

Proletarians of All Countries, Unite!

ISKRA

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THE URGENT TASKS OF OUR MOVEMENT

Russian Social-Democracy has more than once declared that the immediate political task of the Russian working-class party must be the overthrow of the autocracy and the winning of political liberty. This was declared more than fifteen years ago by the representatives of Russian Social-Democracy, the members of the Emancipation of Labour group; it was declared two and a half years ago by the representatives of the Russian Social-Democratic organisations who founded, in the spring of 1898, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. Yet despite these repeated declarations, the question of the political tasks of Social-Democracy in Russia is once again being raised. Many representatives of our movement express doubt as to the correctness of this solution of the question. It is said that the economic struggle is of predominant importance, that it pushes the political tasks of the proletariat into the background, narrows and restricts these tasks; it is even said that talk of forming an independent working-class party in Russia is simply a repetition of borrowed phrases, that the workers should carry on the economic struggle alone, leaving politics to the intellectuals in alliance with the liberals. This latest profession of faith (the notorious “*Credo*”) in fact reduces the Russian proletariat to the status of a minor, and amounts to a repudiation of the Social-Democratic programme. And *Rabochaya Mysl* (“The Workers’ Thought”), especially in its Separate Supplement, expressed itself essentially in the same sense. Russian Social-Democracy is passing through a period of vacillation, a period of doubt bordering on self-repudiation. On the one hand, the labour movement is being torn away from socialism: workers are helped to wage the economic struggle, but they are given no explanation at all of the socialist aims and political tasks of the movement as a whole. On the other hand, socialism is being torn away from the labour movement: Russian socialists are once again beginning to talk more and more of the struggle against the government having to be waged by the intelligentsia alone, with its own forces, since the workers confine themselves to economic struggle alone.

Circumstances of three kinds have, in our opinion, prepared the ground for these sad phenomena. First: in the early days of their activity, Russian Social-Democrats confined themselves to propaganda work in small circles. In passing over to agitation among the masses we have not always been able to avoid falling into the opposite extreme. In the early days of our activity we frequently had to defend our right to exist against the *Narodnaya Volya* (“People’s Will”) adherents, who understood by “politics” an activity that had broken away from the labour movement, who narrowed politics down to conspiratorial struggle alone. In rejecting such politics, the Social-Democrats fell into the opposite extreme of relegating politics in general into the background. Third: working in scattered fashion in small local workers’ circles, the Social-Democrats paid insufficient attention to the necessity of organising a revolutionary party that would unite the activity of all the local groups and make it possible to set revolutionary work on a proper footing. This predominance of disconnected work was naturally bound up with the predominance of economic struggle.

All the circumstances mentioned gave rise to an infatuation with one side of the movement. The “economic” trend, in so far as one can speak of a “trend” here, produced attempts to elevate this narrowness into a special “theory,” attempts to make use, for this purpose, of the fashionable Bernsteinist “critique of Marxism,” which parades old bourgeois ideas under a new flag. Only these attempts create the danger of weakening the link between the Russian labour movement and Russian Social-Democracy as the foremost fighter for political freedom. And the urgent task of our movement consists precisely in strengthening this link.

Social-Democracy is the union of the labour movement with socialism; its task is not passively to serve the labour movement at each of its separate stages, but to represent the interests of the movement as a whole, to point this movement toward its ultimate goal and its political tasks, and to safeguard its political and ideological independence. Torn away from Social-Democracy, the labour movement becomes petty and inevitably turns bourgeois: waging the economic struggle alone, the working class loses its political independence, becomes the tail of other parties, and betrays the great precept that “the emancipation of the workers must be the task of the workers themselves.” Such a period has existed in every country: everywhere the labour movement and socialism at one time existed apart from one another, each going its own separate way, and everywhere this separation led to the weakness of both socialism and the labour movement; everywhere only the union of socialism with the labour movement created a firm basis for both. But in every country this union of socialism with the labour movement was worked out along its own particular path, depending on conditions of place and time. In Russia the necessity of this union has long been proclaimed in theory—but in practice the union is only now being worked out afresh. This process is a very difficult one, and there is nothing especially surprising in the fact that it is accompanied by various waverings and doubts.

What lesson, then, does the past hold for us? The whole history of Russian socialism has led to its most urgent task turning out to be the struggle against the autocratic government, the winning of political liberty; our socialist movement has, so to speak, been concentrated on the struggle against the autocracy. On the other hand, history has shown that in Russia the divorce of socialist thought from the foremost representatives of the toiling classes is far greater than in other countries, and that, given such a divorce, the Russian revolutionary movement is doomed to impotence. From this there follows, of itself, the task which Russian Social-Democracy is called upon to carry out: to instil socialist ideas and political self-consciousness into the mass of the proletariat, and to organise a revolutionary party inseparably bound up with the spontaneous working-class movement. Much has already been done in this respect by Russian Social-Democracy; but still more remains to be done. As the movement grows, the field of activity of Social-Democracy becomes ever wider, the work ever more varied, and an ever-greater number of the movement’s activists concentrate their energies on particular tasks thrown up by the everyday needs of propaganda and agitation. This is an entirely natural and inevitable phenomenon, but it obliges us to pay particular attention to ensuring that particular tasks and separate methods of struggle are not elevated into something self-sufficient, and that preparatory work is not raised to the rank of the main and only work.

To further the political development and the political organisation of the working class is our chief and fundamental task. Whoever pushes this task into the background, whoever fails to subordinate to it all particular tasks and separate methods of struggle, takes a false path and does serious harm to the movement. It is pushed into the background, first, by those who summon revolutionaries to fight the government by the forces of separate conspiratorial circles cut off from the labour movement; second, by those who narrow the content and scope of political propaganda, agitation and organisation, who consider it possible and fitting to regale the workers with “politics” only on exceptional occasions, only on festive ones, who too anxiously trade the political struggle against the autocracy for the demand for separate concessions from it, and do not sufficiently concern themselves with raising these demands for separate concessions to the level of the systematic and irrevocable struggle of a revolutionary party against the autocracy.

“Organise!” the newspaper *Rabochaya Mysl* repeats to the workers in every key, and all adherents of the “economic” trend repeat it after it.

And we, of course, join wholeheartedly in this call—but we shall certainly add to it: organise not only in mutual-aid societies, strike funds and workers' circles, but organise also into a *political party*; organise for a resolute struggle against the autocratic government and against the whole of capitalist society. Without such an organisation the proletariat is incapable of rising to the conscious class struggle; without it the labour movement is condemned to impotence, and with mutual funds, circles and benefit societies alone the working class will never succeed in carrying out the historic task incumbent upon it: to free itself, and the whole Russian people, from political and economic slavery. No class in history has ever attained mastery unless it produced political leaders, foremost representatives capable of organising the movement and leading it. And the Russian working class has already shown that it is capable of producing such people: the broadly spreading struggle of Russian workers over the past five or six years has shown what a mass of revolutionary force lies hidden in the working class, how the most desperate governmental persecutions do not diminish but increase the number of workers pressing toward socialism, toward political consciousness and political struggle. The congress of our comrades in 1898 correctly set this task, and did not merely repeat other people's words or express a passing infatuation of "intellectuals." And we must resolutely set about fulfilling these tasks, placing on the order of the day the question of the Party's programme, organisation and tactics. As to how we regard the fundamental propositions of our programme, we have already said; this is naturally not the place to elaborate them in detail. We intend to devote a series of articles in forthcoming issues to organisational questions—one of the sorest of all our questions. We have fallen sadly behind, in this respect, the old activists of the Russian revolutionary movement; we must frankly admit this shortcoming, and direct our forces toward working out a more conspiratorial way of setting about the business, toward systematic instruction in the rules of conducting affairs, in methods of outwitting gendarmes and evading the nets of the police. We must train people who will devote to the revolution not merely their free evenings but their whole lives; we must build up an organisation large enough to allow a strict division of labour among the various kinds of our work. As for questions of tactics, we shall confine ourselves here to this: Social-Democracy does not tie its own hands; it does not confine its activity to any single, once-and-for-all conceived plan or method of political struggle. It recognises all means of struggle, provided only that they correspond to the party's actual strength and make it possible to achieve the greatest results attainable under the given conditions. Given a strong, well-organised party, a single strike can grow into a political demonstration, into a political victory over the government. Given a strong, organised party, an uprising in a single locality can grow into a victorious revolution. We must remember that the struggle with the government over separate demands, the winning of separate concessions, is only a skirmish with the enemy—only small engagements on the outposts—while the decisive battle still lies ahead. Before us, in the full strength of its position, stands the enemy's fortress, showering upon us clouds of shell and shot that carry off our best fighters. We must take this fortress, and we shall take it, if we unite all the forces of the awakening proletariat with all the forces of the Russian revolutionaries in a single party, to which everything living and honest in Russia will be drawn. And only then will the great prophecy of the Russian worker-revolutionary Pyotr Alexeyev be fulfilled: "The muscular arm of the millions of the toiling people will rise, and the yoke of despotism, guarded by soldiers' bayonets, will fly into dust!"

WILHELM LIEBKNECHT

Born March 29, 1826 — died August 7, 1900.

With the death of the oldest leader of German Social-Democracy, the revolutionary proletariat of the whole world has lost one of its most remarkable and tireless fighters and leaders. It was not for nothing that the news of his sudden death struck the advanced workers of every civilised country like a thunderclap. Telegrams of sympathy, expressing deep grief at the irreplaceable loss suffered by international Social-Democracy, came not only from every corner of Germany but from other countries of Europe—and not only Europe, but from America, Australia, and even from South Africa and Japan. Liebknecht's funeral took on the character and proportions of a majestic demonstration, in which some hundred thousand—perhaps close to a million—German workers took part, together with representatives of the workers' parties of England, France, Austria, Hungary, Belgium, Denmark and various other countries. By the unanimous testimony of every conscientious newspaper correspondent who witnessed this demonstration, so grand a funeral has not yet been given to a single king, nor to a single emperor.

The universal, profound sympathy of the struggling proletariat of the whole world for Liebknecht, expressed with such force and sincerity on the occasion of his death, was earned by his life-long service to the cause of the emancipation of the working class, by his tireless efforts on behalf of the intellectual and political awakening of the exploited and oppressed working masses. To give a full and rounded appraisal of his services to the international proletariat would mean writing a detailed account of his life and activity going back, at the very least, to the sixties—that is, roughly forty years. But the beginning of his public activity goes back to the revolution of 1848, while the shaping of the convictions and ideals to whose service he devoted his abilities began even earlier, at a time when, in Germany—as in Russia today—not only the workers, but the bourgeois classes as well, and especially their educated strata, suffered under governmental arbitrariness and outmoded state and social institutions. The history of Liebknecht's life and work is thus most closely bound up with the history of Germany, and indirectly with the most important moments and events of European history over a period of more than half a century. To set out Liebknecht's biography on so broad a canvas would require a whole volume. Here we shall confine ourselves to reporting a few facts of his tireless life of activity and struggle, and chiefly of that part of it during which he formed and prepared himself to become the future leader of the German workers.

By birth and upbringing Liebknecht belongs to the bourgeoisie, and precisely to that stratum of it known among us as the "intelligentsia." As already said, monarchical and bureaucratic despotism prevailed in Germany, under which the urban classes and the peasantry, further oppressed by the landlords, suffered most of all; but the bourgeois classes too suffered—merchants, manufacturers, and above all their educated strata: doctors, lawyers, teachers, professors, and, chiefly, university students. As a result the bourgeoisie in general, and the intelligentsia in particular, was imbued with a spirit of discontent and opposition. The noblest natures and hottest heads among the intelligentsia were filled with sympathy for the people's sufferings, dreamed of a social order in which there would be no place for inequality and injustice, and even tried to spread their revolutionary ideas among the workers. Within Germany itself this propaganda was of course carried on in secret, under threat of severe penalties. But German workers, chiefly young journeymen, had in those days a custom of wandering from town to town, and even from country to country. Thanks to this, German workers could be met by the hundred, in the forties and fifties, not only in Switzerland, France, Belgium and other countries neighbouring Germany, but even in England. In all these states, even before the revolution of 1848, constitutional orders already existed which gave workers a greater or lesser scope for self-development and independent activity. It was there that those German socialists and revolutionaries who strove to arouse among the workers a conscious dissatisfaction with the existing order directed their

chief efforts. The free political institutions and the revolutionary and socialist agitation of the native opposition parties and workers' unions of those countries naturally, in their turn, did much to hasten the intellectual and political awakening of the German proletarians temporarily or permanently residing there. One result of this twofold influence was that by the forties Switzerland, for example, was already covered with a network of German workers' societies; and the League of Communists, founded in London and famous for issuing the "Manifesto of the Communist Party," written by Marx and Engels, likewise consisted chiefly of German workers.

While still at his grammar-school desk Liebknecht began to be imbued with the revolutionary ideas and aspirations of the advanced intelligentsia; while still at school he was already absorbed in the writings of the great socialist Saint-Simon. At sixteen he entered university, having taken the highest marks in his school-leaving examination. But given his "unruly" character and "ill-intentioned" cast of mind—or, more plainly, given his hot-headed, independent nature and republican convictions—he could not get on with the order of university life. Nor had he any reason to pursue a degree, for he soon came to the conclusion that, with his socialist ideals and his frequently anti-governmental, republican leanings, neither a place in the civil service nor a professorship, for which he had begun to prepare himself, was open to him. Having reached this conclusion, the young Liebknecht—he was then twenty-one—abandoned the university, made his way to free Switzerland, and settled in Zurich, where, to earn his living, he took a post as a teacher in a children's school. And instead of university lectures, he diligently attended the German workers' society in Zurich—not in order to instruct its members, but, on the contrary, in order himself to "learn" from them, to acquaint himself, in private conversation with them, with the situation, needs and aspirations of the German proletariat. It was during this period of his life—this was in 1847—that, on the basis of conversations with workers in the Zurich workers' union, there began the future leader of the proletariat's rapprochement with the more or less conscious circles of the working class; it was here that he first began to be imbued with an interest in their concerns and a burning wish to help their intellectual and political advancement.

Liebknecht's peaceful stay in Zurich, however, did not last long. The long pent-up discontent of the French people with the rule of Louis Philippe—who, together with the Chamber, favoured the moneyed kings and the rich generally at the expense of the working masses and to the detriment of other classes—broke out in February 1848 in an uprising of workers and the lower strata of the bourgeoisie in Paris. As soon as news reached Liebknecht of the great battle that had begun in the French capital between the toiling masses and their exploiters, he set off for Paris to take part in it. But the revolutionary war soon spread over almost the whole of Europe, coming to a halt only at the frontier of the then "barbarous" Russia, which, thanks to the ignorance and slavish condition of its people, submissive to its "God-anointed" tsar, was able to play the part of a "saving bulwark" for all the reactionary governments of Europe against the ruin threatened them by the pan-European revolution. By March all Germany was already in flames—from the smallest of its states to the largest, Prussia, the people rose up, built barricades, and, weapon in hand, rose against their rulers. Liebknecht naturally hastened home to join the ranks of those fighting for the people's freedom. Captured, at the head of his own detachment, in the Duchy of Baden by government troops, only by a happy chance was he not shot. He was, however, kept in prison for nine months, still under constant threat of death; but two days before his trial in Baden, where Liebknecht sat imprisoned, popular unrest flared up again, and in places even the troops went over to the people's side. The duke himself fled, and it is no wonder that at such a moment the prosecutor and judges did not dare condemn a daring youth who had risked his head, weapon in hand, defending the freedom and rights of the people against their

crowned oppressors. But Liebknecht had no sooner left the prison than he at once rejoined the revolutionary army, against which the united forces of the reactionary German governments, Prussia at their head, were marching to inflict a final and decisive defeat on the defenders of the people's freedom. And indeed the army of the fighters for freedom and equal rights was at length utterly routed by the Prussian troops, and its surviving remnants had no choice but to flee abroad, to freer countries. Liebknecht succeeded in escaping to Switzerland.

Settling in Geneva, he joined the local German workers' society—no longer as a pupil, but as teacher, propagandist and organiser. There he lectured on various political questions and on contemporary and recent events. At the same time he agitated for the union of the German workers' societies existing in the main towns of Switzerland, and once this union was achieved he was elected president of the combined workers' organisation. Liebknecht's socialist propaganda, however, met with resistance from émigrés of bourgeois liberal-democratic views, who belonged to the German workers' union or tried, through their own supporters within it, to influence it from without. They opened a campaign against Liebknecht, from which, however, he emerged the victor. But his activity among the workers also alarmed the reactionary governments of Europe, Prussia in particular; Liebknecht was accordingly arrested, spent three months in prison, and was then expelled from Switzerland at the insistence of these governments. He then went to London, drew close there to Marx and Engels, and, in intimate contact with these great founders of the doctrines of international Social-Democracy, completed his socialist education—struggling for his daily bread, living in perpetual want, often half-starved, at times going hungry to the point of desperation. It was this that finally tempered his character and made him into that unbending, self-sacrificing, fearless fighter for the emancipation of the proletariat whom the whole civilised world came to know him as, and as he will pass into the undying memory of future generations.

With the accession of Wilhelm I to the Prussian throne in 1861, and the amnesty he granted to those termed, in the language of the day, political offenders, Liebknecht received the opportunity to return to his homeland. He made use of it, and in 1862, after thirteen years of exile, we find him in Berlin as co-editor of the *North German Gazette*, founded by a former émigré, Brass, an adherent of the republican form of government. He soon took an active part in the labour movement then coming to life, and in the course of the second half of the sixties drew the advanced sections of the workers onto the path that secured him a world-wide reputation as the great teacher and leader of the socialist proletariat.

It is impossible, in a few words, to relate his activity during this stormy period of the German labour movement. But some notion of its significance may be gained from the following.

In the early sixties the Social-Democratic party of Germany was still in its infancy, and numerically very weak. Nevertheless, the political and literary spokesmen of the upper classes courted the advanced strata of the proletariat and tried to draw them to their own side. The bourgeoisie and its leaders, the liberals, were then locked in struggle with the Prussian government and the aristocratic-clerical party supporting it, which dreamed of a return to those good old days when nobility and clergy kept the people in bondage and ignorance. The liberal party enjoyed the sympathy and support of the urban proletariat. The government party, for its part, likewise courted the workers, trying to persuade them that its aims largely coincided with their interests, whereas the aims of the liberals were entirely opposed to those interests. The conservatives thus calculated on sowing discord between the workers and the liberal party—that is, on splitting the anti-government camp and weakening it to the point where it would cease to be dangerous to the crown and the other privileged estates, the nobility and clergy. It must be said that the liberals, absurdly hostile as they were,

quite without wishing it, to the Workers' Union founded by the famous Lassalle, poured oil on the fire and played into the hands of the Prussian government and the conservatives in their calculations regarding the labour movement.

The upshot, in the end, was that the politically most active sections of the German working class, soon after Lassalle's death, split into two hostile camps: one served, as it were, as a reserve army for the bourgeois democrats and liberals; the other had, so to speak, set one foot on the road that might have led it into the role of a bodyguard in the service of the reactionaries—that is, of the bitterest enemies of popular enlightenment, freedom and equal rights. That part of the workers who remained in the liberal camp appeared, in the eyes of the members of the Lassallean Union, as blind tools of the political leaders who exploited the proletariat, that is, as acting against the interests of their own class; while the liberal-minded workers considered it better to follow the liberal bourgeoisie in its struggle against the government, under the banner of freedom, than to do the opposite—than to support the government against the liberals and the workers, and thereby play into the hands of monarchist and aristocratic-clerical reaction. There seemed to be no other choice, and the gulf that opened between the two camps seemed so wide that reconciliation appeared unthinkable.

A bridge between the two was nonetheless built, and the very gulf dividing them was, in the end, filled in. This work was carried out under the banner of the teachings of Marx and Engels, and its principal leader was Wilhelm Liebknecht. He simultaneously waged a tireless campaign both against reconciliation with the reactionaries and against the political tutelage of the liberals, declaring merciless war on both. When, shortly after joining the editorial board of the *North German Gazette*, he learned that its publisher had sold out to the Prussian government and that the editor was trying to bring the paper's views into line with this, he at once threw up his post and broke off all relations with his former colleague.

Bismarck, who not long before had become head of the Prussian ministry, offered Liebknecht, Marx and Engels, through his agents, unlimited freedom to propagate communist doctrines in an official government organ, asking only one thing in return: that they refrain from over-sharp attacks on the monarchy and the government, and turn a blind eye when the articles of other contributors expressed views favourable to government and monarchy; in exchange they might attack the bourgeoisie and the liberals as mercilessly as they pleased. Liebknecht and his friends indignantly rejected these shameful proposals of the future "Iron Chancellor." In revenge he was expelled from Prussia, where he had spoken out sharply against those representatives of the General German Workers' Union who showed a readiness to take the bait of the government party. But his righteous hatred of reaction never for a moment made him forget the opposition of interests between proletariat and bourgeoisie, and hence the need to free the workers from the political leadership and tutelage of liberals representing the interests of the bourgeoisie. Lassalle had succeeded in organising part of the workers into an independent party with its own programme and tactics; Liebknecht, continuing the work begun by his brilliant predecessor, waged a tireless and fearless struggle both against the danger—at one time threatening the political independence of the still-young German labour movement—from reactionary enemies of popular freedom, and against the efforts of the liberal bourgeoisie to keep the proletariat from joining that movement. His whole life, one may say, was devoted to this struggle against both enemies of the political independence of the working class. And it has fallen to few historical figures, as it fell to Liebknecht, to see with their own eyes such rich fruit of their labours.

Millions of German workers stand united in an independent revolutionary force under the banner of Social-Democracy. And while the German bourgeoisie has long since forgotten the liberal enthusiasms of its youth and, in a blind alliance with its former enemies—monarchs,

nobility and clergy—now turns against freedom and progress, the Social-Democratic workers' party stands guard over the interests of both, defending them against every kind of enemy—whether under the openly shameless banner of avowed reactionaries or under the false banner of sham liberals. The late Liebknecht did an immeasurable amount to build this army and to secure its lasting existence. Herein lies his imperishable service to mankind.

THE WAR WITH CHINA

Russia is bringing its war with China to a close: a whole series of military districts has been mobilised, hundreds of millions of roubles spent, tens of thousands of troops sent to China; a series of engagements has been fought, a series of victories won—victories, it is true, gained less over the regular troops of the enemy than over Chinese insurgents, and still more over unarmed Chinese, who were drowned and beaten to death without the killers stopping short even of the murder of children and women, to say nothing of the plunder of palaces, houses and shops. And the Russian government, together with the newspapers that grovel before it, celebrates its victory, exults over the fresh exploits of its valiant army, exults over the defeat of Chinese savagery by European culture, over the new successes of Russia's "civilising mission" in the Far East.

In the midst of all this exultation, one voice alone is not to be heard—that of the class-conscious workers, the foremost representatives of the many-millioned toiling people. Yet the entire burden of these new victorious campaigns falls precisely on the working people: it is from among them that men are taken to be sent off to distant lands, and it is from them that specially increased taxes are collected to cover expenditures running into millions. Let us try to work out the question: how should socialists regard this war? whose interests does it serve? and what, in reality, is the character of the policy pursued by the Russian government?

Our government assures us, before all else, that it is not even waging war on China: it is merely putting down a rebellion, pacifying rebels, and helping the lawful Chinese government to restore lawful order. War has not been declared—but this changes nothing in the substance of the matter, since a war is being waged all the same. What, then, has provoked this Chinese attack on Europeans, this rebellion being suppressed with such zeal by Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Japanese and others? "The enmity of the yellow race for the white," "the hatred of the Chinese for European culture and civilisation," the champions of the war assure us. Yes, the Chinese do indeed hate Europeans—but which Europeans, and for what? It is not the European *peoples* whom the Chinese hate—with them they have had no quarrel—but the European *capitalists* and the governments obedient to those capitalists. How could the Chinese fail to come to hate men who came to China solely for gain, who used their vaunted civilisation only as a means of deceit, plunder and violence, who made war on China simply to win the right to poison its people with opium (the Anglo-French war on China in 1856), and who hypocritically cloaked a policy of plunder in the spread of Christianity? This policy of plunder toward China has long been pursued by the bourgeois governments of Europe, and now the Russian autocratic government has joined them in it too. It is customary to call this policy of plunder "colonial policy."

Every country with a rapidly developing capitalist industry very soon arrives at a search for colonies—that is, for countries in which industry is little developed, which retain a more or less patriarchal way of life, and into which the products of industry can be dumped at a handsome profit. And for the sake of the enrichment of a handful of capitalists, bourgeois governments have waged endless wars, sent whole regiments of soldiers to their deaths in unhealthy tropical lands, squandered millions gathered from the people, driven populations to desperate revolts and to death by starvation. Recall the revolt of the native peoples of India against England, and the famine in India; or the present war of the English with the Boers.

And now the greedy claws of the European capitalists have reached out for China as well. Almost first among them stretched out the hand of the Russian government, which now poses so much on its own "disinterestedness." It "disinterestedly" took Port Arthur from China and

began building a railway into Manchuria under the protection of Russian troops. One after another the European governments have set about so zealously plundering—or "leasing"—Chinese territory that talk has arisen, not without reason, of the partition of China. And if things are to be called by their true names, it must be said that the European governments—Russia perhaps foremost among them—have already begun the partition of China. Only they began this partition not openly, but by stealth, like thieves. They set about robbing China as one robs a corpse, and when this supposed corpse tried to offer resistance, they fell upon it like wild beasts, burning whole villages, drowning people in the Amur, shooting and bayoneting unarmed inhabitants, their wives and children. And all these Christian exploits are accompanied by outcries against the "savage" Chinese who dare to raise a hand against civilised Europeans. The occupation of Newchwang and the introduction of Russian troops into the confines of Manchuria are, the Russian autocratic government assures us in its circular note of August 12 to the powers, merely temporary measures. **[RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]** "called forth exclusively by the necessity...of putting an end to the aggressive acts of the Chinese rebels"; they "cannot testify to any far-reaching designs" utterly alien to the policy of the Emperor. **[END RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]**

Poor Imperial Government! So Christianly disinterested, and treated so unjustly! It "disinterestedly" seized Port Arthur a few years ago; it is now "disinterestedly" seizing Manchuria; it has "disinterestedly" flooded the Chinese provinces bordering on Russia with a swarm of contractors, engineers and officials, whose conduct has driven even Chinese known for their submissiveness to the point of revolt. On the building of the Chinese railway, Chinese labourers were paid ten kopecks a day for their keep—is this not further proof of Russia's disinterestedness?

But how, then, is one to explain the fact that our government pursues this insane policy in China? Whom does it benefit? It benefits a handful of leading capitalists carrying on trade with China; a handful of manufacturers producing goods for the Asiatic market; a handful of contractors now raking in frantic profits from urgent military orders (some factories producing arms and military supplies are working full tilt, day and night, and taking on hundreds of new hands). This policy benefits a handful of noblemen occupying high posts in the civil and military service. They need a policy of adventure, for it offers a chance to distinguish themselves, to make a career, to win glory through "feats of arms." To the interests of this handful of capitalists and venal officials our government does not hesitate to sacrifice the interests of the whole people. The autocratic tsarist government, in this as always, shows itself to be the government of irresponsible bureaucrats, servile before the capitalist magnates and the nobility.

What benefit does the Russian working class, and the whole working people, derive from conquests in China? Thousands of ruined families robbed of their breadwinners, sent off to war; the monstrous growth of the state debt and of expenditure; increased taxation; the intensified power of exploiting capitalists over the workers; a worsening of the workers' condition; still greater impoverishment of the peasantry; famine in Siberia—this is what the Chinese war promises, and is already bringing, in its train. The whole Russian press, every newspaper and journal, lies in bondage; none dares print anything without the leave of government officials, and so we have no exact information as to what this Chinese war is costing the people; but there can be no doubt that it demands the expenditure of many hundreds of millions of roubles. There is information that the government at once allotted 160 million roubles to the war by an unpublished decree, and that current war expenditure runs to about a million roubles every three or four days. And this frantic money is demanded by a government that has endlessly cut back relief for starving peasants, haggling over every kopeck; that never has funds to spare for popular education; that, like any money-lender, squeezes the

last drop from workers on state-owned works, from minor postal employees, and from others! The Minister of Finance, Witte, declared that on January 1, 1900, there stood a free balance of 260 million roubles in the treasury—this money has now gone, spent on the war; the government is seeking loans, raising taxes, cutting necessary expenditure for want of funds, halting the building of railways. The tsarist government is threatened with bankruptcy, and yet throws itself into a policy of conquest—a policy that demands not only huge sums of money but threatens to draw it into still more dangerous wars. The European powers that have descended upon China are already beginning to quarrel over the division of the spoils, and no one can say how this quarrel will end.

But the policy of the tsarist government in China represents not merely an outrage against the interests of the people; it also tends to corrupt the political consciousness of the popular masses. Governments that hold on by force of the bayonet alone, that must constantly restrain or suppress popular discontent, have long known the truth that such discontent cannot be dispelled by anything, and so they try to divert it from the government on to some other object. Sometimes they stir up hatred of the Jews: the gutter press baits the Jews, as though the Jewish worker did not suffer exactly as the Russian worker does under the yoke of capital and the police government. At present a press campaign against the Chinese is under way, crying up the savage yellow race, its hostility to civilisation, Russia's "enlightening mission," the enthusiasm with which Russian soldiers go into battle, and so on and so forth. Journalists cringing before the government and the money-bag strain every nerve to inflame popular hatred of China. But the Chinese people has never in any way oppressed the Russian people; the Chinese people itself suffers from the very evils under which the Russian people languishes—from an Asiatic government that squeezes taxes from starving peasants and puts down by armed force every striving toward freedom, from the yoke of capital, which has made its way into the Middle Kingdom as well.

The Russian working class is beginning to break free of the political benightedness and darkness in which the mass of the people still finds itself. It is therefore the duty of all class-conscious workers to rise with all their strength against those who inflame national hatred and turn the attention of the working people away from its true enemies. The policy of the tsarist government in China is a criminal policy, one that further ruins the people, further corrupts and oppresses it. The tsarist government not only keeps our own people in bondage; it sends them to subdue other peoples rising against their own bondage (as happened in 1848, when Russian troops crushed the revolution in Hungary). It not only helps Russian capitalists exploit their own workers and binds the workers' hands so that they dare not unite and defend themselves; it also sends soldiers to plunder other peoples for the benefit of a handful of the rich and well-born. To be rid of the new yoke that this war is laying on the working people, there is only one remedy: the summoning of representatives of the people, who would put an end to the government's arbitrary rule and force it to reckon with the interests of more than a single court clique.

NEW FRIENDS OF THE RUSSIAN PROLETARIAT

*"Save us, O Lord, from our friends—
with our enemies we can manage ourselves."
(Dedicated to Rabochaya Mysl)*

It has long been understood, in civilised countries, that governments can no longer stamp out the labour movement by police force alone. For a long time now a policy of violence has alternated with a policy aimed at corrupting the working class by turning it aside from its true goals, by

deceiving it. Workers have been told that, to improve their lot, they must go trustingly hand in hand with the government, renouncing any claim to political rights. In the sixties this policy was applied in France by Napoleon III, and in Germany by Bismarck.

Experience has convinced the workers of Western Europe that no improvement whatever in their condition can be lasting so long as they lack the political freedom without which it cannot be defended. Idle noblemen and gendarmes cannot be allies of the workers in their struggle with the factory-owners. And so the workers of Western Europe, renouncing the deceptive promises of governments, went their own way and forged their own happiness with their own hands. Everywhere the policy of corrupting the working class has met with failure.

In Russia, factory industry is growing, the labour movement is growing, and with the growth of this movement there arises, for those in power, a temptation to corrupt the working class and turn it aside from the goals it has already set for itself. But in the countries of Western Europe, where citizens have long enjoyed a measure of freedom, a government wishing to deceive and hoodwink the workers has at its disposal such instruments as parliament, the press, and freedom of assembly; to corrupt the workers there, ministries have had to set up their own supposedly "labour" newspapers, or plant their own people within legally existing parties, to preach at meetings the union of workers with government. In our own unhappy fatherland the only place where the government can come into direct contact with the workers is the police lock-up. And so the noble task of injecting political corruption into the working class has had to be entrusted to the gendarmerie. A wholly fitting man for this lofty mission has been found in Sergei Zubatov. Not yet an old man, Zubatov has already rendered no small service to throne and fatherland. Even as a youth he showed great promise. Scarcely off the school bench, in the mid-1880s he wormed his way into Moscow revolutionary circles and sought closeness with revolutionaries. Through his wife he opened a legal lending library which had a secret department, from which illegal literature was sent out into student and working-class circles. On one occasion Zubatov was asked to bring a suitcase of illegal literature to the flat of one of the movement's activists. He carried out the errand; but a few hours later gendarmes appeared at that flat and searched it, looking quite specifically for that very suitcase. The suitcase was not found—but suspicion of Zubatov began to grow. Soon afterwards the circle of people connected with the library was arrested, and at one of the arrests, at the Petrovsky-Razumovsky Academy, Zubatov already appeared wearing a police uniform.

This is precisely the policy of the notorious police agent Sudeikin: to introduce into a revolutionary milieu such corruption that it becomes hard to tell where the comrade who has entered into friendly relations with the gendarmerie ends, and where the outright informer and provocateur begins. Sudeikin tried, through just such a policy, to undermine the powerful "People's Will" party—and burned his fingers on it. When the poison of gendarme corruption touched the very heart of the party, the Executive Committee of "People's Will" put a bold end to this vile game: Sudeikin was executed by order of the Committee. Russian Social-Democrats must direct all their efforts toward coping with provocateur corruption without resort to political assassination. Let us hope that Zubatov will live to see the day when, in the light of open struggle for freedom, the people hang him from one of Moscow's lamp-posts.

The successes Zubatov achieved in Moscow made him the most prominent figure in gendarme detective work. He was given charge of affairs in Tver, Ivanovo-Voznesensk and Tambov. Since 1898 the Police Department, alarmed by the successes of the General Jewish Workers' Union, has set Zubatov the task of stamping out the Jewish labour movement.

Zubatov's intrigues prepared the August 1898 raid in the Western Territory [the Jewish Pale of Settlement]. Two Jewish printing-presses were seized, and a mass of people arrested. Nearly two years of preliminary investigation brought Zubatov relatively little success. Nevertheless, compared with the local gendarmes, he did achieve something: for the first time, in the case of the General Jewish Workers' Union, there were instances of denunciation, as well as of the conclusion of arrangements of the kind mentioned above between Zubatov and certain of the accused.

Zubatov's spying activity did not end there. In 1889 he played the part of a provocateur in the case of the "Self-Government" revolutionary party, and about the same time he travelled to Shuya, where he founded a workers' circle which he later betrayed.

By now Zubatov had thoroughly fouled himself in the filthy trade of espionage, earning the right to take up the bloody post of the tsar's executioner. He joined the gendarme corps and became assistant chief of the Moscow Security Department under Berdyaev—that same Berdyaev whom Zubatov now, in conversation with socialists, calls a "beast." While assisting Berdyaev in his work of stamping out the revolutionary movement, Zubatov, the true tsarist bureaucrat that he is, did not neglect his own advantage: to climb the service ladder he had to trip up Berdyaev. To this end Zubatov offers Berdyaev a plan for smashing the Moscow socialists, indicating whom to watch, whom to arrest, where to search. Berdyaev puts the plan into effect—while Zubatov, meanwhile, files a denunciation pointing out that Berdyaev made such-and-such mistakes, overlooked this, overdid that, and so failed to root out the sedition. Berdyaev is removed, and Zubatov appointed in his place.

Zubatov now occupies a prominent post: he has been entrusted with guarding the peace of the capitalists and the tsarist autocracy in the very heart of Russia. Moscow's revolutionaries found themselves faced with a very cunning opponent. From his own time in workers' circles he came to know the revolutionary milieu, and its weaknesses, very well, and now applies that experience to good effect. Provocation has spread on a wide scale in Moscow. Arrest follows arrest. Revolutionary work in Moscow has become extremely difficult. Provocation has become so common that a deep and general mutual suspicion has naturally arisen; individuals and small circles working among the workers are afraid to enter into relations with one another.

It must be admitted that the Social-Democratic movement in Moscow, which promised so much in 1896–97, is now passing through a period of stagnation. Zubatov will not, of course, succeed in prolonging this state of affairs into the future.

Zubatov repeats the methods of that notorious gendarme of the eighties, Sudeikin. Alongside provocation he makes wide use of methods for corrupting the inexperienced or weak-willed people who fall into his clutches. He converses with them, behaves in a gentlemanly fashion, tries to persuade them that he sympathises with the labour movement and is much troubled about easing their lot, and offers them every kind of arrangement whereby, so to speak, they may keep both their innocence and their gains—that is, avoid betraying their comrades while nonetheless securing a lighter sentence. This is usually done as follows: the accused agrees to admit certain of the charges, and Zubatov, in exchange, closes the investigation and sends the case for decision, by a simplified administrative procedure, to the Ministry of Internal Affairs; the accused's fate is thus decided within a few months, instead of the usual two years of preliminary inquiry. Many take this bait; the more stubborn souls, who will not agree to such a comfortable settlement between socialists and gendarmes, are singled out from the general mass of the accused and their cases proceed by the ordinary course. One such stubborn comrade, recently arrived in exile, had the doubtful pleasure of meeting former comrades from the same case already finishing their term of exile, just as his own was beginning.

The purpose Zubatov pursues in offering such deals is plain: he needs to lead socialists on to the slippery path of peaceful negotiation with the gendarmerie. He needs the majority to set out on this path; there will always be the slow-witted, the maladroits, and finally the faint-hearted, who, having agreed to say "A," go on and end by reciting the whole alphabet: beginning with an admission of what, as they put it, "can harm only me," such a person gradually begins, little by little, to make admissions that do great harm to others. Some go further still, and arrive at outright betrayal. Not a single Moscow case, in recent years, has passed without the most scandalous betrayals by persons who had formerly enjoyed the trust of their comrades.

Worst of all is that, once many people have entered into such an arrangement, a kind of atmosphere of mutual mistrust and suspicion arises in which one's own no longer know their own, and it becomes altogether impossible to establish where the gendarmes are getting their information. We know of at least one case in which it proved impossible to establish for certain whether a given person had actually acted as a provocateur, precisely because almost all the accused had entered into some arrangement with Zubatov and gained something for themselves by it. It proved impossible to decide whether the suspected man had made only that same sort of deal, or had from the start betrayed everyone and everything.

But the labour movement in the Western Territory soon recovered from the 1898 raid, and over the past two years has taken on an openly political character. The organisation of Jewish workers has grown stronger, and the Jewish Bund, which publishes six clandestine newspapers and carries on its agitational work without let-up, has begun to inspire the government with ever greater alarm.

This past March Zubatov undertook a second major raid on the Western Territory (Minsk and Kovno). Once again a mass of arrested persons was brought to the Moscow prison. Deploying his usual tactics, Zubatov, in private conversations, began assuring the prisoners that it was only through a misunderstanding that the government had come to be at odds with the labour movement; our government, said Zubatov, is not a class government, it is not bound up with the interests of the manufacturers, and can readily act in the interests of the workers. All that is needed is for the workers to give up trying to change the state order and instead strive to improve their economic position within the existing order. The government, he said, sympathises with the workers and their strikes; if workers are persecuted for strikes, this is not by the government's will but by the arbitrary act of local officials, and in such cases it is enough to inform him, Zubatov, of the persecution for it to cease. Instead of struggling illegally, Jewish workers, he said, would do better to see to it that their secret strike funds be officially recognised; Zubatov promised his full support in this, and even promised twenty thousand roubles toward securing recognition of a certain artisans' union that he found much to his liking as a "professional organisation." Let us note, incidentally, that this "professional" organisation consciously aligns itself with Social-Democracy, and in its May Day proclamations openly demands a constitution.

On releasing one of the arrested workers, Zubatov presented him, "as a keepsake," with the first volume of Marx's *Capital*, and declared that he "permits" self-education circles, so long as their reading is confined to legal books. "What do you need Dietzgen for, when you have books like Bogdanov?" Some rose to Zubatov's bait. Among organised Jewish workers voices began to be heard suggesting that Zubatov's proposals of an alliance between workers and the tsarist government had tempted some of them; there were those carried away by the dream that the tsarist government would legally recognise the currently illegal strike funds (the poor fellows had evidently been reading too much *Rabochaya Mysl*). When a strike broke out in one town, several comrades entered into private correspondence with Zubatov about persecution by the local police, and Zubatov wired back that the government had taken note.

Voices began to be heard urging that the Jewish Bund change its tactics toward the tsarist government.

The Central Committee of the Jewish Bund found it necessary, this past August, to issue a special proclamation explaining to comrades the utter absurdity and harmfulness of dreaming of arrangements between the working class and Zubatov, and hence with the tsarist government standing behind him. The proclamation explains the total impossibility, for Social-Democrats, of striking deals with the existing state order, and declares that anyone who maintains “political” relations with Zubatov will be exposed in the press as a provocateur. The Central Committee acted with the utmost wisdom in deciding to lay a finger on the sore spot and come forward openly at the very first sign of internal danger—such a policy has always proved the most advantageous. It may already be said with confidence that Zubatov’s corruption will not touch the core of the Jewish labour movement: the overwhelming majority of conscious Jewish workers indignantly reject a policy of deals with the vilest of the tsar’s gendarmes.

We have set out this whole history at such length because it carries enormous significance for all Russian Social-Democrats. If Zubatov’s tactic has so far been applied specifically to the Jewish labour movement, this is because that movement has already reached a stage at which the police could no longer flatter themselves that they could deal with it by the ordinary means of violence and espionage. The movement of Russian workers, the police still believe they can cope with by the usual measures. But since these ordinary measures, in the end, do not help, one may reasonably expect gendarme attempts to corrupt Russian workers, of exactly the same kind, to begin in the near future.

Yet, however much we trust the sound sense of the Russian proletariat, however confident we may be that this intrigue will, in the end, be smashed, we must not close our eyes to the fact that, in the present state of our movement, we are far less prepared for a successful struggle against Zubatovism than the Jewish workers of the whole Western Territory proved to be. There it was the cohesion of the separate groups and committees of the Jewish Union that enabled the Central Committee, the very moment danger appeared, to come forward with a warning, with a fairly large organisation and several well-established organs of the press behind it. Here we have nothing of the kind.

And this is exactly why this new tactic of the government once more drives home to us, the struggling workers, how important it is for us to unite all class-conscious comrades, how important a firm organisation and strict discipline are. Only a closely-knit, disciplined and mobile workers’ army can successfully fight off attempts to inject political corruption into the labour movement. Such is the first lesson which the history of contemporary Zubatov adventures teaches us Russian Social-Democrats.

The second lesson is still more important. We are living through a time when we must expect our ruling enemies to try systematically to corrupt the political consciousness of the Russian proletariat, so as to divert it from the path of conscious class struggle for political and civic freedom. At such a moment we ought, above all, to ask ourselves directly, and without any excess of self-confidence, to answer the question: how far are we secured against the Zubatov infection finding some more or less festering nest in the ranks of the struggling proletariat? In other words, is political consciousness in our ranks deep enough for us to be able to say with assurance that every tempting proposal will everywhere and always meet with the proper appraisal and rebuff?

Whatever the answer to this question, one thing is clear to us: Russian Social-Democracy would sign its own death-warrant were it not, in good time, to put forth every effort to ensure that Zubatov’s policy shatters against the political self-consciousness of the Russian proletariat as

against an unyielding fortress.

From this it follows that, if we wish to insure our cause against every Zubatov-style intrigue, we must work with redoubled energy to see that the growth of the political self-consciousness of Russian workers keeps pace with the growth of their movement for the improvement of their economic condition. In fostering, within the proletariat, the need to improve its economic position, we must not for one moment lose sight of the fact that it is not enough to tear the working masses out of a condition of slavish submission to the capitalists: it is equally important, at the same time, to work at freeing their consciousness from the yoke of age-old political prejudices—chief among them, blind faith in authority, in the tsar’s mercy, and the absence of any sense of themselves as equal citizens of a society that lives by the labour of the working class. It is on this soil of political abasement and absent civic dignity that the poisonous seeds of Zubatov’s policy can flourish most richly. Only by turning up this soil with the deep plough of open revolutionary agitation can we hope that the mass movement of Russian workers, fighting to improve their economic position, will not be led into a blind alley, will not be made the plaything of political charlatans of the worst sort.

The emancipation of the workers from all the ills of the present order comes down, in the end, to their economic emancipation from the grip of wage exploitation. But this economic, this social emancipation, is unthinkable so long as the working masses do not cease to be the rightless slaves of an all-powerful state authority and become the equal citizens of a free country, working freely, and on a lawful footing, at improving their own condition. The economic goal of the labour movement is therefore inseparable from the political struggle which alone can secure its achievement. That is why the growth of political self-consciousness, and revolutionary propaganda of political struggle, must go hand in hand with the economic movement of the working class. We want to improve our economic position, we wish to enjoy all the benefits of the culture created by our own labour and skill, but we wish to enjoy them not as slaves, but as free citizens. We shall not exchange our present lot as indignant, hungry bondsmen for that pitiable lot of contented, well-fed serfs which is the only thing a God-anointed government of noblemen, gendarmes and priests could ever offer us. In place of that lot we strive for the lot of equal citizens of a free state, which alone will secure for us both the attainment and the enjoyment of an economic position worthy of free men. We strive toward a free democracy, through which we shall attain socialism, and along this road we have no common cause with the government of noblemen, gendarmes and priests. That government is as much our irreconcilable enemy as are the manufacturers, whom it upholds with every means of military and police violence.

There can be no question of improving our position in the factory so long as, beyond its walls, the popular masses remain rightless before a horde of tsarist officials, and lawlessness and arbitrary rule reign in the state. The very same lawlessness and arbitrary rule that reign in the state also feed the lawlessness and arbitrary rule that reign in the factory. Without raising our position as citizens we shall not raise our position as workers. And therefore, in fighting the manufacturers, we cannot at the same time enter into peaceful arrangements with the tsar’s self-willed enforcers. Neither tsar, nor police! Neither exploiters in the factory, nor tyrants in the state! Such is the battle-cry of the labour movement.

Only by tirelessly spreading political consciousness among the broadest masses will Russian Social-Democracy fulfil its duty and spare the Russian proletariat the bitter hangover that must inevitably follow the first days of intoxication with Zubatov’s siren songs.

The unremitting necessity of revolutionary propaganda and agitation, summoning the masses to political struggle and not retreating before the age-old prejudices of the backward masses—such is the moral of this Zubatov affair.

TSARIST JUSTICE AND TSARIST MERCY

The machine of tsarist justice is working at full speed. In every corner of Russia gendarmes are busy with agitators and propagandists; behind closed doors, judicial chambers and district courts try cases arising from strikes and factory disturbances; and, for variety, a military court in Warsaw is meting out punishment to comrades found guilty of killing spies and informers. Every instrument of tsarist “justice” stands at the service of the enemies of the working class.

The military court in Warsaw has finished its work, and three trials for the killing of informers have ended, as was to be expected, in death sentences for all nine of the accused. But they were not executed. Once tsarist justice had performed its bloody office, the turn came for tsarist mercy to display itself in the full splendour. For the killing of an informer by a worker driven to fury, tsarist justice strips the accused of all those safeguards which the ordinary courts grant to any criminal, and tries them by a summary procedure, handing down a bloody sentence “under the laws of wartime.” Tsarist mercy then replaces instant death upon the gallows with a long, agonising death in the mines of Siberia. To Sviatek, Wozniak and Ezerski, the highest mercy has granted penal servitude for life; to Rutkowski, Wilinski and Czerwinski—twenty years; to Karcz, Mrozik and Krawczyk—fifteen years of hard labour. How can one not praise a tsarist mercy that so aptly completes tsarist justice!

Tsarist mercy has granted the Polish comrades only what they would in any case have been entitled to under the general laws of the Russian Empire—and not even all of that: for premeditated murder the general law does not prescribe life-long penal servitude, so that comrades Sviatek, Wozniak and Ezerski have in fact been punished far more severely than any ordinary murderer.

By the special order of the governor-general, crimes for which the law itself prescribes a definite punishment are handed over to a military court—that is, to a special commission of officers which decides the case by its own arbitrary judgement, without any oversight from society and without regard for law: a court made up of officers subordinate to that same governor-general who referred the case to it in the first place. And since everyone knows that military discipline turns every officer into an obedient tool for carrying out the wishes of his superiors, it is plain that a military court can hand down only such sentences as its governor-general dictates in advance.

The Russian military court has a proud history behind it. In 1879, by sentence of the Odessa military court, the nobleman Lizogub was hanged for nothing more than devoting his enormous fortune to the revolutionary cause. That same year, also in Odessa, the socialists Drobyazgin, Malinka and Maidansky were hanged by military-court sentence. The charges against them did not, by their own nature, warrant the death penalty; by their own convictions they were not partisans of political assassination. But while they still sat in the Odessa prison, an attempt was made in St. Petersburg on the life of the gendarme Dreyenteln; the perpetrator was never found, yet the government felt it necessary to intimidate the revolutionary party, and so executed three Odessa socialists who had rejected violent methods—executed them simply because the true culprits could not be found. This execution roused the indignation of every decent person. **[RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]** One student, not himself a revolutionary, gave voice to this indignation: as the condemned men were led to the gallows he approached and spoke to them a word of approval. For this word the student (his name is illegible in the source) was sentenced by military court to fifteen years’ hard labour. **[END RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]** In 1880, in Kiev, a military court, on the governor-general’s order, condemned a young man to death for the mere distribution of

proclamations—an offence which by law carries only imprisonment. In 1882 the military court in Irkutsk sentenced the exile Neustroyev to be hanged for striking the governor-general after the latter, provoked by an act of rudeness, had struck him first. Neustroyev was indeed hanged. About the same time, at the Shlisselburg fortress, the prisoners Myshkin and Minakov were shot for slapping a prison official. These monstrous sentences too were handed down by military courts. In 1880 a military court in Yakutsk condemned more than thirty political exiles to death or hard labour on the ground that, when troops without provocation attacked them and began bayoneting them, several of them fired back with revolvers, in the course of which five men and one girl were bayoneted to death by soldiers. Of the condemned, three were hanged. When public outcry forced a special review of the affair, it emerged that the condemned had been the victims of a savage, senseless massacre carried out by soldiers run amok on the orders of the authorities. Tsarist mercy then “pardoned” the survivors and released them from hard labour—after their lives had already been shattered. Only to the three already hanged could not even all-powerful tsarist mercy restore life. In 1892 military courts in Astrakhan, Saratov and Yuzovka condemned to death dozens of unfortunate workers and peasants for taking part in cholera riots which, as was later shown, had been provoked by the brutal, illegal measures of the police. Finally, in 1899, this same Warsaw military court sentenced to death five Lodz workers for attempting to blow up, with dynamite, the house of a millionaire manufacturer—although not a single human life was harmed.

But the military court also knows how to hand down mild sentences—when the matter concerns not socialists or workers but members of its own caste. In 1898 a drunken Kiev officer sabred a student to death and was sentenced merely to a short period of detention. In 1899, in Tashkent, the editor of a local newspaper, Smorgunov, was killed by Colonel Stashevsky because Smorgunov’s paper had exposed crimes committed by the military authorities against a defeated local population. Colonel Stashevsky, guilty of the premeditated murder of an unarmed man, was sentenced by military court to a short term of imprisonment, and the newspapers recently reported that tsarist mercy has now freed him before even that short term was served. For killing a spy, death; for killing an honest champion of the oppressed, brief confinement. A worker who avenges murdered brothers is sent by tsarist mercy to penal servitude for life; an officer avenging the interests of a gang of extortionists is, by that same tsarist mercy, released from punishment altogether. To the worker who raises his hand against a tsarist spy—death! The millionaire Mamontov, who ruined a mass of people of modest means who had entrusted their savings to his enterprises, who robbed the treasury—that is, all of us taxpayers—while living in luxury went for nearly a year without paying wages to almost two thousand workers at his Nikolayevsky works in Irkutsk province, reducing them to unheard-of poverty; yet this capitalist criminal was not handed over to a military court but allowed to appear before an ordinary jury, which acquitted him, taking into account that the guilt for what had happened lay not with Mamontov alone but also with Minister Witte and other government dignitaries, whom tsarist mercy shields from any court whatsoever. Had an ordinary jury of citizens, even one drawn from outside the working class, tried the case of the killing of the spies, had it been shown what evil, what corruption gendarmes and spies bring into the workers’ milieu and how many victims they destroy, it might well not have condemned men who, in righteous anger, raised a hand against such creatures.

Workers who kill a spy must perish at hard labour! Yet a millionaire oil magnate in Baku who would not spend a few kopecks on necessary safety precautions—a failure that led to an accident on his works costing many workers’ lives—got off with a few months in prison. For several workers’ lives, a light penalty; for the lives of three spies, the destruction of the lives of nine workers. Such is the measure of tsarist justice!

The death sentences on Ezerski and the other Polish comrades have not been carried out: this suits the tsarist government better for the present, since for now it need only intimidate the workers, to show that, should further violence against the sacred person of the spy occur, it will not stop short even of the gallows. The customary blindness of the Russian government! It fails to grasp that one who has resolved to sacrifice himself in order to avenge his comrades will not stop short even of death; it fails to grasp that such measures of intimidation lead only to embitterment and revolt, and that every victim of tsarist justice creates dozens of avengers ready for anything.

The espionage-and-provocation activity of the gendarmerie has, in recent years, produced in many strata of the workers a marked inclination toward bloody methods of struggle against this scourge. Whoever knows the oppressive conditions in which a Russian socialist must work, whoever knows what monstrous crimes are committed by His Majesty's spies, how many precious lives they destroy, how they themselves entice people into the movement only to hand them afterwards to the gendarmerie's executioners, will not be surprised at a thirst for vengeance, will not cast a stone at workers who prefer to destroy one scoundrel rather than let him go on claiming ever new victims. Terrorist struggle against spies is an inevitable consequence of the espionage system itself, and the working class will have to wage this struggle so long as it lacks the right to unite and to defend its interests openly—so long as, over every fighter, the threat of exile and prison hangs for every ounce of his effort. Until then, it is as vain to expect an end to this terror as it is vain to expect an end to **[RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]** the source is badly cut at a column break at this exact point; the surviving fragment of the following word indicates the clause originally read something like “as it is vain to expect an end to the existing order of things” **[END RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]**.

The whole burden of blame in either direction falls upon those who, while denying the working class any rights to defend its own vital interests, at the same time use the people's own money to corrupt workers, recruiting spies from among them and sowing, through them, every kind of moral corruption in the working class.

Social-Democracy cannot approve of such methods of struggle as the killing of spies. All the hope of Social-Democracy lies in the movement of the whole working class, of its entire mass, and a method of struggle which, of its very nature, can only be the affair of separate individuals contributes nothing to the cause of the emancipation of the whole class. Separate individuals or small groups may see, in the killing of a spy, a means of saving from ruin that part of the cause with which they themselves are engaged, and of saving themselves and their comrades from betrayal. Against the great harm that spies can inflict, the workers' party must fight by building an organisation so firm and disciplined that no provocateur could do it damage. Against the whole system of espionage we must fight unceasingly, exposing all its vileness to the working class, calling on the working masses mercilessly to hound, boycott and drive out of the factories every spy, traitor and turncoat (for instance, by organising strikes to demand a spy's dismissal). These methods of struggle are both effective and, for their agitational value, irreplaceable. Many are inclined to think that killing individual spies can have a deterrent effect on the whole spy fraternity. We do not share this view. If it is true that bloody measures can never crush the labour movement, and only teach it greater cunning and skill, then it follows equally that terrorist measures against spies serve chiefly to make them act more cautiously. So long as the government can dispose, without any control, of the people's money to hire spies, so long as the capitalist system everywhere breeds poverty, baseness and a scramble for easy gain, no measures of violence will stem the terrible tide of espionage-corruption. Individual persons, under the impulse of moral indignation, may take upon themselves the struggle against individual embodiments of this vile order; but the Party must fight not against

isolated manifestations but against the soil from which such manifestations inevitably grow—and that soil is the complete rightlessness of the Russian people, and above all of the working class, the self-will of the tsarist government, and the general conditions of the capitalist order, which, breeding poverty, ignorance, and a chase after easy gain, drives men even to the vilest service so long as there is money to be had by it.

In the interest of the struggle against the general conditions of the present order we must make use even of these fresh manifestations of tsarist justice and tsarist mercy. We do not take upon ourselves responsibility for the bloody vengeance carried out by certain comrades against tsarist spies. But we cannot regard them as criminals. For us they are victims of the present vile order, and all our sympathy lies with them, who gave their lives for what they believed useful to the common cause. We must do everything possible to keep this vile system from finally destroying its victims. We must strive, in every such case, to snatch these victims from the hands of the military court, to secure for them the same ordinary court available to every breaker of the general law. We must work to see that the life of a spy enjoys only the same protection of the law that protects the life of any ordinary inhabitant. In every individual case of the use of a military court we must open the eyes of the Russian working masses to this monstrous injustice of tsarist justice. So long as individual comrades, on their own responsibility, carry out terrorist acts against this or that scoundrel, we, as a party, stand aside. But when those same comrades find themselves the victims of a self-willed tsarist government trampling on its own laws, their cause becomes the common cause of the whole working class, and our party must carry on agitation both against the exceptional military courts and against the entire spy-and-gendarme system. And should terrorist struggle, as may be expected, develop together with the intensification of governmental violence and lawlessness, then let every fresh act of the government be met, on its side, with the protest of the entire struggling proletariat.

The government has declared that it intends to deal with us “under the laws of wartime.” Then let the entire working class know, once and for all, that it faces a merciless war against the existing order—a war that can end only with the destruction of one side or the other, “by the laws of wartime.” To develop this consciousness among the masses we shall make use of every fresh outrage of our government; each time it will fall to us to agitate for the arousal of the working class's conscious protest. Then every fresh act of tsarist justice, and every fresh comedy of hypocritical tsarist mercy, will serve our cause.

A PROCLAMATION ISSUED ON THE OCCASION OF THE WARSAW MILITARY COURTS

The following proclamation was distributed with the printed circular referred to above:

TO ALL WHO BELIEVE IN TRUTH!

*A whirlwind of malice and fury is raging—
over you, O defenceless Truth!*

Comrades!

All the newspapers have printed an order of the Warsaw governor-general, dated July 14, that the Warsaw workers Franciszek Widerski and Walenty Wozniak are to be handed over to a military court, to be tried under the laws of wartime, on the charge that “during the strike in Warsaw earlier this year they killed the informer, worker Anton Grzeszczak.” Seven other workers have been handed over to the same military court: the worker Czerwinski, for killing, as a member of the Polish Socialist Party, a spy at his factory; and the miners Ezerski, Mrozik, Karcz, Krawczyk, Glinski and Rutkowski, for killing a

machinist who intended to inform the gendarmerie that they belonged to the Polish workers' socialist party.

Of this trial the Warsaw governor-general has given advance notice to everyone: all Russian workers are to know that the trial of Polish workers will proceed by a special military court. All Russian workers must understand and rightly weigh what this new mark of favour from the Russian government means. You know, comrades, what a military court under the laws of wartime signifies. It means that a handful of coarse officers will pass sentence without hearing the explanations of the accused, without letting them say all they wish to say, without summoning the witnesses who might establish the truth in the accused's favour. The accused will not be free to choose their own counsel; they will be given no right to appeal an unjust sentence to the Senate. And the sentence will be a bloody one: under Article 279 of the Code of Military Justice, cited in the order, our Polish comrades face the death penalty.

Death! This is what the government has decided in referring Sviatek and the others to a military court. Under the ordinary courts, in our country, murder does not carry the death penalty, and an ordinary court would ill suit the government in a matter of this kind. There the accused could put forward their own witnesses, could prove their innocence if they had not killed the informer, or, had they taken part in the killing, could explain what the informer had done to deserve it, and the court might acquit them or impose a lesser penalty. Had the case gone before an ordinary court, every circumstance of the affair would have come to light—and that does not suit the government, which needs to settle the matter quietly, so that no piece of employer or official villainy should come to light. That is why a military court has been appointed. The government needs the accused workers to be hanged. It needs this in order to intimidate you, comrades, in order to terrify all of us who bear our poverty without submission and who struggle for a better life. Against every one of us these bloody threats of the Russian government are aimed, and that is why the government already boasts in advance of its wish to spill our brothers' blood, and proclaims to the whole Russian land that a court of military executioners has been appointed to accomplish this vile deed. Over the corpses of our Polish comrades it seeks to halt the labour movement. That our manufacturers, and traitors like them, might sleep soundly and not fear for their own skins, our comrades must be lawlessly done to death, and to that end they are handed to a court that strips them of every right granted to the meanest thief or murderer.

The government does not know how to cope with the labour movement, and in its blind fury wishes to drown it in blood. It is not for the killing of a spy that our Polish comrades are to be hanged, but in order to take vengeance on the Warsaw workers for their steadfast, stubborn struggle for the workers' cause. The savage tsarist government no longer finds the general laws sufficient for its struggle with us, and so invents new, extraordinary, especially vile laws directed specifically at the working class.

Comrades! The cause of our Polish comrades is our common cause. If we let the government condemn our comrades by military court, it will always and everywhere use this weapon against us. Let the beast once taste fresh blood with impunity, and it will only grow more ravenous, and thirst for ever more blood. If we stay silent on hearing that workers have been hanged for loyalty to the common cause, no one will be safe from being tried by military court for a strike, for handing out leaflets, or for a blow struck at a spy or a traitor. Today the government wishes to please the Lodz manufacturers with a bloody offering; tomorrow it will wish to make the same gift to Russian manufacturers.

Comrades! Our unfortunate brothers now languish in the Warsaw fortress, knowing that gallows are already being built for them. They know that no mercy is to be had from the government, that no one will save them from disaster—no one but their own brothers, the workers. If

the accused did indeed take part in the killing, they did it not for their own gain but because they believed it would serve the common cause. And we cannot look on unmoved while a military court puts them to death unlawfully. Comrades! We call on you, with every means and with all your strength, to protest against military courts, to protest against the bloody designs of the tsarist government. If in every town we raise a united mass protest and give voice to our indignation, the government will see that the working people will not let its brothers be killed with impunity. We call on you to come forward as one man in defence of our unhappy Polish comrades. No one in whom a living soul remains can sleep peacefully knowing that his brothers in labour stand in mortal danger. If there is anything we can do to avert this death, we must do it as quickly as we can. Only we, the working people, can achieve this without shedding blood; if we do not intervene in the matter, then in place of our fallen comrades individual embittered men will take it upon themselves to avenge them, each at his own risk, and much blood will then be shed on both sides. No, comrades, we must not let this happen. We possess a mighty, peaceable means of struggle, and we must use it: wherever possible, declare that you join our protest against the bloody measures of our government. Let the government see that all workers are stung to the quick by this order for a military court, and it will fear to enrage millions of workers and will not dare confirm a bloody sentence. In our hands lies, perhaps, the fate of our comrades, and whoever among us takes upon his conscience the sin of silence, when our very word may decide whether they live or die... Be bold, comrades! Protest against the military court in Warsaw! Let none of us stand apart!

1. Organise strikes and demand the abolition of the exceptional courts, and a retrial of the Ezerski and Wozniak case before a jury.
2. Hold large meetings to draw up protests. Authorise the Party committees to act in our name.
3. Collect funds to aid the families of the condemned.

— *Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party*
(Printing-house of the "Southern Worker")

According to the information available to us, this leaflet was distributed in St. Petersburg, Riga, Libau, Ekaterinoslav, Kharkov, Kiev and Ivanovo-Voznesensk, and Yaroslavl, as well as, it appears, in Odessa and Nikolayev; besides this, in the town of Oryol, Mogilev province, where twenty searches and fourteen arrests followed.

May this successful attempt at circulating a political leaflet serve as an encouraging example to all comrades. We have accustomed workers in every corner of Russia to leaflets of purely local, economic content. We are now obliged to direct our efforts toward organising, throughout Russia, the distribution of leaflets of political content, branding every vileness of the autocracy and calling the whole people to the struggle for liberation. The Iskra group offers, to this end, its services and its printing-press to all Social-Democratic groups.

FROM OUR PUBLIC LIFE

“Enlightening Tasks” — Russia in the Far East, and the Condition of Village Teachers

The season has come round again, and our newspapers have once more begun to carry the usual reports on the desperate condition of village teachers. Teachers grow accustomed to such news! In cramped, wretched lodgings, renting rooms whose cost eats up much of their meagre pay, teachers plead in vain with district boards and marshals of the nobility for their own miserably small salary, honestly earned by back-breaking, truly penal labour, and which they are owed for months on end. Be patient, gentlemen! Russia has no money—she has given hundreds of millions to the Chinese war, and will give still more. Our national “enlightening” institutions are presently to be found in Asia, on the far side of the Amur. Once we have killed as many Chinese as possible and seized (“occupied”) as much Chinese territory as possible for as long as possible, then, we are told, all will be well, and enlightenment will return to Russia from China.

Besides material privation, our village teachers suffer humiliations under a surveillance so strict that they might be enemy spies! Not to mention how their teaching work itself is distorted and hemmed in—they dare not even gather together as a group, for this is at once denounced as a “conspiracy,” and “the political police,” in the person of priests, constables and village elders, buries their superiors in denunciations. The Russian government must, evidently, consider it has weighty grounds for suspecting every village teacher, by nature, of an inclination toward subversive propaganda. It is no accident that it has lately taken care to create a whole new hundred posts of inspector of popular schools. We have no money to improve the position of teachers—but for strengthening police surveillance of teachers there is always money to be found!

Bitter want, and intellectual and moral stultification—such is the lot of the chief labourers in popular education. These unfortunates are deliberately kept divided and intimidated; they are threatened with dismissal, with solitary confinement, with exile for the smallest part in any “disorder.” But for none among them, who has not lost the capacity to think, can it any longer remain hidden that their own hopeless dependence on the political oppression of the whole people makes the threat of police reprisals scarcely more terrifying than it already is for people whose livelihood barely rises above starvation, people whom the petty tyrants of the village beat without ceremony—there is little in your position, teachers, to keep you from joining the ranks of the revolutionary parties! In your position there is much in common with the position of the urban proletariat, which is, however, harder to divide and intimidate, and which has already begun the struggle for the political emancipation of Russia. Join in this struggle; try to bring what help you can to the movement; try to sow, among the people, an understanding of its meaning and its aims. There can be no fruitful work in the service of true popular enlightenment outside the struggle for political freedom of the people. And there can be no fruitful struggle for political freedom outside the ranks of the socialist workers’ party.

Finnish Affairs

In Finland the policy of forcible “Russification” continues. Ever since the Tsar openly and publicly broke the oath sworn by his predecessors to respect the constitution of Finland, the persecution of all the freedoms of this peaceful and enlightened people has taken on more and more of the character of a savage hunt. Public gatherings have been placed under the strictest police supervision; the Finnish press is subjected to a hail of warnings, suspensions, bans and every kind of penalty; the use of the Russian language is being introduced into the administrative business of

government offices; and the destruction of Finland’s customs independence is being prepared. The Finns, who have never risen in revolt against the Russian government, meet all this with remarkable steadfastness, astonishing the whole world by the breadth and depth of their peaceful, strictly lawful protest. And it is precisely this lawfulness that seems only to embitter the police government still further. It floods the country with spies and provocateurs, hoping to provoke an uprising that would free its hands. But the age-old freedom-loving citizens of Finland have, whatever happens, resolved not to allow themselves to be reduced to the level of voiceless, rightless Russian subjects before the face of the autocrat. Well then! It is certain of one thing only: it will unite all Russian subjects in the struggle against the autocracy. Up to now the revolutionary movement in Russia has been marked, in part, by a considerable fragmentation among the borderland peoples, and has in part formed entirely separate national movements (the Baltic provinces, Finland). Now, however, this state of affairs is beginning to change: among every people of the Russian state a labour movement is growing and gaining strength, tending to become one Social-Democratic movement. And our government works, with every success, at the grateful task of gathering together and joining up all these separate streams. It seeks to centralise and to depersonalise all its subjects; it works at forging one iron chain of revolutionary forces. It wants to show that it will not tolerate freedom anywhere—and it will thereby only compel ever broader strata of the Russian people to join in the cry: Long live free Finland! Long live free Russia!

The Crisis

We are receiving reports from every one of our industrial centres of factory-owners cutting back production and of a shortening of the working day. Some manufacturers are introducing a system of drawing lots—that is, dismissing part of the workforce by lottery. In many places capitalists would now be glad of a pretext to dismiss workers wholesale.

Let workers, therefore, be on their guard! A strike is not, in present hard times, always the best weapon of struggle, and we must make full and constant use of these times to explain to the mass of the workers, by living example, the meaning of socialism and to prepare them for a more decisive struggle. When business was good, the capitalists raked in millions, stock-exchange speculators grew rich at the expense of the working class and of small property-owners; the workers, only in a few instances, and only at the cost of a stubborn struggle involving mass sacrifice, managed at that time to win even a modest improvement in their position. Now a season of losses has begun, and the capitalists are throwing workers out onto the street. Yet the crisis is only beginning. The suspension of government orders in connection with the Treasury’s financial difficulties, and the raising of taxes, will lend unemployment a still sharper and more acute character. Either industrial crises—the enrichment of a handful of magnates, the production of goods that find no buyers—or unemployment and stagnation in business: such are the unvarying features of all capitalist countries, in which land, factories, works and the instruments of labour belong to a tiny number of the rich, while the mass of the people sinks into poverty. And only the rule of socialism, for which the conscious workers of every country are fighting, can put an end to this shameful alternation of the luxury of a few and the mass poverty of the many.

A Letter from the Capital

The old antagonism between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Finance has largely lost its point. Sipyagin is, to a great degree, Witte’s own appointee, and Witte and Muravyov have concluded their peace, and in the simplest of ways. **[RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]** This is how it came about: in the autumn of 1899, Muravyov set about, in earnest, the affair of Mamontov-Maximov (Maximov was director of the railway department

at the Ministry of Finance, which had brought the entire railway business under its own control; Prince Khilkov is no more than an obliging figurehead) — the dispute arose over a branch line requiring the use of land belonging to Muravyov. To make his peace with Muravyov, Witte simply presented him with land on the eastern shore of the Black Sea on exceedingly favourable terms — and peace was concluded. **[END RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]**

One may judge the methods that prevail in the higher spheres from the affair of the Moscow electric tramway. This affair has attracted great interest in Moscow, where the merchant class, beginning to show a stirring toward independence, appears here in a new light. Moscow wished to buy out the present, wretched horse-tram system; but one of its principal shareholders is Istomin, nominally head of the governor-general's chancellery, but in fact the real governor-general of Moscow (the Grand Duke, given his extreme limitations, cannot take a step without him; Istomin decides everything). **[RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]** Small wonder, then, that the Ministry of the Interior refused permission for the buy-out. The city then resolved to build a parallel electric line with its own funds, for which purpose it sought to raise a public loan of twenty-five million roubles — the Ministry, of course, again refused. The city has now resolved to raise a private loan instead; at a recent meeting Moscow capitalists have already subscribed some ten million. That the present head of this ministry (Sipyagin) is no stranger to shady dealings is best shown by the fact that he was himself a shareholder in that very gambling house in connection with which the gendarme colonel Meshchersky was tried and exiled to Arkhangelsk, whence, of course, he has long since managed to escape. **[END RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]**

It should be noted that the present moment is marked by a growing, if still cautious, struggle of the zemstvos [organs of local self-government] in a number of towns (Tver, Moscow, Kharkov, Poltava, Nizhny, Vologda, Astrakhan and others) against the administration. At the same time sharp clashes between the peasantry and the police are occurring (agrarian disturbances in Lugansk and Buzuluk districts).

Workers, too, are growing ever more accustomed to standing up for their own rights, while the methods deployed against them by the government remain the same and increasingly provoke general irritation. Such irritation is caused, for instance, by the fixing of zemstvo budgets—a measure harmless enough in itself, but which arouses discontent throughout zemstvo circles. Sipyagin, in this connection, went so far in his heavy-handedness as to summon persons suspected of agitating against this measure and interrogate them directly as to whether they had written a certain circular against the reform then in wide distribution. He was answered: “No, we did not write it”—and was left looking a fool.

A Letter from an Exile

Comrades! This letter is prompted by a wish to draw your attention to an act of government violence which, though owing to a strange chance it has gone entirely unnoticed and unremarked in our clandestine Russian and emigre press, touches with particular severity a certain category of political exile—namely, workers exiled for taking part in strikes, who form an already considerable and steadily growing proportion of Siberian exiles. We speak of the cruel and degrading measure by which the Russian government has openly reduced striking workers in exile to the rank of “persons of depraved conduct,” and on this basis cut the maintenance allowance paid to political exiles in Siberia. **[RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]** (The average allowance is about nine roubles a month; since January of this year the allowance for strikers has been about three roubles a month, and in some parts of Siberia, such as Krasnoyarsk in Yeniseysk province, strikers newly exiled receive as little as a rouble and a half a month.) **[END RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]** This new government measure, in force

since the start of this year, applies chiefly in Yeniseysk province, to which strikers are for the most part exiled and scattered among remote hamlets along the Yenisei, where there is often no colony of political exiles at all, and hence no possibility of the internal, self-organised mutual assistance which alone could, in such cases, serve as a lawful counterweight to this crude act of government violence. The reduction of a striking worker to the level of a common criminal, or, as the government formulates it, to the level of a “person of depraved conduct”—thereby excluding him from the category of political exiles altogether—this measure strikes at the striking worker morally even more than materially, and must, therefore, be of major agitational significance from both an economic and a moral-political point of view. It is precisely for this purpose, for the purposes of political agitation among the working class, that we ask you, comrades, to give space in your columns both to this governmental act and to the desirability of a protest against it, on behalf of the working class. We may add that, for the sake of the widest possible dissemination of the fact and idea of this protest among the masses, it would be desirable to devote to this question a separate publication, in the form of an independent, popular pamphlet.

Reprisals Against a Society

Russian government circles have many strange enemies. Who would have thought that the Imperial Free Economic Society might number among them? Yet it has, without doubt, now fallen among the enemies, and reprisals against it are under way: the operation of its old charter has been suspended, public admission to its meetings forbidden, police supervision established over the papers to be read there, and a commission appointed to draft a new, “harmless” charter. The commission has presumably concluded that the Society is guilty of the fact that people were found in it who dared to sympathise with and openly discuss and raise the question of popular need in Russia, and every such discussion, however moderately worded, inevitably amounts, in Russia, to an indictment of the government. **[RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]** This simple and thousand-times-confirmed truth was let slip with commendable frankness by a speaker (his name is only partly legible in the source, rendered here as Mr I. I. Ivanyukov) at one of its meetings, when the measures called for by the Imperial decree on “reprisals” were under discussion—we have unfortunately forgotten his exact words, but the gist of them was: “can Russia never have a constitution?” **[END RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]** What remarkable logical consistency! In speeches at meetings of the Free Economic Society distant hints at a constitution were dropped—so, to prove that Russia is never to have a constitution, the Free Economic Society must be dealt with. One must keep watch on every such seditious hint, though the task grows ever harder. Towns grow, the need for professional unions increases, the cultural level of new strata of the population rises—and our guardian government finds itself rushing from putting out one blaze to putting out the next. There was a Juridical Society: decent people found their way into it, they began to talk of civil rights, of rights in general—down with the Juridical Society! There were Literacy Committees: decent people found their way into them, and showed that, given the will, a handful of people with modest means can do more for popular enlightenment than the thousands of grovelling officials who protect the people from enlightenment—down with the Literacy Committees! There was the Imperial Free Economic Society: decent people found their way in—begin talking of “rights”—put the Free Economic Society under police tutelage! Poor government! What a lot of work it has, keeping watch not merely on open enemies, but on hidden enemies too, growing shy of open sympathy and cautiously hinting and respectfully petitioning.

For us Social-Democrats, the government is simply an enemy, plain and open. Our duty is to draw lessons in political education from every such petty reprisal of the government against peaceable, lawful societies

and institutions. It is also our duty always to remember that we too must know how to choose our allies with care.

University Disturbances

News from Moscow: on November 8, disturbances began at the University over the appointment, to a chair in the Faculty of Law, of a professor unwelcome to the students. The governor-general summoned the rector and ordered him to prevent disorder at the university.

We have received from St. Petersburg a lithographed leaflet from the women students of the Higher Courses, describing the protest of the students against the expulsion of the first-year student Guseva for “rudeness to the authorities” (she had not bowed to the inspectress, had expressed general dissatisfaction with an assistant’s conduct during the Latin examination, and had brought outside food into the boarding-house—the last of these “crimes” being apparently thought as dreadful as the first two!). The students organised meetings of protest and sent a deputation to the director, who declared he had no power to reinstate Guseva; the matter was referred to the Ministry of the Interior, and for holding meetings a whole series of students were expelled from the right to attend courses at all. The Ministry of the Interior evidently places little faith in the stability of our state order, since it saw a serious danger in these disturbances: “within three days,” we read in the leaflet, “Guseva was expelled by administrative order (within twenty-four hours) from St. Petersburg to her home town.”

“According to information received from the Chief of Police and the Security Department, it has become clear that Guseva, presenting nothing of interest from a political point of view, is being expelled at the insistence of the educational authorities—here is a fact requiring no further comment,” the leaflet declares.

We have learned, from thoroughly reliable sources, that the Ministry of the Interior is now busily working out a plan for drafting into military service, in a punitive spirit and without regard to academic circumstances, students who have taken part in disturbances of this kind.

P.S. We have just received a further leaflet from the Organising Committee of St. Petersburg University, reporting that there were two meetings (on the 18th and 19th of October) over Guseva’s expulsion. At the second meeting, attended by about 900 people, it was resolved, by an overwhelming majority, not to protest in the form of a demonstration, but to confine themselves to giving the fullest possible publicity to every detail of the affair.

The St. Petersburg students are entirely right in saying that the present instance of arbitrary rule is merely “a partial manifestation of the prevailing regime.” Let all, then, to whom the insufficiency of mere protest is clear, join the ranks of the fighters against the regime of autocracy.

CHRONICLE OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

LETTERS FROM FACTORIES AND WORKS

ST. PETERSBURG

Maxwell's Mill.

The now-notorious beating of the Maxwell mill workers, who had bravely defended themselves against a night raid by the marauding police, has produced among the workers a determination to fight harder and more decisively than ever. One worker-correspondent from this mill writes to us: "They can shout at us workers as much as they like, we shall not obey them. In Russia there is censorship for this purpose, which shields every villainy committed by the government and the manufacturers... Our enemy is tsarist-police despotism, which oppresses the workers... Comrades! Let us try to sweep away everything that now exists, and in place of the old ruin build a new order — the kingdom, that is, of socialism, the kingdom of freedom, equality and brotherhood." It may be noted, incidentally, that the workers' self-defence at Maxwell's has made the police rather more cautious: the police now avoid making night-time arrests at workers' lodgings, and prefer instead to summon a worker to the factory office and arrest him there. Evidently the treat of rolling-pins and boiling water was not administered in vain!

Lyalya's Mill.

What monstrous sanitary conditions prevail even at some of our largest capital-city mills is plain from the following account by a worker there: "We have to work with rotten cotton, filthy, mildewed and knotted yarn — such bad cotton can be found at plenty of other mills, every weaver knows it, they work it at Cheshire's, on the Vyborg Side, at Voronin's, at Mitrofanov's and on the Petersburg Side, but nowhere is the cotton as bad as with us. If a worker has to draw a thread through the shuttle-eye by mouth he gets a whole mouthful of filthy dust, which accumulates as the thread runs through the eye of the shuttle; every bobbin lasts scarcely a minute, giving perhaps two inches of thread before it must be changed — and to weave a length of eighty yards, how much filthy, mouldy, stinking dust must one swallow! On this cotton a worker cannot last more than a year before falling ill, and if he is called up he cannot even pass the army medical, so poor does the cotton leave him. The air where we work is very bad, there is no ventilation to speak of, and what there is does not work. The steam pipes run along a floor that is filthy and full of holes, filth oozes from every crack, and about an inch of grime lies caked on the floor; when the steam is let through the pipes, the grime that has worked into the floorboards and the cracks begins to give off fumes; at such moments the floor grows hot, and however much one might wish to run from the shop, there is nowhere to run."

The Imperial Porcelain Works

is situated not far from St. Petersburg, on the Schlüsselburg road. It has existed a long time: in the year of its 150th anniversary, however, on account of the mourning for the late Tsar, no celebrations took place, and each worker was given a single rouble as a gift.

The works belongs to the Imperial family and produces glass and porcelain exclusively for the Court. It employs about 500 workers and around 100 members of staff. In a curious paradox, it belongs to the wealthiest capitalist in Russia — the peculiarity of this capitalist being that laws are issued in Russia in his very name, laws which, though issued precisely in order to check arbitrary rule by employers over his workers, have never once been observed even at the capitalist's own porcelain works, down to the present day! Such arbitrary rule, exercised jointly by the military and civilian officers who administer the works,

has driven the workers, on more than one occasion, to petition. There is, at the works, a benefit fund financed by a deduction of three per cent from wages, from which workers receive payments for every birth and death, and for marriage, together with a pension should a worker, having served many years, become incapable of further work. But a worker who, having served many years at the factory, marries and then dies, or who leaves the works still able-bodied, forfeits everything. This, naturally, ties workers to the factory: having served fifteen or twenty years, a worker no longer dares to leave even when he knows he might better his lot elsewhere — he grudges losing the two or three thousand roubles he has accumulated. With such a worker one need not stand on ceremony: one may cut his rate as much as one pleases, and he will not leave. Even at the Imperial Porcelain Works, then, traces of outright bondage survive. Membership in the fund is not, we are told, compulsory — oh no! "Whoever does not wish to may abstain," the director himself declared at its founding. Yet when one worker announced on the spot that he did not intend to marry and saw, therefore, no advantage in joining, the director answered, "Hand over your passport!"—and dismissed him. New workers are never even asked whether they wish to join; the three per cent is simply deducted.

There is something distinctly unclean about all this: after all, there is no one to keep a check on the director! Such are the doings at the Imperial Porcelain Works. It is frightening to think that the owner of this works is master of the whole of Russia!

MOSCOW PROVINCE

The Awakening of the Brickmakers.

Among the various categories of workers, few receive less attention than the workers of the brick kilns — and this is understandable: until very recently brickmaking, as a branch of industry, remained at such a primitive technical stage, the work so little specialised and the composition of the labour force so unstable, that these workers more resembled itinerant labourers than genuine factory hands. And indeed, what is a brick-worker? A grey, downtrodden, poor, yet still not fully proletarianised peasant, who leaves his native village in Tula, Kaluga or Smolensk province, at the start of the season, to earn wages as a factory hand. He spends most of the year in his village, in the grip of all those bonds which its whole household-administrative structure imposes upon the human personality. Small wonder, then, that, playing this temporary, episodic role of factory worker, he remains, in essence, the same downtrodden, characterless peasant that he is in his own village; not only does he not chafe against the narrow, only-accessible-to-a-Russian-peasant cultural conditions of his life, but at times he himself refuses even the few crumbs of a more cultured existence which the law makes available to him. It is understandable, then, that in such a milieu any movement, any symptom of a nascent class consciousness, any manifestation of a conscious attitude toward one's own position as a worker, acquires special interest. I have in mind the movement among the workers of the brick kilns of Moscow province in the past and present years. This movement arose out of certain special economic complications in the brickmaking trade in 1899.

It must be said that in general, of late, under the influence of the growth of capitalist industry in Russia and especially in Moscow province, the brick kilns have begun little by little to change their character: larger enterprises have appeared, employing 500 to 1,000 hands, with more complex technique. Under the influence of these technical conditions the working season of the works has, in part, changed: thus most of the new works have begun to install, in place of the primitive open-air kilns, the more elaborate Hoffmann kilns, which require more experienced firemen but are also capable of running all year round. Here and there more complex moulding machines are being installed. Some works, in fact, have introduced steam engines into brick production. In a word, the brick kilns are, little by little, becoming

capitalist enterprises. This process has not passed the worker by: he is now obliged, more than before, to specialise, and to spend a greater part of the year in the guise of a factory worker. At the start of the 1899 brickmaking season a holiday of sorts dawned for him. Owing to the building boom in Moscow and the construction of three new railway lines (the Povelets, Bryansk and Vindava lines), the price of brick rose to unheard-of heights. Naturally following on the building boom came a boom in brickmaking: in a single summer season of 1899 more than fifty comparatively large works sprang up in Moscow province, capable of employing four to five thousand workers, besides a good many small ones. Great numbers of workers of the same class from which brickmakers are drawn were also required for railway earthworks; demand rose too for hands to work the peat bogs, whose exploitation intensified owing to the rising cost of naphtha and Donets coal. In short, the brick-worker found himself “in demand,” and understood that he too had some claim upon the employer’s profits. In early May the workers at the large Ikonnikov works, fifteen versts from Moscow, struck for higher wages. The owner refused any increase. Work did not resume for several days, and when, after insistent demands from the workers, wages were still not raised, the workers left the works altogether. No disorder of any kind occurred on the workers’ part. The strike at Ikonnikov’s served as the signal. It was followed by a strike at Chelnokov’s works at Mytishchi (more than 1,000 workers), and then at almost every other works the workers refused to resume work. The owners held firm, and the workers went from works to works, and, finding the owners unwilling to raise wages, did not begin work. Thanks to this, for nearly a fortnight not a single larger works was in operation. At last the owners gave way, and the workers celebrated their victory. The price for producing a thousand bricks rose from 2 roubles 65 kopecks to 3 roubles 10 kopecks (two workers can make about a thousand bricks a day). This suddenly won victory brought, besides the higher wages, other, no less valuable results: it positively transformed the worker. Since the strike he is scarcely recognisable: in place of the downtrodden, endlessly compliant brick-worker one now sees before one a man who demands his rights, understands his position, and stands in open opposition to his employer. And the employer took to complaining, shaking his head: “What sort of people have we now, what sort of people! One might as well give up the business!” His discontent did not stop at head-shaking and lamentation: in May 1900, that is, at the start of the present season, the owners of nearly every larger and medium-sized brickworks gathered in Moscow for a council, and resolved: (1) not to advance wages to workers; (2) not to raise the price per thousand bricks above 2 roubles 65 kopecks (the old rate); and (3) that every one of those present should deposit a security as a pledge that he would keep to these terms.

The war, however, did not pass off without incident throughout the season that has just ended. Scarcely a brickworks in Moscow province escaped at least a few days’ stoppage this past summer.

Everywhere the workers sought to win back the wage level achieved the previous year, but this time, if not entirely, then to a very great extent, victory remained with the owners. Here and there workers did manage to win a rise of ten kopecks per thousand bricks — and, characteristically, this rise was granted almost in secret, unrecorded in the wage-book, evidently so as to avoid the wrath of the members of this peculiar employers’ syndicate.

Thus, in its second year, the struggle of the brick-workers with their employers did not end in complete success; in this was revealed the relative weakness of an unorganised labour movement in the face of a well-united enemy. But even these two years have left a deep mark on the psychology of the brick-worker.

Rabbeneck’s Factory.

“In Russia,” runs a saying, “laws are written so that it should be easy to get round them.” So, to Russia’s shame, reckon our Moscow

manufacturers. Not a single decent shop today would think of shortchanging or cheating its customers — yet these same manufacturers, these vaunted representatives of our home industry, these millionaires who lay claim to the first place in the state, do not scruple systematically to shortchange and defraud their own workers.

Take, for example, a certain plunderer by the name of Rabbeneck, who has settled near the station of Shchyolkovo on the Moscow-Yaroslavl line and sucks the blood of the surrounding peasant population like a veritable vampire. He owns a dye-works employing some 1,000 hands (mostly local peasants), where coloured fabrics are prepared for Persia and Central Asia; and he has now built a new weaving mill fitted out with the very latest devices of science, likewise employing about a thousand hands, most of them migrant, experienced workers. In May 1900 the weaving mill began operating, and by August the workers were already protesting against the owner’s abuses. And no wonder! Conditions at the factory are indeed shameful. The workers’ housing is thoroughly unfit for habitation; the workers must pay for kerosene, for water, and for every trifle out of their own pockets. They are obliged to buy their provisions at the owner’s shop, though prices there run far higher than elsewhere: for second-grade meat with bone in it they are charged seventeen kopecks a pound, when on the open market they could get the same for fourteen or even less. In the wage-book, when the totals are added up, they are systematically shortchanged by half a kopeck here, three kopecks there — a mere trifle in each individual entry, but altogether a tidy sum for the owner. Wages are announced at one figure but paid out at another; ceaseless fines cut them down further still. And everything grows dearer, while it becomes harder and harder for a worker to save even a portion of what the manufacturer pays him out of his millions. And so, in August, a group of about a hundred workers demanded that the owner come to the factory and answer for the fact that they were being shortchanged when they collected their pay, cheated by the shop assistants, and demanded, alongside an investigation of this fraud, a rise in wages.

The protest was not united, and fell far short of complete — but it was a first attempt to assert their rights. And though the workers achieved little in the way of improving their material condition (only the half-kopecks at the shop stopped being shortchanged), and though this wholly peaceable demand led to the arrest of six comrades, who were bound and carried off to Moscow accused of “incitement to riot,” the affair has, in its moral effect, worked well upon the workers, and it will not, we imagine, be long before this first attempt is followed by others, more successful still.

NIZHNY NOVGOROD

On the night of September 11–12, 1900, leaflets were scattered at the Sormovo works marking the anniversary of the Sormovo disturbances. In brief, the matter arose as follows: wages at the Sormovo works were paid once a month, on the first Saturday following the twentieth, but not later than the twentieth. On Saturday, July 24, 1899, the workers were expecting payment, but it turned out that the director had not received the necessary sum from St. Petersburg, and, having announced this, offered the workers credit slips for goods from the Sormovo company store instead. These credit slips are much in use, but workers take them reluctantly, since goods at the shop are both dearer and worse than elsewhere. The workers refused the director’s offer and insistently demanded payment of their wages. The crowd grew to a thousand or more; someone among the factory boys threw a stone at the director’s flat — and that was enough to set the enraged crowd smashing windows, throwing stones and wrecking machinery. Troops were summoned from the town (the works lie seven versts from Nizhny), but the disturbance had ended before the troops arrived. On August 23, 1900, the Moscow judicial chamber heard the case of the Sormovo disturbances, and of eighteen accused, ten were sentenced to detention ranging from three weeks to one month.

The leaflet issued to mark the anniversary of these disturbances calls for an end to overtime work, which the owners introduce precisely in order to lower piece-rates; it protests against the exploitation of workers at the company store (where, as was shown at the trial, workers lose as much as twenty per cent on the credit slips); it brands as “toadies” those who spoke at a church service of their deep sorrow over last year’s disturbances and their desire for it all to be forgiven and forgotten. The leaflet calls for a united struggle against the owners and the government, and points, by way of example, to the workers of the West, who have long enjoyed political rights.

We have just received news of disturbances and arrests at the works in Nizhny. We hope to give further details in our next issue.

KHARKOV

Two days after the raid of October 27–28, the following leaflet was circulated here: “To All Who Believe in Truth!” (see the text of this leaflet, printed above, under “A Proclamation Issued on the Occasion of the Warsaw Military Courts”.) On the Friday (27th) and part of the Saturday (28th) searches were carried out across the whole city among more than 120 people, and about 30 members of the intelligentsia and about 50 workers were arrested.

EKATERINBURG

We print below a worker’s letter about a print-shop that won a strike. Sending on this letter, our correspondent adds a note characterising the marked change of temper of late among the Ekaterinburg printers.

“There is, for example, a certain print-shop here, employing thirty to forty men. Two years ago it was ruled by the most patriarchal relations. The owner, a real tyrant, treated the workers with extreme roughness and recognised no laws whatever — ‘What I want, goes.’ Now times have changed: there is a demand for printers here, and they can pick and choose which shop to work in. Workers no longer let the owner get away with anything and, at the least excuse, go straight to the factory inspector or simply demand their wages and leave. The owner went to the governor to complain that his workers were leaving. ‘How do they leave,’ the governor asked, ‘all at once?’ — ‘No.’ — ‘Well, then, what am I to do about it? This only shows that your workers have a hard time of it.’ So the owner went home from the governor no better off. The apprentices, especially, have grown bold. The younger ones are sharp, literate, they devour books like white bread. The owner can do nothing with them. He tries, for instance, to make them deliver proofs outside working hours. The boys agreed among themselves and told the owner they would carry no more proofs — not their job, and besides he has no right to occupy their free time. ‘Get out, then! I’ll make you work nights!’ — ‘No,’ answered one of the boys, ‘that is slavery, and the days of slavery are over, everything moves forward now. Are you calling a strike?’ — ‘No,’ said another of the boys, ‘I have read what real strikes are, two thousand men at a time; what are we, just three lads.’ But the owner cannot get on without his boys; he stopped sending them out with proofs, but took on three more and told the foreman to train them up quickly. The foreman keeps a close watch, but the older apprentices are not asleep either: we workers, they tell the new boys, must stand together. The owner calls in the earlier boys and gives them notice — and it turns out the new boys demand their notice too! What is going on here? Have you all agreed to conspire against me? And off they went, under escort of policemen, to the police station, and thence to wherever they lived.

“At present this is how wages are worked out at the works. Pay is by the piece, but the owner is forever, and quite arbitrarily, shaving something off a man’s piece-earnings, so that a worker never knows in advance what he will receive; two, five, even twenty per cent is knocked off, quite at whim... Once, an ordinary worker asked for a rise; the owner replied, ‘Give me your passport!’ and dismissed him on the spot.

New workers are never even asked whether they wish to join the pension fund — three per cent is simply deducted from their wages.”

ODESSA

“The war with China” has told hard on the Odessa dock-workers. The administration requisitioned all merchant vessels for transporting military cargoes to Port Arthur, and this loading work was carried out almost entirely by soldiers, leaving a great mass of dock-workers without work. Several times these unemployed men demanded either bread or work; and when their pleas went unheeded, on the day of the troops’ solemn embarkation they carried out a thorough smashing of the shops of the Odessa bourgeoisie. Although, during these disturbances, the destruction of Jewish-owned property also occurred, they nevertheless differed from the ordinary “Jewish pogroms”: alongside Jewish shopkeepers and artisans, the wealthiest Odessa capitalists, whether Christian or Jewish, suffered too. The richest street of all, Deribasovskaya, was especially thoroughly ransacked. The Odessa governor-general, who did nothing to keep thousands of dock-workers from want of bread, is now displaying extraordinary “energy” in suppressing this “riot.” Having arrested no fewer than 1,041 people, he has ordered all those from out of town deported to their home districts, and the local residents held for up to three months.

NIKOLAYEV

On May 4 several hundred workers at the Chernomorsky works did not work, and openly and solemnly celebrated International Labour Day. For this offence 53 families have been expelled from Nikolayev by order of the governor.

FOREIGN REVIEW

THE BALANCE-SHEET OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

Our newspaper makes its appearance at the very end of the last year of the nineteenth century, at a moment when Social-Democracy in every country will be trying to take stock of what it has achieved since it placed itself at the head of the labour movement, with what tasks it enters the new century, and what forces and means it disposes of for their solution. Within the narrow compass of a newspaper article, and bearing in mind the insufficient acquaintance of most Russian readers with the history and present condition of the international labour movement, it is difficult to give a full and comprehensive answer to all these questions. In the article offered here I shall therefore confine myself to an attempt to give only a general balance-sheet of this movement, and chiefly, almost exclusively, with the purpose of clarifying and justifying, before our readers, the standpoint from which the events, facts and phenomena of the proletariat's liberation struggle will be assessed in our paper. We think it necessary to indicate in advance the thread by which we shall be guided through the labyrinth of international public life, and to establish the scale by which we shall measure the historical importance of its several manifestations and of the onward march of the liberation army of the working class. We hope our readers will not resent our postponing, for the sake of this purpose, a review of current events to a subsequent issue.

I.

There was a time when only the "friends of the people" reproached the Social-Democrats for supposedly doing nothing to improve the living conditions of the proletariat under the present bourgeois order, on the ground that, striving toward the socialist revolution, they had, so it was claimed, entirely forgotten today's pressing needs and today's immediate interests of the working masses. In doing so these "friends of the people," the enemies of Social-Democracy, pointed to the English labour movement as an example worthy of universal imitation, as a model of sound, genuine, sensible—or, as we here have lately taken to putting it, "honest"—labour movement. That bourgeois scholars, publicists and politicians should so unreservedly exalt the English craft and consumer unions at the expense of the Social-Democratic movement is not, in itself, surprising. In the eyes of the bourgeoisie, however liberal or humane, these unions deserved the highest praise precisely because they did not "get carried away" with independent political struggle, but followed obediently in the wake of the Liberals and, at times, even the Conservatives — in so far, that is, as their members took any interest in politics at all, and did not simply wish to know nothing of socialism.

What is far more remarkable is that, in recent years, gentlemen have appeared who, under the banner of Social-Democracy itself, almost repeat the very same wise counsels, the very same reproaches, that used to be levelled at it by its open enemies. Such gentlemen, in their tastes and aspirations, are not unlike the biblical hunter Esau, who, as is well known, sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. What they desire is that the workers' organisations now fighting under the banner of revolutionary socialism should set aside every thought of the socialist revolution and concentrate all their efforts and attention on the concerns of the immediate day, on the struggle for partial, piecemeal improvements in workers' lives. If not entirely, then to a very considerable extent, the programme and tactics that long prevailed in the

English labour movement represent, for such people too, an ideal which the labour parties of every country ought to adopt.

To hear the half-socialist, and openly bourgeois, admirers of the old English trade unions, one might think that these unions had won God knows what colossal improvements for the English working class, while Social-Democracy, prevailing in the labour movement of most other countries, has not only failed to achieve anything itself for raising the living standard of the proletariat it represents, but has even hindered others from working fruitfully toward that end. In reality, however, the activity of the Social-Democratic parties on the European continent has been far from as fruitless, for the economic position of the working masses, as its opponents assert; while, on the other hand, the results achieved by the English trade unions are, in fact, nowhere near as brilliant as they appear to their unconditional admirers and eulogists. The truth is that the successes of these unions are viewed through a magnifying glass, and the fruits of the Social-Democratic movement through a diminishing one. Besides this, two circumstances of first-rate importance for a correct evaluation of the results of the labour movement in England and in the other advanced countries of Europe are either overlooked or deliberately passed over in silence. As is well known, in England workers began organised struggle against their exploiters considerably earlier than even in France or Germany, not to speak of Austria, Italy, Denmark, Switzerland and so on. Already in the 1850s the English proletariat possessed strong organisations with a huge membership and considerable funds, while on the Continent the proletariat still slept a deep sleep, as in France, or lay in a state of numbness after the terrible bloodletting inflicted upon it by the crushing of the June uprising of 1848. The flourishing of the contemporary labour movement, even in the most advanced countries—with the exception of England—begins, properly speaking, only around the sixties, and it is only in the last decade that it has attained, in some of them, anything like the strength and scale which it had already reached in the United Kingdom by the middle of our century. What, then, has Social-Democracy to do with all this? It is, to say the least, strange to blame the proletariat — which set out considerably later on the road of struggle with its exploiters — for not having wrested from them concessions as great as those won in England, where the labour movement is nearly half a century older than in Germany, not to speak of other European countries.

But an even more essential circumstance is this: at the very period when its largest organisations were flourishing and consolidating themselves, the struggling English proletariat found itself in far more favourable conditions for winning immediate improvements in its lot than the proletariat of the leading continental countries of Europe found itself in during a corresponding period of its own development. It is well known, for example, what an influence upon the position of English workers was exerted by the fact that, in the first decades of the second half of this century, such countries as the United States of North America stood so far behind England in industrial development that they not only offered no competition to English manufactured goods beyond their own borders, but themselves bought and consumed the products of English industry, serving as markets for its output. England's world-wide industrial supremacy had, as its direct consequence, that every new improvement in communications and transport served, in the first instance, to expand very rapidly, and to an unprecedented degree, the production of England's own factory and mill output, to increase the demand for labour, and thereby to improve the position of the workers in their struggle with employers. On the other side, the employers themselves, thanks to the rapid growth of their own profits, gave way more readily to the demands of the workers: they had the means of passing on any perceptible rise in wage costs to the purchasers of their goods in every country and in every part of the world. But this possibility began rapidly to disappear, or at least to shrink greatly, from the moment when countries that had formerly exported chiefly

agricultural produce made great strides forward industrially and, instead of serving as markets for English manufactures, themselves began to produce and export such goods to other countries, England not excepted. In the fierce economic struggle that flared up between the capitalists of not one but a whole series of industrial states, victory went to those who sold their goods more cheaply—and the cost of that victory fell, in the main, on the workers. Without entering into further detail, I will note only that, as a consequence of the intense development of international competition, together with the spread of ever more perfected machinery and the displacement of adult, professionally trained workers by unskilled labour—women, adolescents, even children—the economic struggle of the so-called craft unions with employers became far harder than it had been in England in the fifties and sixties. And the worst of it was that it was roughly at that very time, in the seventies, when the labour movement on the European continent was beginning to assume much wider dimensions and to acquire greater strength and stability, that a world-wide industrial and commercial crisis broke out, accompanied by prolonged stagnation and only brief periods of revival, lasting almost until the middle of the last decade. Under such conditions the organised proletariat had only one path open to it: to direct its main efforts toward the struggle for legislative protection of workers against excessive exploitation by their employers. But even on this path the struggling strata of the proletariat in most European states met with difficulties partly unknown to the English workers, and partly outweighed, for the latter, by one very favourable circumstance: the bitter rivalry of the commercial-industrial bourgeoisie with the landowners over the repeal of the Corn Laws, and the hostility that continued between them for a good while even after those duties were abolished.

In England, as everyone knows, constitutional government has existed for more than two centuries, and, by the time the labour movement there began to develop especially widely, political freedom and the unchallenged authority of Parliament in the governance of the state already formed a firm, universally unquestioned foundation of English political life. It is true that English workers won the complete abolition of every restriction on the right to form unions and to strike only in the early 1870s. But, in the first place, even before then their craft organisations enjoyed a fair degree of freedom; and secondly, if they had at times to suffer persecution, this was more than compensated for by the extraordinarily wide freedom that English workers enjoyed to defend their interests by political means. Of such freedom of the press, of assembly, of street demonstration, and so on, as English workers have long enjoyed, the proletariat of Germany, Austria and Italy still, to this day, has no notion, and even France, in this respect, lags behind England. And so, upon the soil of this broad political freedom, English workers found an unexpected ally: the rivalry between the ruling classes over the high duties on foreign grain and cheeses. The Liberal Party, championing the interests of the commercial-industrial bourgeoisie, demanded the repeal of these duties, which doubly hindered the rapid expansion of factory production—first, by artificially raising the cost of production, and second, by prompting other states, in their turn, to prohibit outright, or to hamper heavily by tariffs, the import of English manufactured goods, protecting their own industries by highly favourable duties. It goes without saying that English landowners found such an encroachment upon their income exceedingly unjust, and for a long time stubbornly resisted the demands of the manufacturers and mill-owners. This enmity, developing between the liberal representatives of industry and the landowners, led, among other things, to each of these parties, striving to present itself as “the friend of the whole people,” occasionally, out of spite and vexation toward its rival, genuinely taking the side of the workers on this or that question. Thus the English proletariat succeeded, with the help of the conservative, that is, landowning, party, in winning, by the end of the 1840s, legislative limitation of the working day to ten hours for adolescents and women, and later, with the help of the Liberal party, an extension of the general

franchise.

It cannot be said that the mutual dislike, or even hostility, of the exploiting classes in other countries has never rendered any service whatever to the working class. It is well known that German workers owe universal suffrage (for elections to the imperial parliament) in large measure to the wish of the Prussian government and of the aristocratic-clerical (Conservative) party in the 1860s to show, in the face of their Liberal rivals, that they, and not the Liberals, were the true friends of the people. But in that very same Germany, already by the 1870s, and especially with the onset of industrial and commercial stagnation, the interests of the upper and middle classes pushed them, more and more, not toward division but toward consolidation—and this chiefly for the purpose of suppressing or restraining the labour movement. Lack of space does not permit me to go into the causes of this phenomenon here. I must confine myself to pointing simply to the fact that, in contrast to the English proletariat, the organised army of the working class in Germany and Austria found itself, soon after its appearance on the stage of history, obliged to do battle not with divided, mutually hostile opponents, but with a solid coalition of enemies, in which were united not only capitalists and landowners, rich bourgeois and nobles, with monarchs and their governments at the head, but the petty bourgeois classes too—small tradesmen, independent artisans and peasants. To a greater or lesser degree, a similar defensive union of the bourgeois classes against the liberation army of the proletariat could be observed in other capitalist countries as well, though not in so sharp and well-defined a form as in the empires named. Yet in those states this union had, so to speak, its own special motive: the “proletarian” parties of Toryism (as the reactionary current is called in some countries), taking advantage of the workers’ movement, sought to gain popularity for themselves as champions of social reform, while at the same time inciting the discontent of the lower against the higher classes to their own political advantage. It is, however, no accident that our sworn enemies—those who, in speaking of the labour movement, cite as an example only the peaceable, purely economic activity of the old English craft unions—pass over these facts in silence, or dismiss them as unimportant.

(To be concluded in the next issue.)

THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST CONGRESS IN PARIS

Nothing so vividly illustrates the successes of the proletariat's emancipation struggle as its international socialist congresses. They allow one to observe, compare, discuss and select those various practical methods that serve to strengthen organisation and to secure the proletariat's struggle.

The last congress of the (First) International was the Geneva Congress of 1873, which resolved to dissolve the International Working Men's Association, since it was no longer able to bring unity and direction to the already overgrown national socialist parties. Five years passed before the next international congress, held in Paris in 1878, during the first World Exhibition of the Third Republic. This congress did not take place: the police arrested the organisers, the French socialist Jules Guesde and his friends, and expelled the foreign delegates. Nevertheless, this attempted 1878 congress is an important episode in the recent history of the socialist movement: it demonstrated the remarkable resilience of socialism. It had been claimed that socialism in France had perished after the savage suppression of the Commune. In reality socialism was not merely alive, but had already worked out for itself a firmer and far more revolutionary theoretical foundation.

From 1889 the congresses have become regular occurrences. The 1889 congress, again held in Paris, on the occasion of the World Exhibition, met at the same time as the bourgeoisie—the "Third Estate" of an earlier day—was celebrating the centenary of the great bourgeois revolution of 1789. The proletariat, that fourth and last estate, gave, through its representatives from every country, its pledge to carry its own revolution through to the end. And the international May Day holiday, established by this congress, has become the day of a general review of the socialist armies, when millions of workers awakened to conscious life renew the pledge to struggle to the end. The Paris congress also drew up and adopted a systematic programme of proposed labour-protection legislation, covering adult male workers as well as women and children. Among the Russian socialists represented at this congress were the late veteran of socialism Pyotr Lavrov, and our own comrade Plekhanov.

The Brussels congress, held two years later, in 1891, reaffirmed the principle that national enmity, militarism and anti-Semitism are all merely different forms of the exploitation of man by man, and that the abolition of this exploitation alone would remove them. Yet if the full abolition of this evil is possible only through a root-and-branch transformation of society, it does not follow that one should neglect, meanwhile, those means capable of limiting or reducing this evil. We thus arrive at the question of practical means—a question with which the Zurich Congress of 1893 concerned itself especially. The Russian socialists were represented there by the Emancipation of Labour group, which had also sent its report to the Brussels congress.

The Zurich congress rejected certain proposals, put forward by some, for combating war by such undiscussed means as a military strike or a general strike of soldiers. Such measures would only mean the squandering of propagandist forces; at best they could only lead to a repetition of the Paris Commune, without the international socialist movement of that day possessing sufficient strength to give it lasting effect.

At the last session of the Zurich congress we saw and heard, for the last time, our great teacher Friedrich Engels. It is impossible to convey the enthusiasm with which the founder of the International, the friend of Marx, appearing unexpectedly on the platform, was greeted—an ovation that shook the glass roof of the Tonhalle, the hall in which the congress met, and blended with the mighty strains of the "Marseillaise of the

Proletariat." When at length silence fell, the great old man, in a voice trembling with emotion, delivered to us the testament of the International. And it seemed, for a single moment, as though the past itself had come alive before us, as though it had appeared as a mighty protector who had foreseen our movement and its needs, and who, at the cost of his own hard-won errors, had paid dearly to make our road straight and easy.

By the time we set out for the London congress, this teacher was no longer among us. His ashes rested in the depths of the ocean, not far from the Eastbourne shore he had loved to watch the great sea from. He had died; but his testament lives on, treasured in the memory of every delegate, and the London congress carried out one of his express counsels by breaking decisively with the anarchists, who, though already expelled under their own name, had nonetheless found means to slip back onto the congress floor under the guise of representatives of professional (craft) unions. At the London congress the delegates heard, for the last time, another representative of the heroic generation of 1848—Wilhelm Liebknecht. With his death the last of the pilots who had guided the ship of Social-Democracy since it was first launched has left the stage. And now the proletariat is left to its own strength alone, in the difficult task of steering round the countless submerged reefs that litter its path. Its influence has grown to colossal proportions, and its very successes may all too easily tempt it onto a false course.

The Paris congress ran from September 23 to 27 (New Style). Delegates of every nationality brought greetings on behalf of their delegations. Speaking for the Russian delegation were G. Plekhanov and B. Krichevsky. The latter read a letter from Russian, Polish and Jewish revolutionaries in Siberian exile, unanimous in their hatred of tsarism and of capitalist exploitation. Our comrade Plekhanov spoke of the great revolutionary role which the proletariat of the Russian Empire is playing, and will continue to play, in the struggle against tsarism—a struggle in which the whole international proletariat has a stake. "Only the proletariat," Plekhanov continued, "has dared to throw down the gauntlet to a government whose despotism shames the whole civilised world."

We cannot dwell here in detail on every resolution of the congress; we shall confine ourselves to a brief indication of them, and pass on to the main question: that of socialist participation in a bourgeois ministry.

Certain resolutions of the congress merely reaffirmed positions already adopted at the Zurich and London congresses—such are the resolutions on militarism, on the general strike, on universal suffrage, and on colonial policy. On municipal (and, in Russian terms, zemstvo and urban) socialism, the Paris congress reaffirmed once more the necessity of political liberty, and the supreme importance of it for the organisation of the working class. Universal suffrage is, in the view of the congress, the fundamental right of every nation to dispose of itself sovereignly and independently. To combat militarism the congress recommends that the socialist parties of every country carry on propaganda against militarism among young people of military age, and it obliges socialist deputies to refuse governments any credits whatsoever for military purposes, and to demand the transformation of standing armies into popular militias. To make this anti-militarist agitation more effective, the congress advises the socialists of every country to conduct it according to a single, common plan. Another resolution of the congress, adopted unanimously, protests against the cruelties of colonial policy. We may note here that the English comrades Hyndman, Quelch and Keir Hardie voiced, on this occasion, a resolute condemnation of English policy in England's war with the Boers.

Unanimously, too, the congress adopted the following resolution, of particular importance for us Russians: "The Congress denounces with indignation the savage policy of oppression which Russian tsarism pursues against the Polish and Finnish peoples; the Congress calls upon

the proletarians suffering under the yoke of autocracy to unite in a common struggle against this common enemy of democracy and socialism.”

As we have already noted above, the chief debates were concentrated on the following question: is it permissible for a socialist to enter a bourgeois ministry? This question had, to a certain extent, become one of the day, in consequence of the fact that the French socialist Alexandre Millerand had entered the cabinet of Waldeck-Rousseau as Minister of Commerce. This step had been taken at a moment when the very existence of the Republic itself was in danger, when the union of all republicans was essential. Although the socialist party could perfectly well have helped the defenders of the Republic without placing on any one of its own members the responsibility of participating in a bourgeois ministry, the congress nonetheless adopted Kautsky’s resolution, framed in a conciliatory spirit. The congress acted thus bearing in mind the particular conditions in which France finds itself, and from an unwillingness to pour oil on the flames of the disputes now dividing French socialists among themselves. Kautsky’s resolution admits, or rather excuses, entry into a ministry only in the event of extreme necessity, and only on condition of the consent of the majority of the party to such a step. In any case, such an altogether exceptional step must in no circumstances be raised into a system, as Jaurès and his friends wished. Moreover, the congress plainly expressed its disapproval of Millerand for his stubborn wish to remain in the Waldeck-Rousseau cabinet even after the danger threatening the Republic had passed—even after that cabinet had disgraced itself by the killing of workers at Châlons and in Martinique. The congress recognised the correctness of the amendment introduced by comrade Plekhanov to Kautsky’s resolution. This amendment states that a socialist minister must resign at once, the moment the government he serves shows itself partisan in the struggle between capital and labour.

From a practical point of view, of the greatest importance was the congress’s decision to establish a permanent International Secretariat. Brussels was chosen as its seat—the city in which the socialists possess their own “People’s House.” The costs of the Secretariat, reckoned at 10,000 francs, are to be met by the socialists of every country. The task of the Secretariat will be to serve as an intermediary between the socialists of different lands, to furnish them with all necessary information, and finally to prepare the organisation of the next international congress, to be convened, three years hence, in Amsterdam.

That our review of the congress’s resolutions should not be entirely incomplete, we must also mention the resolution on trusts (cartels—that is, unions of entrepreneurs organising joint marketing or even joint production and marketing of a given product). The congress looks upon trusts as a phenomenon entirely inevitable in contemporary society, as the natural result of the ever-growing concentration of capitalist production. The congress confined itself to the wish that the state should exercise strict control over the activity of trusts, obliging them to publish periodic accounts of their operations. Finally, the congress adopted a resolution on the reforms which socialists ought to strive to secure in the sphere of their municipal activity. This last resolution shows that Social-Democracy, while remaining firm and unyielding in its striving toward its ideal — the socialisation of the means of production, and, consequently, the complete transformation of society — nonetheless does not neglect any reform, however small, capable of improving, even in the present-day society, the position of the workers.

The debates at the congress reveal what a colossal political force Social-Democracy represents in the advanced countries. Alarmed at the irresistible growth of socialism, the bourgeoisie is beginning to change its tactics. In France, for instance, instead of the savage suppression of socialism, it has begun making small concessions, whose purpose is to detach from the socialist party every wavering and uncommitted

element. But if separate individuals do at times fall into the traps set for them, the whole proletariat, as a class, will not lose its way; it will not tarnish its ideals, it will not sacrifice its future. Much still remains to be done, the chief goal still remains unattained—but socialists have every right to take pride even in the results already achieved. And let all of you, friends and comrades, languishing in prison and in exile, be comforted by the thought that your efforts have not been in vain! Let all those, young and old, still standing outside our ranks, come to join you, and together we shall go forward, along the road that leads to a bright future! For do you not see that this idea, capable of uniting so great a mass of proletarians of every land, capable of filling them with so unshakeable a faith, with so ready a willingness for every sacrifice—that this is a great and noble idea? This idea deserves that a man should devote to its service all his abilities and his whole life. Let us unite, then, and work and struggle together beneath the shelter of the red banner, to the strains of the proletarian hymn — “The Internationale” — with which the congress both opened and closed its labours:

*C'est la lutte finale,
Groupon nous et demain
L'internationale
Sera la genre humain!*

*'Tis the final conflict
Let each stand in his place
The Internationale
Shall be the human race!*

FROM THE PARTY

The Split in the Foreign Union of Russian Social-Democrats

This past autumn a congress of the Union of Russian Social-Democrats was held in Switzerland, and ended in a split within the Union. The minority, headed by the group which had founded the Union, the Emancipation of Labour group (the editors of the Union's publications until the autumn of 1898), has formed a separate organisation under the name of the Russian Revolutionary Organisation "Sotsial-Demokrat." The majority, including the editorial board of the journal *Rabocheye Dyelo* ("The Workers' Cause"), continues to call itself the Union. The congress of Russian Social-Democrats held in the spring of 1898, which founded the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, recognised the Union as the Party's representative abroad. How, then, are we now to regard the question of this representation, now that the foreign Union has split?

We shall not go here into the details of the causes of the split. We will note only the incorrectness of the widely-repeated and grave accusation that Plekhanov "seized" the Union's printing-press. In fact the manager of the press refused only to hand it over whole to one of the two halves of the split organisation, and both sides soon amicably divided the press between them. What is most essential, from our point of view, is the fact that *Rabocheye Dyelo* was wrong on the substance of the polemic: it wrongly denied the very existence of an "economist" trend, and it pursued the mistaken tactic of hushing up the excesses of this trend and refraining from open struggle against them.

In view of this, we—without in the least denying the services of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, which has done a great deal toward publishing literature and organising its distribution—decline to recognise either part of the now-split organisation as the foreign representative of our Party. Until the next Party congress settles the question, it must remain open. The official foreign representatives of Russian Social-Democracy are, at present, the Russian members of the permanent International Bureau established by the Paris International Socialist Congress this past autumn. Russia has elected two members to this Bureau: G. V. Plekhanov and B. Krichevsky (one of the editors of *Rabocheye Dyelo*). Until such time as an accord or reconciliation is reached between the two factions of Russian Social-Democrats, we intend to conduct all business relating to the representation of Russia through G. V. Plekhanov. Finally, we must also give our own opinion on the question of whom we should wish to see as Russia's secretary on the permanent International Bureau. At a time when currents calling themselves Social-Democratic are, under the banner of "the critique of Marxism," seeking to inject a bourgeois ideology and a politics of meekness and submission toward governments armed to the teeth against their own peoples, it is especially necessary that this important post be held by a man capable of standing firm against this current and of speaking out against every wavering of principle. For this reason, as well as for the considerations set out above, we cast our vote for G. V. Plekhanov.

St. Petersburg

We have received a printed leaflet: the "Programme of the St. Petersburg 'Union of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class'" and the "Statute of the Union Workers' Organisation," dated October 1900. Lack of space does not, unfortunately, permit us to print this document in full, nor to comment on its significance at any length. We shall certainly return to it; for the present we shall only observe that it bears witness, on the one hand, to the lingering influence of the "economic" trend, the trend of *Rabochaya Mysl*, and, on the other, to a wish to break free of the narrowness of "economism."

THE POST-BOX

1. The report "The May Days in Kharkov" will appear as a separate pamphlet.
2. Five roubles received from exiles in Poland.

Printed at the "Iskra" press.