSDRP committee and delegates from other socialist organisations met at the University to consider 'more active methods of struggle' on the 13th.²⁴⁹ Next day pupils from two secondary schools encouraged 2,000 others at 35 schools to walk out. Police seriously injured some girls, and up to 18,000 students, workers and others at the Medical School denounced the atrocity.²⁵⁰ Striking railway workers and students called for a general strike on the 15th, and collected money for arms, while SRs and Bundists visited factories and workshops.²⁵¹ Banks, shops, hotels and restaurants closed and food prices rocketed. Municipal workers won a rise, but joined the strike and kept hospitals, the waterworks and slaughterhouse open. Strikers demanded participation in municipal affairs, an armed civilian militia and civil and political liberties. Virtually all rail traffic had stopped. One group of workers elected a Jewish student as their chair, and almost 7,000 students, pupils, professors and revolutionaries met at the Medical School to plan a general strike, while women collected money for arms. At meetings of up to 10,000 called for an uprising, but the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks refused to cooperate with Bundists, SRs and anarchists, and insisted that only they could give a lead. They toured factories and workshops, announcing a strike, while medical personnel prepared bandages and drugs at the University. The police said 'Jews want freedom – well, we'll kill two or three thousand. Then they'll know what freedom is'.²⁵² Students, youths and workers had built barricades and fought police and troops, while snipers picked off military patrols, but by the evening of the 16th troops had bludgeoned demonstrators, and 197 of the 214 they arrested were Jews.²⁵³ The 40-

year-old former St. Petersburg activist, Natalia Grigoreva, who had been deported to Eastern Siberia for five years in 1895,²⁵⁴ was one of the fighters.²⁵⁵ On the morning of the 17th, after police and soldiers surrounded the Medical School, a crowd marched to the city centre. Some raided a gun shop and others called on shop workers and others to strike. By noon trams had stopped and adults and youths overturned some and used telephone poles and other materials to build barricades. By mid-afternoon most main streets were blockaded. Shooting continued, though by early evening the violence had diminished,²⁵⁶ and four barricades of trams, shop signs, trees and street benches were dismantled.²⁵⁷ The police reported that 4,000 workers from 78 enterprises were on strike and most shops and schools were closed. Collections for weapons continued and students and socialists organised armed militias. Reportedly seven soldiers and policemen had been wounded, while nine civilians had been killed and about 80 wounded civilians were at the University and the Jewish Hospital. City councillors allocated 5,000 rubles for the injured and the families of those killed, then heard police were beating prisoners unconscious.²⁵⁸

In the Caucasus the Gurian RSDRP committee had forbidden members to carry arms without its permission,²⁵⁹ but early in October 30 fighters had clashed with Cossack infantry,²⁶⁰ and the Tbilisi joint fighting squad attacked Cossacks nine times. On the 14th, at the sound the Trans-Caucasian Railway depot whistle, all but 600 mainly Russian workers marched out singing the *Marseillaise*. The city was shut down in hours, and SDs formed a strike committee led by the Mensheviks Zhordania, Japaridze and Noe and Isidor Ramishvili. The Bolshevik intelligentka Aladzhlova addressed railway workers, who listened calmly at first. 'However, when I got into the explanation of differences on the first paragraph of the party rules, they began to interrupt and heckle'. One worker 'jumped up from his seat and waving a club announces, W'Why do we listen to the Bolsheviks? They are against workers being in the party. The Bolsheviks want to command us like Nicholas'.²⁶¹ Courts, banks, and credit societies in Kutaisi, Batumi and Sukhumi closed. The viceroy begged for troops, but the war ministry had none to spare.²⁶² Most railway lines were closed,²⁶³ and two locomotives still blocked the Surami tunnel, cutting Georgia in two.²⁶⁴ Batumi workers went on strike and Tbilisi SDs demanded the end of martial law and the removal of troops.²⁶⁵ On the 17th the viceroy released over 1,000 Armenian prisoners and abolished restrictions on Muslims and Jews.²⁶⁶

A general political strike had begun in Orsha in the Vibetsk region, Kremenchuk in central Ukraine, Simferópol in Crimea and Rostov-na-Donu on the Black Sea coast, and there was a political general strike in Kazan on Volga.

In Siberia the strike had reached Perm and Tashkent by the 13th. Telegraph communications in Chelyabinsk and Irkutsk were interrupted, Irkutsk and Chita stations closed,²⁶⁷ and the Trans-Siberian line was halted east of Lake Baikal,²⁶⁸ as over one million troops demanded demobilisation in the Far East.²⁶⁹ On the 15th Chita telegraph operators and others tried to seize the armoury, but troops dispersed them, and two companies of troops were ordered to restore rail and telegraph communications to Irkutsk.²⁷⁰ The strike had had reached Chelyabinsk, Kurgan and Tomsk by the 17th, and after the Zlatoust line closed,²⁷¹ the entire rail network was strike-bound.²⁷²

Across Russia factory inspectors reported that only 'non class-conscious' workers consulted them.²⁷³ At least 1.5 million inspected workers and 200,000 others had gone on strike,²⁷⁴ and possibly two million altogether,²⁷⁵ including all of almost 750,000 railway workers.²⁷⁶ In many towns and cities, industrial activity and commercial life had stopped, universities and schools were closed, juries refused to sit, lawyers would not plead, magistrates had closed courts and some doctors refused to see patients. Soldiers attended public meetings, and some officers declared that a third of the army was 'with the people'.²⁷⁷

The Bund intelligent Kremer had reached Russia before the railway strikes began, yet other émigré SDs were unable to get there after they started,²⁷⁸ and the RSDRP intelligentsy in Geneva remained well behind events.

(iv) Learn from actual practice, if it is only by beating up policemen

By autumn 1905 Gorky had transferred his publishing house to Berlin,²⁷⁹ and on 2/15 October, in Geneva, Ulyanov accepted the Russian CC's contract with it.²⁸⁰ Next day he wrote to the St. Petersburg 'Combat Committee'.

It horrifies me ... to find that there has been talk about bombs for *over six months*, yet not one has been made! And it is the most learned of people who are doing the talking ... Go to the youth, gentlemen! That is the only remedy! Otherwise – I give you my word for it – you will be too late (everything tells me that), and I will be left with 'learned' memoranda, plans, charts, schemes, and magnificent recipes, but without an organisation, without a living cause. Go to the youth. Form fighting squads *at once* everywhere, among the students, and *especially among the workers*, etc., etc. Let groups be at once organised of three, ten, thirty, etc., persons. Let them arm themselves at once as best they can, be it with a revolver, a knife, a rag soaked in kerosene for starting fires, etc. Let these detachments at once select leaders, and as far as possible contact the Combat Committee of the St. Petersburg Committee. Do not demand any formalities, and, for heaven's sake, forget all these schemes, and send all 'functions, rights and privileges' to the devil. Do not make membership of the R.S.D.L.P. an absolute condition – that would be an absurd demand for an armed uprising. Do not refuse to contact any

group, even if it consists of only three persons; make it the one sole condition that it should be reliable as far as police spying is concerned and prepared to fight the tsar's troops.

You must proceed to propaganda on a wide scale. Let five or ten people make the round of *hundreds* of workers' and students' study kruzhki in a week, penetrate wherever they can, and everywhere propose a clear, brief, direct, and simple plan ...

The propagandists must supply each group with brief and simple recipes for making bombs, give them an elementary explanation of the type of the work, and then leave it all to them. Squads must *at once* begin military training by launching operations. ... Some may at once undertake to kill a spy or blow up a police station, others to raid a bank to confiscate funds for the insurrection, others again may drill or prepare plans of localities, etc. But the essential thing is to begin at once to learn from actual practice ... if it is only by beating up policemen; a score or so victims will be more than compensated for by the fact that this will train hundreds of experienced fighters, who tomorrow will be leading hundreds of thousands.

'We will help you in every way we can, but *do not wait for our help*; act for yourselves'. 'If in a month or two; they did not have 'a minimum of 200 or 300 groups in St. Petersburg, then it is a dead Combat Committee.'²⁸¹

Next day Ulyanov told Mikhail Reisner in Berlin that the Ivanovo strike had 'revealed an unexpectedly high degree of political maturity in the workers', and he understood that the Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, Bund and 'probably' the Latvian SDSP would boycott State Duma elections.

Don't you think it better for us, if we are to conclude an agreement with the radicals, to demand a million or so from them for the purpose of arming the Petersburg workers, than to have an election to a Constituent Assembly right now? What point will there be in an election before or without a fight ...? ... I pin my hopes, first, on the meeting you will be having in Berlin over the next few days with one of my friends, and, second, on our meeting here with you about which Felix wrote to us.²⁸²

Proletary acknowledged that its information about Russia came from 'brief and often contradictory reports in foreign newspapers' and censored 'accounts of the beginning of the movement' in the legal Russian press, though it suggested a slogan for the 'class-conscious rural proletariat'. 'Together with the peasant proprietors against the landlords' state', and 'together with the urban proletariat, against the entire bourgeoisie and all the peasant proprietors', without 'petty-bourgeois illusions'.²⁸³ Three days later Ulyanov reminded Krupskaya, Bonch-Bruевич and Lidia Mandelshtam in Geneva that their role on the Economic Commission was

to handle the business jobs of the Central Committee abroad, and to help the Central Committee in all its work abroad. This applies to the technical end (printing, forwarding, and so forth), finances, transport, sending people to Russia, measures relating to arms, and so on, co-ordinating the work of all C.C. agents, controlling the work of each individual agent, and so on, right up to special assignments from the Central Committee.

They should study Russian CC reports and be 'discussing its work, examining the organisation of its activities and searching for ways of improving it', though they should not accept its 'directives'.²⁸⁴ Around this time Krupskaya told Katerynoslav Bolsheviks they could get literature in Iuzovka from 'a comrade who can be very useful' and who wanted 'to set up a discussion with local workers. Only hurry, for he may have to leave the place'.²⁸⁵

The Bolshevik Essen had been arrested late the previous year,²⁸⁶ and had been sentenced to five years' in the north of Archangelsk province in May 1905, but escaped en route and had reached St. Petersburg by September.²⁸⁷ On 13/26 October Ulyanov told her that they would produce *Proletary* in Geneva until it could be printed in Russia, but 'we must now pay a great deal of attention to a legal newspaper as well'. 'In preparing for the uprising I would advise at once carrying out extensive propaganda everywhere for the organisation of a *large number*, hundreds and thousands, of *autonomous* combat squads, very small ones', which should 'arm themselves as best they can and prepare themselves in every way.' As for the date of the uprising, 'I would postpone it until the spring, and until the Manchurian army comes home'. 'But then, nobody asks us anyway'.²⁸⁸

The Menshevik intelligentsy in Geneva argued that the RSDRP should 'develop the consciousness of the working class and *then* arm it', though Plekhanov disagreed. 'It is not the function of Social Democracy to appoint a rising according to some predetermined plan but to lead the rising once it has started'.²⁸⁹ On 14/27 October Ulyanov asked for the Russian CC's permission to invite Plekhanov onto the 'broad Editorial committee (the 7-man one)' of a new Bolshevik periodical. He told Plekhanov that he and several other contributors agreed about 'approximately nine-tenths of the questions of theory and tactics', and 'to quarrel over one-tenth is not worth while', given 'the events of the last few days'. Print runs could be up to 100,000.²⁹⁰ Plekhanov agreed that the peasantry represented an 'extraordinarily powerful reserve of the Russian revolution', but refused to write for legal Bolshevik or Menshevik papers,²⁹¹ in Berlin Ladyzhnikov reissued his 20-year-old *Nashi raznoglasiya (Our Differences)*, which had sought to distance SDs from SR terrorism.²⁹² In Russia the tsarist regime was approaching breaking-point.

11. Red October

(i) Everything has been given, and nothing has been given

At 6.00pm on 17 October 1905, in St. Petersburg, the tsar signed a *ukase* (decree) calling on 'all faithful sons of Russia' to 'assist in putting an end to these unprecedented disturbances',¹ and promised to

- 1) grant the people the unshakable foundations of civic freedom on the basis of genuine personal inviolability, freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and association;
- 2) admit immediately to participation in the State Duma, without suspending the scheduled elections and in as far as it is feasible in the brief period remaining before the convening of the State Duma, those classes of the population that are now completely deprived of electoral rights, leaving the further development of the principle of universal suffrage to the new legislative order; and
- 3) establish as an inviolable rule that no law may go into force without the consent of the State Duma and that the representatives of the people must be guaranteed the opportunity of effective participation in the supervision of the legality of the actions performed by Our appointed officials.²

He wrote in his diary: 'Lord, help us, save and pacify Russia!'³

Typographers refused to set the ukase, but soldiers put it in the government paper,⁴ and distributed a few copies that evening.⁵ Lev Bronstein joined a huge, excited crowd going to the Technological Institute. Young workers tore red stripes from imperial flags and waved them, but mounted gendarmes rode into them and police barred the entrance.⁶ Many students went to the University, where 200 textile workers stoned two policemen and a Cossack patrol until more Cossacks arrived. That night armed workers guarded the press when *Izvestia soveta rabochikh deputatov*, (the *Bulletin of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies*), was printed.⁷ Bronstein wrote:

We have been given freedom of assembly, but our assemblies are encircled with troops. We have been given freedom of speech, but censorship remains inviolate. We have been given freedom of study, but the universities are occupied by troops. We have been given personal immunity, but the prisons are filled to overflowing with prisoners. We have been given a constitution, but autocracy remains. Everything has been given, and nothing has been given.⁸

Between 1,000 and 1,500 copies of *Izvestia* proclaimed that 'the All-Russia strike has begun'. 'We must not let strikes break out here and die down there in individual factories and plants'. Paper sellers must stop selling pro-government newspapers and shop workers should refuse to sell food to police and Cossacks, 'even for money'.⁹

Next morning copies of the ukase appeared in greater numbers.¹⁰ People gathered at street corners and newsboys ran about shouting 'Ukase of the Tsar!'¹¹ The Bolshevik committee knew it 'changed nothing essential', since 'power remained in the hands of the old autocratic government', and 'these freedoms could be taken back tomorrow'; so they decided to 'seize power and turn it over to a provisional government, comprised of representatives of the workers and peasants', and discussed how to convert the railway strike into an uprising.¹²

Some 'illegal' SD women workers met at Karelina's flat, improvised a red flag and set off for Kazan Cathedral. Women from Laferme cigarette factory, Steiglitz thread factory and Kirchner bindery pulled out older workmates, as did typesetters at the Wolff print shop. Cavalry attacked them as they neared the Technological Institute,¹³ and the student Ivan Shaurov, who had joined the RSDRP the previous year, shot a man in a Black Hundred demonstration carrying the imperial flag. More shooting followed, but Shaurov ripped off the red segment of the flag and waved it, and the Black Hundreds fled. Thousands gathered and sang revolutionary songs, and a speaker argued for an uprising. No police arrived,¹⁴ but around noon troops fired on a meeting,¹⁵ and Cossacks dispersed it.¹⁶ Bronstein addressed thousands at the University as 'Citizens'. 'Our strength is in ourselves. With sword in hand we must stand guard over our freedom'. The ukase was 'only a scrap of paper. Here it is before you – here it is crumpled in my fist. Today they have issued it, tomorrow they will take it away and tear it to pieces, just as I am now tearing up this paper freedom before your eyes!' The crowd voted for an amnesty for political prisoners, a people's militia, the removal of troops from the city, the sacking of the assistant interior minister and the abolition of the death penalty, then Bronstein and two other soviet EC members led the crowd to 'quiet streets far from the prisons' and warned them 'not to fall into the trap of provocateurs'.

That evening Cossacks ordered a crowd of 2,000 workers and students in Vyborg district to disperse, and when they threw stones three were shot.¹⁷ Troops also fired at Putilov strikers.¹⁸ Bronstein told a student going to an RSDRP agitators' meeting to argue for troops to be withdrawn at least 24km from the city.¹⁹ The soviet EC met at a

women's college and demanded that the government free political prisoners. Afterwards around 250 deputies, from 111 plants,²⁰ resolved that the 'revolutionary proletariat cannot lay down its arms until the political rights of the Russian people are put on a solid footing'. They wanted an amnesty for political prisoners, the removal of troops and police from the city, the lifting of martial law and a constituent assembly elected by an equal, direct and secret ballot immediately.²¹ A delegation went to the duma to demand support for a militia of 'armed leaders elected by the people'.²² A satirical paper, *Pulemet (The Machine Gun)*, published the ukase with a bloody hand stamped on it, and though the editor was arrested, the price of a copy doubled.²³ Bolshevik intelligentsy discussed forming small groups of armed men.²⁴ Sverchkov recalled that 'Every district in Petersburg was to organise a fighting detachment with a commanding staff on permanent, uninterrupted duty in a specified place. One squad had revolvers, and metalworkers were to produce steel side-arms for all the others. The managers of a radical paper insisted on being arrested before *Izvestia* was printed, so the armed printers went to another press. The electricity was off, but a printer went to the power station and it was on in half an hour, and *Izvestia* was distributed at every street corner.'²⁵

The people do not need the tsar's decrees, but weapons. When the people of Petersburg take arms in their hands, they will write their great decree on the blood-reddened walls of the Winter Palace with the point of a bayonet. That will be the decree of the death of the tsarist government and the decree of a free republican life for the people ...

For the struggle, arms are necessary. For the arming of the people, money is necessary.

Bronstein recalled that the revolutionary movement had previously been 'financed principally by the liberal bourgeoisie' and 'radical intellectuals', but the ukase 'struck a powerful blow' at the RSDRP's finances.²⁶

The council of ministers had been established in 1865, though it had last been summoned in 1882. On 19 October 1905 the tsar revived it,²⁷ and its president effectively became prime minister.²⁸ He was 'without money and without an army', but had to obtain money and bring troops back from the Far East.²⁹ Ministers ordered censors to enforce the old rules,³⁰ though printers refused to work on pogromist publications,³¹ and newspaper notices asked readers to telephone a certain number if a pogrom started.³² Striking barbers picketed out others, and Putilov vessel shop workers carried their foreman out on a stretcher and dumped him on the road.³³

The city's 3,000 or so SDRPs outnumbered SRs.³⁴ Some sovet deputies were replaced,³⁵ and 132 from 74 workplaces attended.³⁶ Railway union leaders wanted to end the strike,³⁷ and the EC recommended a return in two days, while continuing to arm for the final struggle for a constituent assembly. An 'immense majority' of deputies agreed,³⁸ though they would allow only those papers whose editors ignored the censors to appear, and any editors who disobeyed would lose their presses, the typographers would be blacklisted,³⁹ and strikers would be supported.⁴⁰ Some metalworker deputies had whips with wire weights, daggers, knives and short sabres,⁴¹ and there was unanimous support for a concerted attack on the staggering autocracy by a popular uprising.⁴²

Special collections were taken everywhere for money to buy firearms. The Putilov collected 5000 rubles for this purpose, the Semiannikov 2000 the Franco-Russian 1500. All the plants resolved to put aside a certain percentage of their pay for weapons. In some newspapers, the typesetters were armed by the employers themselves at their own cost. The gun shops, taking no account of police prohibitions, began to sell weapons without permission. ...

The workers began to guard the industrial districts at night; they organised patrols and a militia. As a result robberies in the streets and assaults in the working-class quarters completely ceased. In response to this, by order of the Petersburg city governor, a real hunt for the workers' militia units was organised by the police and the army.

Sverchkov's colleagues had agreed to do his work so that he, Bronstein and Zlydniev could meet at the printers' union headquarters to discuss tactics at the sovet EC. A sovet delegation threatened ministers with 'undesirable consequences' unless they released three deputies, and the ministers caved in.⁴³ The Métropole Restaurant band ended the evening by playing the *Marseillaise* and the national anthem, and according to the London journalist Baring, St. Petersburg 'seemed like a besieged city'.⁴⁴

On the 20th the Director of the Okhrana ordered gendarmes to respect personal inviolability.⁴⁵ Sovet deputies organise hundreds of factory meetings, though they were short of speakers, so those they had spoken at meetings in the morning, early afternoon and after 5.00pm. Mensheviks controlled the sovet EC, so the Bolsheviks instructed factory cells 'to campaign for the election of "reliable"' deputies.⁴⁶

Next morning the tsar amnestied political prisoners detained under the 1881 law and those who had fled deportation or prison,⁴⁷ and freed 80,000 people,⁴⁸ but not state criminals.⁴⁹ Some SRs left Shlisselburg Fortress after 24 years.⁵⁰ Primary pupils refused to pray for the tsar and whistled when they were read,⁵¹ and a publisher issued a legal edition of Chernyshevsky's 1860s coded political novel *Chto delat? (What is to be done?)*⁵² The sovet announced a demonstration for the workers' funerals, though the assistant interior minister ordered that 'no

political demonstrations can be allowed in the interests of the demonstrators'. Bronstein won the argument for calling off the strike,⁵³ though Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and SRs each put 30 members at the disposal of the sovet.

George Denike, an 18-year-old Technological Institute student, had a room outside the city and a secret address in the centre. He had lost contact with the RSDRP committee, but spoke at the Institute, joined the Bolsheviks' 'board of agitators', and worked with 22-year-old Solomon Monoszon, who had become a Bolshevik in Vilnius two years earlier and had recently arrived in the city. Denike's RSDRP contact, Nogin, gave him responsibility for the Narva district, and the Putilov worker Poletaev gave him a badge to get into the plant; but when he quoted the verse of the *Internationale* about neither god nor the tsar being able to help them, angry workers charged at him, stopping just short. Poletaev assured him that if he had run away they would have killed him.⁵⁴

By the 24th many strikers had returned.⁵⁵ Most metalworkers had a nine-hour day,⁵⁶ and some large factories and railway workshops worked eight.⁵⁷ Around 7,000 were still out, and while Obukhov workers asked managers for eight-hour days, Nevsky shipyard workers informed managers that they intended to work eight.⁵⁸

The 22-year-old Menshevik Vladimir Ovseyenko had been posted to the Far East in spring, but went into hiding, then set off for Kraków and contacted SDs. Two weeks later he led a mutiny of two infantry regiments and an artillery brigade at Novo-Alexandria, and though it failed, he escaped to Vienna and met the RSDRP Party Council, which sent him to St. Petersburg. By the end of May he was active in the Menshevik military committee and agitational group, but late in June, while addressing soldiers and sailors at Kronstadt, he was betrayed and arrested. He was released under the amnesty in October, worked for St. Petersburg RSDRP committee, joined the united military committee led by the Bolshevik Nogin and edited *Kazarma (Barracks)*.⁵⁹

There were 4,000 troops and 9,000 sailors on Kronstadt and there were 'patriotic' and other demonstrations about conditions. Officers explained that the ukase did not apply to the military, but were not believed. On the 23rd up to 1,000 sailors, some soldiers and thousands of civilians heard revolutionaries denounce the ukase, demand a reduction in the length of military service, better pay, food and uniforms, freedom of speech, access to public events, parks and gardens, and the right to use off-duty time and drink alcohol, 'since sailors are not children'.⁶⁰ Some Finnish Bolsheviks escaped, though police captured six and found leaflets, and then 28 kilos of dynamite on a cruiser. Workers had robbed a military arsenal and a mutiny was planned for three days later.⁶¹ The admiral toured the barracks on the 24th, listening to complaints, and one sailor argued for the right to review military regulations. On the morning of the 26th 50 infantrymen presented demands to their commander, who had them arrested and taken to an outlying fort. Around 700 sailors and artillerymen tried to free them, but their escort shot one sailor and seriously wounded another. The rest rushed to the barracks for their rifles, and sailors from four barracks and the torpedo school joined them, until up to 4,000 were armed. Officers locked the gates of six of the remaining eight navy barracks, but battles continued all night, and reportedly 107 were wounded and 26 killed. Next morning 21 captains, some colonels and higher ranks fled. After eight loyal battalions arrived, the sailors returned to barracks,⁶² but demanded a democratic republic, universal suffrage, freedom of assembly and association, inviolability of the person and abolition of social estates.⁶³ Strikes had broken out in Moscow.

(ii) Take off your hat!

Petr Durnovo was born into a family of gentry in 1845 in Moscow province in 1845. He later studied at the Imperial Naval School in St. Petersburg,⁶⁴ spent nine years on foreign cruises, graduated from the military law academy and became an assistant prosecutor. In 1881 he transferred to the interior ministry and became the Director of the Police Department in 1884.⁶⁵ In 1893 he organised a fire in the Spanish ambassador's residence to retrieve letters to a former mistress,⁶⁶ and was sacked, but returned in 1900 and later became an assistant interior minister, and in 1905 he was the governor-general of Moscow.⁶⁷ On 18 October *Russkoe slovo* published the tsar's ukase.⁶⁸ Bolshevik and Menshevik intelligenty formed a joint council,⁶⁹ and 50,000 people accompanied a strike committee deputation to the governor-general.⁷⁰ They assembled in front of the palace, carrying red flags, singing the *Marseillaise* and demanding the release of political prisoners. Pavel Arsky, who had escaped from Sevastopol after being arrested for revolutionary agitation in the navy, recognised Durnovo on the balcony. The crowd cried: 'take off your hat!' 'Amnesty!' He took off his hat, bowed and slowly retreated.⁷¹ The strike committee had a list of political prisoners,⁷² and an incensed crowd of 10,000 marched to free them.⁷³

Zvulon Litvin had been born into a Moscow worker's family in 1879. He became a metalworker, took part in revolutionary activity in 1893,⁷⁴ and became an SD in 1897.⁷⁵ He participated in the Moscow workers' union and later worked for the RSDRP in Kolomna, Tambov, St. Petersburg, Nizhni Novgorod and Tbilisi, though he was imprisoned and deported several times.⁷⁶ On 18 October 1905 he rushed from his Moscow prison to a mass meeting at the Conservatory and was so excited he could hardly talk, as columns of demonstrators moved through the city.⁷⁷

Around 141 prisoners were released by afternoon, and a crowd of 30,000, led by red flags, marched to the city centre, but faced gunfire. Another crowd failed to rescue prisoners from a van, and stoned a court building, but two were wounded and two killed. The police had orders to support those expressing 'patriotic sentiments' against 'hooligans'.⁷⁸ The Bolshevik intelligent Bauman was freed,⁷⁹ and that evening he spotted some workers at a factory gate. He got into a droshky, carrying a red flag, and went over; but a peasant hit him on the head with an iron bar and fatally wounded him.⁸⁰ The railway union bureau had decided to end the strike,⁸¹ yet when Baring went to the Russian baths, and someone asked for soap, a 10-year-old barber's assistant said 'Give the citizen some soap'.⁸²

The Bolshevik intelligent Rozhkov had seen police shooting protesters and recalled a 'smell of pogroms in the air'. He had spoken at University rallies, and carried the RSDRP banner at Bauman's funeral on the 20th.⁸³ The mourners included many Sytin & Company workers.⁸⁴ Over 200,000 workers, students, intelligently and uniformed soldiers followed the coffin with its red banner for almost eight hours. Fifty guards had Browning revolvers, Mauser rifles, Finnish knives and bombs, and factories had collected tens of thousands of rubles for arms and ammunition and formed fighting squads. At a barracks someone shouted: 'Soldiers! Who are you with! Tell us!' They replied: 'With the People. For Freedom', and Black Hundreds shied away.⁸⁵ Baring was told that that an 'unknown' 'veterinary surgeon called Bauman' had been shot, and his funeral was 'one of the most impressive sights' he had ever seen, with the scarlet coffin, red banners and the 'low song of tired but indefatigable sadness', and he heard the term 'Black Gang' for the first time. He had heard an orator denounce the ukase, though the crowd ran away.⁸⁶ Ten thousand railway workers walked ten abreast, carrying wreaths and singing the *Marseillaise*. A Bolshevik leaflet urged workers to arm, overthrow the autocracy and establish a constituent assembly, and other SD slogans and banners called for democracy and socialism. At Theatre Square 30 army officers and soldiers joined the mourners,⁸⁷ and it was dusk when the procession reached the cemetery,⁸⁸ but as 3,000 students were returning past Okhrana headquarters, Cossacks and 1,000 drunken men with imperial flags fired at them.⁸⁹ Students fired back, but six died and 30 were injured, half of them seriously,⁹⁰ though a student fighting squad seized a University building.⁹¹ Bullets had spattered Gorky's apartment windows.⁹² That evening, after dinner at the Métropole restaurant, the band played the *Marseillaise*, and only one drunk refused to stand.⁹³

The governor of the armaments town of Tula, south of Moscow, sent a coded telegram to the interior minister. 'Situation in Tula growing more alarming daily. Passions among groupings of various leanings so hot that can be strife at any minute. Have no means to prevent. Believe cannot use troops: result would be general discontent. Demonstrations in the streets occur daily.' The day ended with bloodshed.⁹⁴

On the 21st *Russkoe slovo* called for an assembly elected by a universal, equal, direct and secret ballot to frame a constitution.⁹⁵ There was no light, no gas and no water in Moscow. The shops were shut, food was scarce and when people appealed to the few police who could be seen they 'shrugged their shoulders and said: "Liberty"'.⁹⁶ Thousands of print workers applauded socialist speeches at the Conservatory, demanded an amnesty for political and religious prisoners, the end of using troops to maintain order, and called on workers to join the RSDRP.⁹⁷ The printers' union called a meeting of its 3,500 members, though around 8,000 turned up.⁹⁸ They recognised the deputies who had been elected by non-members, and who had negotiating and representative functions, became members of the union's assembly, while the former Assembly leader Karelin was elected as a sovet deputy.⁹⁹ That evening 200 'patriots' beat workers who refused to doff their caps during the national anthem, and though 20 armed students rushed to their defence, four people were killed and up to 15 were wounded.¹⁰⁰ Baring saw two buses of wounded going to the hospital.¹⁰¹ The strike had almost ended by the 22nd,¹⁰² and next day the tsar appointed Durnovo as interior minister.¹⁰³ On the 28th, after the military governor threatened the occupiers at Moscow University, they left.¹⁰⁴ There were almost 1,500 Bolsheviks in the city and surrounding district,¹⁰⁵ and a joint council of fighting squads included VPSR and RSDRP committee members and other SDs. Four squads fought Black Hundreds.¹⁰⁶ On the 30th the print workers' union asked employers for an eight-hour day and a 'factory constitution', but they refused. Sytin gave his workers 1,000 rubles for a banquet to celebrate the ukase, but they gave it to their union, though when Sytin & Company gave employees 2,000 rubles to fend off Black Hundreds, Sytin's son Nikolai bought 50 revolvers for a fighting squad.¹⁰⁷ SRs stole weapons from state foresters, smuggled guns across the Finnish border, and propagandised troops.¹⁰⁸ The experienced SD worker Fyodor Afanasev attended a rally near Ivanovo in the central industrial region, though Cossacks and Black Hundreds killed him,¹⁰⁹ and the government fomented pogroms.

(iii) Death to the Kikes!

Early in October 1905 the interior ministry had paid 70,000 rubles for a secret press in St. Petersburg police headquarters. It produced thousands of leaflets and pamphlets accusing Jews of trying to ruin Russia, and called on

Russians to 'tear them to pieces and kill them'.¹¹⁰ The Okhrana was involved, and copies of anti-Jewish literature reached army officers, police and officials across Russia,¹¹¹ and especially those in the Pale.

Warszawa Polytechnical Institute closed on the 14th and the Veterinary Institute next day. On the 18th, outside Theatre Square prison, speakers from the SDKPiL, Bund and PPS demanded the release of political prisoners, but Cossacks killed 44. Next day the University closed, though 4,000 people heard socialist speeches in the Philharmonia Hall and resolved to continue the general strike until martial law was lifted, there and in Łódź. By the 23rd 1,151 political prisoners had been freed, including the SDKPiL leader Dzierzynski. In Puławy Agricultural Institute students agitated in the garrison, but four students and two professors were arrested. Częstochowa was in the hands of the people, and arms were smuggled from Austria. In the 'Dąbrowa Basin Republic' socialists disarmed police and extorted money from factory and mine owners.¹¹² SRs led soviets in Biełarus, though VPSR defectors calling themselves 'independent SRs' attacked police, officials and estate managers in Gomel,¹¹³ and around 3,000 Jewish and Christian workers, including up to 2,000 railway workers, poured into the town to hear a Bundist speak.¹¹⁴

The Bundist Kaplan's 'contact man' in Minsk was a schoolteacher. 'Revolutionary workers were marching through the streets without being molested by the police', rumours were flying about a general strike', and Black Hundreds dared not show their faces. Kaplan went to recruit young revolutionary Zionists in Slutzk, and printed and openly distributed leaflets and pamphlets to agitate for a general strike. Old people discussed the iniquities of the imperial family 'with fire in their eyes', and better-off people wanted the rights of free assembly, speech and the press, and a say in the government. Kaplan, two boys and a girl successfully propagandised soldiers, and on the 10th the Bund CC called for an open struggle, but some 'responded ahead of schedule' and the police raided Kaplan's press. On the 16th he escaped to Minsk, where someone distributing leaflets had been beaten to death, though he got a 'makeshift press' next day. On the 18th he went to pick up 'materials and ideas for our future bulletins' in Slutzk, and saw a street meeting. The ukase had arrived and there were shouts of 'We won! We won!'¹¹⁵ After the governor ordered the release of political prisoners, workers set off for the prison, singing the *Marseillaise*, and when they returned the streets were lined with people. Some waved red flags and shouted 'Long Live Freedom!' but others shouted 'Long Live the Black Hundreds!' When people asked a group of soldiers to lay down their arms, their captain marched them away. A gendarme arrested one man, but the crowd persuaded him to let him go, then marched to a larger square. Two companies of troops were ordered to shoot, and while some fired into the air,¹¹⁶ 33 of the 106 they killed were Bundists,¹¹⁷ The wounded 400,¹¹⁸ nearly all of them Jews, while over 1,500 were arrested,¹¹⁹ though the Bolshevik Rozenfeld escaped to St. Petersburg.¹²⁰ On the 19th 100 mounted police with rifles and loaded whips attacked mourners at the funerals, killing several and wounding others, including Kaplan.¹²¹

After the ukase arrived there were rallies in Latvian towns and villages, and LSDSP activists addressed crowds of up to 60,000 each day.¹²² The Rīga joint socialist committee included Latvians, Estonians, Lithuanians, Jews and Germans and used the 'sacred German theatre' for public meetings,¹²³ and there were strikes in every factory. The LSDSP committee refused to recognise the ukase until civil rights had been granted, political prisoners freed and troops taken off the streets. Men and women speakers addressed daily demonstrations and meetings in Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Yiddish, German and Russian.¹²⁴ The governor recognised the authority of the committee, which issued decrees and had an armed militia. The 31 trade unions had 32,000 members, and LSDSP members participated in a congress of 1,000 teachers who decided to use Latvian instead of Russian in schools. All over Latvia men and women elected 532 local committees which organised district militias,¹²⁵ and the strike involved between 60,000 and 100,000 workers. After 2,000 political prisoners were freed in Rīga, Liepāja, Mitau, Wenden and elsewhere on the 22nd, Rīga LSDSP committee ended the general strike, though some members formed 'centres' in rural communities and organised meetings, and thousands of peasants attended.¹²⁶ There were few pogroms,¹²⁷ though hooligans plundered the shops of poor Jews in Rīga on the 23rd. A bank manager boasted about donating 14,000 rubles for 'Jewish massacres', and another printed leaflets headed 'Kill the Jews!!', though the LSDSP militia 'quickly put an end to these bourgeois agitations'. In one skirmish they killed 30 Black Hundreds and arrested several 'notorious spies', and Liepāja workers shot a Black Hundred organiser. The Rīga pogrom ended next day,¹²⁸ and prisoners were freed in Tallinn. The general strike ended on the 25th, but workers took weapons from German landowners.¹²⁹ In two months there had been 69 acts of political terror in Rīga, and after the teenager SD Martyn Latsis was freed from prison, Rīga committee sanctioned the assassination of police, officials and Black Hundreds.¹³⁰

In Lithuania the Bolshevik Shimon Dimanshtein had 'an enormous desire to be organised', and 'it was enough for any group of intelligentsia to appear with a red flag for it to gather round itself for a time a considerable number of people who wanted – regardless how – to join the revolution'.¹³¹ The Bund's armed squads maintained order in Vilnius,¹³² and the 'hegemony of the proletariat' was achieved in several cities in the Pale. Revolutionaries closed shops early in Jewish districts, forced shopkeepers to employ extra staff and extracted 'taxes' from the rich.¹³³ The SDKPiL organised general strikes in Kaunas and elsewhere, and the political demonstrations in Vilnius had grown to 40,000, though the strike ended on the 24th,¹³⁴ and there was a backlash in Ukraine.

The ukase reached Odesa on the morning of the 18th and thousands celebrated in the streets. Some sang revolutionary songs, waved red flags and shouted 'Down with the Autocracy!', 'Long Live Freedom!' and 'Down with the Police!' A red flag replaced the portrait of the tsar in the дума building, and by mid-day two policemen were dead, ten injured and 22 disarmed, while others had deserted.¹³⁵ The assistant interior minister ordered the governor to allow a Black Hundred demonstration,¹³⁶ and labourers told a junior army officer that the police had ordered them to attack Jews, while policemen told another officer that they had permission for three days of violence, since Jews had destroyed the tsar's portrait. The governor had had three Jews buried, but after the crowd threatened to kill the hospital's senior doctor, they were disinterred. The Bund invited other revolutionaries to the Jewish Hospital, where 700 people heard that a fighting squad would accompany the mourners. They attacked police and troops, and by late afternoon there were pitched battles. Jewish students and workers shot 'patriotic' Russians and the governor withdrew the police.¹³⁷ There were 4,000 to 5,000 Jewish factory workers in the city, and that evening armed hooligans, led by police, beat Jews, smashed Jewish homes and robbed Jewish shops, until University students put them to flight.¹³⁸ After Jews demanded that some Russians doff their caps, and tore imperial flags, a pogrom began. Some Jews attacked policemen and troops and four Russians died, while dozens, including policemen, were injured, though 12 Jews were arrested. On the 19th hundreds of Russians gathered and drank vodka,¹³⁹ and labourers, factory and building workers, shopkeepers and assistants, workshop employees and vagrants met at the docks. As another group of 'patriots' left the cathedral, a boy carrying an icon was shot dead. More shots were fired, and home-made bombs were thrown. Russians shouted 'Death to the Kikes', and armed hooligans went to Peresyp district and started a pogrom, though troops were ordered not to interfere with the funerals of the three Jews, and 10,000 mourners assembled in front of the дума. The Bolshevik Tarshis told them that the ukase was 'a trap laid to ensnare all the revolutionary elements', so they should arm, and the Bolshevik Drabkin told them to form 'brigades'. When news of the rival demonstrations arrived they called off the funeral procession, and some headed for the Moldovanka district to help the Jews who were under attack; yet by mid-afternoon there was a full-scale pogrom. The militia included University students, workers from the railway workshops, Henn plant and shipyards, sailors, plus revolutionaries and members of the National Committee of Jewish Self-Defence. They captured suspected looters and pogromists, while Bundists and Krasny Krest set up first aid stations and pharmacists helped the wounded.¹⁴⁰ Police raided the RSDRP committee, and Tarshis knew 'they would finish us all on the spot' if they found the press, but they failed to do so.¹⁴¹ Jewish shops, houses and flats were 'completely smashed up', and their property destroyed, while 'what remained untouched by chance was looted'. Hooligans threw Jewish children from the upper floors of an apartment block, and one 'seized a child by the feet and smashed his head into a wall'. 'In many cases, police officers themselves directed the crowds' and 'supplied the hooligans with clubs', while other police, along with soldiers and Cossacks, attacked the fighting squads and locked them up.¹⁴² Rioters held one Jewish woman upside down and arranged the corpses of her six children below her.¹⁴³ Jews' eyeballs were torn from sockets, guns were fired into their mouths, women were raped, pregnant women had their stomachs cut open and soldiers shot children trying to escape. On Bolshevik advice the militia stopped fighting to help the victims. There were over 20,000 troops in the garrison, but the governor took no decisive action,¹⁴⁴ and the military commander told a Jewish delegation: 'I cannot do anything'. 'There you have your Jewish freedom'.¹⁴⁵ On the 21st troops were ordered to shoot pogromists and the fighting squads,¹⁴⁶ and the pogrom ended next day. One report claimed that 800 Jews were killed, 5,000 wounded and 100,000 made homeless,¹⁴⁷ and a Jewish newspaper reported that hospitals and clinics had treated 600 injured. The governor estimated the casualties at 2,500, while the police reported that 400 Jews and 100 non-Jews had died, around 300 had been wounded, while over 1,600 Jewish houses, apartments and stores had been damaged,¹⁴⁸ costing over 3.6 million rubles,¹⁴⁹ though others assessed the damage at 40 million. (All the 3,500 Jewish artisans and around half of around 1,800 Jewish traders later claimed up to 100 rubles in compensation, and some wanted over 500.)¹⁵⁰ In Slobodka Romanovka district, 350 Jews were buried in a common grave.¹⁵¹

Tatiana Ludvinskaya had joined the RSDRP in 1903, at the age of 16, and became an organiser. By summer 1905 she was a committee member and collected cash, food and arms for *Potemkin* mutineers. She was wounded in October and deported, and St. Petersburg committee summoned her;¹⁵² though pogroms continued elsewhere.

The Katerynoslav assembly of workers' deputies had met for the first time on 17 October, and the ukase arrived next day.¹⁵³ Political prisoners were freed,¹⁵⁴ though supporters were attacked, especially in poor districts. Revolutionaries organised the largest ever rallies against the government,¹⁵⁵ and strike committees distributed food and medical supplies.¹⁵⁶ Around 60 or 70 workers, mostly gentiles, formed fighting squads of 20 or so, and left their barricades to assault Black Hundreds. The number of gentile squad members grew to around 300, and they took hooligans to a factory, photographed them and warned them that they would be shot if they misbehaved again.¹⁵⁷ On the 20th grenadiers asked their chaplain to explain the ukase, and when he said that it did not apply to soldiers he was hit by a flying pillow.¹⁵⁸ Gendarmes distributed anti-Jewish leaflets, and officials who refused to do so were

sacked.¹⁵⁹ Many strikers went back, though not in Nizhnedneprovsk.¹⁶⁰ Kaneskoe workers fought peasants, miners and soldiers who attacked Jews, and though soldiers killed 19 and wounded many at two Kryvyi Rih ironstone mines, Donetsk Bolshevik and Menshevik committees worked together.¹⁶¹ By the 23rd pogromists and Black Hundreds had injured 22,000 people in Katerynoslav, 285 of them fatally, while the cost of damaged property was enormous.¹⁶²

Earlier that year Iuzovka ironworkers had dithered about what to do about an oppressive foreman, until Kadigrabov 'accidentally' ran into him with a 22 kilo rail; though he survived, and Kadigrabov got six years in prison. No more than 500 of the 15,000 or so workers in the district had had any contact with revolutionaries, or with the 10,000 Jewish artisans and traders. Early on 19 October news of the ukase arrived and 300 people paraded through the town. Anarchists, SDs and socialist Zionists unfurled banners, then one member of each organisation spoke, and the meeting decided to organise a rally. Next day shops and small factories closed, and 1,000 people, including Kadets and many Jews, marched through the streets. 'Patriots' at the ironworks successfully urged other workers and miners to go to a church service, and when Panarnin, a rolling mill worker, waved a red flag and led between 300 and 500 out of the gates, they were attacked with iron bars and shouts of 'Beat the Jews!' A member of a fighting squad fired a revolver, and the pogromists threw some demonstrators into the hot slag and blast furnace. The fight spilled into the streets, peasants joined the pogromists and Cossacks protected the factory and non-Jewish shops. On the 22nd the ironworks manager blamed 'an uprising of the Jewish people' and requested more police. Soldiers began to stop the pogrom, but some Jews had been burned alive in a synagogue. Twelve of the dead included a Bundist, two socialist Zionists and an SD, though the police reportedly buried others secretly and there were 100 wounded in the hospital. Damage was estimated at 930,000 rubles and 273 families were destitute.

In Kyiv an assistant professor had found tables full of pamphlets in a monastery print shop, and after a 'patriotic' society of workers published a leaflet encouraging readers to 'defend the fatherland to the last drop of blood', the police warned one Jewish family about a pogrom.¹⁶³ The Bolshevik Krzhizhanovsky was head engineer of the Southwestern Railway, and president of the railway workers' strike committee, which effectively controlled the city, though he carried a revolver in case Black Hundreds attacked him. After the ukase arrived the rejoicings outside the дума ended with shooting and a cavalry charge, and Krzhizhanovsky escaped to St. Petersburg.¹⁶⁴ Many Kyiv activists were released, and there were red flags everywhere. Crowds assembled at the reopened University, Polytechnical Institute and railway workshops. The Bolshevik Schlichter led up to 20,000, around one-third of them Jews, to City Hall. The leaders went inside, then dithered.¹⁶⁵ The Bundist Novominsky was outside at 4.30pm, and recalled that Russians, Jews, Poles and Ukrainians 'formed one happy brotherly gathering', though

[T]he police were agitating among the scum of the city, among ex-convicts, burglars, tramps, distributing among them incendiary literature, money and arms. We knew that rumours were being spread, that the Tzar would permit looting the "reds" and the Jews for three days. We only did not know that the machinery would be so quickly set in motion.¹⁶⁶

After shots rang out,¹⁶⁷ Novominsky recalled hearing a 'shriek interrupted the speech, a cry of anguish... "Pogrom".' 'Robbers and assassins appeared on the edges of the square. The crowds fled in horror'.¹⁶⁸ Up to 130 were injured and Black Hundreds trapped up to a dozen women in alleys and killed them. An artillery officer was killed and at least ten soldiers were wounded, though 124 civilians were arrested. At 7.00pm a crowd bearing portraits of the tsar fought Jews at three places in the city. A young Jew called Kernes could not find a fighting squad to join, though Jewish artisans and students defended some houses. Schlichter escaped, and the mayor left the city, but the police chief and senior military officer encouraged the mob. Policemen told victims it was a military matter, while troops insisted that it was a police matter. The governor refused to meet a delegation of 15 professors and several councillors, so they telegraphed the interior minister. (His reply came next day). There were pogroms in at least 17 districts, and mobs sacked 54 shops and 109 homes in Demievka district.¹⁶⁹ At least 60 Jews were killed, 369 injured and 2,000 shops looted.¹⁷⁰ On the 21st troops killed seven demonstrators and injured 50.¹⁷¹ Socialists demanded that the дума disband, and a mass meeting of workers established a sovet,¹⁷² which met at the Polytechnic, and up to 10,000 met at the University.¹⁷³ Newspapers reappeared on the 23rd, and Brodskiy Mill workers won the first eight-hour day in that industry in Russia next day;¹⁷⁴ though pogromists caused heavy casualties in Kherson, Chişinău, Nezhin and Novosylkov.¹⁷⁵

(iv) Siberia

In spring 1903 Nizhni Novgorod police had searched 18-year-old Yakov Sverdlov's flat, found illegal literature and handed it to the Okhrana. After the RSDRP's Second Congress Sverdlov suggested organising a separate 'majority' organisation in the city,¹⁷⁶ but in October, after workers assassinated a spy, he was put under surveillance. Late that

year gendarmes charged him with being a member of a 'criminal society' and 'spreading anti-government literature', yet by late 1904 he was an underground agent and wrote via a contact to the émigré Bolshevik centre.

I spent one day in Moscow and left with the evening train for my final destination, Yaroslavl. But I could stay there only three days, after which I went to Kostroma where I am at present. I took up my abode as a 'professional revolutionary' in accordance with the instructions of the Northern Committee, which includes Kostroma. There is a lot of work to be done here and hardly anybody to do it – only three or four people except myself, one of whom only can be taken into account.¹⁷⁷

Kostroma's population was around 40,000, though the 12,000 textile workers had appalling working conditions. Sverdlov organised *kruzhki* and gave them political literature, established an underground press and trained student agitators. He gave them Ulyanov's works, including *Razvitie Kapitalizma v Rossy*, and sent them to propagandise workers. In January 1905, after news of Bloody Sunday arrived, Kostroma committee issued leaflets supporting St. Petersburg workers. There were mass meetings on the outskirts, in caves and on the banks of the river. Sverdlov spoke at most of them, though the police intercepted a letter and found his address, and he noticed he was being followed.¹⁷⁸ In February he went to Kazan and focussed on the huge pipe plant which had 4,000 workers. The RSDRP committee was conciliatory about the factions and appointed Sverdlov as an organiser and propagandist.¹⁷⁹ In spring he moved to Yaroslavl and helped to organise a May Day demonstration, but had to leave before it took place since the police were getting close. He returned to Nizhni Novgorod and attended Sormovo committee meetings. On warm evenings, 'workers of all ages would crowd into boats'.

Some people brought balalaikas and accordions, and revolutionary songs, militant and triumphant, would resound across the river. On an agreed signal the boats would quickly come together, the oars would be raised, the songs ceased and fiery speeches began, turning the occasion into a Bolshevik meeting. If danger threatened, the boats would instantly disperse, making the job of the police impossible.

Sverdlov fought the Mensheviks 'tooth and nail' across the Volga region, then received orders to return to Kazan. He and other Bolsheviks worked to eject the Mensheviks from the RSDRP committee and he wrote for the illegal Bolshevik paper *Rabochy* and the legal *Volshsky Ustok (Volga Broadsheet)*. He organised factory *kruzhki* and expanded agitation and propaganda among soldiers. Strikes broke out, then petered out, though Sverdlov formed a nucleus of reliable agitators including experienced comrades released from prison.¹⁸⁰ In autumn he went to Ekaterinburg,¹⁸¹ where women had a leading role.

Klavidia Novogorodseva was born into an Ekaterinburg merchant's family in 1876. She had a good education and became a teacher. In the 1890s she associated with SDs, joined the RSDRP in 1904, became a member of the committee, and worked on the underground press,¹⁸² though in spring 1905 the police arrested her. In summer the committee received stolen weapons from the Izhvesk armaments factory. A female comrade had to distribute a large basketful, so she borrowed clothes from a rich merchant, and a bridal gown, and got comrades to wear them.

The 'happy couple' piled the arms into the capacious sort of trunk that would normally contain the dowry of a merchant's daughter, and then went to the station. They promised some porters a fine tip if they were careful with the trunk, saying that it was full of glass, silver and other valuable houseware. Our smiling comrades in all their finery followed the porters, arm in arm, and nobody ever suspected the kind of dowry that was in that splendid trunk.

Novogorodseva was freed early in October, pending trial. She felt she was too well-known to stay in Ekaterinburg, though 'Comrade Andrei' wanted to meet her, and she knew his real name was Sverdlov. Her guide took her to a dam across the Iset River and pointed to a 'lad' 'strolling along in a carefree sort of way'.

'So you're leaving the Urals', he began. 'You're all ready to cut and run.' 'Cut and run – the very idea! I put my detailed and well-considered arguments to him, convinced that my reasons for leaving were unimpeachable. He heard me out and then said: 'The point is that people who know the local conditions are vital to the Party these days. You ran a study circle in the Yates factory, you know the Verkhny Isetsk plant, you know the people and understand the work here. And you're known to the local workers and the organisation. Now, where will you be of most use – here or elsewhere? Clear as day. It's essential to the Party that you stay in Ekaterinburg. You could be caught, you could be followed. You won't be able to visit people, attend workers' groups or go to conspiratorial meetings in private flats ... But things are changing all the time. Revolution is coming on the crest of a great wave and it's spreading to all corners of the country, to the Urals, to Ekaterinburg. Every day more and more people, politically conscious workers mostly, are joining the movement. So even if they increase the number of spies, which is not so easy and takes time, there still won't be one spy for everybody. They'll get confused and dash from one suspect to another – and that will only make our task easier. And besides,' Andrei smiled,

‘what are spies for if not to be taken for a ride? The more certain you are that you could be followed, the craftier and more careful you’ll be – and the more smartly you’ll fool them’.

Novogorodseva stayed in Ekaterinburg.

When news of the tsar’s ukase arrived on 18 October the RSDRP committee published a leaflet showing it was a fraud, sent agitators round the factories, agreed slogans for banners and called a mass meeting next morning.

Excited crowds filled the main street but, although there were no police in sight, public order was impeccable. The town’s central square was particularly crowded, for factory workers, a lot of students, a number of office worker and even some shop assistants had gathered there, prompted by the committee. Party activists rapidly constructed a makeshift platform. Andrei was there, naturally, and was the first to speak ... He said not more than a few words before a gang of thugs burst on to the square, brandishing clubs and using the most dreadful language. They went straight for Andrei but did not get to him, because there was a guard around the platform and some of them were armed. Several shots were fired, which caught the attackers by surprise. They drew back and some actually ran away, because, though full of bravado, they were cowards at heart. But our men were timid and indecisive, so inexperienced that they had not expected to do any real fighting, so the ruffians collected themselves for another attack. Then a Cossack troop came rushing to their aid.

The demonstrators were routed, and that evening Sverdlov told the RSDRP committee and the ‘active Party nucleus’ that they had only themselves to blame, since the Verkhny Isetsk plant workers had been late, due to bad organisation. The committee trained workers and students as propagandists and agitators, formed strong patrols, encouraged trade unions and organised a sovet. Party membership rose, the best-organised kruzhs began to amalgamate and 35 student kruzhs leaders and students at the Urals Mining College drew up a curriculum which included the Party programme and tactics, and material about political economy and the Western European labour movement. The committee organised an illegal press and invited factory workers to send deputies to the sovet.¹⁸³

For weeks the Trans-Siberian line had carried no more than one train a day, the line round Lake Baikal was closed and those which went beyond the Urals could not return. Railway workers supported striking telegraph operators on the 24th.¹⁸⁴ In Perm a crowd besieged the governor’s home until he read the ukase, and they insisted that he release political prisoners, so he rushed half-dressed to the prison. He distributed copies of the ukase and promised to sack policemen.¹⁸⁵ In Tomsk thousands celebrated, but faced ‘a procession of the Black Hundred’.

The citizens were unarmed. They fled into the theatre and one of the railroad buildings. The ‘patriots’ surrounded both buildings and set them on fire. Those who tried to escape were killed. Soldiers appeared on the scene and began to fire through the windows of the burning theatre. Not far away, the governor was standing on the balcony of his palace calmly observing the battlefield; in the nearby cathedral the priests continued their service.¹⁸⁶

Around 300 people,¹⁸⁷ including Christians, burned to death.¹⁸⁸

(v) The Volga region, Ukraine and the Caucasus

The ukase reached Saratov on the evening of 18 October 1905, and a crowd gathered to hear Menshevik and VPSR speakers. Rumours circulated that Jews had caused ‘disorders’,¹⁸⁹ and Black Hundreds attacked 10,000 workers, students, professionals and revolutionaries in Theatre Square, leaving one man dead and many badly beaten. The workers’ fighting squad retreated, and Cossacks looked on as a pogrom began against Jews, intelligentsy and every radical, and mobs sacked Jews’ shops, businesses and the legal SD paper.¹⁹⁰ Next day Black Hundreds attacked 5,000 listening to RSDRP and VPSR speakers, and Black Hundreds and Cossacks dispersed a lightly-armed fighting squad led by an SR. That evening, and on the morning of the 20th, police and troops stood by as a pogrom began. There was a large force of Cossacks in Theatre Square, and though some people fired at them, and one threw a bomb, there were many arrests.¹⁹¹ The police reported that ten had been killed, 124 wounded (66 seriously) and 168 shops and flats had been looted.¹⁹² More troops arrived and the situation calmed down,¹⁹³ though in one district of Saratov province SRs led peasant ‘brotherhoods’ who disarmed police and took control until troops arrived.¹⁹⁴ On the 21st, after martial law was imposed in Kazan, troops shot up to 40, but did not restore order until the 24th.

In Ukraine Kharkiv province peasants persuaded labourers to strike, and they took over an estate,¹⁹⁵ and a sugar-beet factory, and demanded a constituent assembly. In Kharkiv 40,000 marched with red flags,¹⁹⁶ and the French consul reported to Paris.

Work stopped everywhere: on the railways, in all factories, workshops, in shops of all types, in the University, in all schools, in all administrative offices, even the telegraph offices ... the whole population was on the streets, either as sightseers or demonstrators. From the evening, people began to ransack arms stores and to smash the windows of the large stores and conservative journals. On the 24th, students directed by lawyers, doctors and teachers helped by workmen and Jews, seized the district neighbouring the university and set up ten barricades made of heavy oak planks, telegraph and telephone poles, electric light standards and large paving stones. The rioters seized the law courts where the archives were and threw them into the streets.

All the police could do was organise a poor demonstration at one rouble a head, with a portrait of the emperor and the national flag. This demonstration failed pitifully before the students' revolvers – they tore the tsar's portrait and the flags to shreds.

Officially, over 1,000 were killed or wounded.¹⁹⁷

The ukase reached in Tbilisi in Georgia on the 18th, and a crowd went to the theatre and made the orchestra play the *Marseillaise*. Off-duty soldiers joined a crowd with red flags, and a gymnasium band marched to the workers' district playing the *Marseillaise*. Orators spoke in Georgian, Armenian, and Russian, and people listened 'with all their heart'. After speakers ended with 'revolutionary appeals' and slogans including 'victory to the proletariat and the workers' party', 40,000 angry voices sounded 'like thunder'. Next day 50,000 met outside the viceroy's palace and a delegation went in to ask for the release of political prisoners and an end to martial law. On the 20th people paraded outside the Fortress, demanding the release of prisoners. Next day there were more demonstrations and the viceroy issued a warning.¹⁹⁸ The Bolshevik Alliluev and 30 more Baki strikers were released from Kars Fortress and heard an RSDRP speaker addressing a mass meeting. Alliluev went to Tbilisi, where he and other RSDRP workers got revolvers and bombs and armed 'peasant hillmen'.¹⁹⁹ On the 22nd a 'patriotic' society, which consisted mainly of railway workers and janitors, organised a huge demonstration,²⁰⁰ of 20,000, guarded by Russian soldiers,²⁰¹ who beat everyone who did not cheer.²⁰² Some attacked gymnasium pupils who refused to doff their hats to the tsar's portrait, and killed seven,²⁰³ though Bolshevik fighters killed 41 Black Hundreds and wounded 65.²⁰⁴ Both RSDRP factions called for a struggle for democracy.²⁰⁵ Most funerals took place on the 24th, and the police vanished and everything stopped at 5.00pm. The strike ended next day, though the Nadzalaevi district community feared Cossacks and established a 1,900-strong militia. On the 31st the дума demanded that State Duma elections be based on universal suffrage.²⁰⁶ Kutaisi RSDRP committee had agreed to end the strike if the governor sent no troops,²⁰⁷ though the viceroy ordered a general to crush the Gurian peasantry. A clash reportedly ended with the deaths of 14 Cossacks, and the Kutaisi province governor and Tbilisi intelligenty persuaded the general to withdraw his troops,²⁰⁸ since 28 of the 46 infantry regiments and battalions were unreliable.²⁰⁹ In Baki troops had killed three demonstrators,²¹⁰ looted stores, molested Muslim women and brawled with police, and though sailors beat up a 'patriotic' demonstration,²¹¹ Armenians avenged a massacre in Azeri villages and the oilfields were ablaze.²¹² Alliluev went to Baki and lived with the worker Nazarov. His mother-in-law in Didube hid cartridges, and Alliluev's nine-year-old daughter Anna took a belt of them under her clothes to Baki.²¹³

From January to mid-October, across Russia, there had been at least 54 pogroms, and after the 17th there were at least 657 in the Pale and 17 outside. Reportedly 1,929 Jews were killed,²¹⁴ though fewer Jews than Christians in Zhytomyr, thanks to the Jewish fighting squads.²¹⁵ In over 300 cities most pogroms lasted a week and followed a similar pattern. After a 'street procession, frequently adorned by the red flags of the left parties', a counter-demonstration 'consisting mostly of the scum of society' carried the tsar's portrait and imperial flag and sang the national anthem, interspersed with shouts of "Hurrah, beat the Zhyds. The Zhyds are eager for liberty. They go against the Tsar to put a Zhyd in his place". Plain clothes police and soldiers drove Jews away, then helped 'patriots' to find and kill them.²¹⁶ As ever, the émigré RSDRP intelligenty were days behind events.

(vi) Knives, knuckles, daggers and wire whips

In Geneva, early in autumn 1905, the Bolshevik Wallach had a small hand-powered press, and contacts with small print shops, though he wanted to print a legal SD paper in Russia,²¹⁷ so he left for Riga.²¹⁸ In St. Petersburg Krasin's workmates had elected him as a sovet deputy,²¹⁹ and he asked Wallach to edit a Bolshevik paper.²²⁰ Early in October Gorky discussed the idea with Malinovsky and persuaded Nikolai Schmidt, the son of a factory owner and Savva Morozov's nephew, to lend the Bolsheviks 15,000 rubles for a legal paper in both St. Petersburg and Moscow.²²¹ Wallach arrived in St. Petersburg on 26 October,²²² and Krasin asked him to produce the first issue in 24 hours. Wallach went to Moscow to get power of attorney from Gorky's partner, Andreeva, the official publisher, and the poet Nikolai Vilenkin, the responsible editor. Wallach returned to St. Petersburg, signed a contract with a legal print shop on Nevsky Prospect and volunteers arrived. Next morning the 15,000 copies of *Novaya zhizn* (*New Life*) had

'Workers of the world unite' on their mastheads.²²³ The paper included the RSDRP programme and argued for revolutionary unity.²²⁴ Wallach recalled that copies were 'practically torn from the hands of our messengers',²²⁵ though the actual circulation was around 8,000,²²⁶ since the police confiscated the rest.²²⁷ The printers worked all day and could not satisfy demand, as more factory delegates arrived for batches,²²⁸ though *Iskra* was struggling.

In Geneva Axelrod proposed forming a legally elected workers' congress in Russia, though he acknowledged it was 'moderate and superficially unexciting'. He resigned from *Iskra*, but Tserdobaum persuaded him to withdraw his resignation,²²⁹ yet *Iskra* ceased publication in October.²³⁰ Gurvich arrived in St. Petersburg late that month and wrote to the Austrian SD Adler that 'We live here as if intoxicated, the revolutionary air acts like wine', though 'there is a smell of powder and we are probably on the eve of bloody events'. Bronstein wrote to Axelrod.

Social democracy is held in incredibly high regard. It is difficult to imagine anything like it. ... The ideological influence is so colossal that, if this stormy development continues, a 'grab for power' sometimes almost begins to seem inevitable (this is not to say that there is something alluring about such a coup, I am also afraid that this will be a turning-point in the revolution, but no worse than the Jacobin dictatorship was).²³¹

Young Bolshevik intelligentsy were getting organised.

Nikolai Krylenko was 20. He had joined the RSDRP in 1904 and supported the Bolsheviks.²³² Late in October 1905 he and the Bolshevik Woytinsky found St. Petersburg University main hall was full, and there were 'supplementary gatherings' in large classrooms for the 'revolutionary crowds that converged from all parts of the city'.

The crowds made little response to appeals for armed revolt but never tired of listening to speakers who talked soberly about the aspirations of the people, and the inevitable showdown of force between the people and the government.

Gradually, the character of the meetings changed. Students disappeared completely from the evening gatherings. The leftist parties asked them to stay away from the overcrowded classrooms to leave room for the workers and thus contribute to the political, revolutionary education of the masses ...

The two students were determined to control the meetings, and Woytinsky later recalled that they

organised a group of thirty or forty 'meeting speakers', some with considerable experience and high position in the party hierarchy. These self-styled 'generals' proved to be mediocre speakers, however, and some had to withdraw after their first performance. The party put me in charge of the regular group of speakers at the University meetings. The core of the group consisted of two University students – Krylenko and me – and an underground agitator, Nikolai. The party was officially represented by an obscure Bolshevik organiser, Anton [Loginov], who was stupid and arrogant when he was drunk as on the rare occasions when he was sober. Without contesting his authority as the link between the group and the party, I did my best to keep him from appearing on the platform. ...

Subsequently, 'Speakers of both factions appeared together at meetings, and there was no visible difference in their political programmes. Both pretended to represent the working class, while the S-Rs considered themselves representatives of the tillers of the soil.' The Mensheviks were 'more pedantic, the Bolsheviks more active'.

Workers had to walk for up to three hours to get to the University and got home as late as 3.00am, so they had barely two hours of sleep before going to work. It was dangerous to hold meetings near factories, because of the mounted police and Cossacks, but one evening Woytinsky was called to the heart of the factory district. He was nervous, never having been there before, let alone spoken at an open-air meeting, but Loginov assured him. 'It doesn't matter what you say. Just say something about "Away with the Tsar!" and stress the fact that the Bolsheviks are the only ones who defend the interests of the people'. Woytinsky memorised the address and destroyed the note, then followed the complicated directions and reached the RSDRP district headquarters by 11.00pm. He found the organiser, a female nurse, and a young male factory worker, and asked him what he should talk about.

Few of our people here have been to the city meetings, so whatever you say will be new to them. But you must impress them ... Tell them something about the revolution ... And about socialism ... People are also interested in the eight-hour day ... Say something about labour unions and the party ... The French Revolution might fit, too. Surely, explain about the Constituent Assembly. Our workers are ignorant; particularly muzhiks [peasants] ... Tell them about land reform.

At midnight they began walking until chains of workers with linked arms surrounded them, and after Woytinsky spoke they invited him to speak again in the factory yard.²³³

The sovet had taken over the functions of the bureau of trade unions,²³⁴ and coordinated up to 80. The commercial employees' union had 4,000 to 5,000 members, and Woytinsky became their 'educational director and editor', though 200,000 workers were unorganised, and he was invited to a clandestine meeting in a wine cellar

and met representatives of 50 policemen who wanted to form a union.²³⁵ A secret ballot at the Alexandrovsk works had shown 1,688 for and 14 against an eight-hour day. Soviet deputies in one district decided to introduce it unilaterally,²³⁶ and Obukhov metalworkers worked eight hours without waiting for the ministry's reply to their request.²³⁷ Some managers of plants which worked ten hours cut piecework pay by a fifth if their employees worked eight,²³⁸ yet three more plant workforces implemented the eight-hour day unilaterally on the 28th.

That day martial law was imposed at Kronstadt.²³⁹ Sailors in 11 barracks were disarmed and 2,000 sailors and soldiers were arrested next day,²⁴⁰ and St. Petersburg RSDRP committee sent a supportive leaflet.²⁴¹ Thousands of subscriptions had arrived for *Novaya Zhizn*, so Wallach 'got hold of a second print shop, reorganised the circulation department, and employed a 'partly bourgeois editorial staff' and other waged contributors,²⁴² including 'a few real experts'. Ulyanov contributed almost daily from Geneva,²⁴³ and Malinovsky helped with the editing,²⁴⁴ though he reportedly argued in the intelligently Bolshevik committee that the sovet could become the nucleus of an anti-socialist workers' party.²⁴⁵ Essen was alarmed that it issued decrees 'and we trail behind it' and Krasin suppressed Ulyanov's arguments. The committee denounced the sovet as 'politically amorphous and socialistically immature workers' organisations created by the spontaneous revolutionary movement of the proletariat'. They were 'outside Social Democracy', and 'in danger of keeping the proletariat on a primitive political level' and 'subjugating it to the bourgeois parties', so the committee decided that worker-deputies would 'invite' the sovet to accept the RSDRP programme, 'recognise the leadership of the Party and "ultimately dissolve in it!"' If they refused the Bolsheviks would 'expose' the 'antiproletarian nature' of the sovet, target the SRs and 'dislodge' the Mensheviks.²⁴⁶ Malinovsky, Krasikov and Rumyantsev were responsible for the RSDRP committee's political direction and explaining its line to members. Malinovsky wanted workers to elect factory and sector 'assemblies', which would elect two-thirds of sector committees, while Party committees would co-opt the other third. Groups of sector committees would elect half of the regional committees, and the RSDRP committee would co-opt the other half, and draw in new workers, while ensuring the cadre retained the leadership.²⁴⁷

Nevsky shipyard deputies and other metalworkers put the Bolshevik position at the sovet.²⁴⁸ Krasikov threatened a walk-out if it declined to accept Bolshevik hegemony,²⁴⁹ and Knunyants called on the sovet to 'declare its political physiognomy'. Bronstein, who was in the chair, recalled that Krasikov 'hardly received any support', though a majority endorsed factory collections for arms and forming 'organised cadres which at a certain moment could assume a leading role in the uprising'.²⁵⁰ The sovet had been warned about a pogrom, and while around 12,000 workers had knives, crossbars, bludgeons and pikes, only a few had pistols and hunting guns,²⁵¹ though there were thousands of armed troops and sailors in and around the city, and thousands more not far away.

Soldiers at Sveaborg army barracks near Helsinki had found all the petty restrictions irksome, and reservists who had served their term were angry at not yet being demobilised. Officers had up to four servants, and one senior officer made men pay for boots that should have been free. All the officers had suppressed news about the ukase, but artillerymen and engineers called a meeting about demobilisation on 29 October and argued that 'We shouldn't fear them, there are more of us than them, and they will make concessions'. The commandant promised to petition his superiors, then called the men to a church service. After it ended loyal infantry surrounded them, but they shouted their demands and threatened to use force, and the infantry shouted encouragement. Officers began listening to grievances, including the right to meet and have the regulations drawn up by peasant sovet deputies.²⁵² On the 30th a general strike broke out across Finland,²⁵³ and next day, fearing a riot, the Sveaborg commandant granted all the demands he could.²⁵⁴ According to a non-commissioned navy officer, sailors had received 150 rubles apiece to quell the mutiny.²⁵⁵

In St. Petersburg the printers' union had resolved that books and periodicals had to be uncensored, or face a 'most active boycott',²⁵⁶ and several new publications appeared.²⁵⁷ Many workforces worked eight hours, and those at the Aviaz, Nobel, Petersburg and Lessner machine and metalworking plants, Siemens & Galske electro-technical works, Nevsky Spinnery, plus some tailors, fur workers, lithographers, shoemakers, seamstresses, bakers, draughtsmen and musicians held mass meetings.²⁵⁸ Mechanised Shoe Factory workers had a reputation for being backward, yet 2,100 walked out in support of a sacked colleague and made 25 demands, including freedom of assembly and the withdrawal of troops.²⁵⁹ Thugs attacked radical students, workers, Jews and sovet deputies with knuckledusters, knives and whips, though there was no full-scale pogrom. Gun shops did a roaring trade, especially in Browning revolvers, in defiance of police restrictions, though most workers could not afford them and the sovet had difficulty arming fighting squads.²⁶⁰ Scores of factory workforces attended solemn meetings with their banners and those of their fighting squads, demanded the release of the Kronstadt sailors and threatened to strike,²⁶¹ while several called on the sovet to take drastic measures.²⁶² The RSDRP Nevsky district leaders agreed by nine votes to four, with two abstentions, to continue attending the sovet,²⁶³ and though Nevsky shipyard SD deputies refused to participate,²⁶⁴ an influential SD intelligentka was impressed.

The previous summer Kollontai had spoken to school pupils, students and working men and women at St. Petersburg University, and presented basic SD ideas on the class struggle. She argued that morality 'arises because of the real mutual relations of people', 'develops under definite socio-economic conditions' and was 'dependent not on the individual but on society, since social cohabitation of people appears its source, cause, and even goal'. Workers' 'class psychology', especially solidarity, was 'the greatest weapon in the historical process', but it needed developing. In autumn, when her friends in Nevsky and Vasilievsky Island districts told her about the Mensheviks' proposal to hold 'revolutionary elections' to a workers' sovet, to coordinate and direct the strike movement, she welcomed the idea unreservedly,²⁶⁵ and late in October was impressed with Bronstein's clarity.²⁶⁶

Bronstein recalled that many sovet deputies 'shook their knives, knuckles, daggers and wire whips in the air, but more in good humour than seriously, and with much jesting', and they 'seemed to believe that their readiness to face the enemy was enough to solve the problem'. Most 'did not seem to realise that it was a life-or-death struggle',²⁶⁷ and few had revolvers;²⁶⁸ though they agreed on the slogans of 'Overthrow the autocracy!' and 'Long live the constituent assembly, the democratic republic and the eight-hour day!'²⁶⁹ Metalworkers proposed implementing an eight-hour day across the city,²⁷⁰ and one who reported a 'takeover' received thunderous applause,²⁷¹ though SRs denounced this as a 'syndicalist deviation', since 'we are not yet done with absolutism, and you want to take on the bourgeoisie'. Bronstein proposed that the sovet lead the eight hours movement,²⁷² and 281 deputies resolved that after a delegation negotiated with the duma, the mayor and post office and railway administrations, 'all remaining factories and plants' should implement the eight hour day 'by revolutionary means' next day.²⁷³ The government believed the sovet led 6,000 armed workers and 30 fight squads of ten. That night one squad patrolled outside Nevsky Gate to protect typesetters and journalists, who had revolvers,²⁷⁴ and produced *Izvestia*;²⁷⁵ yet *Novaya Zhizn* claimed the sovet represented 'the subordination of consciousness to spontaneity'.²⁷⁶

During October there had been 500 strikes by inspected workers in St. Petersburg,²⁷⁷ and 506,000 strike days in St. Petersburg province;²⁷⁸ though managers had locked out hundreds of thousands, including over half of the highly skilled metalworkers, and Black Hundreds had terrorised workers in their homes with guns and bombs. The Bolshevik leaders instructed a group of intelligentsy and workers to organise a 'general staff' to lead an unemployed council. Late that month the sovet levied one percent of factory workers' wages, opened premises in each district with free dining rooms, and gave the unemployed 30 kopeks a day, plus ten to 15 kopeks for each child,²⁷⁹ totalling almost 16,000 rubles. The sovet's expenses were almost 13,000 rubles and while printing cost less than 500, 'special tasks', including purchasing arms, cost 3,500,²⁸⁰ though some arms cost nothing.

Nikolai Emelianov was born in 1871, and later worked at Sestroresk armoury near St. Petersburg. He joined the RSDRP in 1904, and by October 1905 he led a fighting squad and helped to transport illegal literature from Finland. Alexandr Afanassiev was born in 1869. He later worked at the Sestroresk armoury, joined the RSDRP committee, supported the Bolsheviks and also led a fighting squad.²⁸¹ In October revolutionaries stole rifles and divided their barrels and stocks. Young women hung eight of each from a cord around their necks, and took them to Valter Sjöberg's liquor shop in Helsinki, where policemen gave them passports, including those of people who had died in hospital. Explosives stores were robbed and Krasin ran a bomb workshop near his Finnish home. Gromova hid bombs in her corset and, accompanied by her daughter, took them to St. Petersburg, and gave Bronstein two powerful hand grenades,²⁸² to disrupt government and military telegraph communications.²⁸³ The sovet EC had ties with the peasants' union, and postal and telegraph workers' union,²⁸⁴ which threatened the power of the autocracy to coordinate its military activities, and the tsar raised the level of repression.

(vii) Shoot first, inquire afterwards

In summer 1905 the peasants' union had formed groups in many villages and districts of European Russia,²⁸⁵ though the harvest in two-thirds of provinces was worse than the previous year.²⁸⁶ By autumn the teachers' union had up to 13,000 members,²⁸⁷ and 22-year-old Vasily Sochikhin, a Vladimir province teacher, the district clerk and his assistant tried to convince peasants to take over the land and not pay taxes.²⁸⁸

By October St. Petersburg province teachers organised workers and peasants, and explained the role of the peasants' union and the 'proper attitude' to the State Duma. Peasant deputations came from over 30km away to 'fetch' teachers to speak to them. After the tsar's ukase reached Shuya near Ivanovo, teachers agitated workers and peasants and held public meetings in schools, and Yaroslavl teachers' union offered lecturers for peasant meetings; while teachers in Pokrov district near Moscow, 'where parties had never penetrated', organised a strike of 4,000 textile workers, and employers made concessions. Elsewhere in Moscow province 40 teachers and zemstvo employees meeting in a village school narrowly escaped when peasants demolished the building. In the Volga

region, near Nizhni Novgorod, traders, artisans and drivers attacked a meeting and killed a teacher, while Samara province peasants threatened teachers and zemstvo employees, and attacked an intelligently demonstration.²⁸⁹

A peasant congress in Viatka province attracted 200 delegates, including some soldiers, and workers promised to support them. The authorities allowed meetings in other districts, and peasants resolved to withhold taxes. In the Pale over 2,000 attended a peasant congress in Vilnius. After it ended they replaced village clerks, elders and primary teachers, sack gendarmes and officials, and elected court and district executives. Saratov province peasants, led by fighting squads, arrested police and expelled 272 landowners. Peasant 'brotherhoods' shared property and livestock, set fire to buildings and communalised the land, though they paid labourers and servants.²⁹⁰ A peasants' committee in Olkhovskaya district converted Orthodox churches into schools and hospitals, elected clergy and replaced the army with a voluntary militia, while Georgian peasants took more drastic forms of action.²⁹¹

On 21 October a teachers' union congress in Moscow supported the peasants' union and called a conference to coordinate tactics.²⁹² On the 23rd Tambov province peasants burned buildings on 130 estates and seized land for 'temporary use', pending the State Duma elections. In Chernihiv province 2,000 peasants plundered estates,²⁹³ and one demonstration was led by a red flag. There was unrest in 11 nearby districts, and the damage on 158 estates was estimated at 2.5 million rubles. No landowner or servant was hurt, but the governor-general, who was a landowner, led a punitive expedition. In 18 villages he called peasants together, ordered them to undress and kneel in the snow and dirt, imprisoned those who protested and arrested others at random. In one village he ordered peasants to kneel while a Cossack rode over them, whipping their backs, and troops injured about 40 in another village. Troops looted granaries, burned villages and raped women, and the mother of a 15-year-old victim went mad. The governor-general boasted about killing six peasants with his bare hands and reported 'Two killed, wounded unknown'. The tsarina sent him swords and torches, and the tsar told him: 'Do not concern yourself with the law. Shoot first, inquire afterwards'.²⁹⁴

By the 27th virtual martial law was in force in two provinces and 48 districts, 'reinforced security' in one province and 18 districts and 'extraordinary security' in five provinces and 32 districts,²⁹⁵ and in parts of Chernihiv, Saratov and Tambov provinces on the 29th.²⁹⁶ When Penza province peasants heard that gentry land was being partitioned in Saratov they threatened estate officials who refused to give them grain and timber, looted landlord's property and clubbed policemen.²⁹⁷ In Moscow province teachers and peasants in and around Markovo district had met in tea rooms to discuss the Moscow papers for four years.²⁹⁸ On the 31st a mass meeting of peasants with insufficient land, including many from other districts,²⁹⁹ called for secret and universal adult suffrage, equal rights, progressive taxation, land for the landless, free universal education, freedom of movement and a political amnesty. They refused to obey the authorities, pay tax or provide army recruits until their demands were met, and elected a 'republican government', democratised the zemstvo, 'nationalised' Orthodox schools and joined the peasants' union.³⁰⁰

During October 2,000 estates in 19 provinces suffered damage costing 29 million rubles. Scores of generals, police chiefs, gendarmes and thousands of policemen were attacked and murdered in the street,³⁰¹ and 31 officials were assassinated.³⁰² There were 219 officially-recorded disturbances,³⁰³ in 37 percent of European Russia, and especially in the central provinces.³⁰⁴ St. Petersburg soviet delegates had gone to the Pale,³⁰⁵ to get sovety elected.³⁰⁶ In Ukraine 120,000 had joined the general strike,³⁰⁷ and Rostov-na-Donu soviet had forged links with peasants.³⁰⁸

In the Caucasus the Shendrikovs negotiated the first collective agreement in Russia. Baki workers won a nine-hour day, sick pay and free fuel, and elected factory delegates to negotiate. The Shendrikovs led Baki soviet,³⁰⁹ and an RSDRP committee member recalled that they 'had to fall in line (at least in the area of the economic struggle) along their front'.³¹⁰ There were over 200 deputies, and though Mensheviks were influential,³¹¹ their strike call fell on deaf ears.³¹²

In Siberia socialist presses were closed,³¹³ though Chita workers freed prisoners.³¹⁴ Late in October officers in Vladivostok barred soldiers and sailors from meeting to discuss the ukase, but about 15,000 men, a quarter of the garrison, mutinied.³¹⁵ Reservists and freed prisoners of war were restive, and loyal troops killed 13 sailors, six civilians, three foreigners and two soldiers, and injured 52 sailors, 32 soldiers, 22 civilians and 12 foreigners, though one loyal officer and 13 men were killed and six officers and 22 soldiers injured.³¹⁶

Since January half of all strikers had raised political issues. During October, officially, there had been 2,628 strikes and 418,000 strikers in inspected plants,³¹⁷ and at least 77 percent of all 518,000 strikers were deemed politically-motivated. In Latvia 97 percent of workers went on strike and seven sovety were established. Bundists led most strikes in the Pale. Between two-fifths and a half of Warszawa workers went on strike, over half in Vitebsk, two-thirds in Minsk, all but four-fifths in Grodno, slightly more in Vilnius and Kaunas and over 95 percent in Poland's Piotrków province. In and around Łódź there were over 2,200 strikes,³¹⁸ and most Warszawa and Piotrków province workers stayed on strike, including 64,000 in Łódź. After the police arrested three PPS leaders, a party council in Minsk reorganised the 1,345 fighters and installed Piłsudski as leader.³¹⁹

Nationally, at least 39 towns and cities had been strike-bound,³²⁰ and in the second half of the month most cities with factories and institutes of higher education experienced strikes. At least one million factory workers, over 700,000 railway workers, 50,000 government employees and tens of thousands of clerks, shop assistants, professionals and students had come out, demanding an amnesty for political prisoners, an eight-hour day, the end of legal disabilities on national and religious minorities and a constituent assembly.³²¹ Most railway workers had gone back by the end of the month, and though martial law remained in force on Caucasian and Polish lines, dedicated 'delegate trains' carried agitators on at least 20 to generalise the strike, raise political issues, contact peasants and disrupt troop movements. Bolsheviks and Mensheviks had convinced embryo sovety to consider organising fighting squads,³²² and strikes politicised many soldiers and sailors.³²³ That month there were 17 officially-recorded military mutinies,³²⁴ including 15 in the last fortnight.³²⁵

Tsederbaum had arrived in St. Petersburg late in October and found that the soviet was 'the embodiment of our idea of revolutionary self-government'.³²⁶ In Geneva Ulyanov wrote to Plekhanov that 'the need for Social-Democratic unity is a question that can no longer be put off, and the possibility for it is now greater than ever'.³²⁷ They agreed to discuss the issue in November at the International Socialist bureau;³²⁸ yet the situation was increasingly urgent in Russia, and especially in Moscow.

Anna Markina had been born into a peasant family in Tula south of Moscow in 1880. After her mother died she was a domestic servant in Moscow, but in 1900 she worked at a stocking factory and taught herself to be literate. She had joined the RSDRP by 1905, and became the committee's technical secretary.³²⁹ In the last two weeks of October 14,500 strikers in Moscow's inspected plants included 11,700 textile workers. Many had gone back by the 31st,³³⁰ though 46 trade unions continued to organise.³³¹ During October the RSDRP committee had distributed over 250,000 publications, including 50,000 to workers' kruzki, over 40,000 to the Zamoskvoreche district and over 30,000 to the Railway and Town districts. Over a quarter of more than 35,000 rubles of the committee's income went on arms, and its slogans were 'With weapons in our hands we shall conquer' and 'gain a democratic republic, the eight-hour working day, a human life, freedom for our future struggle for socialism'. 'Arm yourselves, comrades! In the factories and mills, organise armed detachments!'³³² The month became known as 'Red October'.³³³

12. We must send them to jail or the gibbet

(i) No eight-hour day and no meetings

On 1 November 1905, when 1,200 Kronstadt sailors were being tried by field courts martial, a dozen or so St. Petersburg factory workforces resolved to strike if they were sentenced to death.¹ Many workers were locked out,² yet most printers, railway and office workers, Moscow, Petersburg and Vyborg district factory workers and members of the foremen's and technicians' union were set to strike.³ Nevsky shipyard workers now worked an eight hour day,⁴ as did Port workers, others in small workshops,⁵ and 1,700 at the Nail plant. Almost all metalworks and large textile mills worked eight hours, and 14,000 or so other strikers made economic demands. Over 112,000 were on strike, but two newspapers were printed under military guard and the line to Finland reopened. A large majority of sovet deputies called on workers to show solidarity with the mass protests with the slogans 'Down with courts-martial! Down with the death penalty! Down with martial law in Poland and throughout Russia!' Next morning over 5,000 print workers from 57 firms,⁶ and all the large workforces which had sovet deputies, were on strike, and many small enterprises elected deputies.⁷ Putilov workers asked the Bolshevik Woytinsky to explain sovet policy. He was 'assigned a commando armed with pistols and bolts' and went to the boiler shop to convince them to strike.⁸ The Director of the Okhrana announced that 'either the revolutionaries will use us to adorn the St. Petersburg lamp-posts, or we must send them to jail or the gibbet', and he demanded the arrest of the sovet.⁹

By the 3rd over 119,000 workers from 526 plants were out,¹⁰ though the owners of 72 metallurgical factories and 19 mills announced sackings. Some workforces accepted a nine-hour or a ten or ten-and-a-half hour day, and state plants closed, but around 100,000 workers came out onto the streets.¹¹ That night police and troops caught the *Izvestia* 'flying squad' at the *Nasha dni* press. The printers threatened to destroy it, and agitated the troops, who took their names and sealed the building,¹² though *Izvestia* was printed elsewhere, and it congratulated workers who had won an eight-hour day and encouraged others to do so by 'revolutionary action'. Next day around 7,000 print workers refused to hear speeches about economic issues,¹³ though after Putilov managers announced that strikers would be sacked, some went back, and a dozen strike-bound plants were closed. The government charged the Kronstadt mutineers with disorderly conduct,¹⁴ and some strikers challenged a detachment of loyal sailors. 'Where are you going?' 'To the power station'. 'What, you're going to work while we're on strike in defence of your comrades?' A Fortress sapper told the sovet EC that the sailors did not want to work. 'So we had a talk among ourselves: did we want to set them free? There are gunners stationed in the Fortress as well as us. What their attitude to this would be, we don't know', so they had sent him to ask the sovet 'how to do it'. Half an hour later a Fortress gunner asked the EC what the sappers might do if they freed the sailors. The EC reassured him, and the sailors were freed. The RSDRP committee wanted to continue the strike, and the sovet EC agreed by nine votes to six,¹⁵ though the full sovet voted, by 400 to four,¹⁶ to postpone the decision.¹⁷ That night *Izvestia* used the press of *Birzhevye vremya* (*The Stock-Exchange Gazette*).¹⁸

By the 5th strikers at three plants had been sacked and Black Hundreds had hospitalised a Putilov worker. A soldier told the sovet that senior officers were agitating for a pogrom against Jews and students.¹⁹ Though 25 out of 147 deputies wanted to return to work, 92 voted for an indefinite strike. Bronstein argued that next spring's State Duma election 'must bring the entire revolutionary proletariat to its feet'.²⁰ There should be 'fighting tens' at every plant, and 'hundreds' with a single commander, though the general strike should end in two days' time.²¹

Next day, at the printers' sovet there were 264 deputies from 110 works with over 5,000 workers.²² They empowered 15 leaders to draw up statutes, call meetings, implement resolutions, negotiate with managers, lead strikes and distribute funds. (It was their last meeting).²³ Women on Vasilievsky Island demanded that taverns be closed to stifle rumours that the strikers were a drunken mob, paid leave before and after childbirth, crèches, nurseries and time off for nursing mothers.²⁴ A Pole told the sovet that four days earlier the PPS had led a strike in Warszawa,²⁵ though the police made many arrests.²⁶ Next day a nationalist rally had attracted 70,000, almost 200,000 demonstrated the following day, and 100,000 the day after that.²⁷ Railway workers went back and the number of strikers plummeted. Trade unions had been driven underground,²⁸ though SDKPiL factory cells, who were responsible through district committees to city committees, propagandised and agitated.²⁹ The St. Petersburg sovet heard that several city plants had won a nine or nine and a half hour day, and though state plants had sacked 19,000 and would reopen only under the old conditions, the sovet called for the eight hours struggle to continue where there was hope of success. That night the 'flying squad' occupied the anti-Jewish paper, *Novoye vremya* (*New Time*), and used its rotary press to print *Izvestia*. Police and Cossacks raided the printers' union offices and found 153 of the 35,000 copies, but after threats of 'most energetic resistance' they left without taking one.³⁰

Huge peaceful demonstrations and meetings had taken place all over Finland,³¹ and the governor-general had fled.³² The tsar decided to restore Finland's legal system and allow the Diet to hold democratic elections in October.³³ He granted full civic freedom,³⁴ and women and men over 21 would be able to vote.³⁵ The Diet began reforming itself into a single-chamber elected by universal, free, equal and secret ballot. The tsar replaced compulsory military service with a tax to support the Russian military, granted press freedom, and legalised street sales of newspapers, though judges would punish publishers of illegal words.³⁶ The tsar cancelled martial law, permitted freedom of assembly, association, speech and the press.³⁷ Students and socialists formed a National Guard, and others adopted SD demands and formed a 'Red Guard'. Tampere SDs advocated a revolutionary national assembly followed by an elected provisional government;³⁸ though SDs called off the general strike on the 6th.³⁹

On the 7th Nosar, the St. Petersburg sovet president, joined the Mensheviks.⁴⁰ Over 100,000 workers were out, though the owner of Nevsky shipyard, which made patented machines, knew the plant could remain profitable with an eight-hour day, yet he threatened to sack workers who did not accept the old conditions. On the 8th the navy minister told a sovet delegation that state plants would reopen with 'No eight-hour day, and no meetings'.⁴¹

(ii) The cup of the peasants' patience has spilled over

By 1905 peasants had paid over 1.3 billion rubles for land worth half that amount in 1861, though many were far in arrears.⁴² On 1 November the government mobilised ten reserve Cossack regiments,⁴³ and the tsar sent an admiral to govern Kursk and Chernihiv provinces, a general to Tambov and Voronezh and another general to Penza and Saratov, along with punitive detachments and orders to 'pacify' peasants. If they refused to identify activists, Cossacks whipped suspects and forced villagers to exile them to Siberia, though 3,000 Chernihiv province peasants attacked soldiers with axes to free prisoners until more soldiers arrived. On the 3rd the tsar announced that redemption payments would be halved the following year and abolished the year after, and suggested that his family should sell over 1.6 million hectares to the Peasant Land Bank.⁴⁴ Most RSDRP committees had ignored peasant demands,⁴⁵ and reportedly many villagers had just heard about the ukase,⁴⁶ though St. Petersburg revolutionaries went to agitate peasants in nearby villages.⁴⁷

In Moscow, Warszawa, Kyiv, Riga, Voronezh, Ekaterinodar and other cities, peasant troops demanded improvements in barrack conditions and condemned arrogant officers. Troops marched through Baranovichi, singing revolutionary songs, troops in Tbilisi freed revolutionaries who had been sentenced to death, and mutineers in Batumi, Kursk and elsewhere fought loyal units.⁴⁸ In Manchuria a general insisted that reserves be sent home and negotiated with strike committees which controlled the Trans-Siberian line from Harbin.⁴⁹ Soldiers commandeered trains and 4,000 workers in Irkutsk decided to strike unless they got economic concessions, the abolition of the death penalty, the end of martial law and a democratically-elected constituent assembly.⁵⁰ On the 5th, when news of the tsar's ukase reached Harbin, 3,000 telegraph operators marched through the streets with red banners. Workers at Manchuria station got prisoners freed and there were rumours that Moscow was in flames. Next day rail transport in Siberia was disrupted east of Chita.⁵¹

On the 6th a peasants' union congress in Moscow attracted 145 delegates from 27 provinces, including 42 male and female schoolteachers, plus doctors, zemstvo employees and other intelligenty.⁵² (Other delegates had been arrested en route.) Eleven were members or supporters of the VPSR and five of the RSDRP,⁵³ while other SRs and SDs had advisory votes. Half the delegates had been chosen by village or district assemblies, and half by peasants' union committees, intelligenty-led bureaus or political groups. Saratov delegates argued for taking the land, followed by a general strike and an uprising; though a majority voted for a constituent assembly,⁵⁴ the abolition of waged labour,⁵⁵ and the transfer of state, crown, church and monastery land to peasants without compensation,⁵⁶ by the following February. They pledged to 'enter into agreement' with 'brother workers' in 'municipal, factory, works, and railway unions' and other organisations 'defending the interests of working people', withdraw deposits from state and savings banks, stop consuming taxed liquor and paying other taxes and supplying recruits for the armed forces. 'In the event that the people's demands are not satisfied', they would strike, 'by agreement with the working class', and this would 'inevitably lead to a universal peasant uprising, for the cup of the peasants' patience has spilled over',⁵⁷ and voters in the 'fraudulent' Duma elections would be 'enemies of the people'.⁵⁸ When RSDRP workers announced that they could 'learn a lot from the workers' struggle', some peasants shouted that 'we have just got rid of self-appointed teachers and supervisors'.

At a teachers' union congress in Moscow a majority of the 130 delegates from 12 provinces were probably members of or sympathisers with socialist organisations. Fifty proposed affiliating to the VPSR, but this was defeated to avoid alienating the RSDRP and 'wavering elements'. Delegates were concerned about rural Black Hundreds and called on the printers' union not to produce reactionary papers. (The printers subsequently pledged

support.) After the congress ended on the 12th, delegates went home and agitated 'under the protection of conscious peasants and workers'; though in one Moscow province village peasants attacked a zemstvo employees' mutual aid society and teachers and medical staff narrowly escaped.⁵⁹

When reserve artillerymen in Grodno heard about the Kronstadt and Sveaborg mutinies they had demanded better pay, rations and uniforms and threatened officers, who promised to demobilise them. One brigade refused to drill, and drove an officer who tried to arrest two 'instigators' out of the barracks. They demanded tea, sugar, decent uniforms, the removal of a brutal sergeant and 'freedom', and the commander promised concessions, but had 'instigators' arrested and confined the rest to barracks. By the 7th the infantry were mutinous. The Bund published the soldiers' demands, and newspapers all over the empire quoted the leaflet.

Three out of six third-line Kuban Cossack battalions had mutinied and a fourth had threatened to do so in October. In November one commander noted that their 'principle demand is to be sent home, because they have no desire to protect the interests of landowners and the rich in general' when their farms were 'falling into decay and they and their families are enduring hardship'. Railway strikers and mutineers commandeered trains.⁶⁰

In Poland *Der Bund (The Union)* ceased publication,⁶¹ and the governor-general lifted martial law,⁶² but reimposed it in Warszawa on the 10th,⁶³ and next day the government announced the form of the elections to the State Duma.⁶⁴ On the 12th the war minister reported that the army was 'falling apart' and he wanted all the reserves to be demobilised. The attempt to mobilise five second-line Don Cossack regiments met resistance, and one regiment stopped a train and plundered the countryside. Kuban Cossacks were unreliable, so the government did not mobilise 17 third-line regiments, and RSDRP and VPSR military organisations had penetrated garrisons in Tbilisi, Tambov, Kyiv, Samara and elsewhere.⁶⁵ On the 14th the peasants' union leaders were arrested in Moscow,⁶⁶ and the assistant interior minister told the tsar that the union was a revolutionary organisation,⁶⁷ and the government imposed martial law in more districts,⁶⁸ though more peasants and workers were acting together.

(iii) The embryo of a *provisional revolutionary government*

Late in summer 1905 the Zionist congress in Basel had endorsed a 'publically and legally assured home in Palestine'.⁶⁹ In October the Gomel, Warszawa and Riga Bund committees and regional committee had sent apologies to the Bund congress in Zurich, where 30 delegates represented 12 committees and six other organisations.⁷⁰ They supported Polish autonomy, but opposed Polish nationalism, yet demanded Jewish national-cultural autonomy.⁷¹ The railway strike prevented Bund conference delegates and émigrés returning to Russia;⁷² though early in November they travelled illegally to Berlin, carrying Browning revolvers. They boarded an express to Dvinsk, reported to a designated flat, received a password, went to the CC headquarters and went on to Vilnius. One evening they went to see a Gorky play, and before the curtain rose the orchestra played the *Marseillaise* and the audience stood and demanded two encores; but the police began to clamp down.⁷³

On 2 November (according to the Russian calendar) the émigré RSDRP CC member Ulyanov left Geneva for Russia.⁷⁴ En route he found Bolshevik literature in the cellar of the Folkets Hus (People's House) in Stockholm,⁷⁵ and entrusted the RSDRP archives to Hjalmar Branting,⁷⁶ a former SD who was now a reformist.⁷⁷ Ulyanov had 'incomplete and only "paper" information' about the St. Petersburg sovet, but saw it as 'the embryo of a *provisional revolutionary government*', so the Bolsheviks should not insist that it accept the RSDRP programme, though *Novaya Zhizn* refused his article.⁷⁸ Ula Kasträn, a Helsinki student, was to ensure that Ulyanov got to the capital, where the SD Vladimir Smirnov was an assistant librarian at the University, and wrote about Finland in *Novaya zhizn*. Minutes after he and Burenin arrived at the home of Ula's brother Gunnar, a University lecturer, Ula and Ulyanov appeared.⁷⁹ She gave him a false passport in the name of 'William Frey',⁸⁰ and he left on the 8th disguised as a minor official.⁸¹

In St. Petersburg Krasin took him to Rumyantsiev's apartment, and then Burenin took him to meet leading Bolsheviks.⁸² Mandelshtam told him that the sovet was a talking shop.⁸³ Ulyanov reported to the police.⁸⁴ Next day the union of tavern employees declared that 'all the labouring classes of Russia are united in defence of their rights' and 'are struggling to obtain satisfaction of their basic economic needs and their needs as citizens'.⁸⁵ Nevsky shipyard workers refused to work under the old conditions, so the owner sacked them, told them they would never work in a machine-building plant again, and closed the yard.⁸⁶ Workers at a large Neva district plant appealed to others to strike.⁸⁷ Ulyanov chaired a meeting of Bolshevik intelligenty to discuss *Novaya zhizn*,⁸⁸ which now sold 80,000 copies,⁸⁹ and insisted that the RSDRP CC control it.⁹⁰ After Lunacharsky, Worowski and Rudnev were appointed as editors,⁹¹ and Malinovsky as a contributor, the other editors left.⁹² Next day, 10,000 workers were idle, mainly because of lockouts,⁹³ and *Novaya zhizn* published part of Ulyanov's article.

Freedom of assembly, of association and of the press has been captured. Of course, these rights are extremely precarious, and it would be folly, if not a crime, to pin our faith to the present liberties. The decisive struggle is yet to come, and preparations for this struggle must take first place. The secret apparatus of the Party must be maintained. But at the same time it is absolutely necessary to make the widest possible use of the present relatively wider scope ... [and] create many new legal and semi-legal Party organisations (and organisations associated with the Party).

The RSDRP had 'stagnated while working underground'.

It would be simply ridiculous to doubt that the workers who belong to our Party, or who will join it tomorrow ... will be Social-Democrats in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred. The working-class is instinctively, spontaneously Social-Democratic, and more than ten years of work put in by Social-Democracy has done a great deal to transform this spontaneity into consciousness. Don't invent bugaboos, comrades! Don't forget that in every live and growing party there will always be elements of instability, vacillation, wavering. But these elements can be influenced, and they will submit to the influence of the steadfast and solid core of Social-Democrats.

He concluded that the RSDRP Congress must take place sooner than planned.⁹⁴ Tallinn workers, Finnish troops, the peasants' union, the PPS and the Bund sent delegates to the sovet, though the police prevented it from meeting.⁹⁵

Two days later the last *Proletary* appeared in Geneva,⁹⁶ and reported about St. Petersburg University.

The people ... come from various backgrounds ... university students, high-school students, thousands of workers, soldiers, sailors, and officers, the very poor, and even drifters. The thousands of workers assembled at the meeting show a great sense of decorum and restraint! One would think that we have had a free political life for a long time! The hall is packed, the people stand on window sills. The crowd listens with rapt attention. It does not stir for hours at a time. A bad speaker provokes grumbling, noise, and protests. But there are good orators, the revolution has spawned them, and the crowd hears them with exalted expressions and fervent gazes. After the speech: cries of applause, the sound of the president's bell, quiet. A new orator grasps the attention of the audience. After the end of the meeting, after having sung the 'Marseillaise' and the 'Varshavianka' ... the throng is in holiday mood. It leaves in smaller groups, agitatedly discussing what it heard and promising to call new comrades to the next meeting.⁹⁷

In St. Petersburg Ulyanov wrote in *Novaya zhizn*. 'The struggle for land and freedom is a democratic struggle. The struggle to abolish capital is a socialist struggle'. The members of the peasants' union were 'truly revolutionary democrats with whom we must and shall carry on the fight for the complete victory of the present revolution'.⁹⁸

There were lockouts in plants which had been at the forefront of the struggle in October.⁹⁹ Women formed 38,000 of the 154,000 workers in large factories and 40 percent were literate. The Bolshevik Boldyreva had been elected as a sovet deputy,¹⁰⁰ at Maxwell Mill,¹⁰¹ though Karelina had become one illegally. 'Many women workers knew me from union meetings, factory meetings, and underground kruzki, 'and women at the Laferme cigarette factory proposed her, 'but I could not be chosen, because I was not working there'; so the women chose Anna Afanseva and she gave her credentials to Karelina. There were five other women deputies. M. Ermolina worked in a spinning factory, Anna Barkova in a tobacco factory, M. Zvonariova on the railways, Tatiana Razueva in a print works, and Valentina Bagrova, who was from a family of gentry,¹⁰² was in the shop assistants' union. The Bolsheviks Barkova, Bagrova and Boldyreva were on the sovet EC.¹⁰³ Reportedly 100,000 were on strike or had been locked out, and police and troops clashed with strikers and confiscated their arms. The sovet EC proposed ending the eight-hour campaign; yet one deputy announced that 'if a strike is resolved, the men of Narva will take part. We have 30,000 workers. In order to weaken the government we have decided to abstain from vodka for three months. Anyone caught drunk will be fined 3 rubles'.¹⁰⁴ Deputies from two large metalworks did not want to go back, though Putilov deputies did, and Bronstein recalled a speech from a woman from Maxwell Mill.

She had a fine, open face; she wore a faded cotton dress although it was late autumn. Her hand trembled with excitement as she nervously fingered her collar. Her voice had a ringing, inspired, unforgettable quality. 'You've let your wives get accustomed to sleeping in soft beds and eating sweet food', she hurled at the Putilov delegates. 'That's why you are afraid of losing your jobs. But we aren't afraid. We're prepared to die, but we'll get the eight-hour day. We'll fight to the end. Victory or death!

'There was a moment of painful silence. Then a storm of passionate applause'.¹⁰⁵ The speaker was Boldyreva,¹⁰⁶ and Karelina also spoke 'especially passionately';¹⁰⁷ but after a four-hour debate an overwhelming majority voted to end the eight-hour campaign. Then Bronstein spoke: 'We may not have won the eight-hour day for the masses, but we have certainly won the masses for the eight-hour day. Henceforth the war-cry: *Eight hours and a gun!* shall

live in the heart of every St. Petersburg worker'.¹⁰⁸ Reportedly he used similar rhetoric to end the strike at the Putilov works.¹⁰⁹

(iv) An organ of the proletariat and the peasantry

In Munich the SD intelligent Helphand supported the political mass strike as an offensive 'method of revolution',¹¹⁰ but left to escape from the police, arrived in St. Petersburg late in October 1905 and became a sovet deputy. Early in November he and Bronstein acquired the liberal *Russkaya gazeta* (*Russian Gazette*), transformed it into a popular one-kopek daily and its circulation shot up from 30,000 to 100,000. Helphand hoped that Russia would 'pave the way for the revolutionary energy of the proletariat in the west', and the Menshevik intelligently Tserdobaum and Potresov invited him and Bronstein to edit a new Menshevik paper,¹¹¹ in which they could advocate 'permanent revolution',¹¹² along with another Menshevik.

Nikolai Krestinsky had been born into a gymnasium teacher's family in the town of Mohyliv in Ukraine in 1883. His parents had migrated from Chernihiv, where SRs had influenced them in their youth. Nikolai attended Vilnius gymnasium, befriended boys who had contacts with the Russian and Polish workers' movements, read revolutionary literature and was influenced by an SD teacher. In 1901 he entered St. Petersburg University to study law and became politically active among students and soldiers. In 1903 he joined the RSDRP, and later worked in the Vilnius, Vitebsk and Kaunas organisations. He was arrested in Vilnius in autumn 1904, but released pending trial. In February 1905, during the Shidlovsky Commission elections, he was arrested in St. Petersburg, but released pending trial and deported. In summer and autumn he was arrested in Vilnius again, but was freed after the October amnesty,¹¹³ and in November he became one of the editors of the new Menshevik paper in St. Petersburg.¹¹⁴

On 13 November Bronstein wrote in the first *Nachalo* (*The Beginning*), that 'The proletariat accomplishes the fundamental tasks of democracy and then, at a certain moment, the logic of the struggle to consolidate its political power confronts it with problems that are purely socialist. Revolutionary permanency is established between our minimum and maximum programmes.'¹¹⁵ Helphand argued that the revolution would be a 'long, drawn-out development', and SDs must 'merge the old conspiratorial organisation with a new mass organisation',¹¹⁶ though Tserdobaum believed that 'the proletariat has not got at present the necessary strength' to 'push the revolution beyond the point it reached on the 17 October', so 'it must limit itself to defensive tactics';¹¹⁷ and the SPD's Franz Mehring agreed that Russians could not 'pass from absolutism to socialism at the wave of a hand'.¹¹⁸ *Novaya zhizn* welcomed *Nachalo* as 'a comrade in the struggle' and defended its support for 'permanent revolution'.¹¹⁹ Ulyanov urged the sovet EC not to react to government provocations and give it an excuse to crush the movement.¹²⁰ Reportedly he did not speak at the full sovet, but Bolshevik deputies took him to a restaurant afterwards and he accused them of being 'completely incapable of appreciating the enormous force' represented by the sovet and of 'putting forward ridiculous proposals' that it 'should subordinate itself to them'. 'Let peasant deputies join it as well (in Siberia, deputies have already been elected by soldiers)', to make it an 'organ of the proletariat and the peasantry'. The sovet had declined the support of VPSR fighting squads, but workers' patrols saw off a Black Hundred attacks on its building.¹²¹ Around this time the Bolshevik intelligentka Essen, who organised RSDRP fighting squads,¹²² told Ulyanov that workers' wives were not always friendly, and some were disagreeable. Ulyanov replied that in their place, given their hard life, he would have shown her the door. The Bolshevik intelligentka Knipovich, an RSDRP committee secretary, could not agree to unity with the Mensheviks without a Congress's authorisation, and when Essen pointed out that the state was crumbling, and a Congress was impossible since the railway workers were on strike, Ulyanov burst out laughing.¹²³

On the 14th *Novaya zhizn* called for Bolshevik-Menshevik unity.¹²⁴ The 459 sovet deputies came from 147 factories and plants, 34 workshops and 16 unions, and included 351 metalworkers, 57 textile workers, 32 print and paper workers, 12 shop workers and seven office and pharmacy workers. They represented 200,000 workers, or about half all those in the city, and a quarter of the population.¹²⁵ The Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and the VPSR each sent ten deputies and 25 agitators without votes, though Bronstein believed that fewer than two-thirds of deputies were politically aligned.¹²⁶ Soldiers' deputies asked what they should do with arrested soldiers and sailors who had been sent to Kronstadt under escort, and the sovet urged them to form unions and send deputies.¹²⁷ Unemployed workers had organised four soup kitchens,¹²⁸ and the city дума had donated 2,000 rubles out of its annual budget of 15 million rubles. Almost all of the 35,000 rubles in the sovet kitty came from workers, and Putilov workers who had worked only 43 days that year had contributed more than all the city's liberal intelligenty. The deputies elected an unemployed commission of three EC members and one each from the Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and SRs, and allocated 10,000 rubles to the soup kitchens. Deputies debated a motion drafted by Ulyanov which called for unity

between workers, peasants and the armed forces against the government and the bourgeoisie, and instructed the EC to contact revolutionary organisations and plan a general strike;¹²⁹ though one SR intelligent was not convinced.

The lawyer Alexandr Kerensky had believed that the tsar's ukase meant that 'absolute power' was 'a thing of the past'. Early in November the editors of the VPSR's *Pesnya o Burevestnike* (*Stormy Petrel*) had invited him to contribute. His article appeared under a pseudonym on the 15th and he disagreed with the SDs' and SRs' policy of boycotting Duma elections.¹³⁰ *Nachalo* argued that the RSDRP should support the bourgeoisie and the 'new mass organisations', including trade unions, and build 'a broadly based open workers' party'.¹³¹ *Novaya zhizn* noted that the RSDRP CC had announced a congress, and argued that committees had to 'prove to large sections of new Party comrades the importance of a consistent Social-Democratic programme, Social-Democratic tactics and organisation', and 'show great tact' to 'typical representatives' of the masses by using 'a more popular style', explaining 'the basic truths of socialism in the simplest, clearest and convincing manner', and developing a 'basic organisational nucleus' that was 'much broader' and 'less rigid'.

We shall have to distribute the Social-Democratic intelligentsia in a more rational way to ensure that they do not hang about uselessly where the movement has already stood up on its own feet and can, so to speak, shift for itself, and that they go to the 'lower strata' where the work is harder, where the conditions are more difficult, where the need for well-informed people is greater ... [to] spread all over the country, among all the proletarian masses, the slogans issuing from the big centres.

RSDRP organisations should include one intelligent to several hundred workers, and the 'initiative of *all* Party members must be brought into play'. The postal and telegraph union leaders announced a national strike, though members in several cities struck immediately.¹³² Around this time Ulyanov invited the SPD's Kautsky, Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht to write for *Novaya zhizn*.¹³³

By the 16th most of over 100,000 locked out St. Petersburg workers were metalworkers, and many were single men aged under 22,¹³⁴ though after the postal and telegraph workers struck,¹³⁵ the sovet EC sent speakers, and they elected five sovet deputies.¹³⁶ It now took 24 hours for telegrams to reach the border and banks had to send money to Europe by special messengers.¹³⁷ Next day the president of the watchmakers' union reported that since 'we have developed self-consciousness and raised our, legal, intellectual, and moral level, we shall be transformed into free citizens. Not as pathetic and dispersed cowards, but as brave men proud of our solidarity, fully armed with justice and truth, we shall present our demands before the insatiable sharks who are our employers.' Possel factory workers were ready for a 'decisive battle for freedom', if the sovet asked, and Old Lessner workers would 'fight until the last drop of blood' to defend citizens' rights; yet most workers wanted 'liberty', not socialism.¹³⁸

Krupskaya had left Geneva,¹³⁹ and entered Russia legally on the 18th,¹⁴⁰ followed by a spy.¹⁴¹ When she reached St. Petersburg she and Ulyanov lived on Nevsky Prospekt.¹⁴² He wrote in *Novaya zhizn*: 'The autocracy is no longer strong enough to defeat the revolution, and the revolution is not strong enough to defeat tsarism'.¹⁴³ Next day the sovet discussed the strike of 100,000 postal and telegraph workers,¹⁴⁴ gave them 2,000 rubles, found them meeting places, printed their leaflets and asked them not to send government messages.¹⁴⁵

(v) Citizen Schmidt, Commander of the Fleet

Petr Schmidt was born into a navy officer's family in 1867. He attended a navy school, then joined the navy, but in 1888 he married a prostitute and was dismissed the service. He wandered about Europe, returned, and rejoined the navy, thanks to his family's influence; but he later resigned, and by autumn 1905 he was a delegate to the Sevastopol sovet.¹⁴⁶ By October the marines' sovet sometimes met members of workers' organisations.¹⁴⁷ After the ukase arrived in Simferópol in Crimea on 18th, a crowd broke open the prison gates and released prisoners;¹⁴⁸ though troops fired on a crowd at Sevastopol jail, killing six and wounding three.¹⁴⁹ Lieutenant Schmidt led sailors, soldiers and civilians to release the *Potemkin* mutineers, though loyal troops shot some of them, and Schmidt addressed a large crowd at their funeral. 'Let us take our oath to them that among us there shall be neither Jews nor Armenians nor Poles nor Tatars, but henceforth only free and equal brothers in a great and free Russia', and 'if we are not given universal suffrage we shall once more proclaim the great all-Russian strike'. 'We swear it', came the reply. He was arrested, but released on 11 November.¹⁵⁰

The *Prut* was now a katorga prison in Sevastopol harbour. Sailors and infantry ashore were ordered not to protest in public, yet some joined a huge demonstration and a band played the *Marseillaise*. Afterwards some sailors met in barrack courtyards, and members of the RSDRP committee suggested that a sailors' and soldiers' sovet should liaise with workers and support the political general strike. Thousands of workers attended soldiers' meetings and some companies elected deputies, though a rear admiral stationed an armed company at the gates

and ordered 'No one to be let out of the barracks; in the event of insubordination, fire'. A sailor called Petrov shot the rear admiral and a major, and an officer ordered his arrest, yet no one moved. Petrov threw down his rifle and asked to be arrested, and when the officer asked if he had fired accidentally, he denied it. The astonished officer said: 'But they're asking for your release'. Sailors disarmed officers, locked most of them in an office, and though about 40 deputies sent some out of the barracks, they planned a demonstration to win an army regiment's support.

On the morning of the 12th sailors met a workers' delegation,¹⁵¹ though loyal troops tried to break up the meeting. Several crews, including that of the *Panteleimon* (the renamed *Potemkin*), imprisoned officers and elected deputies, and many others mutinied.¹⁵² In hours the port and railways were at a standstill, and Petrov led an armed company to the navy barracks, while unarmed sailors and two RSDRP speakers went to the army barracks. Some soldiers reluctantly agreed to disarm and remove their officers, but insisted that a few remain, while others formed ranks and set off on a demonstration. They kept civilians out, though they disarmed generals who refused to move machine guns and locked them in a barracks office. Sailors, soldiers and workers marched to the Białystok regiment barracks and when they asked machine-gunners to remove their weapons, they presented arms and let the demonstration pass. The *Panteleimon* flew a red banner, and the battleship *Rotislav* acknowledged it, though some sailors objected that it was above the tsar's flag and put it below. Sailors' and soldiers' delegates from seven warships and other units, with rifles and a few cartridges, met SDs, and insisted that the officers be disarmed and removed from the ships and barracks.

On the 13th armed sappers joined the mutiny. Deputations from the Fortress artillery, the Białystok regiment, and border guards, promised not to fire. Loyal troops arrived, though agitators won over some of them. Messages of solidarity came from the *Panteleimon*, the cruiser *Ochakov* and two torpedo boats, and other warships promised not to fire. An officer brought the tsar's telegram to the navy barracks, demanding that they lay down their arms in 24 hours, but mutineers drove him away. Mutinous sailors patrolled the streets and guarded liquor shops to prevent a pogrom, and delegates invited Schmidt to take command of the fleet.

Next day an admiral's flag was raised on the *Ochakov* and Schmidt telegraphed the tsar: 'The glorious Black Sea Fleet, holding sacred its allegiance to the people, calls upon you, Sire, immediately to convene a Constituent Assembly, and ceases to obey your ministers'. He signed it 'Citizen Schmidt, Commander of the Fleet'. A loyal admiral arrived and put the town under martial law, and when several warship crews arrested their officers,¹⁵³ loyal ships and artillery opened fire.¹⁵⁴ The *Ochakov* managed six shots before it was disabled, and torpedo boats and sloops were sunk. Sailors were shot in the water, and rescue boats were fired on, so few escaped, while the crew of the *Panteleimon* had not readied its guns and raised the white flag. Schmidt disguised himself as an ordinary sailor, but was captured. By evening over 2,000 mutineers were under arrest and the admiral telegraphed St. Petersburg. 'The military storm has abated, not so the revolutionary storm'.¹⁵⁵

There had been 44 officially-reported mutinies in a fortnight. Most took place after officers arrested 'instigators' or dispersed meetings, and 11 were in the Caucasus.¹⁵⁶ On the 15th, at Kronstadt, some mutineers were disciplined, while others were sent to ordinary or katorga prisons.¹⁵⁷ On the 20th there were serious troop disturbances in Kyiv, Ekaterinodar, Elisavetpol, Proskurovo, Kursk, Lomzha and Warszawa.¹⁵⁸

Next day martial law was imposed in Poland,¹⁵⁹ though the SDKPiL combat organisation assassinated a retired colonel and his tenant who they suspected of leading Black Hundreds.¹⁶⁰ The SDKPiL demanded 'equality of nationalities in the Russian empire' with 'guaranteed freedom of cultural development', 'national schools', 'freedom to use native tongues' and 'national autonomy', and a secret resolution noted that 'Our present work among the troops must aim at organizing the soldiers for an armed uprising'.¹⁶¹ The perspectives of most revolutionary parties were converging, and the RSDRP intelligenty factions were cautiously moving towards unity.

(vi) Tired of being slaughtered like fowls

On the 20 November 1905, in St. Petersburg, *Nachalo* argued that it was 'entirely possible that in the event of a protracted civil war our revolution, which began as a democratic revolution, will end as a socialist revolution'.¹⁶² The Mensheviks Tsederbaum, Potresov, Gurvich and Piker joined the editorial board, and the paper's slogans were a 'Social-Democratic Provisional Government' and 'No tsar, but a workers' government!'¹⁶³

Malinovsky and Ulyanov attended a Menshevik conference,¹⁶⁴ without consulting the Russian CC,¹⁶⁵ and the conference accepted the Bolsheviks' organisational principle of 'democratic centralism'.

All party members take part in the election of party institutions. All party institutions are elected for a period, are subject to recall and obligated to account for their actions both periodically and at any time upon demand of the organisation which elected them. Decisions of the guiding collectives are binding on the members of those organisations of which the collective

is the organ ... All party members vote directly in elections to general party congresses; congress delegates are elected by organisations in proportion to the number of members. No delegate may have more than one vote at a congress. The agenda must be published beforehand so that organisations will have an opportunity to discuss it.

The Bolshevik and Menshevik centres were to 'be merged on the basis of equality' and would support a merger at a local level, though it was 'essential that the right of special representation be granted to any minority which has collected not less than two-thirds of the votes needed to send a delegate' to an RSDRP Congress.¹⁶⁶

After the replacement postal and telegraph union leaders were arrested on the 20th,¹⁶⁷ Tserderbaum became depressed inactive.¹⁶⁸ Ulyanov rarely went out,¹⁶⁹ and he and Krupskaya avoided bumping into police and meeting comrades who were lax about security. Krupskaya visited the Kornilov School and found that 'Propagandist work was conducted in classes crammed full of working men and women. Party propagandists read lectures', and a young speaker was 'dealing with Engels' theme, the development of socialism from Utopia to Science, yet the workers sat there without winking an eyelid, trying to take in what the orator expounded. Nobody asked any questions'.¹⁷⁰

Krupskaya became the leading secretary of the Bolshevik CC. Her assistant, Vera Menzhinskaya was 33. She had been born into a professor's family, graduated from a girls' secondary school, completed a three-year teacher-training course and taught in a Sunday school. Her sister Ludmila was 29. She had become a teacher, joined the RSDRP in 1904, became a secretary of St. Petersburg committee in 1905 and was responsible for storing and transporting weapons.¹⁷¹ Mikhail Weinstein was secretary of the RSDRP 'fighting organisation'. Krupskaya recalled that the secretaries did not attend CC meetings, but no one was 'in charge' of them, 'no minutes were taken' of discussions and 'ciphered addresses were kept in match-boxes, inside book-bindings, and in similar places'. 'We had to trust our memories. A whole heap of people besieged us, and we had to look after them in every way'. The secretaries sent the 'most interesting comrades on the most interesting business' to CC members, and Krupskaya kept Ulyanov fully informed,¹⁷² made his appointments and supplied false passports and propaganda, and she was the only member of the economic commission with access to the accounts. The secretaries moved to two rooms in an SD dentists' surgery, then to an SD bookshop and subsequently to the Technological Institute canteen.¹⁷³

On the 21st Nevinson arrived in St. Petersburg and got an entrance ticket for the soviet EC from a 'revolutionary typographer'. The ante-room was 'crowded with working people', including some women, though he noticed no factory workers. The soviet sat 'almost in permanence night and day'.

As soon as the reports were all read, the executive gathered up their papers and adjourned into the upper room to consider their decision. During their absence, the other delegates broke up into groups according to trades, for the discussion of their own affairs. Standing on a chair, a man would shout, 'Weavers, this way please!' 'Engineers, here!' or 'railway-men, this way!'

Workers 'clustered around in swarms'. After an hour or so 'a yellow-haired young workman with a voice like the Last Trumpet, raised the Russian "Marseillaise", and in a moment the room was sounding to the hymn of freedom. Russian words - rather vague and rhetorical words, - have been set to the old French tune, and even the tune has been altered at the end of the chorus, to make room for words, "Forward, forward, forward!"' The EC argued against a general strike for an eight-hour day, and the deputies agreed by 300 votes to 20.

Next day Nevinson noticed that the police were more daring.

[T]hey planted themselves in front of the doors and drove the audience away from a meeting; and the audience had to go, for except to bombs and revolvers there was no appeal. Every day I watched the police hounding groups of tattered and starving peasants or workmen along the streets, because they had ventured to come to St. Petersburg without passports, and had to be imprisoned until the luggage train could take them back to their starving homes.

Managers had cleared 60,000 locked-out workers from factory barracks, so many lived in wooden huts off the Shlisselburg Road. No family had more than one room, and up to four families occupied larger rooms 'separated by shawls or strings'. Cossacks roamed the streets, carrying the *nagaika*, which Nevinson described as a heavy whip of twisted hide with 'a jagged lump of lead is firmly tied into the strands' near the end. 'When a Cossack rises in his stirrups to strike, he can break a skull right open, and any ordinary blow will slit a face from brow to chin, and cripple a woman or child for life.' After boy of eight with his mother in a mill shook his fist at the Cossacks, their officer ordered them to enter the machine room, where they 'bayoneted the child, and began firing at random upon the people at their work'. 'Tired of being slaughtered like fowls', workers collected arms and organised a militia. 'Armed groups crept through the fields and back lanes from one point of vantage to another. In the daytime, firing was common in the streets, and almost every night the workmen met the soldiers in a sharp encounter'.¹⁷⁴

On the 23rd railway union leaders heard about Kushka officials who were to be executed at midnight for revolutionary agitation. The union leaders and the sovet EC told ministers that all rail traffic would stop if the executions were not cancelled by 8.00pm. At 8.05pm the communications minister telegraphed the war minister, courtesy of the union, to confirm that the executions would not take place. Given the government's 'imminent bankruptcy', the sovet called on workers to demand wages in gold,¹⁷⁵ withdraw deposits from savings banks and refuse to pay taxes or subscribe to loans.¹⁷⁶ Next day the government strengthened governors' powers and criminalized false information and incitement to demonstrate or strike.¹⁷⁷ Preliminary censorship had not been enforced for over a month,¹⁷⁸ but censors ordered the prosecution of the official publisher of *Novaya zhizn*.¹⁷⁹

On the 25th *Novaya zhizn* noted that the sovet was 'an inchoate, broad, fighting alliance of socialists and revolutionary democrats', but anarchist deputies would be a 'liability' and the EC had been right not to admit them.¹⁸⁰ Ministers ordered troops to suppress strikes, 'in extreme cases'.¹⁸¹ Next day the interior minister ordered police, gendarmes and troops to raid the sovet EC. The police chief arrived and began reading the warrant, but Bronstein asked him not to interrupt a speaker, then put it to the vote as to whether the chief should be allowed to speak. They agreed, though Bronstein asked him to leave, then asked the deputies to destroy their documents and 'anything unnecessary' and not to give their names. When the chief returned with troops, an EC member called the tsar's ukase a 'foul and worthless lie', and asked the soldiers to support 'the people'. After an officer pushed the soldiers out of the room, the EC member raised his voice and asked them to 'turn their rifles on those who force them to reinforce a rule of force, depravity and robbery with the blood of their brothers'. The police re-entered, Bronstein closed the meeting,¹⁸² and Nosar was arrested.¹⁸³

On the 27th 302 deputies attended the sovet,¹⁸⁴ out of 562.¹⁸⁵ They elected a new president,¹⁸⁶ and Bronstein successfully proposed a presidium of himself, Zlydniev and Sverchkov;¹⁸⁷ though the SRs were offended,¹⁸⁸ so the EC was expanded to 35 voting and 15 non-voting members.¹⁸⁹ The sovet agreed to coordinate its financial policy with the peasants' union and the socialist parties, and to issue a manifesto,¹⁹⁰ to say that they would not recognise the tsar's debts after the revolution.¹⁹¹ They also agreed to issue a leaflet to troops,¹⁹² and to continue preparing for an armed revolt;¹⁹³ though a returning SR intelligent had his doubts.

Earlier that year the revolutionary publicist Vladimir Burtsev had returned to St. Petersburg and found 'a different country'. He thought people would avoid him 'like the plague', but they 'vied with one another in offering me a flat for the night' and 'everybody talked as openly' as in Paris. He asked Sverchkov 'can these really be Russians?' The 'revolutionary atmosphere smelled of gunpowder', yet Russia was 'not ready for social revolution and the introduction of socialism'. The 'few revolutionaries did not have sufficient strength even to defend our gains', and 'we could only do this in alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie', so 'we should make our aim' the 'reinforcement of our political gains'. Late that year Burtsev opposed the general strike and the sovet's decrees;¹⁹⁴ yet brave young male and female intelligently continued to distribute revolutionary literature.

Valerian Kuibyshev had been born into the family of a landless senior military officer in Kuznetsk, Siberia, in 1887. His father earned no more than 150 rubles a month, but had eight children, and was shell-shocked in the war with Japan. In autumn 1905 Valerian entered St. Petersburg Military Medical Academy, and by November he delivered RSDRP literature to distribution centres. He was tasked with visiting a worker's house to pick up bomb casings from Finland and deliver them to a warehouse for distribution across the country, especially to Moscow; so he and an older student, Agatha Yakovleva, stuffed them in their pockets, under their belts, around their backs and chests and into briefcases. They walked to the city centre, and noticed a policeman behind them, so they entered a doorway. Kuibyshev hailed a droshky and shouted the address to the driver, but Yakovleva feared that the policeman may have heard him. Days later, as Kuibyshev returned home late one night with six pistols in his briefcase, Yakovleva ran out to warn him that a search was imminent. He had illegal literature in his room, which district organisers were to pick up next morning, though he managed to warn them.¹⁹⁵

Ministers communicated with the tsar by military telegraph, sent couriers in navy launches or went in person, and two destroyers stood ready to take the imperial family to England.¹⁹⁶ On the 29th the tsar decreed that if postal, telegraphic or railway communications broke down,¹⁹⁷ governors could declare the severest form of martial law.¹⁹⁸

Peasants did not necessarily support revolutionaries. When teachers out at Chorino asked for the RSDRP's advice on forming a union, Woytinsky took a train and met unemployed young workers who sang revolutionary songs and were about to seek work at a factory near Moscow. A teacher had recommended a subscription to a 'good' newspaper, and wanted to 'organise a non-partisan professional union' with him and others 'as an S-D cell within it'. Woytinsky advocated a republic, but peasants threatened to lynch him. The young workers supported him, yet after he left some peasants ambushed him. He escaped to a railway station, but was threatened with being lynched again. Troops took him to Novgorod prison; but freed him after a few days and he returned to St. Petersburg. 'Because of the interruption in communications, wild rumours spread in the city, and panic developed on the stock exchange'; so 'everybody began to talk of the imminent collapse of the ruble'. The sovet appeal to workers not to

accept paper currency meant they would have nothing to live on, and Woytinsky hoped that mutinies in Kharkiv, Kyiv and 'a half-dozen other places' represented 'a new revolutionary tide'.¹⁹⁹

(vii) Kyiv

By November 1905 most Kyiv sovet deputies came from nine large plants, while around 200 from smaller factories had a consultative voice, but no vote, and the chair, F.P. Alexeev, a metalworker at the largest factory, was a Bolshevik sympathiser. Delegates expressed solidarity with the St. Petersburg sovet, decided to boycott the reactionary paper, *Kyivlianin (The Kyivian)*, blacklist its printers and support victimised nail factory workers, but not to affiliate to the Union of Unions,²⁰⁰ which had 100,000 members nationally.²⁰¹

The city дума had allowed the University to reopen, though after students boycotted a professor who had thanked troops for their role in the pogrom, and the University was closed on the 5th. Tailors considered forming a union, but did not invite Jews, and the carpenters' union barred the self-employed. SDs influenced unionised bakers who called for a democratic constituent assembly and the transfer of land to the peasants who worked it, and though 90 percent of print workers were ready to join a union with economic aims, only 20 percent agreed to a political platform. On the 8th the liberal *Kyivskaya gazeta (Kyiv Gazette)* damned the 'Black Hundred Council' and 'hooligan mayor' for the pogrom, but the paper was closed next day.²⁰² Professor Lomonsov worked with the *Vyperod* group, and attended a University gathering on the 12th. Next evening E. Ivanovsky, a Menshevik engineer, invited him to meet the Bolshevik Schlichter, other full-time revolutionaries and a member of the revolutionary coalition committee. Schlichter argued for revolutionaries and unions to join the Union of Unions, and cooperate with the coalition committee, which might make a few seats available. On the 15th about 60 delegates attended the first meeting of the Kyiv branch of the Union of Unions,²⁰³ and 700 postal and telegraph workers joined the strike.²⁰⁴

The Menshevik-led RSDRP committee had not prepared for an armed rising, or contacted radicalised troops,²⁰⁵ though the joint RSDRP military organisation made contact, re-established secret apartments and arranged meetings almost daily, and its leader, Alexandr Vannovsky, a Moscow Marine Kadet Corps graduate, cooperated with SRs. After hundreds of Cossacks heard about the Sevastopol and Kronstadt mutinies, and sappers were ordered to do the work of postal and telegraph strikers, tensions rose. On the 16th two battalions voted to strike over the lack of a kitchen, dining area and seats, poor food, scarce tea and sugar, poor quality uniforms and other issues, and demanded courts to try incompetent officers. They also wanted a soldiers' sovet. That evening up to 60 soldiers, all but one of them sappers, met SDs and decided to stage an armed demonstration at the arsenal to win the support of infantry and workers for an armed rising. Around 50 workers went to a market to chase hooligans, but they increased in number and savagely beat the workers. One restaurant workers' fighting squad killed three hooligans, and 150 workers in three others rid the streets of 'sinners'.²⁰⁶

Lomonsov heard that seats on the revolutionary coalition committee were unavailable,²⁰⁷ and next day the Union of Unions branch split. Vannovsky led an armed group to an army barracks and then Perchersk bazaar, and infantry, sappers, workers and youths joined them. Most other troops refused to attack them, but Cossacks surrounded them with poised rifles. The crowd moved to an artillery barracks, though the troops had been removed or disarmed. Machine-builders joined the crowd, which grew to around 3,000, though most had no arms, and loyal infantry fired on them near the Halytsky bazaar, while Cossacks and dragoons blocked their escape. Two hundred unarmed soldiers who tried to win over the infantry took massive casualties,²⁰⁸ including at least 30 dead,²⁰⁹ and belatedly, the joint military committee appealed to other soldiers to form a sovet.²¹⁰

On the 19th up to 6,000 people discussed a general strike. The sovet at the Polytechnical Institute agreed, though the machine-building works was isolated and the main railway shops were closed. Next day there was a small demonstration,²¹¹ though martial law was imposed,²¹² troops occupied banned newspaper presses on the 21st and loyal newspapers reappeared. On the 23rd the sovet called off the strike, though 60 teachers attended a union meeting, and delegates from a mill, a tobacco factory and other plants joined the sovet, which decided to recruit one delegate for every 100 workers on the 27th. Next day fighting squads helped the police to overpower an armed looter, and when workers learned that police had helped him loot during the pogrom, they beat him up. The police arrested 50 workers, though metalworkers discussed a strike,²¹³ and strikes broke out between Kyiv and Moscow.

(viii) Orel

Alexey Preobrazhensky was born into an Orthodox priest's family in an Orel province village in the central industrial region in 1853. He graduated from Orel seminary, taught there and then at a zemstvo school, and in 1883 he was

ordained as a priest. He opened a school with his own resources, a Sunday school in 1885 and then a parish school in 1886. His wife Varvara had been born into an archpriests' family in 1864, and had had a boarding school education, and Evgeny was born in the town of Bolkov, Orel province, in 1886. He could read by the age of four; but in 1894, when his mother gave him new boots at Easter, he threw them away because his friend, a shoemaker's son, had holes in his. Evgeny attended his father's school, then spent two years at an Orel school, and went on to a gymnasium. He read 'liberal-populist' literature and found that his father's library included works that seemed to contradict his 'very religious' views. In 1893 the seven-year-old decided that god did not exist, and struggled with his parents about going to church. He later read works by the 1860s radicals Pisarev and Dobrolyubov, and noted the oppression of local peasants. In the fifth form he read illegal literature, including a Katerynoslav Mining Institute students' revolutionary manifesto and an account of Cossacks beating students, and eventually considered himself a revolutionary. He and a merchant's son went to solitary places outside the city and sang the *Marseillaise*, and Evgeny read books on culture and history, 'especially the history of revolution', and on 'the basic elements of political economy' and illegal 'foreign works on rice-paper'. The boys established two kruzhski, contacted people under surveillance and Evgeny hectographed 100 leaflets. In the seventh form he read the *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* and Engels' book on the development of socialism from utopianism to science, and distributed RSDRP committee literature. He had got VPSR literature from a woman under surveillance, but could no longer accept it. In autumn 1903 40-year-old Alexandr Litkens of the RSDRP committee acquired a mimeograph, and early in 1904 the committee ordered three boys to distribute a leaflet against the war.

[A]ll three of us simultaneously left our different classes, and went to the cloakroom where the coats of all the students were hanging, and, seizing the opportune moment, we distributed one hundred and fifty to two hundred proclamations into the pockets of all the students of the upper classes. The operation went splendidly, and when the students put on their coats and left for home, they were all surprised to find in their pockets the publications of the Orel committee. There was an enormous scandal, the administration rushed about in search of the people responsible, and the gendarmes conducted an investigation, but did not find the culprits.

The RSDRP committee accepted 18-year-old Preobrazhensky and the other two adolescents as propagandists, and by spring Evgeny was explaining the RSDRP programme to two kruzhski of engineers. In summer the committee asked him to tutor the son of the local police chief, who locked a mimeograph and illegal literature in his father's desk, and when they wanted to organise factory meetings he asked him for his horses to 'go hunting'.

In spring 1905 Preobrazhensky led a strike at Orel's educational institutions, yet after he graduated in summer his conduct book made no mention of his political activities. At the suggestion of the Menshevik Olimpy Kvitkin, he was co-opted onto Bryansk RSDRP committee. He slept on newspapers on a railway station floor, spent no more than 20 kopeks a day on sausage and bread, and walked almost 20km to lead workers' kruzhski at the locomotive plant each evening. The committee took a 'compromising attitude' to the factions, and Preobrazhensky and another young man were the only 'solid Bolsheviks', until Kvitkin returned from the London conference as a 'convinced Bolshevik'. In October strike committees formed in Bryansk, Verkhov and along the railway from Orel to Gryaz, and on the 18th, after the tsar's ukase arrived, print workers and others marched to the jail to free political prisoners, though Cossacks and Black Hundreds blocked their way. What had become the Orel-Bryansk RSDRP committee formed a fighting squad, led by Kvitkin, and a sovet was formed with deputies from plants where Preobrazhensky had propagandised. The sovet demanded the withdrawal of troops and took responsibility for maintaining order, and at the end of November the teenage Preobrazhensky was summoned to be a propagandist in Moscow.²¹⁴

(ix) Moscow

Since summer 1905 revolutionaries had propagandised soldiers in Moscow.²¹⁵ One sympathiser recalled that 'From time to time we used to come across literature', and he and other soldiers 'would pick it up and read it, if they could, or smoke it, if they could not', though 'extremely little of it was digested'.²¹⁶ In autumn, during the general strike, SDs and SRs discuss an insurrection with members of several regiments,²¹⁷ and on 1 November delegates from nine grenadier regiments met at Morozov's Mill, and though the police made arrests, Bolsheviks and Mensheviks agitated for the election of sovet deputies who had not been Shidlovsky elders.²¹⁸ Half of the over 35,000 strikers were textile workers, 8,000 were domestic servants and 6,000 or so were metalworkers. The strike committee's 12 SDs proposed barring professional and white-collar workers, and walked out after they lost by 54 votes to 17.²¹⁹ On the 4th Moscow Metalworks employees demanded that four managers be sacked, and though the managers threatened to close the factory in 17 days, the workers went on strike on the 12th.²²⁰

The Bolshevik rabochy-intelligentka Bobrovskaya had been freed by the October amnesty and reached Moscow by mid-November. She had orders to 'make the Lefortovo workers fall into step with the more militant districts', and recalled that Bolsheviks 'organised meetings from morn till night at the Vedensky People's Palace'. 'Before we could clear the hall of one group, another group would pour in, while crowds of workers would be waiting their turn on the Vedensky Square'. Bolsheviks organised clubs, arranged lectures and did 'all sorts of cultural work'. 'I vividly recall a group of workers from the Dufurmantel factory, five of them, led by a middle-aged, red-bearded worker. They were sent by the illiterate workers who had organised themselves and demanded that we immediately teach them to read and to write. "It's a crime not to be able to read at such times"'. The Bolsheviks promised to set up a school with public funds, though the district organisers 'found it very difficult to provide agitators', and Bobrovskaya was no orator, so she used 'all sorts of ruses to get an extra agitator from the centre'.²²¹

By the 21st the 180 sovet deputies represented 80,000 workers,²²² from 134 workplaces.²²³ Of the 72 from known plants, 21 were from metalworks, 16 from textile mills and 15 from food firms. Most were politically unaligned, yet they elected a Menshevik printer as chair and an EC of SDs from the eight districts, plus two each from the VPSR, Menshevik and Bolshevik organisations.²²⁴ Twenty deputies formed district sovet, but a Bolshevik recalled that the sovet 'did not exert any strong independent influence' like the Bolshevik-led RSDRP committee. After a St. Petersburg Menshevik sovet deputy addressed the sovet,²²⁵ RSDRP northern committees passed a resolution.

A council of workers' deputies should be established only in places where the party has no other means of directing the proletariat's revolutionary action or where it is necessary to free the masses from the bourgeois parties. The sovet of workers' deputies must be a technical instrument for the party for the purpose of giving political leadership to the masses through the RSDRP. It is therefore imperative to gain control of the sovet and prevail upon it to recognise the programme and political leadership of the RSDRP.

Plants with 400 workers and smaller workforces amounting to 500 should send a deputy.²²⁶

By the 22nd the city's soldier's sovet had around 130 deputies from a dozen or so regiments and representatives of the revolutionary parties.²²⁷ On the 25th two squadrons of exhausted Don Cossacks refused duty, and when a sapper who made a revolutionary speech was arrested, two reserve sapper battalions and a reserve infantry battalion demanded his release,²²⁸ and one battalion refused to obey an order and issued demands on the 26th. When Rostov regiment grenadiers were arrested, the rest refused to disarm the sappers.²²⁹ Around 50 trade unions now had 24,000 members,²³⁰ including 4,000 printers, 2,500 commercial and industrial workers, 2,000 tea-packers, 1,770 bakers, 1,200 tailors, 1,000 tobacco workers and 600 railway workshop engineers.²³¹

On his way to Moscow Nevinson had noted that 19 strikers had been shot in Tula and peasants who could not pay taxes were 'marched off to the village police-court', 'tied face downwards to a sloping bench and 'whipped with whips or rods by officials and police'. He reached Moscow on the 26th and saw troops returning from the front. A 'few cavalry came first', then 'a few straggling infantry – not more than half a battalion – covered with filth, their uniforms torn and patched, some in low, flat caps' and others in 'high, furry caps, matted with mud and snow'. Their faces were 'yellow, thin' and 'bemused with wonder'. Behind them was 'a rambling line of various forms of cart' carrying 'muffled and pallid forms, their heads or arms or feet bound up with dirty and blood-stained bandages', while discharged reservists 'limped about in traces of departed uniforms'. Rumours circulated that the 'distracted army, mutinous and starving' in Manchuria, was 'unable to crowd into the worn-out trains that crept along those thousands of kilometres of single line, choked with stores and blocked by continual accidents and strikes'. It was unclear who the troops in Moscow supported, though a 'gigantic Caucasian' at meeting of 'peaceful and scientific' SDs shouted that 'the party who commands force is the government'. On the 27th Nevinson saw a 'feeble attempt to rush a mail-cart' and its armed escort, though Cossacks drove them away. SDs had agitated tea-packers and shop assistants, and almost every trade had a union. The University was closed, and 7,000 students were 'scattered, some to their homes' and 'some to their lodgings in the city, where for the most part they swelled the army of the Social Democrats, and spent their time discussing maximum and minimum programmes and the socialisation of productivity. They were also collecting arms.' When a professor spoke about SD principles to an audience half composed of workers,

three young Cossacks leapt onto the stage and announced that they were on strike. "I have flung away the uniform!" shouted one, who was apparelled in a long dressing-gown. "No more fools of officers over me!" Shouted another. "And they fed us like swine!" shouted the third, who was just economically drunk. The applause that rocked the audience was one of the grandest noises I have ever heard.²³²

More sappers threatened to strike if their demands were not met, and the police feared that other soldiers might support them.²³³ The Katerynoslav regiment declared their readiness to support an armed insurrection under RSDRP leadership,²³⁴ and offered to seize the arsenal, yet the Bolshevik intelligently dithered.

The Bolshevik intelligentka Zalkind had left St. Petersburg to avoid arrest, and became a Moscow RSDRP committee secretary.²³⁵ She objected 'passionately' to an uprising, since the Sevastopol and Kyiv mutinies had failed, yet Mikhail Vasiliev reported that the Rostov regiment had listened to revolutionary agitators, 'sent their officers packing', seized weapons, 'met the area commander with bayonets' and had eight of the regiment's 13 machine guns. The mood in other regiments was 'possibly sympathetic', and 'Cossacks had begun to listen to our agitators', though their 'neutrality was more to be counted on than their active help'. The committee should 'get the Rostov men out of their barracks, seize the main government institutions, arrest the most important officials, and take possession wherever possible of stores of arms in order to arm the workers', some of whom were forging pikes; yet Shantser proposed giving the Rostov regiment 'agitational speeches' and 'waiting for directions' from St. Petersburg, and when the sappers who guarded the arsenal offered Vasiliev the keys, Shantser persuaded him to wait.²³⁶

On the 28th the police arrested a postal and telegraph union leader, and five Kazan line telegraphists were sacked, but over 1,000 railway workshop workers protested.²³⁷ Revolutionary militia discussed taking over the arsenal, arresting the governor and disrupting the St. Petersburg line to prevent loyal troops arriving, though they did not act.²³⁸ After Rostov regiment officers gave the men extra pay, meat and soap, the mutiny ended on the 29th,²³⁹ though other regiments made demands and one refused duty. Volunteer combat organisations contacted the RSDRP, received leaflets, and over 50 formed two weak RSDRP kruzki and one stronger VPSR kruzok, though the police raided the strike committee and took its cash and literature. Mensheviks pressured Bolsheviks to allow an extra delegate from unions with over 500 members onto the sovet,²⁴⁰ and it became 'a federation of all the revolutionary socialist organisations'.²⁴¹ The RSDRP CC intelligent Krasin had organised an 'armed company of 12 Georgians', aged 18 to 22, to fight Black Hundreds during the day and protect Gorky at night, and that evening the CC met at Gorky's flat to discuss a rising. Gorky met Ulyanov for the first time,²⁴² and they agreed to make Helphand relinquish Gorky's royalties and repay what he had taken,²⁴³ yet there was a spy among the city's SDs.

Zinaida Zhuchenko had been born into a noble Georgian family in 1872, and later attended the elite Smolny Institute in St. Petersburg.²⁴⁴ In 1894 the police recruited her,²⁴⁵ and in 1895 she provided information that foiled a plot to assassinate the tsar. The police 'deported' her to Georgia for five years, but gave her 1,000 rubles and 100 rubles a month.²⁴⁶ In 1898 she penetrated revolutionary kruzki in Leipzig and Heidelberg,²⁴⁷ and after the Moscow spy Serebriakova retired in 1905,²⁴⁸ Zhuchenko was summoned to Moscow in November and given revolutionaries' names and addresses and letters of recommendation.²⁴⁹

Women were active in sovet across the region. Nina Podvoyskaya had joined the RSDRP in 1902, at the age of 20, and worked in Yaroslavl, Nizhni Novgorod, Moscow, Perm and St. Petersburg from 1903 to 1904, then organised armed squads in Kostroma in 1905.²⁵⁰ By November the sovet had 135 deputies, and Moscow sovet had 204,²⁵¹ including 36 women textile workers,²⁵² who were also members of the strike committee,²⁵³ which met in a school.

Ivan Fiedler had been born into an upper-class Moscow family, and by 1901 he was a liberal councillor. By October 1905 students and secondary pupils met at his academy and studied street fighting and practiced shooting. Up to 300 SR and SD workers and intelligently *also* met there most days, though the RSDRP fighting organisation's link to the committee was a spy.²⁵⁴ In November the Bolshevik Emelianov was deported to Nizhni Novgorod for five years,²⁵⁵ though a Bolshevik intelligent arrived in Moscow.

Ivan Muralov spent four years at a gymnasium in the early 1850s, volunteered for the army, fought in Crimea and was decorated for bravery; but was captured and spent two years in England. He met the utopian socialist Herzen, and when Muralov got back to Russia he ran a farm near Taganrog and subscribed to Herzen's *Kolokol*. Nikolai was born in 1877, and from 1883 his father taught him to read and write over winter. In 1894 he passed the entrance exam for an agricultural school, and graduated in 1897. After his father died, 20-year-old Muralov worked for a landowner, but a year later he was accused of 'familiarity with the workers' and left for Moscow province. He volunteered for an elite regiment, but the assistant interior minister refused to certify his political reliability, and when he returned to Taganrog he was put in the reserves. In 1899 he went to Maikop in the Caucasus and managed a distillery and then a creamery. He joined an SD kruzok, read *Kapital* and *Iskra* in 1901, and joined a workers' kruzok. In 1902 he was briefly imprisoned in Moscow, and in autumn he joined an SD kruzok in Serpukhov in Moscow province. In 1903 he became an agronomist in Podolsk, and supported the RSDRP Second Congress 'majority'. In November 1905 he shot his way out of a Black Hundred pogrom and rushed to Moscow.²⁵⁶

In summer Azev's new Okhrana contact had threatened to expose him unless he betrayed VPSR leaders,²⁵⁷ and he promised to betray Savinkov and others. His salary rose to 600 rubles a month, with 3,600 in advance, and he went to Saratov with 300 rubles for expenses.²⁵⁸ Savinkov was sent to St. Petersburg to assassinate the assistant

interior minister, but had to dodge the police and left for Geneva. He returned to Russia and went to Moscow. The assassination attempts were unsuccessful, though he escaped to Finland.²⁵⁹ A 25,000 rubles reward was offered for capturing the VPSR combat organisation, and in November Savinkov went to St. Petersburg, met Nosar, and dismissed soviet leaders as windbags with the partial exception of Bronstein.²⁶⁰ Azev was in Moscow and told the CC the combat organisation had been 'dissolved',²⁶¹ and *Revolyutsionnaya Rossiya* would close,²⁶² though the Moscow committee asked peasants to prepare for an uprising,²⁶³ and the VPSR was influential in south Ukraine.

(x) Odesa

Early in November 1905 some Odesa factory workforces had demanded that pogromists be sacked and assisted their victims. Bolsheviks supported RSDRP-affiliated unions, and Bolsheviks and Mensheviks formed a joint trade union bureau. At the Mensheviks' suggestion, 35 delegates from Peresyp district's main metalworking and machine-building plants discussed a soviet and asked the Mensheviks to organise the election of deputies. On the 6th they invited 200, yet almost 1,000 turned up. Members of the Menshevik-led RSDRP committee and Bundists attended, though the Bolsheviks held aloof, since it 'might easily elude party control and succumb to the "spontaneity" of the masses'.²⁶⁴ St. Petersburg soviet got in touch, an Odesa soviet was established and the deputies elected a Menshevik student as chair.²⁶⁵ Deputies formed three district soviets, which elected five-person ECs, and together they formed the soviet EC. They organised rallies to encourage the formation of more district soviets, and many leading workers who had been detained that summer were elected. Dock workers went on strike for higher pay, an eight-hour day, medical care and negotiations about fines and sackings, and thousands of shop assistants discussed forming a union. Railway workers demonstrated solidarity with the St. Petersburg strikers, protested against the decision to execute strike leaders on the Trans-Caspian military railway and were reportedly 'fully prepared at the first summons of the soviet to enter into combat with the enemy'.

On the 19th, at the soviet, the Bolshevik intelligent Bogomolets argued for a constituent assembly, abolishing the death penalty, an amnesty for political prisoners and a boycott of wealthy merchants who controlled the duma and exploited the poor,²⁶⁶ and the Bolshevik praktik Tarshis recalled that a strike 'might have been converted into an armed revolt, had the soviet and the revolutionary organisations called for it'.²⁶⁷ Next day 3,000 people, including many workers, protested at the imposition of martial law in Poland and called for Polish national autonomy. Sailors refused to transport troops and supplies and railway workers threatened to strike if the death sentences on their Samara colleagues were carried out. The government caved in. In Odesa Bogomolets argued that unions were 'a political weapon in the struggle with capitalism', but could not end exploitation, so workers needed to develop class consciousness and launch a political general strike in order to win control of the means of production.²⁶⁸

On the 22nd Bolshevik intelligent insisted that the soviet accept the RSDRP programme, though most Mensheviks and other deputies decided that it would be 'a nonpartisan instrument of leadership of the working masses, the majority of whom are unaffiliated'.²⁶⁹

By the 26th the RSDRP committee had more than 1,000 supporters and called for the election of more soviet deputies to prepare for a general strike. Workforces chose 22 SDs and six SRs, mainly from the railway, a large metalworks, a tobacco factory, a print works and student medical assistants. The soviet elected the Bolshevik railway workshop turner A.A. Petrov as chair, but passed a VPSR motion that the soviet 'must be the single leader of the revolutionary parties of the proletariat in its struggle with the government and must not adopt the program of any one party'. The police arrested soviet leaders, though others raised money for arms.²⁷⁰

By the 28th the soviet's 391 deputies came from factories and workshops, 80 from unions and professional organisations and 16 from political organisations. Seven of 154 known deputies were women, 33 were Jews, 81 were RSDRP members, though only three were Bolsheviks, 12 were SRs, six were liberals, five were Anarcho-Communists, two were Bundists and one was a Ukrainian SD; though all 15 EC members were SDs. Two St. Petersburg soviet deputies who had been active in Odesa years earlier, addressed the soviet, and argued successfully that it should be politically unaligned. The deputies focussed on winning a constituent assembly, establishing a social security system, organising a general strike and overthrowing the tsar. The soviet resolved to direct strikes and boycotts, organise free cafeterias for the unemployed, set food prices in the shops, organise boycotts of those charging more, establish a legal aid bureau for workers who had been cheated or sacked and publish a newspaper. Next day railway workers supported the 'last onslaught' to achieve a constituent assembly, and demanded an amnesty for political prisoners and the release of arrested strikers.²⁷¹

The VPSR 'centre' had a propagandists' group and an agitators' assembly, and coordinated work with at least three trade unions, plus groups of soldiers, sailors, students and secondary pupils, though the fighting squads may have had some autonomy,²⁷² and RSDRP contacts in England were helping to smuggle arms.

(xi) The Baltic region

In 1901 the 30-year-old former St. Petersburg SD engineer and rabochy intelligent Heinrich Fischer and his pregnant wife Lyubov had escaped to Newcastle, since he faced conscription and possible imprisonment in his parents' native Germany. He was appalled at seeing the kind of 'scenes' which took place in Russia only where 'workers used to fear to go',²⁷³ though his 28-year-old comrade Alexandr Khozetsky helped.²⁷⁴

I obtained work on a building site, carrying bricks, mixing cement, erecting and dismantling scaffold ... [We] rented living quarters and bought a few sticks of furniture. Naturally, our situation was not exactly brilliant, but all the same we three managed to get by on twenty-five shillings a week until comrade Khozetsky got a job at the Armstrong factory. Later the manager hired me as Khozetsky's mate. So by Christmas we were getting a huge wage: three pounds twelve shillings, the minimum wage for union carpenters, i.e., 36 shillings each [equivalent to 36 rubles] for a 53 hour week. Soon, as skilled workers we got a raise. Khozetsky got four shillings and I got three, which not a single English carpenter was then getting.

The myth about the superiority of the English worker was soon knocked off its pedestal. Not because we Russians had special qualifications, but simply because our system of training was less specialised than the English system: we were more enterprising in devising ways and means of getting the work done. The English workers looked askance at us, since we raised productivity, which according to English trade-union ethics was against them, as the increase in production reduced chances of unemployed union members getting jobs. So we were boycotted even by those Englishmen who had previously fraternised with us and had themselves been frowned upon.

Fischer and Khozetsky were unimpressed by the union and did not join.²⁷⁵

Henry Fischer was born in spring 1902,²⁷⁶ and in summer his father paid 25 rubles he owed to N.M. Flerov's family in Poltava.²⁷⁷ (Flerov had been a founder of a radical constitutionalist party in Saratov.²⁷⁸) Later that year Fischer and Khozetsky joined the union, though a doctor failed to diagnose Khozetsky's peritonitis and he died in December.²⁷⁹ In 1903 the 28-year-old RSDRP intelligent Nikolai Alexeev sent Fischer *Iskra* and *Zarya* from London,²⁸⁰ though Alexeev recalled that the Russian workers in his own kruzhek had 'very little leisure for systematic undertakings'. They showed 'great enthusiasm at the start, but then it cools'. Its composition 'changes all the time: some go to America, others simply fall away'.²⁸¹ Fischer contacted the 30-year-old RSDRP intelligent Konstantin Takhtarev in London, but carried out no 'technical party functions' in Newcastle, since nobody asked him to. There were almost no Russian workers, and only a few émigré Jewish artisans. William Fischer was born that summer, and his father contacted Baltic sailors, and especially those from Latvia.²⁸²

In summer 1903 Fisher visited London, met the SD intelligenty Nikolai Alexeev and Apollinaria Takhtareva, and volunteered to distribute *Iskra*. He did not attend the RSDRP Second Congress,²⁸³ though he arranged for a delegate to return to Russia via Newcastle,²⁸⁴ and he wrote to his exiled friend the rabochy-intelligent Semën Kanatchikov in Archangelsk about the split.²⁸⁵ Fischer had begun to

get on better with my English socialist comrades from the local independent cell, and I set them to work. A typesetter set up a small hand press and printed envelopes with the addresses of firms. ... My wife and I moistened the copies of *Iskra*, rolled them flat in a rolling press, dried them out and sent them out in these envelopes. Other Englishmen posted the envelopes in various villages, so that each subscriber got his copy with a different postmark each time.²⁸⁶

By December Fischer earned bigger wages, and though his political activity seems to have been largely propagandist in 1904, the Alien Bill would make it harder for political refugees to find sanctuary.²⁸⁷

Early in 1905 the *Daily Express* discovered that many of the 60 or 70 Russian police agents in London were British, and after a bomb exploded in a St. Petersburg hotel room and killed the occupant, the police discovered the passport of the Newcastle actor Arthur McCullough. The police knew that he and the London journalist Henry Brailsford of the Society of the Friends of Russian Freedom had procured three false passports from a Russian refugee, and they were fined £100 apiece, though the Society gave Brailsford £150 and appealed for other contributions.²⁸⁸ The Aliens Act came into force, but the liberal Tyneside solicitor Robert Spence Watson praised the heroism of the St. Petersburg workers.

Fischer was now the most active member of a small group of RSDRP supporters in Newcastle, and argued at a lunchtime meeting at work that the autocracy had provoked 'Bloody Sunday'. He organised a highly successful meeting to explain developments in Russia to local Jews, joined the Social Democratic Federation in October and raised around £300 for Russian workers. When two Russian vessels entered the Tyne he gave the crews SD literature, and though the stokers on the *Smolensk* took down portraits of the tsar, the crew of the ice-breaker *Ermak* remained loyal. Subsequently, with the help of a Latvian comrade, Fischer gave illegal literature and arms to Latvian sailors and stokers on ships bound for Baltic ports, though Azev betrayed the operation.²⁸⁹

Almost all of the guns sent from north east English ports to Russia were revolvers and other small arms, and the Society conducted most of activity, though John Leslie, an Edinburgh SDF member, introduced 'Alf', a member of the Latvian SDSP to 'certain members' on Tyneside. He spoke English very well and his credentials were above suspicion. He told them that he smuggled small quantities of Mauser cartridges and Browning pistols, but needed secure storage facilities at ports to be able to get them onto steamers bound for Russia's Baltic ports. Some SDFers agreed to help, and by autumn consignments of small arms and munitions arrived in Blyth, Sunderland, Tyne Dock and North Shields, and were picked up by Russian sailors. A young Blyth socialist received some 'goods' and hid a 'fair-sized box' under the font of a Baptist Chapel; though his grandfather, the caretaker, opened it and informed the police. They suspected the SDF councillor Dunlop of South Shields, raided his coal cellar, and found a broken box with an Edinburgh address that appeared to have contained munitions. 'Alf' had made contacts in lowland Scotland, and Edinburgh police subsequently discovered 15 boxes of Browning pistols and cartridges, and arrested Leslie and two others. At their trial, rather than risk 14 years in prison, they admitted that the munitions were for Russia, and the Tory Sheriff fined them £1 1s each and imposed costs of £70. A similar case was tried in Glasgow.²⁹⁰ Fischer had been known in Ulyanov's St. Petersburg kruzhok in the mid-1890s as 'Genrikh', and reportedly, late in 1905, he wrote to Ulyanov as 'G',²⁹¹ as the struggle in the Baltic provinces intensified.

By November martial law had provoked peasant risings in Latvia. There were joint SD committees in Liepāja and in Rīga, which was also home to 7,200 of the Lithuanian SDP's 18,200 members,²⁹² who were supported by farmers, artisans and students.²⁹³ Around 15,000 metal, wood and textile workers, plus servants, tailors, bookbinders, typographers, builders and gardeners, had joined trade unions, as had 5,000 Liepāja workers. Over 40,000 had joined the Latvian SDSP at crowded union meetings, and the metalworkers' union donated around 2,500 rubles for a press and promised 1,000 rubles a year. It also gave over 2,500 rubles to locked-out St. Petersburg workers and Liepāja workers donated 20,000. On the 12th Rīga was brought to a halt by a general strike, and next day a congress of primary schoolteachers demanded that lessons be given in the pupils' own language, drew up a new syllabus, elected an executive council and expressed solidarity with the LSDSP. On the 16th the general strike ended, but the SD joint committees ran Rīga and Liepāja, and SDs were powerful in Tukums, Ventpils, Kuldīga and Talsi. There were no soviets, though on the 19th 1,000 delegates from 352 LSDSP committees attended a conference in Rīga,²⁹⁴ and 1,000 delegates from over 600 Kurzeme and Līvõmō villages ignored the governor-general's ban and attended a peasant congress.²⁹⁵ On the 21st Līvõmō peasants disarmed soldiers and shot two German barons.²⁹⁶ The peasant congress decided to elect councils in every community, sack officials, 'control all the institutions concerning the local life of the peasantry' and defend themselves, 'if necessary with arms', from 'attacks of the nobles or the government'.²⁹⁷ Around 800 formed a Lithuanian peasants' union,²⁹⁸ and peasant councils were established in Wenden, Wolmar, Walk and Dorpat districts, and though the interior minister empowered the governor of Līvõmō to impose martial law, he did not do so.²⁹⁹ On the 23rd a meeting of 200 Lithuanian SDP agricultural labourers and smallholders advocated forming militias to protect the population against Black Hundreds and police, dismantle government organs and create revolutionary committees.³⁰⁰ Next day two infantry regiments mutinied in Rīga,³⁰¹ and that evening Latvian officials and workers of the Rīga-Orel Railway met in the workshops at 6.00pm to discuss their attitude towards martial law. Around 7.00pm the chief of the railway police demanded that the meeting close, since the governor-general did not permit such things, but the meeting continued, so he sent for two companies of infantry, and after the soldiers were ordered to fire the meeting hastily decided to join the general strike then left. A general strike began on the 25th. All factory workers, tram drivers, boatmen, workers in warehouses, restaurants, hotels, public houses, theatres, newspapers and large shops came out, though small shops were allowed to stay open, and Cossacks with lances patrolled the streets.³⁰² Next day the joint committee published *Revolūcijas biļetens. Nr. 1 (Bulletin of the Revolution. No. 1.)*,³⁰³ yet loyal troops placed cannon at strategic points and the governor asked for more troops and gunboats.³⁰⁴

Peasant militias had clashed with troops on Latvian gentry's estates, and gentry and soldiers attacked peasants' meetings and small towns, and plundered farms and flour mills near Tukāmō, where dragoons whipped and assaulted inhabitants daily; though they fought back against over 2,000 troops, killing several infantrymen and over 24 dragoons.³⁰⁵ On the 28th the government appointed a general as acting governor-general of the Baltic provinces,³⁰⁶ and the tsar put the entire region under martial law.³⁰⁷ On the 30th soldiers and dragoons ran riot in the Latvian countryside, though 200 militia forced the acting governor-general to agree a truce.³⁰⁸ He allowed armed citizens to leave, then had 60 peaceful inhabitants shot, including women and children, and had soldiers' corpses taken to Mitau where they were mutilated and photographed for propaganda purposes. Troops bombarded and pillaged Talsen, though the Vēntspils garrison gave up their arms and left when the SD committee ordered them to do so. Townspeople took over banks, post offices, railways and other institutions, and drove troops away, while peasants dismantled over 200 gentry houses and took arms,³⁰⁹ causing over 23 million rubles' worth of

damage. Reportedly all the SD parties in Lithuania and western Biełaruś opposed sovet, since most workers were already organised, and at the end of November the only sovet in was in Tallinn,³¹⁰ where SDs were strong.³¹¹

During November there had been around 120 political meetings in Lithuania,³¹² and village assemblies demanded the convocation of a constituent assembly with proportional representation, and the communalisation of land.³¹³ One activist recalled: 'we did not receive the newspapers we subscribed to and began to read the local revolutionary newspapers and leaflets, which appeared in abundance', so 'eyes were opened' and 'we saw that the peasants and workers were the most offended and oppressed and most unhappy people in Russia'.³¹⁴ The governor of Suvalkija reported 'complete anarchy'.³¹⁵ According to the Bundist Novominsky, there were 'little towns in Lithuania where for a day or two, before the arrival of troops, revolutionary crowds discharged the old administration and the revolutionary committees appointed new officials'.³¹⁶ Liquor shops were closed, new courts were opened and a militia was organised. By the end of the month 459 Baltic region manor houses had been destroyed, almost 2,000 armed men, mainly villagers, had captured Tukkum and other towns, and 10,000 armed peasants had fought troops.³¹⁷ A Latvian activist recalled that it would have been possible to have had the 'troops on your side', though 'the moment was missed',³¹⁸ and military repression reached new heights elsewhere.

(xii) Rioters to be exterminated immediately

By November 1905 insurgents in Kutaisi province had captured railway lines and telegraphs and isolated western Georgia. The Gurian RSDRP committee declared that 'many will enter the party who will not understand our programme well', yet 'the only way to increase a party of conscious members is to put the Social Democratic tactic into effect', and the few Bolshevik-led committees called for unity, ignoring 'tactical differences'.³¹⁹ Delegates from the Baki, Tbilisi, Batumi, Samegrelo and Gurian committees attended a conference,³²⁰ and the Gurian committee ended its boycott of government institutions.³²¹ On the 20th the first legal Georgian Bolshevik paper in Russian, *Kavkazsky rabochy listok* (the *Caucasian Workers' News Sheet*), appeared in Tbilisi, and an anonymous article proclaimed that 'The Great Russian Revolution has started!'³²² It argued for the overthrow of the autocracy and a democratic government.³²³ In Tbilisi four regiments, one railway battalion, two sapper battalions, several smaller units and the viceroy's bodyguard mutinied;³²⁴ but on the 21st a minor dispute between Armenians and Tatars in the Ganje bazaar escalated into armed conflict. Next day clashes in the old town left 13 dead and 23 wounded. On the 24th the Tatars were out-gunned and 25 had been shot by evening, though there were rumours that 200 armed Tatars were on their way, so SDs create *troikas* of one Russian, one Georgian and one Armenian to try to keep the warring groups apart. An army colonel and the police chief passed on the viceroy's offer of 2,000 rifles to SDs to keep the peace, and they received 500, though half were useless. Tbilisi SDs prepared for a general strike, barricades went up in Batumi, and days later 'Red Hundreds' 'paraded the streets' of Poti and defended the railway station. Citizens boycotted courts, Sukhmi district police were 'dismissed' and inhabitants established a militia and an administration. The military governor of the Batumi region reported 'an open rebellion against the government' and the theft of arms. In Kutaisi and elsewhere police and government officials were 'under threat of death' and stopped working. On the 27th Cossacks attacked civilians and troops trying to reopen a railway line clashed with passengers and officials, though civilians erected barricades. Next day Batumi civilians disarmed a Cossack, though others whipped and bayoneted everyone in a bazaar. Civilians erected more barricades, and a bomb was thrown at troops, though some joined the insurgents. After a threat of bombardment, the barricades were dismantled and soldiers raided houses and executed anyone with a gun. Clashes with troops left 30 dead or wounded, and on the 30th, when SD fighters controlled the centre of Batumi, martial law was declared,³²⁵ though the Department of Police in St. Petersburg authorised governors to give policemen temporary leave.³²⁶

The army's strength in the Caucasus, and in Chernihiv, Poltava, Kursk and the Baltic provinces, was around a third of what it should be, and 300 troops in Estonia had to cope with a restive population of 90,000 in Tallinn. The 86 officially-recorded army mutinies in the second half of November included 24 in central Russia, 18 in the Caucasus, 12 in Ukraine and 11 in Poland, and they were more frequent after demobilisation than before. In the Pale revolutionaries controlled Pinsk, Gomel and Sochi. Infantry regiments in Łódź, and two in Warszawa, along with an artillery brigade, had mutinied, as had three infantry regiments and a Cossack regiment in Katerynoslav in Ukraine. In the Volga region an infantry battalion in Kazan and an infantry regiment in Saratov had mutinied, while an infantry regiment in Rostov-na-Donu which sympathised with workers was withdrawn.³²⁷

Since early autumn around 160 rural districts had seen peasant disturbances,³²⁸ and almost 800 were recorded in November.³²⁹ The army had surrendered the countryside, especially in the Baltic provinces and the Caucasus, where peasants captured troops.³³⁰ In Saratov province armed peasants, some of them in bands of 500 with wagon trains, had seized state foresters' equipment, attacked over 300 estates, disarmed and beaten landlords and

stewards who resisted, burned manor houses and driven out gentry and local authority officials.³³¹ Tambov province peasants had looted 130 estates, including 20 near the city of Tambov.³³² In the Pale Kaunas province was in peasant hands and landowners and administrators had fled. Disorders had erupted in the Polish countryside, along the Don and Volga,³³³ and near Moscow. Martial law was in force Kyiv, Chernihiv, Penza,³³⁴ Saratov and Simbirsk provinces,³³⁵ though the government permitted Jews to live in 133 towns where they had previously been barred.³³⁶ In Chernihiv province, after a general found that peasants regarded the tsar's ukase as a licence to beat Jews,³³⁷ he sent detachments to suppress disorders and other commanders followed suit;³³⁸ though the interior minister sent a 'Top Secret' circular to 60 provincial governors.³³⁹ 'Immediately identify all ringleaders of the anti-government and agrarian movement and incarcerate them in local prisons pending further action'.³⁴⁰

Rioters to be exterminated immediately by force of arms, their dwellings to be burnt down in the event of resistance. Arbitrary self-rule must be eradicated once and for all – now. Arrests would not serve any purpose at present and anyway it is impossible to try hundreds and thousands of persons. It is essential that the troops should fully understand the above instructions.³⁴¹

The US Ambassador felt that the government was 'practically helpless to restore order', and 'nobody goes without a pistol', so he feared a 'military dictatorship';³⁴² and the government was not in control in Siberia.

The former St. Petersburg rabochy-intelligent Bolshevik Babushkin had been exiled to the far north and had become 'cut off from Party life', though he studied, 'equipped himself for the struggle', was 'active amongst the workers' and tried 'to make them class-conscious Social-Democrats and Bolsheviks'. He was released after the October amnesty, went to Irkutsk, joined the RSDRP committee and spoke at meetings, agitated and organised an uprising. He led the Bolshevik military organisation, though it lacked arms.³⁴³ On 15 November Chita SDs led workers and soldiers demanding the demobilisation of reservists, and next day Krasnoyarsk troops refused to leave the garrison.³⁴⁴ On the 20th a soldiers' and Cossack strike committee was formed in Irkutsk, and some soldiers in the Far East refused to salute officers, were impertinent, roughed up railway officials and commandeered trains. The commanding officer at Harbin thought he had got rid of all the reservists, but reservists, prisoners of war and sailors rioted at Vladivostok, and 20 trainloads headed west. On the 23rd a large number officers formed a union in Chita, expressed solidarity with the soldiers' and Cossacks' soviet, sent greetings to the St. Petersburg strike committee and the mutineers on the *Ochakov*, demanded respectful forms of address, the election of sergeants and commissary officers, the transfer of disciplinary cases to elective courts and the right to leave the barracks in civilian clothes when off duty and go on strike. On the 25th a general railway strike began in Siberia and the railway union took over the administration and postal and telegraph communications.³⁴⁵

The Bolshevik Viktor Kurnatovsky had spent two years in Tbilisi Fortress before being deported to Yakutsk in 1903. He was involved in an armed rebellion in 1904 and sentenced to 12 years' katorga, but was amnestied in October 1905 and reached Chita by late November.³⁴⁶ The soviet elected Kurnatovsky, Babushkin and another SD as leaders, and they established armed squads of up to 2,000 workers, took control of the railway and published a paper, *Zabaikalskii rabochy (Transbaikal Worker)*.³⁴⁷ After a railway battalion mutinied at Krasnoyarsk the rest of the garrison joined them. On the 28th the 4,000 strong Irkutsk garrison, chaired by a member of a fighting squad, demanded a constituent assembly.³⁴⁸ Next day the soldiers and Cossacks' committee declared a strike and demanded the immediate release of reservists, abolition of the death penalty and field courts martial, the end of police duties, the freedom to demonstrate and strike and a constituent assembly. Around 100,000 demonstrators, led by Cossacks, marched through the streets;³⁴⁹ and after a general insulted railway workers, soldiers detached his coach and left it behind. Military and government telegraphs had to go via Japan, and some troops in Manchuria disobeyed orders, fraternised with strikers, demanded an eight-hour day, the right to organise and a constituent assembly, and supported the RSDRP.³⁵⁰ There was a revolutionary kruzhek in a reserve sapper battalion at Alexandrov in Vladimir province on the Yaroslavl railway, 120km north east of Moscow,³⁵¹ and the government feared that more troops would join politicised workers across Russia.

The metalworker Alexandr Iatsynevich had arrived in St. Petersburg 1901 and got involved in SD activity at the navy's Obukhov plant. In 1903 he was deported to Tver, but returned in 1904. On Bloody Sunday in 1905 he was wounded in a demonstration, but helped to build a trade union in autumn.³⁵² During November five employers at the largest plants circulated blacklists, refused to negotiate with unions, organised lockouts,³⁵³ and replaced men with youths and women.³⁵⁴ Up to 80 percent of the unemployed had been locked out;³⁵⁵ though 40 unions had been established and a 'central bureau' published a paper.³⁵⁶ Wood, leather and textile workers had organised, though most white-collar and shop workers and some postal and telegraph staff were working. During November there were 774,000 strike days in St. Petersburg province, involving one sixth of the inspected workforce, and there were

11 army mutinies in St. Petersburg military district.³⁵⁷ Around 6,000 St. Petersburg workers had arms, and groups guarded the sovet and patrolled the streets.³⁵⁸

Nationally there had been over 323,500 strikers in 1,327 inspected plants, or around 19 percent of the workforce,³⁵⁹ and 147,000 were deemed politically-motivated.³⁶⁰ There had been 130 officially-recorded military mutinies,³⁶¹ including several among the 500,000 or so reserves in Manchuria,³⁶² and by late that month no more reservists were leaving.³⁶³ Mutinous garrisons and railway workers' committees controlled the lines from Krasnoyarsk to Harbin and Vladivostock, and the war minister contemplated discharging all but the most loyal sailors and mothballing the navy.³⁶⁴ The police believed the RSDRP CC had received 78,000 rubles since June, spent 48,000, repaid debts of 20,000, and allocated 11,316 for uprisings in St. Petersburg and Moscow,³⁶⁵ and the government's financial position was precarious.

Around 1.25 billion paper rubles were in circulation, and government gold reserves had shrunk by almost 250 million rubles to 1,076 million,³⁶⁶ since, apart from other vital expenditure, it had had to repay a 200 million ruble German loan.³⁶⁷ It would soon need about 400 million rubles to repay another loan, and Berlin banks demanded part of the gold reserves be deposited in the Reichsbank to cover short-term credits.³⁶⁸ The Russian government was economically, politically and militarily highly vulnerable, and it escalated repression even further.

13. The 'dress rehearsal'

(i) On the verge of bankruptcy

Late in November 1905 two minor government officials in St. Petersburg,¹ with the financial support of a wealthy woman publisher, had founded Soyuz ruskogo naroda (the Union of the Russian People). Its programme included draft legislation to improve factory workers' conditions and give land to peasants without infringing on private property,² but opposed socialists,³ blamed the Jews for every social ill,⁴ and recruited landowners, wealthy peasants, shopkeepers,⁵ and many army officers.⁶ The tsar received a delegation,⁷ and became an honorary member,⁸ and on 1 December he reportedly ordered the interior minister to finance their paper and provide it with arms.⁹ (He later met three delegations of what he called the 'true sons of Russia'.¹⁰)

On the 2nd the government criminalized political strikes,¹¹ but legalised economic ones,¹² if there was no violence or damage, except for those in state enterprises or with social or political significance.¹³ On the 3rd the government decreed that railway, post, telegraph and telephone workers who joined unions or went on strike would face up to four years in prison.¹⁴ Loyal troops suppressed a strike in Irkutsk on the Trans-Siberian railway,¹⁵ though the Okhrana reported that revolutionaries were discussing how to raise money for arms every day in Paris, Berlin and other German cities, to be sent to Russia from Zurich, Bern, Liège and Hamburg via Latvia and Finland.¹⁶ In St. Petersburg Bronstein and Helphand's *Russkaya gazeta* sold around 500,000 copies and its press was close to its limits.¹⁷ The 230 sovet deputies included 18 women, though 13 were intelligentki, and Barkova was the only woman worker on the EC, though four intelligentki had attended Brusnev's SD kruzhenki in the 1890s.¹⁸ The sovet met after a six-day gap. The city's 35-40 unions had around 35,000 members, and some EC members argued for a general strike.¹⁹ A railway union deputy reported that they would strike four days later, and a Bolshevik CC member proposed asking revolutionary organisations to set a date for the general strike, supported by agrarian and military organisations, and go forward to a 'decisive solution'.²⁰ RSDRP, VPSR, PPS and peasants' union deputies signed a joint statement,²¹ which asked for the withdrawal of gold from state banks.²² When the Bolshevik Woytinsky arrived at the building the police in the entrance directed him to the main hall.

The delegates and guests were crowded into the hall, encircled by a double line of soldiers with rifles and fixed bayonets. When I was pushed inside the circle, a man who sat at the chairman's table said flatly, 'Order of the Executive committee: Offer no resistance, answer no question, destroy all personal papers and arms'.

Nobody moved. The soldiers along the walls looked as if they had been carved out of solid rock. The silence was broken only by a soft clanking of tools at the chairman's table, where two youths were busy smashing the small arms passed to them from the assembly.

A large number of deputies, including the EC members, were arrested,²³ and taken to Kresty Prison.²⁴ Several newspapers had published the interior minister's secret circular ordering governors to imprison agitators and exterminate rioters,²⁵ and the editors had formed a committee to counter police harassment and had elected the Bolshevik Wallach as chair.²⁶ The police had confiscated 15 of the 27 previous issues of the Bolsheviks' *Novaya zhizn*,²⁷ though after the sovet deputies were arrested the next was printed clandestinely. It included the RSDRP programme and argued that the government was 'on the verge of bankruptcy' and had made Russia 'a mass of ruins and covered it with corpses'.²⁸ Four liberal and four socialist papers printed the sovet policy of withdrawing gold from state banks,²⁹ and the police closed them all and arrested the editors, though *Izvestia* published the policy,³⁰ and sold 500,000 copies,³¹ and the sovet was re-established clandestinely.

Early that year the SD intelligentka Lidia Gurvich had heard about Bloody Sunday in Siberia and escaped. She reached Vilnius, and her brother Sergey Tserderbaum got her across the border. She reached Geneva by spring, and after the October amnesty she joined her husband Fyodor in St. Petersburg. Bolsheviks and Mensheviks produced *Severny golos* (*Northern Voice*), though she had 'no clearly formed awareness' of the factions.³² By 4 December about a quarter of strikers had gone back,³³ though the RSDRP published *Partiniye izvestia* (*Party News*).³⁴ Helphand organised the election of 200 new sovet deputies, who elected him as president,³⁵ and Lidia Gurvich as EC secretary, though only up to 50 deputies met in workers' districts, where the police feared to go.³⁶ Next day governors and military commanders in regions not under martial law were empowered to allow wealthy landowners to form militias,³⁷ if the interior minister agreed. On the 6th the government abolished peasants' forced labour, promised to speed up the demobilisation of reservists and gave Cossacks a cash bonus and confirmed their privileges.³⁸ The term of infantry service was cut to three years, four in other units (and five in the navy), followed by 14 or 15 years

in the reserves and five in the veterans' army.³⁹ Infantry pay would be almost trebled, meat rations would treble, tea and sugar would be issued, and they would get more underwear and boots, and, for the first time, blankets, bed linen, shirts, towels and handkerchiefs. On the 7th, after the railway union announced a national strike,⁴⁰ the government ended press freedom,⁴¹ and the interior minister gave the Okhrana a free hand. Gendarmes made nearly 350 searches and found three dynamite laboratories, almost 500 bombs, a large arsenal and several presses. They met an armed response on four or five occasions but shot resisters.⁴² St. Petersburg's sovet EC worked underground, but *Izvestia* appeared, and Helphand argued for an uprising and using water hoses to disarm police.⁴³

By the 8th two-thirds of city workers were either on strike or locked out,⁴⁴ and the police arrested the RSDRP committee. The sovet EC delegated leadership of the strike to district organisations,⁴⁵ and Helphand resigned.⁴⁶ Next day there were around 111,000 strikers, though postal workers and some railway workers had returned and most railway lines had reopened.⁴⁷ On the 10th the navy ministry closed the Obukhov, Baltic, Izhorsk and New Admiralty plants.⁴⁸ The Bolsheviks ordered Wallach to leave the city,⁴⁹ and he went abroad to organise the smuggling of weapons,⁵⁰ though the intelligent Alexeev returned from London to produce publications with a Bolshevik tendency.⁵¹ On the 13th the veterans Zasluch and Deutsch had a rapturous reception at the sovet. The amnesty did not apply to terrorists, though they could appeal to the interior minister. Zasluch and several other returned exiles were arrested on the 15th,⁵² though the autocracy was losing control.

(ii) Complete anarchy

Early in December 1905 the Rīga joint committee and 1,000 delegates at the Latvian SDSP congress rejected a Bolshevik call for a rising, but supported a political general strike.⁵³ There were elected peasant councils in most villages in Kurzeme,⁵⁴ and Līvõmō, and 430 functioned as local authorities.⁵⁵ Police and troops in Līvõmō and Kurzeme, and in Bieľaruś, were powerless against 'bands of insurgents excellently armed with long-range weapons', and the Vitebsk governor reported 'complete anarchy'.⁵⁶ When a police chief refused to release prisoners, 1,500 militia arrived with 'very primitive' weapons and took over telephones, telegraphs and railways.⁵⁷ In Estonia martial law was imposed in Tallinn and Harjumaa, and many RSDRP intelligentsy were arrested.⁵⁸ Bundists agitated troops to mutiny and infantry refused to disperse civilians.⁵⁹ In Bieľaruś the response to the call for a general strike in Slutsk was patchy, and Mensheviks and Bolsheviks had 'fights and snarls', though the son of the town's police chief, who was a Bundist, told Kaplan that he was a 'marked man'. When the police came, he punched one in the mouth, though another knocked him out with a rifle butt and took him to prison, yet comrades brought him books and meals 'fit for a king'.⁶⁰ There were strikes in Minsk and 29 other towns.⁶¹ Railway workers struck in Vilnius,⁶² and a general strike began in Kaunas.⁶³ The police reported large demonstrations. 'Everything Russian was boycotted, Russians were attacked and Orthodox churches threatened with destruction'.⁶⁴

In Poland peasants made armed attacks on property, chased tax-collectors out of villages, assaulted officials and threatened to kill police and gendarmes. Nationalists encouraged peasants not to join the armed forces, and up to 30 percent of those liable to conscription did not turn up.⁶⁵ After Warszawa police arrested the editors and printers of legal SDKPiL and PPS papers, and martial law was reimposed across Poland, work stopped in Warszawa and Łódź factories, though troops prevented demonstrations.⁶⁶ Many workers in Ryki, Radom and the countryside were armed,⁶⁷ and Warszawa railway workers went on strike.⁶⁸

Nationally, there were reportedly 27 SD organisations in the army, and over twice that number of civilian committees propagandised troops,⁶⁹ though the Rostov-na-Donu garrison commander had proclaimed martial law and paid Cossacks 40 rubles a month to enforce it. The 300-400 strong workers' militia was armed, mostly with revolvers,⁷⁰ though troops massacred a meeting of mainly women workers. A sovet was established by 7 December,⁷¹ and while six Cossacks who expressed solidarity were arrested, members of the mainly Cossack garrison listened to revolutionary speakers outside the barracks and refused to march to honour the tsar. The sovet and the railway union leaders declared a general strike, and though 12 revolutionaries were arrested, they were released when the sovet demanded it, and two senior officials fled.⁷²

At Krasnoyarsk on the Trans-Siberian line, military railway battalions and railway union members had formed a sovet on the 6th, and SDs led it. Armed groups patrolled the streets, disarmed police, freed political prisoners, occupied government buildings, then handed authority to a democratically-elected дума.⁷³ Next day Chita sovet deputies disarmed police, seized the arsenal, removed officials and freed political prisoners.⁷⁴ The governor wanted to avoid a pogrom and backed RSDRP decisions.⁷⁵ On the 9th Krasnoyarsk railway strike committee expanded into a 'workers' commission' of 80 and merged with the railway battalion's 40-strong committee.⁷⁶ Soldiers, SDs and SRs disarmed police and gendarmes, took over the railway and published *Krasnoyarskii rabochi* (*Krasnoyarsk Worker*).⁷⁷

Villagers around Moscow and Smolensk demanded well equipped schools, free secondary and university education, the confiscation of Orthodox Church land, the payment of clergy by the state, equality of taxes and status, the removal of police, release of political prisoners, lower taxes on liquor, tobacco, matches and other goods, more hospitals, and the execution of those who started the war.⁷⁸

In Ukraine almost every trade had formed a union in Odesa, or had begun to do so, and 50 or so had around 5,000 members. The soviet EC resolved that a general strike was 'inevitable and necessary' and recommended collecting money for arms. Railway workers protested at the arrest of Nosar in St. Petersburg, denounced the attempt to 'take back from the people the civil rights won by the proletariat' and called for a general strike and uprising when St. Petersburg soviet called for it. Workers at the largest print works pledged 'material and moral support' to the St. Petersburg soviet to 'rally the entire proletariat for the final blow against the obsolete regime', while shipping workers donated half a day's pay to the St. Petersburg unemployed fund. The Odesa soviet mobilised workers to oppose a rumoured pogrom and held meetings across the city. Workers joined fighting squads, students waited for instructions at the University, and one district soviet ordered workers to arm and assemble at their workplaces or face disciplinary action. In another district 1,200 workers vowed to arm to prevent the 'vile, beastly slaughter of defenceless people', and there was no pogrom. The soviet EC, two RSDRP committee members, plus Bundists and SRs, formed a strike committee. Soviet deputies explained the strike's significance to workers, and on the 9th almost 100 delegates from 27 unions agreed to strike when the soviet asked. 'Red Hundreds' put themselves at its disposal. A dozen or so railway leaders were detained, including the Bolshevik Avdeev and the Menshevik Golubkov, though some were freed for lack of evidence.⁷⁹ A general strike had begun in Kharkiv, but the Menshevik-led RSDRP committee resisted Bolshevik calls for an insurrection.⁸⁰ In Kyiv the 700-strong printers' union had been prevented from meeting on the 4th, and the city дума banned liberal reporters from their meetings on the 9th, and closed the paper on the 10th.⁸¹ By the 12th militias patrolled the streets,⁸² and 140 activists, mainly students, agitated soldiers.⁸³ Officers ordered reliable soldiers from three infantry regiments, and a Cossack regiment,⁸⁴ to bombard a factory,⁸⁵ and they killed 27 and wounded over 100.⁸⁶ Strikers from the main railway workshop and large factories tried to close other plants by force and there were 'cruel fights'. Some railway workers did not strike, though secondary pupils came out, and the soviet tried to regulate shop hours, yet trams kept running and an attempt to blow up the electricity plant failed. Troops searched houses, confiscated arms and arrested at least 78 people, while police arrested 100 secondary pupils and beat them mercilessly. The Bolshevik Schlichter returned, though Krzhizhanovsky fled.⁸⁷

Donbass miners and factory workers had formed fighting squads along the Ekaterinin line that summer. Mark Sheitlander, a Caucasian-born paramedic and Menshevik agitator, who had been active in the strikes after Bloody Sunday and in the Donetsk mineworkers' union in Horlivka, had arrived in Luzovka in November. Workers donated 1.5 rubles for arms and raised thousands. Popasnaya clerks, merchants and landowners also donated, and Avdeevka station fighters bought 50 US rifles for 3.5 rubles apiece from Pavlograd military stores. Grigory Tkachenko, a former Luzovka worker and trade unionist, led Yenakiiiev soviet. On 3 December the Luzovka ironworks manager closed a furnace and laid off 3,000 workers. On the 8th railway delegates voted 51 to three to join the strike and half a dozen stations on the Ekaterinin line, including Luzovka, struck. The strike committee included members of all the socialist parties, the postal and telegraph union and the Ekaterinin railway strike committee, and strikers in Debaltsevo, Grishino and the Petrovsky factory demanded a constituent assembly. The last Ekaterinin line station workers struck on the 9th, though the Donetsk and Kursk-Kharkiv-Sevastopol lines, and most factories, including Luzovka ironworks, stayed open. In Horlivka 5,000 workers, miners and peasants voted for a constituent assembly, and similar meetings took place elsewhere in the region. At Kryvyi Rih, after iron ore miners heard that the railways would stay closed until spring, 5,000 out of 7,000 returned to their villages. On the 10th a VPSR leader brought armed strikers to Lasinovata station and they shot the Cossack commander, while an officer and a Cossack soldier were wounded at Alexandrovsk. Strikers stole over two tonnes of dynamite, distributed bombs, disarmed soldiers and police, levied railway passengers and contractors, expropriated railway and telegraph office funds and gave the money to the families of those who had been injured and arrested. When a Horlivka machine-building works manager announced a cut in hours, the workers came out, but returned next day, though 50 workers with votes and 30 alternates from 16 mines and factories around Luzovka formed a soviet, while Yenakiiiev soviet took over the railway settlement and disarmed police. Horlivka machine-builders telegraphed Ekaterinin line stations on the 12th: 'we are totally without arms and demand immediate aid from all sides'; yet next day a Grishino fighting squad disarmed troops, who offered no resistance,⁸⁸ though it was a different matter in Siberia.

Maria Aveida had been born into a Polish exile's family in Viatka in 1884. After she graduated from a gymnasium she tutored pupils at home, and joined the RSDRP in Perm in 1904. Late in 1905 she joined Ekaterinburg committee and the soviet. On 9 December workers at the state cannon factory at Motovilikha, the largest plant in the Urals, went on strike in response to the committee's call. On the 12th the provincial governor sent a coded telegram to St.

Petersburg: 'The workers of Motovilikha, prompted by the revolutionaries, have stopped work in support of the railway strike, have taken over the factory and are running it on their own initiative. Groups of youths are walking about with rifles; the populace is being urged to rise. The police are powerless.' He was told to restore order at all costs, so he deployed police and troops, though workers fought bravely until they were overwhelmed after considerable bloodshed and most of their leaders had been killed or captured. The factory's RSDRP organisation was in ruins, and the Perm organisation seemed doomed,⁸⁹ though troops were unreliable in the far south.

Three infantry regiments and one Cossack regiment had mutinied in Baki.⁹⁰ The Trans-Caucasian line was strike-bound by 9 December,⁹¹ and the French ambassador compared the situation to a civil war.⁹² Baki sovet called for a general strike on the 13th and demanded an eight-hour day, state insurance, free education for children, a two-year limit on military service, higher pay for the armed forces, sending Cossacks home, ending police brutality, releasing political prisoners and a democratically elected constituent assembly. The strikers included postal and telegraph workers and newspaper printers.⁹³ Since the October ukase RSDRP membership had increased to between 15,000 and 20,000, including 5,000 in Guria, 4,000 in Tbilisi and 1,000 in Batumi. The Bolsheviks, who were mainly Russians, issued most leaflets in Russian to build a soldiers' union. In Tbilisi both RSDRP factions called for a political general strike, and SDs dominated the city's elected strike committee of ten, who co-opted others. They demanded the removal of Cossacks, an end to martial law, a popular militia, a complete political amnesty, free elections and a constituent assembly. All the shops, except those that sold food, and all public transport, except for trams that carried revolutionary delegations, were stopped by the 10th.⁹⁴ After armed clashes between workers and troops, bombings and assassinations, troops attacked workers' districts. The strike committee EC, led by Mensheviks, ordered the bombing of a Cossack base, though Cossacks burned the RSDRP press building and killed everyone inside. In Kutaisi province Gurian peasants disarmed soldiers and drove them away. Revolutionaries controlled the railways and the tsar told the viceroy it was 'essential to bring the matter to a peaceful end by force of arms, not hesitating before the most extreme measures.'⁹⁵ On the 14th he empowered local officials to impose martial law and ban workers' meetings, with three months' in prison and a 500 ruble fine, without trial, for any who persisted.⁹⁶

In Crimea troops put down a rising in Sevastopol,⁹⁷ and the tsar ordered them to stop mutineers in European Russia and Siberia from joining forces,⁹⁸ yet by the 15th 70 of the 203 infantry regiments in European Russia had mutinied 211 times, including 11 Kuban Cossack units, nine Siberian units, five Don units, one Terek units, 11 units in Caucasia and 15 in Manchuria and on the Trans-Siberian line.⁹⁹

The SD Shlyapnikov had been freed from Vladimir katorga prison by the October amnesty. Black Hundreds beat him,¹⁰⁰ but he got to Murom, and local students in St. Petersburg sent him illegal literature.¹⁰¹ He tried to organise a sovet, yet the RSDRP intelligenty 'turned to legal activity'. When he received his call-up papers he found a significant number of conscripts were 'infected with revolutionary propaganda' and demonstrations 'broke out here and there'. He refused to take the oath to the tsar, but was not arrested, because the authorities feared riots,¹⁰² though he was sentenced to two years in a Fortress in December. The SR and Menshevik prisoners were mostly intelligenty, though the workers were Bolsheviks, and he joined them.¹⁰³

Nizhni Novgorod committee had a Bolshevik majority, though the Mensheviks cooperated. People died in street fighting and there was a general strike,¹⁰⁴ including railway workers,¹⁰⁵ and strikers in Sormovo occupied the station and erected barricades.¹⁰⁶ Nikolai Semashko, who had been an RSDRP member since 1904,¹⁰⁷ organised medical assistance, but was arrested.¹⁰⁸ The governor had about 30 reliable infantry and 100 Cossacks, so he armed a militia. Workers disarmed them and set up barricades, and though Cossack artillery quelled them,¹⁰⁹ there were insurrections in other towns.¹¹⁰

In Samara Boris Nicolaevsky had met a Menshevik for the first time that summer, and the intelligenty factions were reconciled by autumn. A colonel who had joined an SD kruzhok in his youth cooperated with SDs to combat Black Hundreds,¹¹¹ and the son of a police inspector told them about their activities. Some SDs joined a fighting squad and the colonel gave them a password to use if they needed assistance. 'The street was ours.' SDs and SRs addressed mass meetings, and SDs supported striking railway, postal and telegraph workers,¹¹² and organised unions among typographers, clerks and other workers.¹¹³ On 4 December the sovet included delegates from about ten unions, though it 'did not play any role' and was dispersed on the 11th. Nicolaevsky and others began 'propagandising for an insurrection in the army',¹¹⁴ though martial law was imposed in parts of Saratov province,¹¹⁵ and the government ordered massive police raids on the 12th. Many sovet deputies were arrested and workers' meetings were dispersed. On the 14th printers pressured the sovet to proclaim a general strike, but the VPSR and RSDRP committees called for an armed rising and appealed to soldiers to join them.¹¹⁶ Both RSDRP factions and the VPSR collaborated in the sovet,¹¹⁷ and SD cells and committees in most districts, and the railway workshops,¹¹⁸ called for armed resistance. The garrison commander noted that 'several thousand striking workers from the factories, printing plants and railways are moving through the city'.¹¹⁹

Georgi Lomov had been born into a noble Saratov family in the Volga region in 1888 and joined the RSDRP in

1903,¹²⁰ and in December 1905 he led the workers' militia.¹²¹ Around 40 delegates, including SDs, SRs and unaligned people, had established a sovet in Saratov. They elected an EC of four SDs and three SRs, with the Bolshevik A.A. Petrov as chair, though the SRs and Mensheviks rejected the Bolsheviks' perspective. On the 8th the sovet heard of the general strikes in St. Petersburg, Moscow and on the railways, and railway workers came out. The sovet assumed leadership of the strike on the 9th, but did not call out other workers. The police arrested leading railway workers,¹²² and the line between Saratov and Moscow was put under martial law.¹²³ On 16th workers attacked the jail to free prisoners, and though Cossacks beat them off, the sovet called for a demonstration,¹²⁴ and over 2,000 turned up.¹²⁵ They elected a Bolshevik chair and heard speeches from SDs and SRs. Cossacks attacked them, but the militia fought back, suffering eight dead and 24 badly wounded, of whom seven later died. By the 17th most sovet deputies, including the SDs, were in jail, and the strikers returned to work.¹²⁶

The struggle continued in the Donbass. Katerynoslav intelligenty, three directors and an engineer at the Bryansk steelworks had reportedly donated 6,300 rubles to arm a united fighting squad, and the strike committee included eight Mensheviks, seven Bolsheviks, two Bundists, three SRs, and two members of both the railway union and the postal and telegraph union. Two German SD engineers propagandised workers, and at the Mensheviks' suggestion the town's factory committees formed a sovet.¹²⁷ The 47 deputies came from unions and professional groups,¹²⁸ and the Menshevik Pavlovich brothers, who had wide support, including from factory clerks, became co-chairs. During the strike men of all ages and classes manned barricades.¹²⁹ On the 8th up to 60 armed Russian and Jewish revolutionaries visited the railway station, announced that it belonged to the 'provisional government' and threatened to stop electricity going to the theatres. Miners and steelworkers responded to agitational leaflets, assemblies formed across the Donbass and thousands of armed insurgents took over almost 3,200km of railway lines and ran delegates' trains.¹³⁰ On the 12th 146 Luzovka sovet deputies included 27 from the ironworks and 42 from its associated coalmines. They 'taxed' merchants, government clerks and artisans, and disarmed police, who put up no resistance, yet the Donetsk RSDRP committee did not discuss an armed rising. After a Horlivka factory manager cut the working day, but almost halved pay, the strike committee imprisoned him in his office, though troops freed him, then killed up to 15 strikers and wounded others, including Mark Sheitlander, who had an arm amputated in hospital before being taken to prison. The strike committee telegraphed for fighters to come to Horlivka, and by the 17th over 100 had arrived from Grishino, led by a doctor and a nurse, and others from Yenakiieve, Luhansk, Debatsevo and Luzovka. Before dawn next day 3,000 to 4,000 armed workers had arrived with 100 Russian rifles, 150 Berdan rifles, 200 shotguns and 200 other weapons, including bombs, incendiaries and 3,000 pikes. At first light they marched to an army barracks, and though 90 dragoons and 104 infantry fled, they returned with 60 Cossacks and reportedly killed 300, including the doctor and nurse, and captured 1,000 though three soldiers died and 12 were wounded. Eight strike committee members escaped, though 23 were captured. Troops swept Avdeevka and Grishino, confiscating arms and arresting suspect workers and intelligenty, including two railway nurses, and shot escapees who had dynamited their prison walls.¹³¹

These struggles were evidently unconnected, and in spite of the fact that the St. Petersburg sovet had been crushed, there were preparations for an uprising in Moscow.

(iii) We would have lost the fuse and the nitroglycerine

Earlier in 1905 the Moscow Bolshevik intelligent Pokrovsky had visited Geneva,¹³² where Ulyanov invited him to contribute to *Proletary*,¹³³ and late that year Pokrovsky returned to be a Moscow RSDRP propagandist.¹³⁴

Each day some large press was seized, the squadmen occupied all the entries, the typographers, the make-up men, the proof readers, the stereotypists and the printers lost no time in setting to work and in a couple of hours the paper was ready – composed, made up, printed and issued. It was not large, consisting as it did of nothing but a leader and current news. The police were never able to seize the issue or to prevent the work, though the printing usually took place in the governor-general's sphere of influence.¹³⁵

The Bolshevik intelligenty awaited instructions from the CC,¹³⁶ and on 2 December they failed to stop five grenadier regiments, an infantry regiment, a Cossack regiment, two sapper battalions and an artillery brigade from mutinying. Most made demands, though sappers rejected calls to expel officers and seize the barracks. A Menshevik military leader acknowledged that despite efforts to 'restrain separate outbursts' until there was organised contact between soldiers and workers, 'we must reckon with the possibility of an unexpected uprising'. SRs in the Rostov regiment who circulated leaflets calling a meeting at 1.00pm were arrested,¹³⁷ though Cossacks attended political meetings and sang the *Marseillaise*,¹³⁸ and other soldiers seized weapons and ammunition,¹³⁹ drove most officers

out of the barracks, kept two as hostages and posted guards.¹⁴⁰ Twenty agitators appealed to them to elect deputies for 'the common consideration of all matters of interest to soldiers',¹⁴¹ using the Grodno soldiers' demands, and previously unaligned fighting squads elected an SD chair and SR secretary. Other regiments supported the grenadiers, and none could be relied on to suppress them, so commanders urgently requested reinforcements.¹⁴²

On 3 December Nevinson noted the increasing extent of workers' militancy.

The cooks struck, and paraded the streets with songs never heard in the drawing-room. The waiters struck, and heavy proprietors lumbered about with their own plates and dishes. The nurse-maids struck for Sundays out. The housemaids struck for rooms with windows, instead of cupboards under the stairs, or sections from the water-closets. Schoolboys struck for more democratic masters and pleasanter lessons. Teachers struck for higher pay ...

Nevinson went to a meeting of 1,500 men and women and heard that Gapon had sent a letter calling for the Assembly to be rebuilt. A speaker who denounced calls for arming was loudly applauded, while an SD who 'burst into a violent and threatening speech' was denounced as a spy. At 1.00pm the meeting split into 11 groups and Nevinson met Gapon, who worried about conflict between SDs and peasants. Soon after he escaped to Finland.¹⁴³

The police called Nikolai Schmidt's Presnya district furniture factory a 'devil's nest',¹⁴⁴ since Bolshevik fighters had their headquarters there and in the factory next door. There were at least 1,000 fighters in the city, though only 250 had guns, so Schmidt gave Gorky 20,000 rubles.¹⁴⁵ He raised tens of thousands more, and Krasin supplied bomb fuses in candle boxes, though Gorky recalled that Mitia Pavlov, a Sormovo worker, arrived from St. Petersburg with 'a big box of nitro-glycerine sticks and fifteen metres of Bickford fuse' tied round his chest.

The fuse had contracted with the man's perspiration, or perhaps had been too tightly laced round his ribs; anyhow, on entering my room Mitia sank down on the floor exhausted, his face blue and his eyes protruding wildly as though he were about to die of suffocation.

'You're mad, Mitia! Don't you realise that you might have collapsed on the way? You can guess what would have happened to you if you'd done that',

Panting for breath, he answered a little guiltily:

'Yes, we would have lost the fuse and the nitroglycerine'.¹⁴⁶

Bombs were being made in Gorky's apartment,¹⁴⁷ and a worker he had helped earlier that year was involved.

Petr Zalomov had been born into a workers' family in Nizhni Novgorod in 1877. He had joined the revolutionary movement by 1892, then became a mechanic, and in 1901 he built an SD organisation in Sormovo and joined a May Day demonstration with a red banner bearing the slogan 'Down With Autocracy!' He was arrested, and made a revolutionary speech at his trial, but was exiled to Eastern Siberia for life. He escaped in spring 1905, with Gorky's financial help, organised fighting squads in Kyiv, St. Petersburg and Moscow,¹⁴⁸ and late that year he made bombs in Gorky's apartment.¹⁴⁹

Elsewhere in the city, unhappy troops caused disturbances,¹⁵⁰ rations were cut, and a VPSR kruzhok organised a meeting. Four leaders were arrested, but a clerk who led the kruzhok resisted and exhorted soldiers to take up arms against their officers,¹⁵¹ and 300 soldiers' deputies formulated 37 democratic demands.¹⁵² Deputies from four grenadier regiments, three sapper battalions, a Cossack regiment and three civilian military organisations heard that the garrison might support a rising and would not suppress one.¹⁵³ The soldiers' committee issued ammunition, readied machine guns and assigned guards, and SRs and Bolsheviks failed to convince them not to go ahead,¹⁵⁴

After the tsar promised concessions, the Rostov regiment barred civilians from their barracks, two battalions returned to duty on the 4th,¹⁵⁵ and Rostov soldiers arrested their committee.¹⁵⁶ (Nine were later sentenced to katonga for life, five to lesser terms, and a dozen or so to punishment battalions, though 50 were freed.¹⁵⁷) Thousands of criminals had joined Black Hundreds,¹⁵⁸ and Nevinson heard that they were inciting the assassination of Jews. A mob had beaten a student senseless, and a 'slightly drunken soldier, who had been boasting of his revolutionary convictions', had been 'surrounded by a little knot of loyalists, beguiled down a side court, and quietly slaughtered'.¹⁵⁹ One army officer arrested 57 agitators.¹⁶⁰ Others sent older troops home, or added more meat to their soup and a few kopeks to their pay, and gave them time to 'return to their senses'; yet others reportedly considered joining the insurgents if they could 'could count on victory' and some were sovet sympathisers. The sovet represented around 100,000 of the city's 130,000 workers, and the deputies' average age was 23. That evening a sapper sergeant-major told an RSDRP committee member that they had spoken with Cossacks and three other regiments. 'We have a supply of cartridges. We mount the guard at the arsenal. We can hand it over to you at any moment. Send us reliable workmen'.¹⁶¹ There were 20 Bolshevik, Menshevik and SR sovet deputies,¹⁶² without the right to speak or vote,¹⁶³ yet 400 deputies voted for a general strike,¹⁶⁴ even though a Bolshevik deputy from St. Petersburg sovet had failed to convince them that it could offer no support. Deputies called on soldiers to

take over their regiments and wait for the workers to rise. They were unsure if the troops would support a rising, but were confident that the infantry would not oppose one,¹⁶⁵ and they planned factory meetings next day to test the water.¹⁶⁶ They would call for a strike to protest at the arrest of the St. Petersburg sovet and an armed rising. A meeting of 264 printers' deputies representing workers at 110 enterprises finalised arrangements;¹⁶⁷ but Dubasov arrived as governor-general,¹⁶⁸ and announced that postal and telegraph strikers had to return to work or be sacked. After most went back on the 5th,¹⁶⁹ railway union leaders doubted that a political strike would succeed.¹⁷⁰

The Bolsheviks, chaired by Shantser, met factory representatives at Fiedler's Academy,¹⁷¹ and from 7.00pm until 1.00am on the 6th, 400 people heard reports from factory representatives, 'not district organisers, or professional party militants, but simple workers at the benches',¹⁷² and then 'interrogated' them.¹⁷³ The Bolshevik military leader, A.N. Vasiliev, calculated that there were around 300 armed Bolsheviks, 300 SRs, 100 Mensheviks and 300 or so others, while and workers had a good chance of winning over 10,000 troops, 4,000 probably remained loyal to the government.¹⁷⁴ The Menshevik Petr Bronstein organised Presnya district workers and collaborated with the Bolsheviks, and the Bolshevik Mandelshtam recalled that 'the mood among the workers was such that that if we did not call a strike, it would break out by itself. Nobody doubted that a strike would inevitably turn into an armed uprising'.¹⁷⁵ A railway worker announced that they were ready to strike, and though the RSDRP militia leader, Ye. Kudryavstev, was opposed, a Bolshevik recalled that his arguments 'bounced back like peas off a wall'.

[O]ne can sense one's neighbour holding his breath. 'Our workers are racing into battle, but have no arms'. 'Our workers will act themselves unless the committee calls them out'. 'Our factory has a dozen revolvers'. 'Our workers are forging daggers and lances – we can't hold them back'. Then the military organiser appears. He is pale, and is clearly excited. He says that in Moscow the soldiers, even the Cossacks and officers, will refuse to fire at the people. The army is in uproar. The soldiers are ready to come over to the people's side, but their rifles have been taken away. Two speeches, one for and one against. A vote is taken. A forest of arms goes up: in favour.¹⁷⁶

Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and SRs agreed to urge the sovet to call for a political general strike two days later.¹⁷⁷

Yuri Steklov was born in Odesa in 1879. He considered himself a revolutionary by 1888 and formed an SD kruzhok in 1894.¹⁷⁸ In 1895 he was exiled to Yakutsk and looked forward to meeting 'heroic demi-gods'.¹⁷⁹ In 1899 he escaped and joined the Borba group in Paris,¹⁸⁰ and by late 1905 he was a Bolshevik in Moscow. At noon on 6 December he assured 120 sovet deputies from 91 factories and the railway and the postal and telegraph unions that they would get national support, and 20 EC members argued that one Bolshevik, Menshevik and SR should lead a rising.¹⁸¹ Deputies from 29 railway lines, postal and telegraph workers and other deputies called for a political strike next day,¹⁸² resolved to 'strive to transform' it 'into an armed uprising',¹⁸³ and asked soldiers to elect leaders and join the 'people'.¹⁸⁴

Elsewhere in the city, when Dubasov greeted a loyalist crowd from a balcony, someone cried 'the students are coming! The students! The students!' Nevinson had 'never seen anything quite so ludicrous as that stampede of bloody-minded patriots'.¹⁸⁵ The garrison commanders had 1,850 infantry to guard the barracks and government buildings and patrol the streets, plus around 2,600 others, mainly cavalry and artillerymen, and 1,800 armed police. Citizens gave money and gifts to at least one regiment, and officers propagandised about civilian attacks.¹⁸⁶

The Bolshevik committee gave its EC authority to take tactical decisions,¹⁸⁷ while Ivan Kachalov, a technical school teacher, became responsible for 'technical work', including the press,¹⁸⁸ and Shantser for editing the sovet's paper.¹⁸⁹ Rozhkov played a key role in establishing the Bolshevik *Borba (Struggle)* in Gorky's apartment, and the Bolshevik intelligenty planned there.¹⁹⁰ The first *Izvestia*, printed at Sytin & Company's press,¹⁹¹ called for converting the strike into an armed rising,¹⁹² and its print run was up to 10,000.¹⁹³

On the 7th the VPSR mobilised 300 armed men, more than the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks combined.¹⁹⁴ At noon after over 100,000 workers struck, the police patrolled in groups and there were minor clashes. Workers emptied a gun shop and railway workers carried red flags. Two blackleg engine drivers were killed,¹⁹⁵ and only the line to St. Petersburg remained open.¹⁹⁶ Electricity and water were off, gas pressure was down and no trams were running. Nevinson saw a crowd trying to persuade an officer to stop supporting the tsar, though he led his detachment away. When 'three red flags in poles emerged and were marched into the square' by a crowd singing the *Marseillaise*, Cossacks charged. 'In a few seconds nothing remained' except 'men and girls stretched upon the snow, and the three long strips of red cotton'. The wounded were taken to police cells and an infantry battalion was deployed.¹⁹⁷ The RSDRP intelligenty did not know how the strike could transform itself into a rising, so Mensheviks asked SRs for advice. That evening Vasiliev, Shantser and the printers' union leaders were arrested,¹⁹⁸ so the bureau was beheaded. No rank-and-file workers were trained to lead an insurrection,¹⁹⁹ though some got arms at Gorky's flat.²⁰⁰

On the 8th factory workers, including many from the largest metallurgical plants and textile mills, came out without a vote.²⁰¹ There were now 150,000 strikers,²⁰² and most banks, schools, theatres,²⁰³ restaurants and shops

were closed, and no commercial newspapers appeared, though the water supply was restored. A large meeting of strikers at the Aquarium Theatre called on the militia to act, yet they had only a few bombs and revolvers and 80 rifles.²⁰⁴ Some were from the *John Grafton*,²⁰⁵ and Rozhkov bought a revolver at the *Borba* office.²⁰⁶ Railway workers had collected 26,000 rubles for arms and organised 500 men into fighting squads,²⁰⁷ which disarmed army officers returning from Manchuria and took arms from railway wagons. The authorities sent away reserves and unreliable troops and issued vodka to the dragoons. The soviet EC exhorted strikers to talk to troops, and after printers agitated a soldiers' demonstration an officer marched them back to the barracks and conceded their demands. A policeman ordered 500 Cossacks to fire on a workers' demonstration, yet they fraternised, and a fighting squad persuaded them to withdraw. Two women workers in a 10,000-strong demonstration challenged Cossacks to shoot them: others joined in, someone made a speech, the crowd cheered, and the Cossacks rode off, though troops broke up another demonstration.²⁰⁸ Dubasov declared martial law, but allowed 2,000 terrified policemen to wear civilian clothes, then withdrew them. The military commander reported that 700 troops were available for patrols,²⁰⁹ out of the 1,500 who were reliable, and though he had the rest disarmed and locked in their barracks, his authority was confined to the city centre. Nevinson recalled that 'Practically nothing was done beyond agitation and the information of the masses; factory meetings were held to ascertain the state of things' and 'district assemblies met'. The soviet's mass meetings were followed by demonstrations that were 'extraordinarily unanimous and permeated with genuine revolutionary enthusiasm', but '*unarmed workers* were no substitute for armed insurrection'. A leading SD attended 'an endless number of meetings'. '*Everything that could be said has been said*' and 'the state of mind of the workers has reached the highest pitch'; yet there was no serious attempt to get enough firearms, and while civilians donated 1,500, including double-barrelled guns, many did not reach the fighters. Some had Mausers and Winchesters, and 700 to 800 had revolvers; yet there were no more than 100 in the Railway district, and in Khamovniki, Butyrki and Presnya districts, apart from the 'Schmidt squad', there were no more than 200. Some took revolvers from policemen, yet over 1,000 had no arms, though there were up to 6,000 scouts, 'sappers' and ambulance workers. There were strikes in nearby rural factories,²¹⁰ though peasants were rumoured to be threatening strikers, loyal troops drove locomotives and others were stationed along the St. Petersburg line,²¹¹ and a railway workers' strike did not take place.²¹² Loyal artillerymen arrived in Moscow by rail and destroyed houses. Pokrovsky recalled that 'when we heard the first cannon shots we didn't believe our ears: we thought our fighting squads were throwing bombs'. 'Against artillery Brownings were powerless'.²¹³ Loyal troops were stationed near the Kremlin,²¹⁴ and some told an agitator that they would join the workers after they had won.²¹⁵ That evening Dubasov sent troops to the Aquarium Theatre, where 12,000 workers were discussing the strike. About 50 fighters slipped out;²¹⁶ though others were arrested,²¹⁷ clubbed and whipped.²¹⁸

On the 9th some troops marched through the city centre, singing the *Marseillaise*, but an officer got them to return to barracks and locked them in.²¹⁹ RSDRP military leaders told fighters to 'Act in small groups of three or four', and 'not occupy fortified buildings', but install two marksmen. Thirteen men inflicted great losses on 600 troops, who had two machine guns and three artillery pieces, though the fighters ran out of ammunition after four hours and withdrew. Civilians built barricades, though dragoons wounded defenders and killed two or three. Troops fired at a demonstration, wounding several and killing a schoolboy, yet civilians built more barricades.²²⁰ The VPSR had received money from wealthy sympathisers, including Gorky, and its fighters led most of the military activity.²²¹ Azev wanted to bomb the Okhrana headquarters and a bridge on the St. Petersburg line, and though Zhuchenko betrayed the plan and police arrested the fighters,²²² SRs blew up the Okhrana headquarters that evening,²²³ and the chief had a nervous breakdown.²²⁴ Troops surrounded Fiedler's Academy, and called on 200 militia, including several women, to surrender, though someone threw a bomb, killed an officer and wounded two soldiers.²²⁵ The militia barricaded themselves in, but faced artillery and machine-guns.²²⁶ The cannon were too far away for a bomb-thrower to hit them, though rifle-fire and grenades killed one soldier and wounded four, while three defenders died and 15 were wounded.²²⁷ The bombardment lasted half an hour, then some defenders escaped, while 110 men and ten young women kept up revolver-fire to cover their retreat, then surrendered, and others attacked the Kazan and St. Petersburg line stations.

On the morning of the 10th Nevinson counted 130 barricades, though there were probably twice as many. They had gone up overnight on the streets leading to the circular road, with a wedge into the city centre, yet some were so flimsy that a push would knock them over, none could stop a bullet and there were no emergency ambulances. Most citizens exhibited 'sceptical resignation or indifference',²²⁸ as the fighters waged 'guerrilla warfare'. 'They fire or throw bombs and rapidly disperse',²²⁹ and politely disarmed policemen. In the afternoon there were factory mass meetings, yet SR, Menshevik and Bolshevik speakers could not agree on tactics and the workers walked away. A military cordon was put in place, artillery lined up and troops fired on a crowd of 5,000 who were agitating soldiers. Workers, led by SDs, controlled Zamoskvoreche district,²³⁰ though barricade defenders faced artillery. Workers tried

to 'withdraw' a regiment, propagandised sappers and turned back the Rostov regiment's artillery, while sappers were disarmed out at Kolomna,²³¹ and a regiment joined the strikers.²³²

The Moscow Bolshevik Alexinsky arrived in St. Petersburg and shouted 'hysterically' at an RSDRP meeting. 'Where are your bombs, how many revolvers have you got, where are your armed detachments?' The military organisation was in 'the most rudimentary state',²³³ and had failed to blow up the line to Moscow.²³⁴ Drabkina, a member of the RSDRP military organisation,²³⁵ was tasked with recruiting for the Congress,²³⁶ and went to Moscow on a troop train with her four-year-old daughter and a trunk of Macedonian bombs. The station had not been captured, but she delivered the bombs to Gorky's apartment.²³⁷ That night revolutionaries raided a gun shop, and though troops fired on a crowd and retreated, the crowd returned.²³⁸ Gorky wrote to his publisher.

I've just come in off the street. They're fighting at the Sandunov Baths, at the Nikol Station, at the Smolensk Market and at Kudrino. It's a great battle! Cannons are roaring – they started yesterday at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, continued all night and they have been rumbling continuously all day today. The horse guard artillery is in action. There are no Cossacks on the streets, the infantry is mounting guard, but for some reason it isn't involved in the fighting at the moment – and it is very small in numbers.

There's an entire corps here but only the dragoons are on the streets. There are three regiments of them and they are cowards. They are magnificent at running away from the armed workers' detachments. They're on Pliushchikha now. We have been fighting them at Strastnaya, at Pliushchikha and Zemlianoi rampart.

The Caucasians – thirteen men – have just routed some forty dragoons at Okhotnyi. One officer and some four soldiers were killed, seven were seriously wounded. In some places bombs are being used. It's a huge success! Everywhere on the streets the gendarmes and the police are being disarmed. A twenty-man detachment has just been disarmed after it was driven into a cul-de-sac.

The workers are conducting themselves very well! Judge for yourself: overnight eight barricades and magnificent barbed-wire barriers have been constructed on Sadovaya-Karetnaya – the artillery was using shrapnel. Overnight, barricades were built on both Bronnaya Streets, on Neglinnyi, Sadovaya, and Smolensk. There are now twenty barricades in the Georgian district! Obviously, there are not enough troops and the artillery is hopping from place to place. There are also not enough machine-guns or no crews. Overall, the conduct of the defence forces is incomprehensible! Mind you, they fight without mercy! There are rumours about unrest among the troops; some patrols have surrendered their weapons – that's a fact. The Fidler [*sic*] High School was destroyed by the artillery – eleven salvos completely destroyed the façade. In general, these days will result in many mutilated buildings. Buckshot is being fired indiscriminately, many houses are being damaged and a few people are too. In general, despite the cannons, the machine-guns, and other such things, there are as yet few dead and wounded. Yesterday there were about 300 today there are probably about four times as many. But the troops are incurring losses as well, in some cases even heavier ones. At the Fidler School seven civilians were killed and eleven were wounded; twenty-five soldiers and three officers were wounded; two bombs were thrown. The Samogitskii regiment was in action. The dragoons are suffering more than anyone else. The public is in an amazing mood! Honest to God, I had expected nothing like this! They are efficient and serious in action against the cavalry and in the construction of barricades, and they laugh and joke when they are at leisure. The mood is excellent!

I've just received some more information: the square at the Nikol Station is littered with corpses. Five cannons and two machine-guns are operating there, but the workers' detachments are still managing to inflict casualties on the troops. According to all the information, our detachments are suffering very little. It's the idlers and inquisitive people, of whom there are tens of thousands, who are suffering more.

Everyone has somehow got used to the shooting, the injuries, and the corpses straightaway. As soon as the shooting breaks out, people immediately flock in from everywhere, carefree and cheerful. All but the very lazy are throwing whatever they can lay their hands on at the dragoons. The dragoons have stopped fighting with sabres, it's too dangerous, they're being shot very successfully. They fire their rifles as they dismount from their horses. On the whole there is fighting all over Moscow! The window panes are rattling. I don't know what's going on in the outlying districts or in the factories, but the sound of gunfire resounds everywhere. Of course, the authorities will prevail, but they won't do so for long, and what an excellent lesson this is for the public! This will surely cost them dearly. Four officers – three wounded and one dead – were carried past our window today.

Will the soldiers say anything? That is the question! ...²³⁹

As he wrote artillerymen and machine gunners were clearing the streets and killing dozens of people.²⁴⁰

Early on the 11th Nevinson heard about 'rooms crowded with people all blown to pieces by shells, walls bespattered with blood, and other horrors'. There was an almost continuous line of wounded fighters and civilians in a backyard, and blood ran down the gutter. Some barricades were reinforced with overturned trams and hoardings, and though the water poured on piled up snow had frozen and could stop bullets, the defenders retreated when artillery arrived. Nevinson saw an officer stripped naked, while ten dragoons had been killed. There was a 'vast black space' where a gun shop had been and a policeman acknowledged that the loyal troops would be defeated in three days.²⁴¹ Artillery bombarded a student dormitory and workers' strongholds,²⁴² and destroyed

Sytin & Company's press. The arrest of soviet deputies had forced district sovety to give a lead. Only one or two squads in Presnya had arms,²⁴³ though many of the 300 fighters carried on elsewhere.²⁴⁴

By the 12th the prisons were full and troops shot anyone with a revolver, including five men who were probably out of ammunition and refused to obey an order to halt. Fighters had name-tags sewn in their clothes, so their family and friends would know if they were killed. Corpses were piled up, and cartloads were taken to the countryside for anonymous burials, yet Nevinson saw six men with revolvers take an officer's sword, and new barricades going up in the north-west suburbs.²⁴⁵ A cannon was captured, yet nobody could fire it, and dragoons and Cossacks recaptured it.²⁴⁶ Dubasov reported to St. Petersburg that the situation was 'very serious': 'a network of barricades is constricting the city ever more tightly; there are clearly not enough troops for counteraction. It is absolutely essential to send an infantry brigade from St. Petersburg, at least for the time being'.²⁴⁷ He banned Krasny Krest, imposed a partial curfew and ordered that anyone resisting arrest for building barricades was to be shot. Bolsheviks called for strikers and sympathisers to stay indoors, and though the joint SD-SR combat committees sought to co-ordinate action, many young and inexperienced fighters operated independently. By late that day they had lost contact with each other, and though a few hundred fought on in Presnya, the police let a loyal factory owner arm his employees.²⁴⁸ Volunteer insurgents received a revolver and three times a soldier's pay,²⁴⁹ and the VPSR had given the railway union dynamite and bombs, yet they failed to blow up the St. Petersburg line.²⁵⁰

On the 13th fighting squads captured six artillerymen, gave them a meal and talked politics, then let them go with their arms.²⁵¹ Loyal troops advanced street by street and killed and wounded up to 9,000.²⁵² Next day citizens tore down barricades until defenders stopped them by force. Thousands of workers had left for nearby villages and the militia was melting away.²⁵³ Morale was low, and ammunition scarce,²⁵⁴ yet loyal troops were exhausted and many refused to fight an enemy they could not see. Many others had been sent to the Baltic provinces, and Dubasov reported that 10,000 of the 15,000 who remained were unreliable,²⁵⁵ so he issued police with rifles and bayonets,²⁵⁶ and banned public and private meetings.²⁵⁷ The Bolshevik intelligenty committee met for the first time since the rising began, and decided to carry on, though Menshevik intelligenty wanted an orderly withdrawal.²⁵⁸ Nevinson saw soldiers execute someone in Theatre Square, yet he also heard revolutionaries congratulating themselves on the 'dress rehearsal'.²⁵⁹

On the 15th the Bolshevik and Menshevik intelligenty issued a joint statement,²⁶⁰ telling fighters to go home or the countryside. Some refused, but loyal troops made rapid progress, and at noon Dubasov ordered shops to open or face martial law.²⁶¹ Troops captured the Kazan line station and workshops, though a trainload of fighters escaped under a hail of bullets.²⁶² Mensheviks insisted that the soviet meet,²⁶³ yet a majority of the 90 deputies voted to carry on.²⁶⁴ Fighters raided police headquarters, took the photographs of people under surveillance and 600 rubles, and shot the police chief,²⁶⁵ though late that day troops surrounded Prokhorov Mill in Presnya with 16 cannon.²⁶⁶ On the morning of the 16th elite troops were ordered to 'make no arrests and act without mercy' along the St. Petersburg to Kazan line,²⁶⁷ and the line from St. Petersburg to Moscow remained open.²⁶⁸

In St. Petersburg Kanatchikov and other Bolsheviks sent 'Ivan Ignatevich' to blow up a troop train, though the bomb failed to explode.²⁶⁹ Tver workers destroyed part of the line, but troops from St. Petersburg and Warszawa reached Moscow, cleared the streets and shot resisters, though 200 fighters, with about 80 revolvers and rifles,²⁷⁰ fought on in Presnya district. There were rumours that workers, and male and female students dressed as workers, were sentries and pickets, and that an 18-year-old woman was one of the leaders.²⁷¹ A few Moscow Metalworks employees had participated, and some had been killed, though most were jailed or deported, but other strikers had stayed out and elected soviet deputies.²⁷² The soviet EC, including the Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and SRs, called off the political strike, but not the rising, yet Cossacks dismantled Sushchov district barricades without resistance.²⁷³

On the 17th cannon fired into Presnya district up to seven times a minute.²⁷⁴ From 8.00am to 9.00am, and 1.00pm to 2.00pm,²⁷⁵ they fired 600 shells,²⁷⁶ and the defenders of Prokhorov Mill and the Mamontov and Schmidt factories could not escape.²⁷⁷ Schmidt's factory, house and workers' cottages burned down, and up to 80 non-combatants died. A doctor treating the injured had his brains blown out,²⁷⁸ and intelligenty and workers helping the wounded were executed,²⁷⁹ while two journalists were so badly beaten that they barely survived. White flags flew on factories that were still standing and the defenders surrendered their arms. It had been 18 degrees below for three mornings running and corpses were stacked like logs.²⁸⁰ The wounded were taken from ambulance wagons and shot, as was an engine driver who tried to drive fighters away. Barricades were cleared,²⁸¹ and buildings that housed snipers were demolished. Troops reportedly killed 129 workers, students, railwaymen and supporters 'without reason', and the district death toll reached 150.²⁸² Policemen beat boys and girls to 'teach them a lesson',²⁸³ though 30 soldiers and five officers had been killed,²⁸⁴ and some VPSR and RSDRP fighters escaped with their arms.²⁸⁵

Anastasia Verbitskaya had been born into a Voronezh army officer's family in 1863, and in autumn 1905 her mother went to buy a grave plot in Presnya, but was turned back. At 6.00am on 17 December troops opened fire below her widows and Anastasia risked her life to reach her. 'For two days and nights gunfire boomed overhead,

and it was impossible to go out. Now and then, bullets shattered the windowpanes and whistled through the rooms.' 'At night the whole sky was aglow with fire. No one slept.'²⁸⁶

Over 400 Prokhorov Mill fighters held out until the 19th, when troops shot nine of them, but released the rest.²⁸⁷ Litvin had led the Bolshevik fighters in Presnya district, fought on the barricades, was wounded,²⁸⁸ and reportedly issued a communiqué. 'We are ending our struggle.' 'We are alone in this world. All the people are looking at us - some with horror, others with deep sympathy. Blood, violence and death will follow in our footsteps. But it does not matter. The working class will win'.²⁸⁹ The fighters were ordered to disperse.²⁹⁰ Mandelshtam escaped,²⁹¹ as did Sofia Nevzorova,²⁹² yet Presnya was in ruins. Thousands were arrested, including Schmidt, though the police did not search his factory basement which was full of cases of Mauser rifles and revolvers.²⁹³ Nevinson saw the corpses of three bayoneted insurgents and others who had been executed in a sugar-mill yard. Many were women. He heard that prisoners had been shot in batches of 16, 20 or more, while some were strapped to a board, beaten almost to death and then had their bones smashed and legs and arms chopped off. Even worse things had happened in police stations,²⁹⁴ though 70 troops had been killed or wounded. Soviet deputies and others suspected of instigating the revolt had been shot out of hand,²⁹⁵ yet 90 percent of civilian casualties were onlookers.²⁹⁶ Reportedly 700 fighters, supporters and civilians had been killed, and 2,000 wounded, including over 100 women. Most wounded fighters were treated in private houses, and only 13 went to hospitals,²⁹⁷ where 174 of the 885 civilians died. At least 454 corpses were buried, but many were taken out of the city in railway wagons,²⁹⁸ and there were rumours of shootings down by the river on the 21st.²⁹⁹

Summary executions continued for over a week, and Nevinson believed about 1,200 had been killed and 12,000 wounded, while those who escaped to the country were hunted down and executed.³⁰⁰ In Moscow over one third of men and women arrested for supporting the insurgency were under 25 and included five teachers, 11 doctors and 46 peasants who worked in factories for part of the year. Moscow RSDRP committee had printed almost 150,000 leaflets, including almost 25,000 for kruzki, though intelligenty had taken 276, and the committee had spent almost nothing on arms. Twenty-seven sailors had joined a fighting squad, and there had been moves towards a delegate-based soldiers' sovet; but the Bolsheviks later acknowledged that 'our party was completely unprepared to lead a revolution',³⁰¹ and Mikhail Vasiliev lamented the absence of 'a specialist experienced in military affairs', since 'we were all absolute laymen'.³⁰² Baring thought the defeat had not 'affected the revolutionary movement in the slightest degree', since the number of insurgents killed was 'trifling', and 'all the important and real leaders of the revolution' escaped, so 'if a number of boys and girls can, at the head of a mass of workmen, drive the garrison to distraction, take guns from the troops, and force the authorities to bombard the houses of the inhabitants without raising universal indignation, things were 'fairly serious', yet people had been arrested indiscriminately.³⁰³

Gorky's leaflet circulated clandestinely. 'The proletariat is not defeated, even though it has suffered losses. The revolution has been expanded by hope'. The proletariat was 'on its way to a decisive victory because it is the only class in the country that is morally sound, clear-headed, and sure of its future', and the revolutionary leadership had been 'considerably expanded'.³⁰⁴ RSDRP members told Gorky to leave the city, and soon after he and Andreeva left the police searched their flat, and after they left St. Petersburg for Finland, the police did the same,³⁰⁵ though some Bolshevik cadre escaped from Moscow.

Ivan Smirnov was born in 1881,³⁰⁶ into a Ryazan province peasant family. In 1883 his family was ruined by a fire, and his father left to work in Moscow, but died a year later. His widow went to Moscow and worked as a domestic servant, and Ivan joined her in 1889. He attended a municipal school, and later worked on the railways and in a factory. In 1898 he read SD literature and met student propagandists and two or three workmates who had survived from a kruzok smashed two years earlier. Fifteen or so workers formed a kruzok, though Ivan was arrested in 1899, and detained for two years, then exiled to Irkutsk for three, but escaped after eight months and joined the RSDRP. The CC in Pskov sent him to Tver province, and local committees sent him to Vyshny Volochek, since they had no contact with its 10,000 workers. He worked at a tannery for six months, and managed to 'establish a following' in two plants, until a sacked worker denounced him and police arrested him. His replacement had arrived from Tver by early 1903, and comrades produced a leaflet and organised a small strike on May Day 1904. In January 1905 Smirnov was sentenced to a year in a fortress, then released because he had spent two years in prison. He worked for the Moscow RSDRP committee as an organiser in the Lefortovo district, but was arrested in spring, and exiled to Vologda province. En route he contracted typhus, and arrived in summer, though he was freed by the October amnesty and returned to Moscow. In December he was the organiser for the sub-district of Blagusha in Lefortovo district, though he was 'heavily compromised' and hid in the Railway district after the rising was crushed.

Early in December Preobrazhensky had attended a district committee and met strikers under artillery fire. He recalled that when Presnya was surrounded by troops, 'I hid my Browning in the water-closet of my room, made my way at night through a line of soldiers in the centre of the city, and left to spend several days in Orel'.³⁰⁷

Zalkind had argued against a rising on the Bolshevik committee, but had fought on the barricades,³⁰⁸ and deployed armoured trams.³⁰⁹ Afterwards she demanded that the 'architects' be removed from the committee.³¹⁰

Frunze had manned Presnya district barricades,³¹¹ but was arrested and sentenced death. That was later commuted to ten years' katorga in Vladimir, Mykolaiv and then Alexandrov in Siberia,³¹² yet the Moscow rising persuaded some people to join the Bolsheviks.

Grigory Sokolnikov was born into a Jewish doctor's family in the city of Romny, Poltava province, in Ukraine, in 1888. He could read by the age of five, and when the family moved to Moscow he entered a gymnasium, but experienced racism. In 1903 studying Latin and Greek 'drove' him to join 'self-education kruzhki' which 'spontaneously developed into political kruzhki', and 'supporters of the proletariat were sorted into the categories of sheep and goats'. He read VPSR and RSDRP literature and joined an RSDRP kruzhok.

[T]he basic legal Marxist books were carefully studied, and illegal journals and pamphlets were read regularly. Foreign literature, delivered to me for safe keeping at home, introduced me to the theoretical and tactical disagreements then being discussed in the social democrat press abroad. At clandestine parties I had arguments with young SRs and Tolstoyans (S. Durylin and Gusev [Drabkin]). Among the first underground activists I knew was Loginov (Anton), through whom I made contact with the Moscow Bolshevik committee.

The committee recruited him, and after the rising was defeated he joined the Bolsheviks.³¹³ The worker Stepanida Lagutina also 'began to feel myself with the Bolsheviks',³¹⁴ though a young male intelligent was horrified.

Ilya Ehrenburg had been born into a bourgeois Jewish family in Kyiv in 1891. His father, an unbeliever, 'belonged to the first generation of Russian Jews who had broken out of the ghetto', yet he cursed Ilya because he attended a Russian school. In 1896 his father was appointed as the manager of a Moscow brewery, and by 1899 Ilya knew all about residence permits, school quotas and pogroms. He was one of the three Jews in his primary school class, and did not have to attend Christian scripture lessons. When a boy taunted him, he hit him in the face, and had no trouble after that, though he did not learn Yiddish. He got the top marks he needed to enter a gymnasium, and his father told him that he needed a higher education if he wanted to live in Moscow, so he hired a student as a tutor. Brewery workmen dictated letters to Ilya to send to their villages and he got to know about their food, illnesses, weddings and funerals. Tolstoy lived next door to the brewery, and Ilya often saw him. He found a copy of his *Voskreseniye*, (*Resurrection*), in the loft, and his father gave him another banned work by Tolstoy to copy. Ilya frequented second-hand bookshops and read works by Gorky and other radicals. He did not experience anti-semitism, but in spring 1903 he knew 'something terrible' had happened in Chişinău, and that the tsar, governor and police were responsible. Soon after his father lost his job and flat, and went to live in a hotel. That summer Ilya travelled abroad with his mother, but returned in autumn for his examinations. Early in 1904 he knew the Japanese 'were giving us a licking' and 'the autocracy was at the root of the whole trouble'. A schoolmate's uncle who was in contact with the VPSR predicted a revolution, so it would be necessary to disarm Cossacks and proclaim a republic. Ilya's cousin was an SD, though Ilya read works by Chernyshevsky, Zola's *Germinal* and pamphlets on political economy, and boys from upper forms told him about 'historical materialism, surplus value, and a multitude of things which seemed to me exceedingly important and created an abrupt break in my life'. One day he and others rushed into the University courtyard and prepared to defend it. 'We were organised in groups of ten: I chalked a figure on my uniform greatcoat. We carried stones upstairs to the lecture room: if the enemy broke through we would stop them by hurling stones. Camp fires were lit: we ate sausage sandwiches and sang till morning'. In October 1905 he witnessed the Bolshevik Bauman's funeral and 'saw blood on the snow', and in December he helped to build barricades. 'I shall never forget that Christmas: the heavy, terrible silence after the singing, the shouting, the firing.' The boots of the guardsmen 'crushed the snow and the snow squeaked piteously'.³¹⁵

Thousands of those arrested during the Moscow rising were sentenced to katorga or Siberia,³¹⁶ The insurrection had not generalised to the most militant towns and regions, though military repression soon would.

14. Terror must be met with terror

(i) Not hesitating before the most extreme measures

On 15 December 1905 the postal and telegraph strike ended,¹ and ten punitive expeditions subsequently set off,² in armoured trains,³ to deal with regions where the regime had lost control. On the Moscow-Kazan line elite officers had orders to 'find the leaders' and 'annihilate the armed revolutionary militia'. 'Every house from which a shot has been fired' was 'to be destroyed by fire or artillery'. Police provided lists of 'suspects', and some were imprisoned, but those deemed 'dangerous' were shot. Troops entered houses and killed peaceful citizens. At one station they killed 50 peasants unloading a railway wagon, and stabbed the station master's face with bayonets. His 'eye-sockets were pierced through to the brain', and his chin, cheeks and nose were 'one bloody mask'.⁴

In two months 66 estates had been burned in the Verkhnedneprovsk district of Ukraine, where the teachers' union had deep roots. It deprecated terror, because it led to 'savage repression', and argued for 'cultured forms' of activity, but supported moderate peasants' tactics. In Katerynoslav province seven of the 29 members of peasants' union out on trial were peasants, nine were teachers, while the identity of the other 13 is uncertain.⁵ Martial law was imposed in Chernihiv province on the 18th.⁶ Kyiv sovet voted to continue the strike for three days.⁷ Across the empire the peasants' union had at least 200,000 members.⁸ In northern Ukraine a conference in Sumy attracted 350 delegates, but the police deported many of the 1,100 peasants and intelligenty.⁹ Loyal troops arrived in Katerynoslav on the 18th and strikers learned that the Moscow rising had been crushed.¹⁰ They lacked arms, and troops suppressed them with little resistance, though local strikes erupted,¹¹ and the provincial governor imposed martial law on the 20th.¹² Cossacks arrested workers,¹³ and regained control of the Ekaterinin line next day,¹⁴ while police and gendarmes were told to shoot anyone carrying arms.¹⁵ On the 23rd Luzovka ironworks was closed,¹⁶ and though workers formed armed camps along the Katerynoslav line, barricaded the station and besieged barracks until the soldiers surrendered,¹⁷ a punitive detachment arrived on the 28th and occupied each station, but they took three days to regain complete control. Donbass plants had produced 90,000 tonnes of pig iron in January, but 49,000 tonnes in December,¹⁸ though coal miners had produced 762 million tonnes that year for 22.6 rubles a month.¹⁹ One Donbass worker recalled that he 'still didn't understand anything about politics', and 'hadn't figured out whether the tsar was a swine or not, but I knew it was necessary to help my fellow workers'.²⁰ Nevinson had arrived in Kyiv late in December and found that 300 Jews had been released, though 35 arrested refugees had disappeared. Mutinous soldiers who had demanded better treatment had been suppressed and officers acknowledged that at least 380 had been killed.²¹ Spilka had had 7,000 members, including many Russians and Jews, though the organisation had been decimated.²²

By early December two SD railway workers in Odesa had persuaded others to strike to protest about their imprisoned workmates.²³ Groups of 100 workers had elected 153 sovet deputies,²⁴ and they called for a general strike and a democratic constituent assembly 'to further the cause of socialism', banned the sale of alcohol and ordered shops to close at 11.00am. Trams stopped and gas workers and lamplighters were out. Martial law was reimposed on 15 December, and though the sovet took no serious steps to disarm police or form a militia, armed workers took over presses to print leaflets and *Izvestia Soveta rabochik deputatov g. Odessa (News of the Odesa Sovet of Workers' Deputies)*.²⁵ The Bolshevik Tarshis was a member of Odesa RSDRP committee,²⁶ and became aware of the sovet's existence for the first time.²⁷ Odesa's RSDRP factions united,²⁸ and the 38-year-old Bolshevik Vladimir Krasnukha chaired the sovet.²⁹ After tobacco factory managers sacked strikers, the sovet began a boycott, then ended the strike, though most strikers had already returned. All the railway workers had been sacked and only those who pledged not to join the union or strike were rehired. Anarchists bombed a fashionable café, killing some of themselves, customers, passers-by and police.³⁰ (At least three of the four surviving anarchists were subsequently hanged.³¹) The former St. Petersburg Putilov worker Shapovalov had worked for the RSDRP in Batumi, Kyiv, Tver, Katerynoslav and Odesa since 1901,³² and supported *Iskra*.³³ Late in 1905 he reported to Geneva that many Odesa SDs had confided in informers, lost their nerve and refused to work hard. 'Thanks to disorganisation the committee remains without a kopek of money, without *tekhnika*' (technical equipment), and 'no decisive and active people'.³⁴ Across Ukraine hundreds of workers were sacked, and in some places, and especially in Chernihiv, many were arrested. The Kharkiv governor-general told an army commander: 'In the event that peasants in a region support insurgents and do not disperse on first demand, you are to announce that the entire village will be burned'.³⁵ A revolutionary called Parizher had left Baku in spring and had gone to Katerynoslav. Police arrested him in summer, and after three months in jail he went to Odesa, then emigrated at the end of the year.³⁶ Along the coast in Mykolaiv Mensheviks and Bolsheviks had agitated together,³⁷ and an armed militia controlled the port for days.³⁸

In the Baltic provinces the Riga strike had ended on the 16th, yet the Bolshevik committee demanded an armed rising.³⁹ There had been insurrections in some Latvian towns, and citizens and farmers were reportedly 'imbued with an unflinching revolutionary spirit'. A 'strongly organised and well-disciplined army' included 'numbers of skilful sharpshooters' and the countryside was 'one great battlefield'.⁴⁰ On the 18th a general took 19,000 troops to achieve the 'pacification' of the Baltic provinces.⁴¹ They attacked people who had committed acts of violence, or were suspected of supporting them, while German barons burned up to 400 farmhouses.⁴² Anyone inciting disobedience, attacking property or advocating overthrowing the government was to be shot. Next day Līvõmō province and Rīga were placed under martial law.⁴³ German barons supplied 'prescription lists' of peasants. In every village between 10 and 30 were shot and hundreds were flogged, while members of peasant councils and suspected agitators were hanged, often on trees and telegraph poles.⁴⁴ Troops killed 10,000 and jailed RSDRP members.⁴⁵ One general was short of ammunition, though citizens had handed over the corpses of an officer, a dragoon and 107 guns. The tsar noted: 'The city should have been destroyed'.⁴⁶ In the Latvian countryside 'Forest Brothers' who had waged guerrilla war against landlords, troops and officials,⁴⁷ surrendered after Cossacks used artillery,⁴⁸ and gentry burned 17 peasant farms as a 'Christmas gift'. In one small Līvõmō town, a German baron made 49 dig their own graves in the presence of their relatives and friends.⁴⁹ One general issued a leaflet. 'Every violation of or a failure to comply with the orders will be followed by destruction and annihilation of entire villages, without discrimination between the innocent and the guilty'. 'If only a single rifle, dagger or other weapon is not handed over, if only a single criminal is not surrendered, if one recruit fails to present himself in due time or one duty is not fulfilled', troops would begin 'levelling that village with the ground'.⁵⁰ Over 100 Riga railway workers were court-martialled.⁵¹ A general told villagers who refused to identify 'instigators' that their houses would be blown up 'for greater moral effect'.⁵² He assigned seven officers to specific areas,⁵³ and German barons gave them lists of those to be summarily executed, including peasant committee members, militiamen and agitators, and there were hundreds of floggings.⁵⁴ A major general was ordered to shoot the 'main agitators' without being 'fastidious', and told subordinates that they would not be punished for 'major errors'.⁵⁵ A captain ordered 42 'suspects' to be summarily executed, and when troops found four socialists asleep, an officer ordered them to be carried onto the street at bayonet point and tortured to death.⁵⁶ At the end of December, as the Bolshevik Skrypnik taught Riga workers about street fighting, troops surrounded the building and arrested most of them. Skrypnik escaped, but was sentenced to death in his absence.⁵⁷ In Tallinn workers and peasants had partially or totally destroyed up to 120 estates.⁵⁸ Armed workers had seized towns and agricultural labourers and peasants had fought a guerrilla war against troops.⁵⁹ They had had attacked 3,000 German landlords, Russian officials and soldiers, and killed about 1,000.⁶⁰ Around 40 percent of manor houses had been severely damaged or destroyed,⁶¹ and the damage was estimated at 11 million rubles.⁶² PPS in Lithuania unsuccessfully proposed a merger to the Lithuanian SDP.⁶³

In Poland provincial and city governors and the Warszawa police chief had orders to take the 'most drastic measures in accordance with the law' against 'politically unreliable' zemstvo employees.⁶⁴ The SDKPiL had more members than the PPS in Częstochowa and Lublin, and was narrowing the gap in Warszawa, where most members, including many metalworkers, were in factory cells. District organisations collected subs, distributed literature and trained agitators, and fighting squads protected demonstrators and acted as bodyguards; yet the SDKPiL, Bund and PPS called on strikers to return,⁶⁵ and the railway strike had crumbled by the end of December.⁶⁶

In Rostov-na-Donu, early in December, troops had made half-hearted attempts to disperse a public meeting, and left workers' patrols alone. On the 13th workers overwhelmed infantry at the railway station, who had refused to fire; though artillery bombarded the insurgents and resumed the attack next day.⁶⁷ Workers beat off Cossacks and infantry,⁶⁸ and 28 corpses at the hospital included an officer and six soldiers, while at least 113 others were wounded; yet they eventually took the station and other strongholds,⁶⁹ including the RSDRP's headquarters, causing casualties, and the survivors fled.⁷⁰ Insurgents used dynamite and revolvers, while troops fired cannon and machine-guns in workers' districts.⁷¹ The city's fighting squads were the last to disperse.⁷² Railway managers sacked at least 192 and the main workshops stayed closed until late that month. Around 350 of the 900 Greter & Krivanek workers were sacked and the plant closed, but waiters demanded ten rubles a month, polite treatment, decent accommodation, either free meals or a higher food allowance, a five-day week, mediation over sackings, an end to employers' interference in their lives and to their insistence on reimbursement if customers left without paying.⁷³

Semeno Ter-Petrosian had been born in Gori in Tbilisi province in 1882. His mother was Georgian, and his father, who was Armenian,⁷⁴ supplied weapons to the army and became wealthy, but was bankrupted in 1901.⁷⁵ Semeno joined the Bolsheviks in 1904 and worked underground for the Caucasian joint committee.⁷⁶ Late in 1905 the northern Caucasus Pyatigorsk citizens' committee, 'encouraged by the neutral attitude of the local garrison', had disarmed and discharged police. Troops 'willingly surrendered their arms', and an 'armed militia under the red flag protected peace and order'.⁷⁷ In Georgia the viceroy of the Tbilisi region declared martial law and handed power to a general. He banned meetings, running in the street and wearing cloaks that could conceal weapons, ordered

shops to open, and Cossacks surrounded Tbilisi railway depot. Armed SDs defended the Didube and Nadzaladevi districts, though Cossacks killed at least six on the 18th, and captured several.⁷⁸ In the Caucasus a general ordered that if anyone attacked troops, gendarmes or railway guards, 'prisoners and all those previously sent to jail' would be shot.⁷⁹ Ter-Petrosian led the 'Outfit' which fought Cossacks in Tbilisi, but was wounded. The Cossacks tried to hang him, but the rope snapped, so they took him to the Fortress.⁸⁰ The Armenians withdrew from the Tbilisi strike committee, and it met for the last time,⁸¹ and the two largest employers in Batumi closed their factories permanently. That year there had been 194 officially-recorded 'terrorist acts' in Tbilisi province and 331 in Kutaisi province,⁸² and there were reportedly 20,000 insurgents in the Guria district.⁸³ During December troops burned villages and shot people without trial,⁸⁴ killed 60, wounded 250 and arrested 280. They captured Kutaisi, killing any 'suspect' they recognised, and burned the city,⁸⁵ and the police arrested fighters, strikers and soviet deputies.⁸⁶

In Siberia the Bolshevik Novgorodtseva recalled how Sverdlov responded to the situation in Ekaterinburg.

Immediately on his return from Moscow he had begun to transfer the organisation to a clandestine footing, beginning, of course, with its central nucleus. He advised that a watch be put on our headquarters; then we dispersed to several secret addresses. The once-hospitable house stood empty. Our transformation into an underground organisation was made easier by the fact that none of us had really believed in the constitutional freedoms promised in the tsar's manifesto. Sverdlov never tired of explaining that the final victory of the revolution was still distant and that we should be prepared to change direction many times before then, reacting to circumstances. If any of our comrades became overenthusiastic about those 'freedoms', Sverdlov would remind him that the state system, the autocratic regime with its landowners and bureaucracy, still existed, that the secret service, the police, the prisons, had not disappeared and that we therefore had no right to abandon our underground apparatus.

They 'still had our clandestine meeting places, and our system of contacts and passwords had been much improved, so that we were ready to go underground at any time',⁸⁷ but liberals still hoped for peaceful reform.

The VPSR CC had returned to Russia after the amnesty in October 1905,⁸⁸ then went to Paris. The combat organisation included seven men and three women, but after the CC ordered them to cease activity, Savinkov fired a revolver just over Chernov's head. Many former members of the combat organisation were freed, and agreed that Tatarov had betrayed them. Savinkov went to Geneva, and patronised Matiushenko for his lack of education and respect for Gapon.⁸⁹ By December the VPSR had 75 local organisations in Russia,⁹⁰ and held its first congress in Imatra in Finland, close to the Russian border.⁹¹ Chernov's draft programme argued that the immediate future would see something between a liberal regime and a future collectivist society, and workers would have to develop the process in the latter direction through increasing consciousness, organisation and economic activity, which might limit the development of industry. He postponed the full socialisation of industry to the more or less remote future, though he envisaged a comprehensive insurance system, shorter hours leading to an eight-hour day, freedom to form unions, a say in factory operations and better pay, while agriculture would develop through 'socialisation of the land' without compensation to full collectivisation. It assumed that civil rights, universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage, proportional representation and free education without clerical influence would lead to direct taxation, legalised cooperation, free trade, the replacement of the standing army by a people's militia and a republic. The draft programme favoured maximum decentralisation, including the right of national self-determination, but acknowledged that there might be a temporary need for a 'revolutionary dictatorship'.⁹² The programme did not discuss soviet.⁹³ The delegates, who had been elected by local committees, elected members of the central institutions to supervise committees in cities, towns and villages. Each committee was to have an agitator, a propagandist, a typesetter if it had a press and a 'chemist' if it was involved in terror. Groups of neighbouring committees would elect district committees, which would elect 15 regional committees, accountable to the central council, which would include the CC and its subcommittees. Local committees would have the right to replace arrested members by co-option and organise a 'battle squad', though the CC's combat organisation would conduct 'central terrorism'.⁹⁴ Delegates supported the expropriation of public and private property, especially banks, and pillage and incendiarism on landlords' estates,⁹⁵ but though voted by 32 votes to 19 not to commit to an insurrection the following spring,⁹⁶ they wanted a 'partisan war' on police, jails holding political prisoners, government institutions, barracks and government officials,⁹⁷ and Durnovo and Dubasov would be the first targets.⁹⁸ Azev and Savinkov would be based in Finland,⁹⁹ and Azev would command the central combat organisation. There had been plenty of volunteers, including many of those amnestied in October, and its numbers had risen to 30.¹⁰⁰ From 1902 to 1904 it had been responsible for six attacks and for 51 in 1905,¹⁰¹ when it killed 54 officials.¹⁰² Of the 73 members whose ages are known in the early 1900s, 16 were 19 or younger, another 33 were under 25, and by 1905 their average age was 20. Out of a sample of 179, ten were schoolboys or schoolgirls, and 13 were students, and around one third of all of them were from intelligently or middle-class families,¹⁰³ and a few

were women, and the rest were peasants, sailors, soldiers and a few workers.¹⁰⁴ The police had 32 agents in the VPSR,¹⁰⁵ and two raids late that year crippled the organisation.¹⁰⁶

In Paris in summer 1905 Struve had declared in *Osvobozhdenie* that 'every sincere and thinking liberal in Russia demands revolution',¹⁰⁷ yet late that year he condemned 'the pernicious anarchy of the Russian revolution'.¹⁰⁸ In Russia the Kadet Congress rebranded itself as *Partiya Narodnoi Svobody* (the Party of the People's Freedom), and declared that 'Russia should be a constitutional and parliamentary monarchy'.¹⁰⁹ Four teachers had recently been killed, 14 deported, 250 arrested at least 450 sacked for political activity. A teachers' union congress met in Finland. Delegates resolved to 'organise the forces of the narod [people]' in the struggle for a constituent assembly and called on the peasant army not to suppress the movement.¹¹⁰

(ii) Insufficient to satisfy even the most urgent necessities

In 1905 the state owned over 143 million hectares, and the imperial family, nobles, gentry, clergy and business people owned almost 81 million hectares between them, though around gentry 22,500 owned less than 110, 13,200 owned 110 to 1,100 and 9,300 owned over 11,000. Nobles owned 58.2 million hectares, business people eight million,¹¹¹ and the imperial family seven million, and though the Orthodox Church owned 2.9 million, it did not make tenants improve their agricultural methods.¹¹² Since 1887 gentry landholdings had fallen from 85 to 54.5 million hectares,¹¹³ though they had sold 30 percent less land since 1895 than in the previous decade.¹¹⁴ Most gentry in Tambov, Voronezh, Kursk, Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Katerynoslav, Kherson, Poltava, Kyiv, Podolia and Samara provinces, demanded high rents, since the soil was fertile; though crops could be harvested mechanically, the amount the gentry farmed had risen by a third in five years and labourer's wages were low. In Poltava province gentry used machinery and farmed twice as much land, so peasant rents for the rest had risen sharply.¹¹⁵ Between them the Church, municipalities and other institutions owned 39.1 percent of useable land in 50 provinces, though most was mainly forest. Peasants' allotment land was mainly arable and amounted to 35.1 percent of the total, though 25.8 percent was privately owned.¹¹⁶ Peasant allotments totalled 140 million hectares, plus the 31 million they had held since 1861,¹¹⁷ though the average holding had decreased by one-third in a decade.¹¹⁸ By the end of 1905 the average allotment was around 11 hectares, and the price of the peasant staple, rye, had increased.¹¹⁹ Around 30 percent of households had too little land and five million agricultural labourers were unemployed.¹²⁰

Since 1901 European Russian grain production had risen by over 15 percent,¹²¹ though an annual average of 5.37 million tonnes was exported, and most of the 20.8 million rubles spent on farm equipment was for machinery.¹²² The 1905 harvest was poor,¹²³ and 90 percent of peasant households had no surplus.¹²⁴ Since 1895 almost 1.4 million people had migrated to Siberia, where the average landholding was under four hectares, though there were 118 cooperative creameries.¹²⁵ During 1905 around 44,000 migrated,¹²⁶ and by the end of the year they were doing so in ever larger numbers.¹²⁷

Officially, there had been 3,228 outbreaks of peasant unrest,¹²⁸ with 474 in the third quarter and 1,590 in the fourth,¹²⁹ including 575 in December.¹³⁰ Across Russia around 2,000 estates had been wrecked,¹³¹ and damage was estimated at 47 million rubles.¹³² Middle peasants had led many of most violent disturbances, which were numerous in black earth provinces, where landlords had taken away allotments. In 16 of the 20 provinces where landlords lost most from the unrest, repartition was predominant.¹³³ In Saratov province 272 estates were looted and 9.5 million rubles' worth of damage done, and in Kursk province the damage to 127 estates cost three million rubles.¹³⁴ There were 811 disturbances in Kyiv province,¹³⁵ and 1,067 in the south west.¹³⁶ In the Pale there had been over 160 strikes by agricultural labourers in Kaunas and Suwałki provinces.¹³⁷ Peasants had been freed with land 40 years earlier, and the risings Vitebsk, Minsk, Magiļoŭ, Vilnius, Kaunas and Grodno provinces were smaller and less fierce than in Kurzeme and Līvõmō in the Baltic provinces, where peasants had been freed without land 80 years earlier,¹³⁸ and damage in Katerynoslav province in Ukraine was estimated at 774,000 rubles.¹³⁹ Across European Russia, most landowners had conceded wage rises and the use of more land, though in 41 of the 84 Polish counties there had been risings on 740 estates, including half of the largest, especially in Lublin, Siedlce and Warszawa provinces.¹⁴⁰ The assistant interior minister acknowledged that he would 'be only too glad to give away half my land as I am convinced that this is the only way to keep the other half'.¹⁴¹ Peasant unrest had generally followed workers' strikes.

During 1905 around 245,000 workers belonged to 600 trade unions, yet while 22 had over 2,000 members, 349 had fewer than 100.¹⁴² There were over 1,693,000 inspected workers,¹⁴³ and a quarter were women, but fines totalled over 500,000 rubles.¹⁴⁴ Almost 1,040,000 workers had gone on strike,¹⁴⁵ at 13,110 plants, costing employers an estimated 127 million rubles and workers 17.5 million.¹⁴⁶ One-third of all factory workforces had gone on strike,¹⁴⁷ including 109 percent with workforces of 21-50, 160 percent with those of 101-1,000, and 231 percent

with those of over 1,000. More of almost 4,400 economic strikes had been successful than those in Germany and Britain in the previous decade,¹⁴⁸ and in every month except September there had been more strikers than in any whole year since 1895.¹⁴⁹ Over 736,000 metalworkers had struck on 2,657 occasions, while they and uninspected miners had struck on average almost three times and 640,000 uninspected railway workers more than twice. Over 1,269,000 textile workers, including 779,000 cotton workers and 279,000 wool workers, struck 4,067 times, making a total of almost 2,087,000. Reportedly almost 14,000 strikes of inspected workers lasted over 23,600,000 days, and strikers averaged 1.6 strikes for 8.25 days. Twenty-eight percent of strikes lasted for two days or less, 52 percent from three to ten days and 20 percent for longer, and 632 were about pay for previous strikes. A quarter ended in victory, 46 percent in compromise and 29 percent in defeat, and the momentum was increasing towards the end of the year. In December there had been over 418,000 strikers in 2,172 plants, or around 25 percent of the inspected workforce. Including repeat strikers, the total was 5,119,000.¹⁵⁰ Urban workers had struck most often, though about 16 percent of suburban workers had come out, compared to around 25 percent in the 1890s,¹⁵¹ and at least 33 large towns and cities had been strike-bound.¹⁵² There had been over 1,300 strikes in Poland,¹⁵³ involving over 93 percent of inspected workers. Piotrków province accounted for over 37 percent of the empire's textile strikers, including over 80 percent of those in Łódź and almost half of those in Warszawa. In the Warszawa region 78 percent of economic strikes were successful,¹⁵⁴ and Piotrków province workers averaged five strikes apiece.¹⁵⁵ There had been 93 serious labour disputes in Finland.¹⁵⁶ Altogether 385,000 strikes were deemed politically-motivated,¹⁵⁷ and involved 1,843,000 strikers,¹⁵⁸ and inspectors acknowledged that 'class-conscious' workers led the movement.¹⁵⁹

The St. Petersburg authorities had acknowledged that workers' pay bore 'no relation to the work performed', and it was 'often insufficient to satisfy even the most urgent necessities', including food and clothing, while many workers were 'forced to take refuge in some damp corner or in a night shelter'.¹⁶⁰ There were around 250,000 workers in the privately-owned factories and 36,000 in state plants. During 1905 18 percent of the city's inspected strikers were cotton workers and 55 percent were metalworkers.¹⁶¹ Putilov workers struck eight times for 63 days, and Nevsky shipyard workers six times for 110 days.¹⁶² On average workers struck over three times. In the province 12 percent of 150,000 workers struck for 555,000 days,¹⁶³ and there were 300,000 strikers altogether. In Moscow 276,000 of around 285,000 inspected workers went on strike and 540,000 of the 567,000 in the province.

St. Petersburg province and Warszawa province's 550,000 inspected factory workers, with those in Moscow, Vladimir, Piotrków and Livõmõ provinces, formed two-thirds of all strikers. Bakı and Tbilisi province workers struck on average 4.5 times, and almost 54,000 Livõmõ workers averaged five times.¹⁶⁴ In Lithuania 29,000 workers went on economic strikes, compared to under 16,000 in the previous decade. Over 80 percent of strikes were in Vilnius and Kaunas, and 46,000 strikers were deemed politically-motivated.¹⁶⁵ On the Volga one Nizhni-Novgorod province metalworking plant workforce had come out 26 times.¹⁶⁶ From 1895 to 1904 321 strikes in Siberia had involved around 45,000 workers, but in 1905 347 involved about 70,000,¹⁶⁷ or almost three-quarters of the workforce,¹⁶⁸ and they reportedly won raises averaging of 25 percent.¹⁶⁹ In the second half of December there had been over 1,000 strikes in the St. Petersburg region, 887 in Warszawa region, 540 in Moscow region and 403 in the Kyiv-Volga-Kharkiv region.¹⁷⁰ Half of Moscow region factories had previously worked an 11.5 hour day, but by the end of the year ten-hours had become normal, and only 5,000 worked nights.¹⁷¹

Around 3.9 percent of the population had been formally educated, though only 6.7 percent of primary pupils had gone on to secondary education and one percent to higher education. The 739 municipal schools now had 113,415 pupils, gymnasia around 102,000, realschulen 47,000, and there were 30 higher educational schools for women.¹⁷² Popular libraries now the status of public libraries,¹⁷³ though censors had banned 156 of that year's 166 new publications.¹⁷⁴

During 1905 the police reportedly had 19,500 spies, including 18 in SD organisations in Russia and abroad,¹⁷⁵ while 64 Okhrana officers tracked revolutionaries,¹⁷⁶ and 'black offices' copied over 10,000 letters. Civil courts heard 498 political cases and military courts found 308 guilty of 'state crimes', and in November and December 115 political suspects were exiled without trial.¹⁷⁷ There were 85,000 political detainees,¹⁷⁸ including 6,100 in katonga prisons, and 6,500 exiles,¹⁷⁹ and Jews formed 37 percent of arrested intelligenty.¹⁸⁰

The Finnish SSDP had over 45,000 members in 177 branches.¹⁸¹ Together with the PPS, the Lithuanian SDP, Latvian SDSP and RSDRP, the total number of revolutionaries may have been 70,000.¹⁸² At the end of the year the RSDRP claimed 3,000 members in St. Petersburg, 1,500 in Nizhni Novgorod and 1,000 in both Saratov and Minsk,¹⁸³ though St. Petersburg Mensheviks had recruited more workers than the Bolsheviks.¹⁸⁴ Nationally, there were reportedly 25,000 Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and SRs.¹⁸⁵ During 1905 workers had contributed 14 percent of the RSDRP committee income in Sevastopol, 22 percent in Riga and 53 percent in Ivanovo,¹⁸⁶ and the Bolshevik CC had received 201,000 rubles from Caucasia.¹⁸⁷ St. Petersburg sovet had produced over 500,000 leaflets and newsheets,¹⁸⁸ and the Bolsheviks had issued 117 leaflets.¹⁸⁹ Their Bakı press had produced over one million items

in runs of up to 15,000, weighing a total of nine tonnes, and though under half a tonne had reached its destination,¹⁹⁰ over 20 newspapers for troops included *Kazarma*, which sold up to 20,000.¹⁹¹

There had been 180 officially-recorded mutinies in November and December,¹⁹² in a quarter of all artillery and Cossack units, a third of infantry regiments and half of engineering regiments.¹⁹³ Soldiers had mutinied in Tomsk, Khabarovsk, Irkutsk, Sretensk and other Siberian towns, and there had been joint soldiers' and workers' soveti in Achinsk, Barnaul, Irkutsk and Novosibirsk.¹⁹⁴ Former factory workers had often given a lead,¹⁹⁵ and soldiers had given peasants arms on at least six occasions.¹⁹⁶ During 1905 four Cossack regiments and battalions had mutinied, and ten were too disaffected to be deployed, though 2.8 million other Cossacks had been sent against civilians,¹⁹⁷ and troops had put down armed risings in Kazan and Ufa.¹⁹⁸ At the eastern end of the Trans-Siberian line loyal troops had killed 17 suspects, wounded 22 and arrested 80 on 20 December,¹⁹⁹ and Cossacks and other loyal troops had reached the outskirts of Krasnoyarsk on the 24th, but delayed an attack; and resistance continued in Chita.²⁰⁰

In the second half of December 14 soveti had been established,²⁰¹ and between 40 and 50 strike committees, plus soldiers' and peasants' organisations which effectively functioned as soveti.²⁰² Baki sovet had 400 deputies at its peak,²⁰³ as had Rostov-na-Donu, while Voronezh and Tver both had 200, Kostroma had 135, Novorossiiske had 72, and Samara had 40;²⁰⁴ and Bryansk sovet survived until the end of the year.²⁰⁵

During December, officially, there had been 233 assassinations,²⁰⁶ yet some of the 5,000 anarchists were reportedly responsible for most of them,²⁰⁷ including those on factory managers who had imposed harsh working conditions and opposed strikes and protests,²⁰⁸ though anarchists reportedly had had little impact outside the Volga region.²⁰⁹ Since 1900 the vast majority of arrested political suspects had been under 30.²¹⁰

In five years Russia's annual commercial turnover had risen by a third, to almost 1.7 billion rubles, though the state-owned railways had lost an average of 36.4 million a year since 1900.²¹¹ The State Bank had given over 148 million rubles to private banks and discounted over 138 million rubles of debt,²¹² and 94 million rubles were withdrawn from savings banks in December.²¹³ St. Petersburg banks were four million rubles in the red and the total bank deficit was 8.8 million.²¹⁴ The foreign trade deficit was around 80 million rubles,²¹⁵ and the total deficit was between 700 and 800 million.²¹⁶ In two years the government's gold reserves had fallen from the equivalent of £106 million to £94 million, while the face value of paper rubles had grown from the equivalent of £59 million to £143 million. Officially, the government's annual deficit was equivalent to £48 million, yet it was reportedly closer to £90 million,²¹⁷ and it tried to raise a £32 million loan,²¹⁸ though businessmen sent gold and hard currency abroad.²¹⁹ The government budget for 1906 was equivalent to £250 million,²²⁰ including around 18 million rubles to hire 30,000 more policemen, an increase of one third,²²¹ while the cost of demobilising troops in the Far East was 700 million rubles. The predicted annual deficit for 1906 was 481 million rubles,²²² and late in 1905 the tsar told his mother that 'Terror must be met with terror'.²²³

(iii) The European workers will show us how to do it

Late in November 1905 the Baki SD worker Petr Montin was elected to represent Caucasian workers at a conference in Finland, but he was assassinated on the eve of his departure. Alliluyev was the police's prime suspect, but he had a plausible alibi, and Jughashvili took Montin's place.²²⁴ Early in December he arrived in St. Petersburg, went to the *Novaya zhizn* offices, as instructed, but they were closed, so a friend put him up until he found Krupskaya, who gave him a code name, money and railway tickets to Finland.²²⁵

On the 11th the government announced elections to a consultative State Duma (parliament).²²⁶ That day 41 Bolsheviks, badly disguised as teachers, left for Tampere. The conference opened next day,²²⁷ and 26 delegates claimed to represent local RSDRP organisations.²²⁸ They supported the peasants' confiscation of land and accepted the 'irreconcilable conflict' between the interests of poor peasants and the 'rural bourgeoisie' - *kulaki*.²²⁹ They rejected participation in the elections to the 'police State Duma', but agreed to 'make extensive use of the electoral assemblies' to 'expand the revolutionary organisation of the proletariat and to conduct agitation for an armed uprising among all sections of the population', which 'must be prepared at once' and 'organised everywhere'.²³⁰ The Bolshevik CC and the one member of the Mensheviks' organisational commission present agreed to merge the factions and call an RSDRP Congress. A majority of delegates rejected the proposal for an equal number of delegates, but agreed to factional election platforms.

All members of the party organisation are to participate in the election of delegates by direct and secret vote. There will be one delegate for every 300 party members. Autonomous local organisations with a total membership of less than 300 but more than 100 may also send a single delegate. Autonomous local organisations with a total membership of less than 100 but more than 50 may send delegates in an advisory capacity.

The conference ordered 'all party organisations quickly and energetically to reorganise' on the basis of the 'elective principle', and would permit 'departures from fully democratic procedures' only 'in the event of insurmountable practical difficulties'.²³¹ The conference granted 'elected centres full powers in matters of ideological and practical leadership', though they were to give their actions 'broad publicity', be 'strictly accountable' and 'subject to recall'.²³² Krupskaya recalled that their links with Moscow were poor, but 'In the intervals we learned to shoot'. When news of the defeat of the rising arrived it was a 'very bitter experience' for Ulyanov, since he understood that the workers had been poorly armed and the organisation had been weak.²³³ He noted privately that after a bourgeois revolution, the bourgeoisie would 'adopt an overtly hostile attitude' to the proletariat, though 'a new crisis and a new struggle' could 'blaze forth' with the proletariat 'fighting to preserve its democratic gains for the sake of a socialist revolution', though that would require a socialist revolution in Western Europe first.²³⁴

Subsequently some Bolshevik intelligenty noted that those tasked with blowing up the St. Petersburg to Moscow line had had no maps, and some blamed Krasin for not supplying enough bombs and explosives,²³⁵ while Bonch-Bruевич blamed him for the 'unfortunate events', and Mikhail Vasiliev criticised Shantser for irresolution. Others blamed the Mensheviks.²³⁶ In Moscow the English journalist Baring found that revolutionaries 'profess to be in no way disheartened', since the rising was 'nothing in comparison with what they will do'. They intended to blow up government buildings next March,²³⁷ and congratulated themselves on the 'dress rehearsal'.²³⁸

There were waves of arrests in St. Petersburg,²³⁹ and by the 25th 78 newspapers had been suspended, 58 editors imprisoned, 2,000 postal and telegraph workers sacked and over 20 workers' dining rooms closed.²⁴⁰ Ulyanov and Krupskaya returned to St. Petersburg with false passports.²⁴¹ They had previously lived with Ulyanov's sister Maria, and registered with the police, they now lived apart and did not register; yet the police tracked them down,²⁴² so they went underground.²⁴³ The replacement sovet EC had met five times,²⁴⁴ but was dead.²⁴⁵ Ulyanov discussed the State Duma elections with Bolshevik intelligenty and wrote a pamphlet against working with liberals.²⁴⁶

The Kadets claimed 100,000 members, though 60 percent were gentry, 27 of the 41 CC members were professors and they were all in their forties.²⁴⁷ They had recently agreed that Russia 'must be a constitutional parliamentary monarchy', so they would focus on the 'most extensive *organisation of public consciousness* by all means except *armed insurrection*'. The eight-hour day for workers was desirable, where 'possible', and peasants should get gentry land at 'a fair valuation';²⁴⁸ but they condemned peasant land seizures, strikes and the Moscow rising.²⁴⁹

Lunacharsky edited the legal *Vestnik zhizni (Journal of Life)* in St. Petersburg and later recalled that Ulyanov worked on an 'émigré scale', 'chiefly behind the scenes, almost exclusively with his pen and at various committee meetings of local Party branches', though he was 'comparatively ineffective' and 'not the genuine revolutionary leader I had thought him to be'. 'I began to feel that émigré life had reduced his stature', and that 'for him the inner party struggle against the Mensheviks had overshadowed the much greater struggle against the monarchy,' and he was 'more a journalist than a revolutionary leader'. Lev Bronstein was 'a very able if somewhat theatrical tribune', though he was not 'a politician of the first rank'. Lunacharsky later acknowledged that the revolution had 'caught us somewhat unprepared', and 'we lacked real political skill'. wanted to clarify a 'science of values' in aesthetics. He believed that socialists should express 'Promethean aspirations' through art, aspire to a 'victory over spontaneity', produce 'supermen', acknowledge human subjectivity – tastes, feelings and spirituality – as well as objective material factors, and replace bourgeois mysticism with a 'religion of humanity',²⁵⁰ though with 'no belief in the supernatural'.²⁵¹ On the 31st two troops of infantry surrounded the Nevsky district building in which he was teaching Marxist theory to 54 workers. Police arrested them all and took Lunacharsky to Kresty Prison,²⁵² where sovet leaders enjoyed 'every privilege'. Cell doors were unlocked and they had books and visitors. Bronstein believed the revolution would require a network of sovet led by an All-Russian sovet.

Revolutionary cooperation with the army, the peasantry, and the plebeian parts of the middle classes; abolition of absolutism; destruction of the military machine of absolutism; part disbandment and part overhaul of the army; abolition of the police and of the bureaucratic apparatus; the eight hour day; the arming of the people, above all, of the workers; the transformation of the Soviets into organs of revolutionary, urban self-government; the formation of Peasant Soviets to be in charge of the agrarian revolution on the spot; [and] elections to the Constituent Assembly.

He acknowledged that it was 'easier to formulate such a plan than to carry it out'.²⁵³ Lunacharsky wrote an anti-tsarist play, but was freed on 28 January.²⁵⁴

Woytinsky was also in Kresty Prison, and a guard had brought him a Menshevik paper about the crushing of the Moscow rising. Most sovet deputies were freed by the end of the year, including Woytinsky, and though 50 or so were detained pending trial,²⁵⁵ Krasin was freed.²⁵⁶ He was head of the German-owned Siemens & Galske Electro-Technical works,²⁵⁷ though he and his family lived at Kuokkala in Finland.²⁵⁸ He was a member of the all-intelligenty Russian CC along with Lalayants, who had been deported to the Vologda region in 1904, but subsequently escaped

to St. Petersburg,²⁵⁹ 35-year-old Ivan Sammer, and some Mensheviks. They were tasked with establishing a new central organ, *Partiinye izvestia (Party News)*, with an editorial board of the three Menshevik intelligentsy - Tserderbaum, Gurchich, and Piker - and three Bolshevik intelligentsy - Ulyanov, Lunacharsky, and Rudnev. They listed points of agreement and undertook to produce a 'more accurate and strict registration' of RSDRP members.²⁶⁰ Ulyanov had invited Jughashvili to observe the meeting, and the Okhrana received a report from 'Ivanov', which included the names of all those present, including 'Ivanovich, the delegate from Tbilisi'.²⁶¹

Krasin believed that the Moscow rising had failed because of insufficient coordination, and advocated forming fighting squads with a joint battle plan to coordinate an armed rising to 'surgically resolve the political crisis'. He ran the RSDRP's technical group in Finland, merged sections to improve coordination, instituted a rigid chain of command so that one arrest would compromise few if any others, barred chemists from doing other party work and temporarily closed the explosives workshop. He reorganised equipment and training in the Baltic region, Moscow, Kyiv, the Urals and Caucasia, authorised thefts from tsarist stocks and bought smuggled explosives.²⁶² A leader of the Swedish SAV helped to smuggle arms and explosives into Russia, and Krasin met him and other SAV members in Helsinki and showed them a bomb in a camera case.²⁶³

Ulyanov visited Moscow,²⁶⁴ and when he returned to St. Petersburg he met the Russian CC and committee in a dentist's surgery.²⁶⁵ He wrote in the St. Petersburg student paper *Molodaya Rossiya, (Young Russia)*, that 'Reaction is rampant all along the line. The autocracy has been fully restored' and "'reinforced" by the dictatorial powers granted to the local satraps' and 'the lowest ranks of the police'. The ruble had been devalued, prisoners of war were returning and 'pacification' of the Caucasus and Siberia 'drags on', yet 'The European workers will show us "how to do it"', and 'together with them we shall bring about the socialist revolution'.²⁶⁶

Over 273,000 soldiers and over 3,500 officers had returned from the Far East,²⁶⁷ though around 275 former non-commissioned officers from elite regiments and four gendarme officers had been appointed to protect the tsar with an annual budget of 200,000 rubles.²⁶⁸ The ultra-loyalist Soyuz ruskogo naroda may have had 300,000 members,²⁶⁹ and though the identity of the army captain who printed 'patriotic' leaflets on a secret press in the Department of Police headquarters in St. Petersburg became public knowledge, and he offered to throw the press in the Nevsky River, he moved it to his apartment.²⁷⁰ The assistant interior minister suppressed the official report.²⁷¹

The interior minister told the Kursk province governor to 'wipe the rebellious village off the face of the earth' and 'exterminate the rebels'.²⁷² The rural rebellion was almost over.²⁷³ Almost 60 reserve regiments and six reserve Cossack battalions had been mobilised,²⁷⁴ but 1,400 police and government employees had reportedly been assassinated.²⁷⁵ That month, officially, there had been 12 army mutinies and 34 political assassinations,²⁷⁶ and the police had arrested over 7,000 suspects. Martial law was in force across Poland and in seven Baltic, Caucasian and central Asian provinces, reinforced security in 17 provinces, and extraordinary security in Katerynoslav, Kaluga, Minsk, Moscow, Ufa and Chernigov provinces and along 27 railway lines.²⁷⁷

Striking was illegal, but some workers continued to organise.²⁷⁸ The government had permitted workers to form 'societies'. They had to send their rules to a factory inspector, and if he was satisfied he would forward them to the city captain or governor, who, after consulting officials, would decide whether to register the society as a legal entity.²⁷⁹ Societies could 'elucidate' wages and conditions, establish funds for funerals and dowries, provide members with 'material benefits' and 'legal aid', establish trade schools, libraries, reading rooms, sell tools and other 'necessities' at reasonable prices and help members find work; but they could not threaten to damage public or state interests. Societies, and even elected their representatives, could not meet, branches could not have separate governing bodies,²⁸⁰ and they could not engage in political activity,²⁸¹ or have a role in running plants.²⁸² Anyone organising outdoor or indoor meetings had to seek police permission and give them the agenda three days in advance,²⁸³ and a governor or police chief could send a policeman to ensure the meeting stuck to the agenda.²⁸⁴

(iv) As quiet as a cemetery

By the beginning of 1906, officially, almost 1,000 people were under police surveillance, and 88,520 'political suspects' were in prison.²⁸⁵ In reality 17 temporary prisons held over 1,700 others, and at least 1,400 people had been summarily executed in addition to those killed in the Moscow rising and its aftermath.²⁸⁶

On the 9th the British ambassador in St. Petersburg felt that most of Russia was 'quieter', though the Caucasus was a 'complicated chaos'.²⁸⁷

Whole districts seem to have been given over to military executions by the Cossacks who appear to have behaved with inconceivable brutality. The surviving inhabitants have fled to the mountains where they endure great privations from

hunger and cold. At one place 15 political prisoners were killed by letting steam into the cells where they were confined and this statement, though often repeated, has not been denied.

One general had left 'a state of things hardly credible in a civilised country'.²⁸⁸ The tsar had ordered the interior minister to replace the Kutaisi province governor with his assistant.²⁸⁹ Ministers recommended that troops should be deployed to restore order in the countryside only as a last resort, but then they should act mercilessly: 'arrive, punish, depart'. This would not become law for a month,²⁹⁰ yet repression was already well underway.

Cossacks with machine-guns and cannon had quashed resistance in Kutaisi province. Many Gurians were killed, and 300 were exiled to Siberia. Troops recaptured the Surami tunnel, which had cut Georgia in two since the previous autumn.²⁹¹ A Tbilisi railway depot worker who was a member of the SD fighting squad, threw a bomb at a general, who was mortally wounded, though the assassin was arrested. In Tbilisi 280 revolutionaries were in prison,²⁹² and Stasova left Geneva to lead the city's Bolsheviks,²⁹³ though Batumi RSDRP committee, peasants and workers had failed to prevent clashes between Armenians and Turkish-speaking Azerbaijanis.²⁹⁴ The government sacked 140 railway workers and civil servants. In the Guria district of Kutaisi province insurgents had no more than 20,000 rifles, though not all of them worked, and they were short of ammunition. The punitive detachments included 20 battalions of troops, 12 machine gun companies and nine squadrons of Cossacks,²⁹⁵ and they burned villages and executed insurgents.²⁹⁶ Twenty days of flogging failed to get some peasants to name 'instigators', so 300 were exiled to Siberia,²⁹⁷ and Guria was 'as quiet as a cemetery'.²⁹⁸

The Tsionistish-Sotsialistishe Arbeter Partey (the Zionist Socialist Workers' Party) had been founded in Odesa in February,²⁹⁹ and demanded an exclusive territory for Jews in Russia.³⁰⁰ Late in summer the Zionist congress in Basel had had endorsed a 'publically and legally assured home in Palestine'.³⁰¹ In October the Gomel, Warszawa and Riga Bund committees and regional committee had sent apologies to the Bund congress in Zurich, where 30 delegates represented 12 committees and six other organisations.³⁰² They supported Polish autonomy, but opposed Polish nationalism, yet demanded Jewish national-cultural autonomy.³⁰³ During 1905 the tsar had ordered he *Programa zavoevaniya mira evreyami* (the *Jewish Programme to Conquer the World*, better-known as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*),³⁰⁴ to be read in all Orthodox churches.³⁰⁵ That year there were 690 officially-recorded pogroms,³⁰⁶ and 87 percent were in the southern provinces of the Russian Pale. According to one account 15,000 Jews were wounded, 2,000 seriously injured and over 3,100 killed,³⁰⁷ and some horrific consequences were photographed.³⁰⁸ Another account estimated that up to 4,000 Jews had been killed and 10,000 severely injured in 110 pogroms in small towns,³⁰⁹ while over 1,500 children were orphaned and 800 lost one parent, and damage to Jewish property was almost 58 million rubles in the Pale and over eight million outside.³¹⁰ In the Donbass there had reportedly been 41 pogroms from October to December, and 285 Jews were killed,³¹¹ while 10,000, were wounded.³¹² Another report estimated that 711 of the 1,650 killed and 1,207 of the 4,100 wounded were Jews.³¹³ That year over 92,000 Jews left for the USA,³¹⁴ making over a quarter of a million in three years,³¹⁵ though in November and December US citizens reportedly donated \$20,000 to Russian SDs, and a New Yorker known only as Richard sent 25,000 francs for weapons to Jewish communities.³¹⁶ The railway strike prevented Bund conference delegates and émigrés returning to Russia;³¹⁷ though early in November they travelled illegally to Berlin, carrying Browning revolvers. They boarded an express to Dvinsk, reported to a designated flat, received a password, went to the CC headquarters and went on to Vilnius. One evening they went to see a Gorky play, and before the curtain rose the orchestra played the *Marseillaise* and the audience stood and demanded two encores; but the police began to clamp down. The Bund CC sent Grinberg to Odesa; but when he heard that the Moscow rising had been crushed he returned to Vilnius. The Bund's *Der Veker* (*The Awakener*), appeared late in 1905,³¹⁸ in the Pale. It was the first legal daily Yiddish paper,³¹⁹ but it lasted only six weeks.³²⁰ On 2 January 1906 Odesa police arrested all 15 members of the RSDRP EC, over 20 soviet deputies and several trade union leaders.³²¹ The Bolshevik Tarshis recalled: 'Torture was applied systematically' to 'compel political prisoners to give evidence', including suspension by the finger tips, twisting of the hands and legs, pouring of large volumes of water mixed with oil into the mouth, mutilation, flogging'. There were 'no more friendly discussions'.³²² Late in March the leading Bundist Grinberg attended a conference in Bern, Switzerland. Three RSDRP Congress delegates were selected, and were authorised to negotiate about rejoining the party.³²³

(v) Eliminated, arrested, dismissed

On 1 January, in Siberia, gendarmes arrested the Irkutsk RSDRP committee.³²⁴ A punitive detachment with two field guns set off from the west of the Trans-Siberian line going east, and next day another detachment left Manchuria going west.³²⁵ Troops occupied Krasnoyarsk on the 3rd,³²⁶ and 396 workers 183 and heavily armed soldiers

surrendered. (Nine soldiers later received prison sentences of four to eight years and 116 got shorter sentences in punishment battalions.)³²⁷ At Tomsk katorga prison, some 'politicals' erected scaffolds in prison courtyards and hanged warders, but loyal troops arrived, searched cells, seized weapons, books, letters and personal belongings, then clapped the prisoners in irons and flogged many of them.³²⁸ The punitive detachments were determined to 'break the spirit of resistance and rebellion', and agitators calling for the strike to continue faced 'merciless severity'.³²⁹ Peasant council members were hanged and up to 30 others were shot. Troops flogged hundreds in each village, burned or blew up farms and destroyed goods;³³⁰ yet the governor and police chief of Novorossiisk had fled and troops refused to shoot workers. The 72 sovet deputies continued the political strike, established a local government and court, organised unions and political associations, relieved the unemployed and prepared an armed rising.³³¹ After Kuban foot Cossacks went home the sovet controlled the city,³³² but police, gendarmes and troops pursued RSDRP cadre.

Semion Sosnovsky had been conscripted into the army as a boy, probably in the late 1850s, and officers tried to convert him from his Jewish faith to Orthodoxy by 'beatings, humiliation and even torture'. Once they chased him into a river and threatened to drown him if he did not cross himself. Many of his contemporaries converted, but he remained a Jew. After his demobilisation in Saratov, 25 years later, he spent days in an inn near the bazaar acting as a lawyer, even though he was semi-literate and had no academic qualifications. He later moved to the Urals, and Lev was born in Orenburg in 1886. When he was nine he wrote fair copies of petitions and complaints for his father, and later attended a gymnasium, but recalled 'the callousness of the school system, the cowering pupils, the mediocre teachers, the cramming, the boredom', 'the humiliation, the arbitrariness, the constant experience of boorishness'. He got a job in a German chemist's shop in Samara, and when his employer struck another boy, Lev and others went on strike. He wrote an article about 'white slaves' for a local paper, and was introduced to an SD kruzhek, where he learned about the massacre of Zlatoust workers. He read *Iskra*, and began to 'render such services to the Party (of a technical nature) as I could', and by 1903 he considered himself an RSDRP member. He wandered from job to job, and in 1904, in Ekaterinburg, Sverdlov encouraged him to go to meetings and demonstrations, duplicate leaflets and carry out other small tasks. The chemist's shop he worked at was 'very convenient, both for storing illegal things and as a rendezvous for underground activists'. Letters, including some from abroad, arrived in his name. 'Party workers from elsewhere would present themselves' and 'I would direct them to a secret address.' Late in 1905 one of the 'bloodthirsty generals' arrived in Ekaterinburg and Sosnovsky had to 'slip away'. He reached Samara in a goods wagon, half dead with cold, and though he found no RSDRP comrades, he managed to get some Odesa addresses. He went there, but had no luck, so by early 1906 he had stowed away on a ship 'in the hope of learning about Marxism, seeing for myself the labour movement' and 'simply breathing fresh air'.³³³

Sergey Kostrikov was born in the small town of Urzhum in Viatka province in 1886.³³⁴ He and his siblings were orphaned at an early age and were raised by their grandmother, a soldier's widow. Her pension was three rubles a month, and by 1893 she could not afford to keep them all, so she put Sergey in an orphanage. In 1894 he attended a primary school, and later a municipal secondary school, and when he graduated he received a zemstvo scholarship of 96 rubles a year to attend Kazan Technical School. He was influenced by political exiles, contacted revolutionary students and read illegal literature, and when he graduated he considered himself a revolutionary 'with a leaning towards social democracy'. In 1904 he entered Tomsk Technological Institute in Siberia and worked with SDs, and in January 1905 he helped to organise an armed protest about Bloody Sunday, though he and 40 others were soon detained. In spring, after he was released, he distributed illegal literature, propagandised, attended workers' meetings and organised kruzki. Most SDs supported the Mensheviks, but he joined the Bolsheviks and worked in the underground press. He later led a successful strike at Raiga station; but by January 1906 the press could not cope. Kostrikov was ordered to go to Moscow or St. Petersburg to bring back a better one, though just before he was due to leave he was arrested in the committee treasurer's flat.

Boris Shumiatsky was born into a worker's family in Verhneudinsk, Yenisei province, in 1886. They later moved to Chita in Siberia. In 1897 Boris worked in the railway workshops and later became a trade unionist and joined the RSDRP, but was arrested. In 1903 he supported the Second Congress 'majority' and moved to Irkutsk, then Krasnoyarsk, where he met the exiled Bolshevik Uritsky and read works by Marx, Engels and Ulyanov. Late in 1905 Shumiatsky was elected to the sovet EC, and though he was arrested in January 1906, he escaped.³³⁵

Irkutsk SDs asked the Bolshevik rabochy-intelligent Babushkin for help, so he and five others took arms and boarded a train,³³⁶ which stopped at Sliudianka near Lake Baikal³³⁷ Troops surrounded them and they surrendered.³³⁸ They were taken to Mysovaya,³³⁹ where 'all six, without the slightest pretence of a trial, were lined up on the edge of a common grave hastily dug on the spot and shot'.³⁴⁰ In Chita the Bolshevik Kurnatovsky and other SDs had led the joint committee of railway workers and organised a sovet of soldiers' and Cossack deputies which controlled a large part of the Baikal region. Soldiers and workers were heavily armed, and no military units

had dared challenge them, while the military governor had put his seal on everything they asked for.³⁴¹ Early in 1906 Kurnatovsky was captured, handed to a punitive detachment, sentenced to death and taken to see revolutionaries being shot. (His sentence was later commuted to exile for life in Siberia.)³⁴² On the 31 January a lieutenant-general reported from Siberia that all 'revolutionary elements on lines have been eliminated, arrested, dismissed; a portion of them have fled'.³⁴³

In Vladivostok, early in December 1905, a mutineer committee ran the town, though loyal troops shot at a peaceful demonstration honouring the victims of Bloody Sunday. On the 16th there was an uprising in Nikolayevsk-na-Amure.³⁴⁴ The interior minister told governors: 'It is impossible to judge hundreds of thousands of people. I propose to shoot the rioters and in cases of resistance to burn their homes'.³⁴⁵ The Vladivostok commander forbade military personnel to attend public meetings, court-martialled officers who cooperated with the sovet, and ordered machine gunners to fire on demonstrations without warning; yet mutinous soldiers and sailors occupied the town until a punitive detachment of Cossacks arrived early in February 1906.³⁴⁶ One punitive detachment executed nine people in Chita and 60 in Tomsk, while an Irkutsk jail designed for 500 held 1,212, and some one-person cells held 18;³⁴⁷ though resistance continued in the Baltic region.

(vi) Latvia's torture chambers

Years before 1905 a founder member of the RSDRP had escaped to England and set up a press. He later wrote an anonymous memoir. The police had arrested him on one occasion, and after 18 months in jail they exiled him to Siberia without trial, yet he escaped back to England. By late autumn 1905 he was an active member of the Latvian SDSP in Rīga,³⁴⁸ but on 2 January 1906 the police arrested members of the combat organisation,³⁴⁹ and on the 26th they raided a restaurant and found leaflets, passports, a dagger and a Browning revolver. They detained everyone, but released those with visas and those not under suspicion. They arrested four, including the veteran, and told them to look straight ahead or be shot as they marched to the central police station, where an officer claimed they had been armed, and the chief detective threatened to shoot them if they did not say who owned the revolver. They denied knowing each other, and were locked up separately, but soon after 'heartbreaking screams' came from one cell. The veteran was next. He knew they had been looking for him for three years, and that a spy knew his face, and though his signature matched that on his passport, the police claimed it was false.

I received a blow in my face, and then a second one from a policeman's fist. I stumbled back but immediately received a kick from behind. With a great struggle I placed my back against the wall and faced my enemies; then an officer ran up to me, clapped a revolver to my head, screaming: 'Be quiet! Be quiet! You dog!' I protested, and again he threatened to shoot me. ... At last, cursing and swearing, they pushed me out of the room ...

At midnight we were again called. One of our friends told me he had been fearfully beaten with rifles. We saw his limbs, quite black and terribly swollen. About 3 o'clock, my turn came: I was taken into a small room on the third floor. In the room there was a table on which were some empty whiskey bottles, and standing near it eight police officers. A soldier and a policeman guarded the door [and] an officer walked about the room with a long (3 f[ee]t) thick rubber nagaika ... I was carried into a small recess behind a barrier, then taking a wet towel they bound it round my mouth so that I could not scream, one of the officers holding the ends of the towel. They stripped me, and two officers held my hands and one my legs, and so put me across the barrier. The paper [he had signed earlier] was placed upon my back and beaten to shreds. After the first part of the beating they again put the questions to me. I would not reply. The beating was repeated. When they saw I was losing consciousness they stopped for a little while and then went on again.

This lasted over an hour and then I was dressed ... An officer took a pen and cried: 'Write the truth, you dog, or I will prick out your eyes!' He took the pen and began slowly to prick my eye. Because of the pain I took the pen out of his hand as if willing to write, but I put it on the table. This angered the officer terribly and catching up his nagaika (this one was about 2½ft. long, with a leaden weight at the end) struck me across the head several times. I became quite dizzy and fell back on the barrier, and he ceased to beat me. Afterwards another officer came and said to me: "You know that the country is under martial law and therefore we may shoot all you cursed agitators and revolutionists like dogs without any trial whatever if we like."

Five soldiers took him outside and assured him that he would 'escape to the next world', though they brought him back to the police station. One prisoner had been so badly tortured that blood was pouring out of his mouth and he could not eat. The veteran decided to escape, contacted comrades outside and 12 arrived with Mauser pistols. Two shot a soldier and guarded a policeman, and two others found one soldier, ten detectives and two officers, though when the prisoners were given revolvers all the policemen ran away. The veteran left the city in disguise, but that evening four prisoners were shot.³⁵⁰

In Estonia Nevinson saw 25 men by the side of the St. Petersburg to Rīga railway line, 'tied together in a row by their feet and arms'. They were shot and fell together, but many were still alive, and were 'finished off at close quarters before they were heaped together into a trench already prepared for them'. Nevinson went on to Rīga, and saw 20 soldiers with fixed bayonets driving four teenagers to the Fortress to join 100 who would probably be shot next day, and he read about reprisals after 250 of the 700 gentry's houses had been burned.

Tarwast. – The whole population of the villages over the age of fifteen was brought before the court-martial today. Six were shot on the spot, including one woman; nine were flogged with strokes varying from twenty-five to two hundred.

Semzel. – Yesterday six revolutionaries were shot, and four the day before. In the neighbouring parish of Lemberg twenty-four were flogged.

Kokenhusen. – Nine people were hanged here today.

Dahlen. – A squadron of dragoons, half a troop of Cossacks, a company of infantry, two cannon, and two machine-guns arrived here today. Dahlen had elected a revolutionary parish council; so a court-martial was held, and four men were shot on the spot. Several farms were destroyed by shells.

Neuenmühle. – The schoolmaster was hanged on a telegraph pole here today, for having allowed public meetings in his school. Two young girls were flogged with rods for having stitched a red flag.

Wolmar. – This morning early, two boys, one only fifteen, evidently much excited, ran up to a patrol of soldiers and tried to catch hold of a rifle, saying they would show them how to shoot.

A general 'consulted by telephone' and 'ordered their immediate execution'.

Across the region hundreds of peasants were flogged, hanged or shot. Houses were burned and the occupants turned out in freezing temperatures; though fearful soldiers marched through towns in single file and groups of two or three police had as many soldiers with fixed bayonets to protect them. A boy who ignored an order to stop was bayoneted to death, but one or two policemen were assassinated each day, and five prisoners who had been sentenced to death were rescued from a police station. Reportedly Bundists formed the core of the resistance.³⁵¹

In Rīga a court martial had sentenced large numbers of people to death and many were executed, including six who witnesses had testified to be innocent. There were three 'torture chambers'. '(1) The Secret Police Office, (2) the premises of the 2nd Police Division, (3) the 2nd Mitavsky Police Station', south of Rīga. Police used nagaikas, rifle butts, 'specially made guttapercha rods', 'a special kind of hempen ropes twisted with wire', 'electric appliances' and probably a 'nail-studded boot-heel, a bolt, and a 'knuckle-duster'. One prisoner had 'made a slip knot with strips torn from his shirt and fastened it to the hook about two feet from the ground, then 'stretching upon the floor with the noose round his neck he succeeded in strangling himself'. Four were taken out of the town and two were shot in order to try to force the other two to confess. Nevinson saw a 'photograph of the back of a woman marked all over with weals and bruises', and other females, including at least one very young girl, 'were commanded to confess under threat of being given to the Cossacks for their lust',³⁵² and a few SR intelligentki fought back.

(vii) Conscious and unconscious workers

In January 1906 the former SD intelligentka Ekaterina Kuskova knew of no organised revolutionary parties in St. Petersburg, though some *kruzhki* propagandised and agitated, and there were 'broad mass tendencies more or less coinciding with the outlines of the *kruzhki*'.³⁵³ On the 21st Putilov metalworks managers closed the plant, and strikers elsewhere in the city either drifted back or returned in an organised way.³⁵⁴

The SD worker Malinovskaya, who had been active on Bloody Sunday, recalled that a Maxwell Mill manager 'got hold of me by the scruff of the neck, shook me and said: "You're the one that's behind it all, now we're going to give you the sack"'. She did not sleep at home, and soon left for Japan.³⁵⁵

There were 39,000 unemployed workers in the city and the factory committees had collapsed,³⁵⁶ though 44 unions had 35,000 members,³⁵⁷ and 16 or so activists led 400 workers at the Phoenix machine-building works.³⁵⁸ Around 14 percent of Baltic shipyard workers had been there less than a year, but over half for between one and five years, and over a quarter for between five and ten years;³⁵⁹ and Alexey Buzinov, a skilled worker at Nevsky shipyard who was politically unaligned, heard a new term.³⁶⁰

[T]he appearance of the conscious worker clearly implied that his opposite was also present – the unconscious worker. There were few socialist workers and they were supported by the conscious workers. The latter were ten times as numerous as the socialists ... [and] each was, in a way, a 'juridically reasoning individual' capable of understanding all that surrounded him. They all, to a greater or lesser degree, understood the situation of the workers and their relations with the factory owners. Life itself transformed them into the vanguard of the worker masses. Their native keen wit and worker sensitivity

did not fail them when they exposed the hidden ends behind this or that manoeuvre of management. And they were no longer silent. Somehow in their midst, a special type of agitator was created, a man always hammering away at the same point – I would say – of class isolation from the exploiters. In the persons of these agitators life had hammered a wedge between workers and owners than no party agitator, not so closely tied to the masses as they, could have done. The self-made agitator said what was in the head of each person but for which the others, less developed, could not find expression in words. After each of his words, the workers could only exclaim: That's it! That's exactly what I wanted to say. He would seize upon a subject that could not claim a very wide scope. But rather one of the simplest kind ... It would have to do with a screw and its thread. But the confrontation of a whole series of such details, among which a worker passes his whole life, gave this speech a special persuasiveness. For each worker, be he as benighted as the dark night, it became clear that under his very nose amazing things were going on, and this in itself posed the question: 'And after that, what else is going on that he, like a mole, does not see?'³⁶¹

Pavel Alexandrov, a landless Tver peasant, had arrived in St. Petersburg in 1896 and worked at Putilov metalworks. In 1898 his wife and two daughters joined him and he made trunks after work to make ends meet and rent a house. By 1906 there were ten mouths to feed, so the family lived in the kitchen and storeroom and rented the upstairs rooms to boarders, for to ten rubles a month, or 5.5 for a 'corner'.³⁶²

Other former peasants were becoming politically conscious. After the state-owned plants reopened, early in February, managers introduced the 'American' bonus system. Pavel Kolokolnikov believed that Moscow workers were 'duller' than those in St. Petersburg, though state factory employees were a 'sort of worker aristocracy' who would 'take offense when they are called workers', saying 'we are skilled workers and not common labourers'. The Menshevik organiser Petr Bronstein knew a worker whose family lived on the top floor of a wooden house in Alexandrovsk village, and their life, like many workers', was 'semi-peasant'.

He lived comfortably, like the majority of skilled workers of the state Obukhov plant. He made 150-200 rubles a month, but when urgent work was given out with premiums (on the 'American' system), he could 'pull off' up to 250 rubles. For holidays he had a good fur coat with a beaver collar and even a black frock suit for trips to the city for public meetings or the theatre. If for a textile worker somewhere in Tver province the sign of an association with culture was brand new galoshes in the summer heat, then for the worker aristocracy of Petersburg it was to be dressed, characteristically, as the intelligentsia would dress, not for a visit to the district, that is in a Russian blouse and cloth cap, but for oneself – in public places, at evening parties, at the theatre. Vasia Sokolov did not see in this a sign of 'being bourgeois': he was always ready to go to prison for the workers' cause; he wanted to live not a wealthy life but a cultured life, as did the intelligentsia with whom he was acquainted. The visits of the party intelligentsia with leading workers called forth in them an imitation of cultured habits of life, beginning with dress.

Many locked-out workers were registered peasants, but had no land or house in their village to fall back on.³⁶³

St. Petersburg's illegal trade union bureau organised a conference.³⁶⁴ V. Grinevich was its president,³⁶⁵ and 22 delegates from ten industrial centres included three from St. Petersburg, including two Bolsheviks, three from Moscow, who may have been unaffiliated, and a Bundist from Warszawa.³⁶⁶ They knew the outlines of the impending regulations concerning trade unions,³⁶⁷ but decided that while unions should function illegally where possible,³⁶⁸ others should register and try to turn the new regulations 'from a weapon for the enslavement of the working class' into 'a point of departure for a new, more stubborn struggle to win the rights of strike and association',³⁶⁹ and they elected a bureau in both Moscow and St. Petersburg.³⁷⁰

The railway network covered 63,600km.³⁷¹ Around 5,000 railway workshop employees at Novorossiysk, Rostov-na-Donu and Tikhoretskaya had been sacked, but up to 90 percent were rehired after signing a 'slave's charter'. Late in February, in Moscow, sacked Kazan line workers, including at least one member of the union bureau, organised with SRs.³⁷²

During February St. Petersburg police had found 43,500 copies of a book by the leading Menshevik intelligent Tserdobaum, and arrested him. He acknowledged partial responsibility for the failed Moscow rising, and believed that terrorist tactics threatened to 'disorganise and demoralise the proletariat for good', though the Bolsheviks had 'intoxicated themselves with this form of preparation'.³⁷³

(viii) Whip her as hard as you can. No mercy!

Maria Spiridonova was born into a Tambov manufacturer's family in 1885. She could read and write by the age of five, was always top of her primary school class and later did well at a women's gymnasium. She led a kruzhek of male and female pupils who read illegal literature and supported a seminarians' petition for new textbooks and the right to go to university; but when the girls asked the headmaster for changes in their curriculum and rules, he

expelled Maria. She was barred from completing the course elsewhere, so she studied at home. In 1903, after her father died, she took an office job to help the family's finances.³⁷⁴ When socialist newspapers reached the town in summer 1905 she was inspired by the *Potemkin* mutiny and 'Admiral' Schmidt, and when the general strike reached Tambov in October she marched behind a red flag and joined the VPSR. In November martial law was proclaimed in Tambov province and a landowning general led a punitive expedition which executed peasant activists, shot those who refused to betray them and burned their houses, starting with those of the poorest, then pillaged and raped. The SD Alexandr Dubrovin tried to persuade villagers not to burn landlords' property, yet soldiers tortured him for four days, so his relatives could not recognise him, then he died. The provincial governor reassured the general: 'Do not concern yourself with the law. Shoot first, inquire afterwards.' By the end of the year the property of 158 Tambov landowners had been attacked.³⁷⁵

On 9 January 1906 the interior minister ordered Kyiv's governor-general to use 'armed force without the slightest leniency'. Insurgents were to be 'annihilated' and their homes burned if they resist. It is necessary once and for all to stop, with the most severe measures'.³⁷⁶

The VPSR leaders had reconstituted the combat organisation and it undertook large-scale operations to kill senior government officials, including the hated Tambov general.³⁷⁷ On the 16th Spiridonova went to Borisoglebsk station and saw his Cossack bodyguards chase a crowd away. She shot the general twice in the stomach, twice in the chest and once in an arm, then cried 'Shoot me!' She pointed the revolver at her temple, but a Cossack clubbed her to the ground and others hit her with rifle butts. An officer lifted her up by her hair, slashed her across the face with a nagaika and ordered the Cossacks to 'Whip her as hard as you can. No mercy!' She did not cry out, and one of general's bodyguards ordered the Cossacks to beat her to death, and then everyone in the crowd. The Cossacks attacked the train guard and a gendarme corporal, though a gendarme officer pointed out that if Spiridonova died they would not be able to trace her accomplices. The Cossack officer interrogated her with blows to the face until she was unconscious, then she was dragged down steps by her hair, so that she hit her head on each step, then to the police station where she was put in an unheated cell. Soon after a policeman kicked her into a corner, trampled on her back, threw her to the other corner, ordered her to undress, picked her up by her hair and beat her with a nagaika. Still she did not cry out. The policeman and bodyguard drank wine and brandy, then whipped her again, kicked her, pinched her bruised face, pulled off shreds of torn skin, stubbed cigarettes out on her body and stood on her feet, demanding to know her accomplices. After 11 hours her face was covered with bruises and her left eye looked as if it had been torn out. Then there were 'foul embraces', and the bodyguard kicked her tightly closed legs, but after he failed to make her open them, he called for a medical assistant who took her by train to Ternovka. She was sentenced to be hanged, but that was commuted to katorga for life,³⁷⁸ and her experience was not unique.

Alexandra Izmailovich had attended lectures at St. Petersburg University and became a revolutionary. Early in 1905, in Minsk, when her widower father was serving as a brigadier in the Far East, she and her sister Ekaterina allowed SRs to store literature, guns and explosives. Workers, intelligentsy and revolutionaries visited by the back door, and the sisters dressed as servants, peddlers or pig women, and distributed VPSR propaganda.³⁷⁹ When gendarmes watched the house, SRs stayed clear, but Alexandra and Ivan Pulikov moved into a worker's attic, opposite the governor-general's residence, and planned to assassinate him. Ekaterina had a foolhardy encounter with the vice-governor, and gendarmes arrested her early in 1906. Days later five male SRs dressed as soldiers rescued her, and Alexandra drove the get-away sledge. Soon after Pulikov threw a bomb at the governor-general, though it failed to go off, and Alexandra fired a revolver at the police chief, but missed. A dozen policemen stripped her and beat her with rifle butts, and they beat Pulikov so badly that he could not lie down.³⁸⁰

Schmidt and three other mutineers had been court-martialled on an island near Sevastopol, and they were shot on another island on 5 February.³⁸¹ After Ekaterina heard about their fate she went to Sevastopol and shot the vice-admiral. He hid under a table, but though she kept firing until she ran out bullets,³⁸² he survived and had her shot.³⁸³

In February SRs inside and outside Minsk prison sang the revolutionary funeral hymn. There were speeches, and men and boys on the prison walls picked up the black flags which had been thrown from cell windows. Pulikov was hanged in the yard, but his statement was read to the SRs outside, who wrote it down, then rushed off to print it, though the boys were locked up for days. Speeches and singing went on all day in the prison, but early in March, after 140 inmates signed and then smuggled out a petition for leniency, Alexandra's sentence was commuted to katorga for life in Siberia. Within a week of Ekaterina's execution, news reached an SR fighter in Minsk prison. Alexandra had sheltered him in St. Petersburg. He told her about her sister's actions, but not her execution.³⁸⁴ Reportedly, women had often 'shouldered the guns' during 1905, and 'casualties among them were the heaviest'.³⁸⁵

(ix) Expropriations

Late in January 1906 Bolshevik and Latvian SDSP fighters bombed monarchists, shot two of them and wounded 20,³⁸⁶ and 12 fighters attacked police headquarters in Riga.³⁸⁷ In mid-February LSDSP CC members killed a guard at the State Bank in Helsinki in broad daylight, took 150,000 rubles and left an empty tin can that sparked a bomb-scare.³⁸⁸ Gorky was in Finland, and the Russian police ordered his arrest, but Ulyanov met him at the home of the Helsinki University librarian Smirnov.³⁸⁹ By late February the RSDRP military technical bureau had distributed 365,000 leaflets and pamphlets,³⁹⁰ and Krasin had supplied arms and munitions to military organisations for over 200 robberies from stations, trains, customs houses and banks.³⁹¹

Kliment Voroshilov had been born in a Katerynoslav province village in 1881. His mother was a charwoman and his father, a former soldier, was a level crossing keeper and 'free-thinker', but was often unemployed, and the children sometimes had to beg for bread. In 1888 seven-year-old Kliment sorted pyrites at a coalmine for ten kopeks a day, and he later worked for his uncle as a farm labourer, but returned to the mine. In 1893 he attended a zemstvo school, and he got a factory job in 1896, but kept on reading, though in 1897 he refused to bow to a policeman and was beaten and jailed overnight. Spies followed him, and he was blacklisted after he led a strike in 1899. In 1903 he got a job at the Hartmann factory in Luhansk, joined the RSDRP committee and supported the Congress 'majority'. Early in 1905, and again in summer, he led strikes, and was elected as chair of the workers' soviet, but was arrested, 'beaten half to death' and imprisoned, though late that year 1,000 workers freed him. He reached Stockholm by early 1906, met Ulyanov, and returned to Luhansk. The Bolsheviks had 'the best armed detachments and an excellent laboratory manufacturing bombs in unlimited quantities', and Voroshilov went to Finland 'to fetch large consignments of arms' for Donbass revolutionaries.³⁹²

Alexander Vanovsky was born into the family of an army officer, south of Moscow, in 1874. He later graduated from the cadet corps and the military academy, but did not become an officer. His elder brother developed his interest in revolutionary ideas, and in 1898 Vanovsky was one of the founding members of the RSDRP, though he was arrested soon after and exiled to the frozen north. When he was freed he became an active revolutionary again, but landed in jail once again. He was freed during 1905 and helped to coordinate armed uprisings in Kyiv and Moscow,³⁹³ and by early 1906 he was the Menshevik leader of St. Petersburg's military technical bureau.³⁹⁴ During February Mensheviks expropriated up to 8,000 rubles from a Kyiv post office.³⁹⁵

There were around 3,000 Mensheviks and 300 Bolsheviks in Tbilisi,³⁹⁶ where the RSDRP committee had subcommittees for propaganda, peasants, soldiers, the petty bourgeoisie and sympathisers. Committee members were subject to re-election every six months, though others could be invited with the right to speak but not vote. Committee members could raise issues and vote on those involving the whole organisation, but all decisions had to be submitted to regional organisations unless they were of a conspiratorial character. The RSDRP Caucasian bureau and the Caucasian joint committee merged,³⁹⁷ and on 9 January 1906 the Kutaisi RSDRP marked the anniversary of Bloody Sunday with a general strike, though the police arrested them next day.³⁹⁸ Ramishvili led a fighting squad, acquired bombs and terrorised police, while Mensheviks, Armenian and Georgian SDs and SRs carried out assassinations.³⁹⁹ The young Tbilisi worker Arsen Jorjashvili fatally wounded the general of the military district and was executed without betraying his comrades.⁴⁰⁰ The Transcaucasian railways were under martial law, but workers at Tbilisi railway workshops assassinated a spy, then vanished. Next day troops encircled the works and arrested suspects, including the Bolshevik Alliluev. Troops had been known to hit prisoners in the back to get them to move away, then shot or bayoneted them, and alleged that they were trying to escape. They tried this on Alliluev, but failed, so they put him and others in prison. (Subsequently courts martial sentenced several to death, and threatened the rest with exile to Siberia unless they named the assassins.)⁴⁰¹ The police also arrested Jughashvili, though he escaped,⁴⁰² and he later recalled that the Bolshevik fighting squads were 'impotent'.⁴⁰³

Semeno Ter-Petrosian had been wounded in a battle with Cossacks in Tbilisi the previous December, and was taken to the Fortress; but at the beginning of February 1906 he changed names with a Georgian prisoner, hid, and arranged for arms to be smuggled in. He and 31 others escaped,⁴⁰⁴ and he and Jughashvili went to Telavi to recruit expropriators.⁴⁰⁵ The 'Outfit' included eight men and two women, and one recalled that their 'tasks were preparing arms, organising prison escapes, holding up banks and arsenals, and killing traitors'.⁴⁰⁶ Armed by Krasin, and led by Ter-Petrosian, they staged a robbery near Tbilisi which netted up to 8,000 rubles. Soon after they attacked a Kutaisi bank coach, killing the driver and wounding a cashier,⁴⁰⁷ and got away with 20,000 rubles.⁴⁰⁸ They put 15,000 in empty wine bottles,⁴⁰⁹ and sacks, and sent them to Krasin in Finland, though Jughashvili kept the rest.⁴¹⁰ Soon after Tbilisi RSDRP committee's Georgian language *gantjadi* (*Dawn*) appeared, and announced that 'the forces of hell are not undefeatable', because they were 'built on sand'.⁴¹¹

By March the government had imposed martial law in two provinces and 40 districts and cities, 'reinforced security' in one province and 17 towns and cities, and 'extraordinary security' in five provinces and 32 towns and city districts; so about 69 percent of provinces and districts were subject to martial law. Some punitive detachments had fewer than 200 men,⁴¹² though there were 19,000 troops in the Baltic provinces, and punitive detachments

summarily executed and flogged peasants and workers, including women and children. In Kharius district a major-general ordered public floggings and executions as a 'model exercise in dispensing justice'. A general reported that his troops had burned 70 buildings, shot 78 peasants and killed 22, while taking one casualty. The tsar noted: 'What a fine fellow!'⁴¹³ Punitive detachments had killed over 14,000 and wounded 18,000.⁴¹⁴ The British ambassador reported to London that 'the number of persons incarcerated for political reasons, mostly without trial, is variously estimated at 17,000 and 70,000', though there may have been more.⁴¹⁵ Early in March, in Finland, Ulyanov told Krasin: 'This is the beginning of a reaction which is likely to last 20 years, unless there is a war in the meantime. That is why we must needs go abroad'.⁴¹⁶

The tsar reduced the length of service to three years in the artillery and infantry, or 70 percent of the army, before they entered the reserves.⁴¹⁷ Police raids in several districts had found revolvers, bayonets and a bomb factory, and a bomb had torn the governor of Tver to shreds. There were five more military mutinies and 19 political assassinations, and the German Consul saw 'enough inflammable material' for the revolutionary movement to 'flare up again'.⁴¹⁸ Moscow police had 'raked up' 'old papers and old cases, sometimes of 40 years ago', and arrested political suspects.⁴¹⁹ One district prison intended for 120 housed 250, and 90 other prisoners had to sleep in a field.⁴²⁰ The leaders of the Markovo 'Republic' in Moscow province were in prison or underground, but while local self-government continued for a while,⁴²¹ all military training exercises were cancelled.⁴²²

Ulyanov had instructed the 30-year-old Bolshevik intelligent Meir Wallach in Paris to buy 'rifles, machine guns, small arms, and the necessary cartridges'. Wallach placed an order with a Danish company, but an army officer supervised the sale, so Wallach assumed the role of a French-speaking Ecuadorian officer and got away with it.⁴²³ Wallach went to Berlin and reported to Krasin that 5,000 francs from Gorky were available for arms.⁴²⁴

Vladimir Antonov-Ovseyenko was born into the family of an infantry officer in Chernigov in 1883. He later studied at the secondary military school in Voronezh, but left the army in 1901 and joined Marxist students in Warszawa. He joined the RSDRP in 1902 and organised a military section of the party among graduate officers in five cities. He graduated from St Petersburg military college in 1904, and early in 1905 he led an uprising in Novo-Alexandria in Poland. He was arrested, but escaped to Vienna in spring. He supported the Mensheviks, returned to St Petersburg and was made chair of the RSDRP committee's military organisation.⁴²⁵ The RSDRP military technical bureau had links with groups in Sevastopol, Rostov-na-Donu, Kyiv, Kaluga, Riga, Perm garrison and other garrisons in central Russia. Late in March Antonov-Ovseyenko tried to convene a national conference of fighting squads, but only Bolsheviks and representatives from Moscow, Vilnius, Dvinsk and Latvia arrived. Moscow Bolsheviks proposed forming squads of soldiers to lead 'a decisive, nationwide insurrection'; but the police had been tipped off and arrested all those present. Days later most of them escaped,⁴²⁶ though many prisoners died.

Ministers subsequently acknowledged that punitive detachments had killed up to 5,000 people between December 1905 and March 1906,⁴²⁷ though the real figure was at least 14,000, while over 1,000 had been executed, and over 20,000 wounded. An unknown number of the 70,000 in prison had died, and though flogging had been legally abolished in 1904, peasants had been flogged to death.⁴²⁸ Reportedly in Latvia and Estonia alone 700 people had been sentenced to death by courts martial, and 6,000 imprisoned or exiled to Siberia.⁴²⁹ Around 1,800 were deported and 2,600 sent to central Russia; though around 5,000 escaped and about 4,000 went to North America.⁴³⁰ Other reports estimated that 2,000 had been killed and 550 executed in Latvia, and 8,000 exiled to northern Russia or Siberia,⁴³¹ while Estonian courts martial had sentenced 652 to death and 495 to katorga; The leading Bolshevik intelligently had escaped abroad, but the slaughter would continue for over a year, and the total number of deaths and executions is unknown.⁴³²

A working conclusion

By the beginning of 1904 the autocracy was politically shaky and debt-ridden, yet the tsar had imperial ambitions in the Far East, and after the Japanese navy inflicted a crushing pre-emptive defeat on the Russian Pacific fleet, he declared war. In spring his overwhelmingly peasant army was defeated twice in Manchuria, and he granted a few modest reforms to soldiers, Jews and some deportees and exiles.

Revolutionaries at home and abroad were in disarray and had failed to learn many of the lessons of the period up to 1903. In Switzerland the RSDRP intelligenty had become warring factions. They both relied heavily on liberal Western European and legal Russian newspapers and on occasional letters by and visits from intelligenty for much of their information, since workers were unable to leave their jobs and travel so far. Consequently the émigrés were always well behind events, had only a partial view of the situation, and were unable to provide a clear analysis of how intelligenty in Russia should try to steer the developing economic class struggle in a political direction. The émigré Mensheviks controlled the leading Party Council, the funds, most contacts in Russia and *Iskra*, but an RSDRP intelligenty in the Berlin transport organisation kept the Okhrana fully informed. The émigré Bolshevik intelligenty had to make do with letters and couriers to send messages to their few contacts in Russia.

In Russia the RSDRP 'majority' and 'minority' intelligenty still considered themselves as temporary groupings, though they were scattered, unconnected and abjectly politically dependent on émigré intelligenty for literature and analysis, yet there were Okhrana spies in several organisations and informers were everywhere. A few committees gave a tiny number of trained workers positions as agitators, though they allowed none into the committees themselves. Both intelligenty groupings failed to recruit, develop and integrate many new intelligenty, and while workers formed the overwhelming majority of 'members', the intelligenty considered them as 'ties' in the committees' 'periphery', and failed to help to develop a significant number of rabochy-intelligenty who could lead basic kruzhki and perform other vital tasks. Bundists in the Pale and the SDKPiL in Poland had had their federationist demands rejected at the Second Congress and they kept their distance from the rival groupings in European Russia, as did the organised Latvian and Lithuanian SDs in the Baltic provinces, and 'minority' RSDRP intelligenty began seceding from committees they did not control and forming an organisation linked to the Menshevik-controlled Russian CC.

In summer, in Switzerland, 22 Bolshevik intelligenty decided to win control of local RSDRP committees in Russia that were controlled by 'minority' intelligenty, by fair means or foul, and to establish an all-intelligenty organising committee for a Third Congress that was entirely in their hands. Reuniting with the 'minority' remained a possibility, but only if they accepted 'democratic centralism', which had been rejected at the Second Congress. By autumn both RSDRP intelligenty groups in Russia were splitting committees. Meanwhile Latvian and Lithuanian SDs helped to organise workers and peasants, and Bundists organised fighting squads to defend Jews from pogroms, while the VPSR had a combat organisation, but also helped to organise peasants and teachers along the Volga and elsewhere.

Emigré Menshevik intelligenty briefly considered integrating more rabochy-intelligenty into local organisations in Russia, and favoured a working arrangement with liberals to win reforms, and though an attempt to coordinate revolutionary nationalist, terrorist and border region SD organisations failed, a transport route for illegal literature was established from Western Europe via Sweden and Finland to St. Petersburg.

By winter the army had suffered a series of serious defeats in the Far east and government finances were seriously overstretched. A leader of the revolutionary-nationalist PPS negotiated with the Japanese government for arms in return for intelligence about Russian troops in Poland. The émigré Bolshevik intelligenty convinced the Berlin transporters to stop forwarding the Menshevik *Iskra*, and called for more letters from Russian workers for their new paper.

In Russia some former SD intelligenty had become 'legal Marxists' who accepted some of Marx's ideas, but refrained from illegal activity, and they joined liberals to conduct a successful propaganda campaign. The RSDRP intelligenty groups had hardened into Bolshevik and Menshevik factions, and St. Petersburg Bolshevik intelligenty failed to stop Menshevik intelligenty from scuppering an anti-war demonstration, or prevent the Russian CC from making difficulties about a Third Congress. Meanwhile, an Assembly of workers led by a radical priest, and a few hand-picked politically-conscious workers, some of whom were former members of, or sympathisers with the RSDRP, was becoming increasingly influential in the capital. They made political as well as economic demands that included key elements of the RSDRP programme; yet the RSDRP intelligenty factions either knew nothing about it, or dismissed it as an Okhrana plot. Both factions suffered from a 'remoteness from the working masses', and failed to recruit and retain young workers. there was no sustained or coordinated attempt to propagandise and agitate conscripted soldiers or sailors, yet SD sailors in the Baltic fleet were organising and some mutinied. Late that year,

the émigré Bolsheviks' first *Vyperod* reached Russia, just as the Japanese captured the strategically vital Russian navy base of Port Arthur on the Pacific coast, at the cost of 60,000 Russian dead and wounded, and 32,000 taken prisoner. The tsar was convinced that revolution was 'banging on the door', yet the RSDRP intelligently factions were both unprepared for events outwith their control.

By January 1905 the factional intelligently claimed 100,000 'members', though around 50 percent were ties with workers. The intelligently were 'woefully weak' in St. Petersburg; yet up to 30,000 Assembly workers tore up their leaflets, ejected student propagandists from their meetings and sometimes beat them. All the intelligently 'wasted three-quarters of their time on the factional fight', and tried to prevent a peaceful demonstration from taking place under Assembly leadership. The priest invited a leading Bolshevik to discuss the situation, but he failed to turn up, though Menshevik intelligently did, and the first Menshevik leaflet appeared on the 4th. The first Bolshevik leaflet on the 8th rubbished the Assembly petition, and most Bolsheviks sat on their hands on the 9th, the day of the demonstration, and RSDRP propagandists were told that 'We do not need students'. The city was an armed camp, troops had been issued with live ammunition and preparations for dead and wounded had been made days earlier. After troops massacred at least 1,200 demonstrators, and wounded 5,000 or more, a few Bolshevik intelligently agitated for an armed rising, yet they were unable to provide arms, so workers found them where they could. Menshevik intelligently thought that the massacre would alienate workers from the tsar, and Bolshevik intelligently disciplined the very few Bolshevik intelligently who had tried to relate to the demonstration, then both factions sat back and waited for further events. It took ten days for a St. Petersburg intelligently to report to Moscow Bolshevik intelligently, and similar reports seem not to have been given elsewhere.

Both intelligently factions were unprepared for an upturn in class struggle. In the second half of January economic strikes spread across Russia, and railway strikers interrupted the strategically vital Trans-Siberian line to the Far East. Strikers in several cities, including some at state plants, won economic concessions. A few RSDRP factional intelligently coordinated their efforts, and issued joint propaganda leaflets in an attempt to turn economic strikes into political strikes, though others tried to hold back strikers to prevent 'anarchist strikism' and 'terrorist deviations'. A few cooperated with SDs in the Pale to form fighting squads to prevent pogroms or combat them if they happened. The Bolsheviks failed to relate effectively to peasant insurgencies in several regions, even though some peasants were resisting conscription. Menshevik intelligently were influential in Georgia, and drove Bolshevik intelligently out of committees, while Gurian peasants had established local self-government, and Latvian and Lithuanian SDs agitated workers and peasants and organised armed peasant 'brotherhoods' in the Baltic region, while the VPSR continued its policy of individual terror. Bolshevik intelligently began organising the production of bombs in Finland, and *Vyperod* exhorted them to continue splitting RSDRP committees. More and more peasants and peasant troops got hold of illegal literature, and the government was almost bankrupt, yet the tsar did not seek a peace treaty, and thousands more peasant troops died in the Far East.

In February the tsar established a commission to examine the unrest in St. Petersburg and gave male workers aged 25 or over the right to elect some deputies. In the first stage Bolshevik workers won a considerable number of 'electors', yet intelligently opposed the commission and it was cancelled. After the VPSR assassinated a member of the imperial family, the Okhrana employed top officials to train gendarmes about revolutionary organisations and methods, and recruited members of SD organisations as spies. Railway and other strikes were generalising.

Vyperod exhorted Bolshevik intelligently to recruit radicalised youths, show them how to work, then let them get on with it, even if they made mistakes. It also urged them to enlarge local committees with workers, without micro-managing or substituting for them, and to march separately from other SD parties, but strike together. The émigré intelligently discussed how to get arms, though their main focus was on winning delegates to the Third Congress.

After the Russian CC voted to sack their Bolshevik émigré CC contact, the police arrested all the Mensheviks, though the Bolsheviks and 'conciliators' between the factions escaped. Terrorism continued in Georgia, though peasant strikers made political demands. Strikes and terrorism continued in the Baltic region, and peasant insurgency spread to the central provinces, though troops put many of them down and the police decimated the VPSR combat organisation.

Vyperod argued that the Third Congress should vote to cooperate with SRs, but insisted that 'terrorism must be merged in actual practice with the movement of the masses'. Internal democracy was desirable in the RSDRP, but was impractical under the autocracy, though a 'single centre' was needed in Russia.

A few SD intelligently in Russia issued agitational leaflets, and some strikers made political demands, though most settled for economic gains. A few Mensheviks and Bolsheviks cooperated in the south, though the secession of Menshevik intelligently from RSDRP committees had become widespread.

By spring St. Petersburg Bolshevik intelligently claimed hundreds of 'ties' to workers, but still appealed to the émigrés for guidance. The few Menshevik intelligently who arrived for the Third Congress in London soon withdrew,

claiming that they were under-represented, and the London meeting became a Bolshevik conference, though a few conciliators stayed. The conference 'dissolved' Party Council and threatened Menshevik-led committees which did not recognise conference decisions with the same fate. The conference derecognized *Iskra* and decided to set up a new central organ. A majority rejected demands to put more workers on committees, but agreed to adopt democratic centralism and remove intelligently 'chair warmers and keepers of the seal'. Bundist, SDKPiL and Latvian SD intelligently were elected to the CC, and the conference supported an armed rising, but only under Bolshevik leadership. All the London decisions were illegal. The Menshevik delegates had joined those who had remained in Switzerland and they rejected the London decisions and favoured working in trade unions, linking Menshevik-led organisations and propagandising for an armed rising, but envisaged it leading to a bourgeois revolution which might develop into a socialist revolution, but only if it spread to Western Europe.

Meanwhile strikes generalised across border regions in Russia, and the SDKPiL, Bund and PPS cooperated, as did some Bolshevik and Menshevik intelligently. Teachers, printers, railway workers and printers and other trades began organising national trade unions, and some workforces, especially in St. Petersburg, unilaterally worked eight hours, while government plants were allowed to work nine. The government made other concessions, though the wipe-out of a Russian fleet at Tsushima compounded the repeated defeats of the peasant army.

By summer 'Bolshevism' was a 'distinctive trend' in the RSDRP, yet neither intelligently faction in Russia generalised the workers' elected *sborka* in Ivanovo in the central industrial region, which led a lengthy but ultimately unsuccessful strike, though intelligently issued leaflets and recruited a handful of intelligently and male and female workers. Economic struggles in Odesa had become politicised, and though SD intelligently armed themselves, they refused to arm workers. Morale in the Black Sea fleet was at rock-bottom, and after the armoured cruiser *Potemkin* anchored near Odesa, dozens of sailors were shot for refusing to eat soup made from maggots meat, though a few revolutionaries agitated successfully, took over the vessel and the crew elected a committee. Some troops ashore offered to mutiny, though others clashed with workers, and the tsar imposed martial law in the Yalta district, and ordered the sinking of the *Potemkin*. Two civilian SDs agitated the *Potemkin* committee, but when elements of the garrison again offered to mutiny if the committee took decisive action, its half-hearted response literally misfired. The crew managed to fend off a loyal flotilla, but were unable to generalise the mutiny to the rest of the fleet. When a Bolshevik agent arrived from Geneva he found that the local intelligently were totally ineffective, and the *Potemkin* had sailed; and when its crew were unable to get hold of coal and provisions, they scuttled the warship.

The war continued to go badly, peasant troops were becoming mutinous, and the police knew that VPSR and RSDRP émigré intelligently were discussing how to get arms and planning an uprising; so the tsar secretly appointed negotiators to meet the Japanese.

In St. Petersburg Bolsheviks walked out of a teachers' union conference which refused to grant them political control, yet workers went on rent strikes and factory organisations joined forces, and the number of strikers officially deemed politically-motivated rose. Moscow RSDRP intelligently claimed 1,435 'ties' with workers, led 95 workers' basic *kruzhki*, and there were 28 workers in 'special *kruzhki*' and 30 worker-propagandists; yet the peasants' and printers' unions rebuffed intelligently attempts to claim political leadership.

In autumn, RSDRP intelligently in Moscow opposed a general strike, yet it was already underway. The new liberal Kadet party supported a constitutional assembly, and the print workers' sovet developed into a city-wide organisation with Menshevik support. The railway union generalised strikes across the empire, and other workers followed suit. In Moscow and St. Petersburg, at the Mensheviks' prompting, university and other students opened buildings to workers and held huge successful meetings, but the Bolshevik intelligently failed to take over the political leadership of the print workers' sovet and other trade unions. Workers formed a sovet, with Menshevik support, and while Bolshevik intelligently called for the general strike to end, the sovet and many SD workers and students opposed them. Some RSDRP intelligently accepted an unaligned intelligently's idea of 'permanent revolution'.

Vyperod insisted that 'We shall not stop half-way'. It also argued for a twin approach to both workers and peasants, though attempts to work with other SDs and revolutionary nationalists to import arms were not highly successful.

In Russia both RSDRP intelligently factions struggled against 'syndicalism' and the importation of SPD 'revisionism', but the Bolsheviks failed to relate effectively to peasant insurgencies, even though the number of peasant disorders and political strikes and strikers rose.

The peasant army in the Far East continued to lose battles, though the Japanese were at the end of their tether, and its government ratified a peace treaty. The Russian government did so a fortnight later, but kept it secret until the tsar signed it several days later.

Strikes had spread across Russia, and particularly in the border regions, and there was growing unrest among conscripts being sent to the Far East. The tsar granted an amnesty for some 'state criminals', yet martial law was enforced across large swathes of the empire, and the government encouraged widespread pogroms and Black Hundred violence, especially in the border regions. The St. Petersburg sovet vacillated as mutinies at Kronstadt and Sveaborg were suppressed, though after Bolshevik intelligenty published the legal and highly successful *Novaya zhizn*, *Iskra* ceased publication. SD students propagandised and agitated factory workers, though sovet deputies rejected the Bolshevik intelligenty's attempt to impose its political leadership. Workers produced sharp-edged weapons, and Bolsheviks stole rifles from a state armaments plant near the Finnish border. As a political general strike swept across the empire, and more sovet were established, the tsar allowed Finland to have a democratically-elected Diet, but extended martial law even further. The teachers' union collaborated with the peasants' union, railway strikes paralysed the line to the Far East and the postal and telegraph workers' strike disrupted government and military communications. Both RSDRP intelligenty factions failed to take full advantage of the state's weaknesses, develop and integrate more rabochy-intelligenty into local organisations, let alone committees, or form non-party, well-armed and well-trained fighting squads linked to each other, and to revolutionary cells in the armed forces, and the government escalated repression.

In winter St. Petersburg sovet supported the Kronstadt mutineers and railway workers elsewhere who were threatened with execution, though the employers and the government went on the offensive against peasant insurgents and strikers, and after the post and telegraph workers were forced back to work, punitive detachments crushed sovet and mutinous soldiers and sailors. The RSDRP intelligenty remained hopelessly sectarian and arrogant. The Bolshevik member of the émigré intelligenty CC arrived and argued that the struggles of workers, peasants and revolutionary democrats should be linked, and he and other Bolshevik intelligenty took over *Novaya zhizn*, which called for RSDRP unity and opening up the party to the thousands of increasingly radicalised young workers. The Menshevik intelligenty's *Nachalo* pushed permanent revolution, and the Bolshevik émigré CC member argued successfully that Bolshevik and Menshevik intelligenty should merge on the basis of democratic centralism. SDs in the border regions were organised, but uncoordinated, though organisations in central European Russia were weak. The political general strike was now nationwide. More and more peasants were seizing land, and there were multiple mutinies. Some sovet included troops, especially on the Trans-Siberian line; but after St. Petersburg sovet called for withholding taxes and withdrawing bank deposits, it was closed.

Moscow RSDRP intelligenty had no military specialists and insufficient arms, yet they declined the offer of the keys to the state armoury and held back a regiment that was on the verge of mutiny; yet as other regiments wavered, a rising began, and the city governor had too few reliable troops. The VPSR led the fighting, while the RSDRP fighters had few small arms and received little military or political support from RSDRP organisations elsewhere. Poorly-organised attempts to blow up the line from St. Petersburg failed, and loyal troops brought artillery, isolated the insurgents and crushed them. Many of those killed were citizens who had built barricades and male and female students. A few mainly male RSDRP intelligenty escaped, and reportedly claimed that the failed uprising had been a 'dress rehearsal' for a future successful revolution.

By early 1906 the state was effectively bankrupt, but the government mobilised more punitive detachments. They destroyed sovet, exterminated rabochy-intelligenty, other revolutionaries, insurgent peasants and mutinous troops, especially in the border regions. They added to the troubles of the Bund, which was already under pressure from Zionists who looked to Palestine, and they terminally weakened the VPSR. In St. Petersburg newly-'conscious' workers tended to get involved in economic rather than political struggles, while Bolsheviks and others adopted terrorist methods and focussed on expropriations, often killing civilians in the process, which further alienated Menshevik intelligenty who sought constitutional reforms. Most leading RSDRP intelligenty escaped abroad, sooner or later, but for over a year many Bolshevik and other SD workers were executed, or died in prison or exile.

The consequences of the RSDRP intelligenty's serial failures will be analysed in *The Centre Cannot Hold. The Implosion of the All-Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, 1906-1914*.

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