

Proletarians of All Countries, Unite!

ISKRA

(THE SPARK)

Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party

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Translated from the Russian. This edition reproduces, in translation, the full text and article structure of the original four-page broadsheet (a digitised, OCR-scanned copy of which was supplied for translation). The masthead epigraph reads “From a spark a flame shall be kindled!—the

*Decembrists’ reply to Pushkin,” and the paper is described on this issue as organ of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. A small number of passages were illegible or badly garbled in the source scan (faded type, torn columns, pre-reform Cyrillic orthography); these were reconstructed from context rather than transcribed with confidence, and are bracketed in the text with the tags **[RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]** ... **[END RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]**.*

ON SENSELESS DREAMS

On January 17, 1895, a young man, who had only just taken his ancestral seat on the throne, delivered a speech that astonished the world and threw the 'loyal subjects' of the zemstvo into confusion. A barely fledged chick, free from any learning save, perhaps, the 'science of tender passion,' he lectured men grown grey in the trials of life, the 'chosen men' [of the zemstvos], on sober realism, on the futility of utopias. 'Senseless dreams!' he cried at the silent crowd of intimidated men. It was a strange, wild, and in the highest degree improper spectacle. But — alas! — sometimes truth itself speaks through the mouths of babes: the young man was right, and had unwittingly put his finger on the sore spot of our public life.

The Russian inhabitant of a liberal cast of mind loves to dream a little, longs for a constitution and is even ready — behind closed doors and drawn curtains — to 'let loose a revolution' among himself and his intimates.

The hour will come — Russia will become free! But how, by what means, through whose efforts — this is dark, unknown. Whether the Germans will beat us, and we, as after the Crimean disaster, will find ourselves at the threshold of 'great reforms'; whether famine will disorganise the government; whether the revolutionaries will force 'the powers that be' to make concessions; whether this same power will suddenly, of itself, grow kind-hearted — who knows? Our liberal dreamer, building castles in the air and hoping for 'famine, pestilence, flood, and invasion of unwashed hordes,' firmly remembers one thing: that he, the inhabitant, Ivan Petrovich, is a bystander, and in no way a participant in events: he is not averse to cutting a fine figure in the concluding apotheosis, but has no intention of being an actor in this heavy historical drama. There is no denying it: the fruit of political 'schooling' is sweet, but the root of 'learning' is bitter, and the plot [of land] is so close!... The inhabitant's fantasy grows swiftly and irrepressibly: the fewer 'deeds,' the greater the possibility of surrendering to the 'charm of beautiful fictions.' With tense attention he watches for every breath from above, for every intrigue at court and every change of officials. In his mind he lays out a game of patience with the well-known figures of the bureaucracy: one will go, another will die, a third will become a minister — and the game is won, the patience has come out. On every convenient and inconvenient occasion, then as now, in the epoch of the 'dictatorship of the heart' six and a half years ago, as in these present stormy days, his 'senselessly dreamy' gaze is turned toward the summit of the Russian edifice — one gracious nod from there, from on high, and he is ready to forget every outrage and to betray his own best sons. Once, the biblical Esau gave up his birthright for a mess of pottage. It was a shabby deed, but the pottage was tasty, and he ate it up without leaving a trace. Our contemporary Esaus sell their honour and betray their neighbours for the mere smell of pottage. There is not yet any real, actual pottage, but somewhere, it seems, there is already a whiff of it in the air... and the inhabitant has melted. He has been beaten and is being beaten, bent double, — it is all nothing to him, and still not enough! It was enough for the words of the 'most gracious rescript' of March 25 to be uttered, about bringing into 'the work of educating Russian youth' 'a reason ripened by experience and heartfelt solicitude for it,' for the inhabitant's heart to leap for joy, and for the mouths of its troubadours to begin spouting Judushka-like verbiage.

'The business of school and university reform is in reliable hands — the comrade-in-arms of the Tsar-Peacemaker belongs to us by right,' say the 'guardians': the illustrious Prince-'Citizen' and the Moscow spawn of Katkov.

No, no! howls the inhabitant through his newspaper megaphone — he's our general! 'Fears are groundless'! Not one of the ministers has 'ever placed the social and state significance of the universities so high,'

let us place a little more trust in the general, and success will crown the work. 'From the height of the throne there has sounded a call to participate in the life of school, family and society,' and 'the press, as the voice of public thought, cannot as before remain a silent witness of events, a passive spectator of the mistakes, delusions and misunderstandings of others.' Therefore: let us hasten to the aid of the young, they must be freed from the influence of 'extreme and irreconcilably minded activists,' who interpret 'the government's benevolent concern for the young' as 'the youth's victory over the government.' Let the students not persist, but go and sit their examinations — they 'can be perfectly calm about the fate of their comrades, whom they do not yet see among themselves.*' Let them only be good, looking to their elders — after all, the elders have achieved so much through their own example and conduct!

* See *Rossiya* from April 8 and May 5, the articles 'Before the Reopening of the Universities' and 'Groundless Fears.'

These 'well-intentioned speeches' we have quoted belong to the organ of Messrs Sazonov, Leonid Obolensky and other worthy gentlemen, an organ recently elevated by the reactionary press to the rank of 'leader of Russian liberalism.' We do not have too high an opinion of Russian liberalism, nor of its political maturity, but we still do not wish to lay upon it the entire responsibility for the exploits of the valourous 'Russians' [*Rossiyan*]. Certainly, had it not been for the censor's 'excisions,' the warm campaign of retired *Novoye Vremya* types and 'Narodniks of the Ministry of the Interior,' a campaign that flowered under the blessing of Mamontov's capital, it would not have taken the place in our press that it occupies today. And, certainly, *Rossiya* is now no 'leader,' just a mere echo, a 'shabby' newspaper. But for the many-headed hydra called the ordinary inhabitant, for the broad strata of readers only just beginning with their ABCs, and yet already touched by 'free-thinking,' there might be found no better mouthpiece for its mood than this very rebellious offspring of the Suvorin establishment.

Its very appearance, two years ago, on the horizon of our everyday press, already signified something not devoid of real significance; it was a symptom of a progressive decay of censorship and other pillars, a sensitive barometer registering the 'change' in the minds of the general public: the ordinary run of newspaper wares now required a stamp certifying membership in the guild of free-thinking. Possessed of the very latest talents, *Rossiya* quickly came into fashion and became one of the licensed organs of the Russian inhabitant.

Rossiya dreams senseless dreams. But 'dreams' and 'dreams' are two different things. One thing is the simple-minded reader, another the cunning writer. One thing is the naïve Ivan Petrovich, who has no grasp of political literacy, seeking deliverance from the 'plagues of Egypt' of autocracy in every earthly and heavenly element; another thing is the seasoned public figure, who hoists on his banner 'senseless dreams' in which he himself does not even believe. Yes, the cunning writer does not believe, or believes only halfway, in the good will of the rulers of Russia. He is a hypocrite and a liar, because hypocrisy and falsehood release him from struggle and secure his position. He raises hypocrisy and falsehood into a system and, with an unshaking hand, sows corruption among the simple-minded.

The poor Prince-'Citizen' is greatly alarmed by the liberal airs of *Rossiya* — the ghost of the late *Golos* ('The Voice') seems to appear before him, and he sounds the alarm. Calm yourself, illustrious Prince, and sheathe your sword. You are angry only because you are still an old-fashioned romantic and act with a bull-headed rush where a 'delicate touch' is required. Look at those who stand at the helm and rule Russia: they are more sober, more realistic than you, and know the true worth of the inhabitants' press. There are moments when the whip grows tired of striking, when the nagaika frays, when it is needed to gently stroke the beaten man — without, of course, giving him any real satisfaction —

and to divert his attention. Then those whose business it is to know these things turn, not to you, illustrious Prince, nor to your Moscow counterpart, but to that part of our daily press which has access to the hearts of the inhabitants. Then the *Novoye Vremya* apparatus, or some other, is set into motion, then the call goes out to the volunteers — the craftsmen of newspaper affairs — and a safety valve is opened, a lightning-rod for ‘senseless dreams.’ For the cause of conservatism is served, in the end, infinitely better by ‘senseless dreams’ than by all these princely speeches.

The senselessly dreaming inhabitant does not know how, and, above all, does not wish, to struggle: he forever chases the ‘will-o’-the-wisp’ of hope, and fears nothing so much as losing sight of it. Ah, only let it not slip away, ah, only let no one interfere, and especially those ‘extremely and irreconcilably minded’ elements who poke their noses in and are bound to ruin the whole affair! And our ‘dreamer’ begins to grow seriously angry at those who, on their own backs, have felt the whole pain and burden of ‘progress.’

What does it matter that hundreds and thousands of fighters for freedom languish in prison and go into exile; what does it matter that Kleigels, the man behind the March massacre, carries out bandit raids upon literature and, in revenge for the most loyal petitions and collective protests, ransacks editorial offices; what does it matter that students, refusing to be soldiers, cannot bear their shameful bondage and end their lives with a pull of the trigger; what does it matter that the blood of working men flows, and from the south comes the stifled, muffled groan of the starving peasant; what does it matter that reaction proceeds at full speed, sweeping away the remnants of our illusory self-government and imposing curb after curb on the enlightenment of the people? He will go on dreaming, and dreaming again, our political Mitrofan, our pitiful inhabitant-Manilov. Let rank after rank of Russia’s true citizens perish — he will look on passively, without understanding that political rights are not granted to the people, but taken by struggle, torn out tooth and nail, and that every step on the road to Russia’s liberation is paid for in human sacrifice.

[RECONSTRUCTED TEXT] the title of this article is badly torn in the source scan; the surviving fragment is consistent with the Russian words for “The Obukhov Massacre” (the works involved was the Obukhov steel-casting works, subject of this article)[END RECONSTRUCTED TEXT]
THE OBUKHOV MASSACRE

It seems we are living through a moment when our labour movement, once again, with irrepressible force, is being driven toward those sharp clashes which so frighten the government and the propertied classes, and which so encourage and gladden the socialists. Yes, these clashes encourage and gladden us, despite the enormous toll of victims of military reprisal, because, by its resistance, the working class proves that it will not make its peace with its position, will not remain a slave, will not submit in silence to violence and arbitrary rule. The present order, always and inevitably, even in the most peaceful course of affairs, imposes countless sacrifices upon the working class. Thousands and tens of thousands of people, labouring all their lives to create another’s wealth, perish from starvation and from constant malnutrition, die prematurely of diseases bred by disgusting conditions of labour, wretched housing, and lack of rest. And a hundred times more does the name of hero belong to him who chooses rather to die in open struggle with the defenders and preservers of this vile order, than to perish a slow death, a beaten, worn-out and submissive nag. We do not at all mean to say that hand-to-hand fighting with the police is the best form of struggle. On the contrary, we have always pointed out to the workers that it is in their own interest to make the struggle calmer and more sustained, to try to direct every discontent toward the support of the organised struggle of the revolutionary party. But the chief source that feeds revolutionary Social-Democracy is precisely that spirit of protest among the working masses which, under the surrounding oppression and violence pressing upon the workers, cannot but burst out from time to time in desperate outbursts. These outbursts awaken to conscious life the broadest strata of the workers, downtrodden by need and ignorance, and spread among them the spirit of a noble hatred toward their oppressors and the enemies of freedom. And this is why the news of such a massacre as took place, for instance, on May 7 at the Obukhov works forces us to cry out: “The workers’ rebellion is dead, long live the workers’ rebellion!”

There was a time, and a relatively recent one, when workers’ rebellions were a rare exception, called forth only by some special conditions. Now this is no longer so. A few years ago we were living through a period of industrial prosperity, when business went briskly, when demand for labour was high. And, nonetheless, the workers organised a whole series of strikes, seeking better conditions of labour: the workers understood that they must not let the moment slip, that they must make use of precisely that time when the profits of the manufacturers are especially high, and it is easier to force them to make concessions. But then prosperity gave way to crisis: goods will not move off the manufacturers’ hands, profits shrink, the number of bankruptcies grows, factories cut back production, dismiss workers, who find themselves, en masse, out on the street without a crust of bread. Workers are forced to fight desperately, no longer for an improvement in their position, but for the preservation of the old, for a reduction of those losses which the manufacturer heaps upon them. In this way, the labour movement deepens and broadens: at first, struggle occurs only in exceptional, isolated cases; then a persistent, unbroken struggle during a period of industrial revival and brisk trade; and finally — an equally unbroken and stubborn struggle during a period of crisis. We can now

say that the labour movement has become a permanent phenomenon of our life, that it will continue to grow under any conditions.

But the alternation of industrial revival with crisis teaches the workers not only that a united struggle has become for them a permanent necessity. This alternation also destroys those harmful illusions which had already begun to form during the period of industrial prosperity. Here and there workers succeeded relatively easily in forcing concessions from their employers by means of strikes, and the significance of this 'economic' struggle began to be exaggerated; people began to forget that professional (trade) unions and strikes can, at best, only secure somewhat more favourable terms for the sale of one commodity: labour-power. Trade unions and strikes are powerless to help when this 'commodity,' owing to the crisis, finds no buyer; they are powerless to change those conditions which turn labour-power into a commodity, which condemn the toiling masses to the most agonising want and unemployment. To change these conditions, a revolutionary struggle against the whole contemporary social and political order is necessary, and the industrial crisis will force many, many workers to become convinced of the truth of this.

Let us return to the massacre of May 7. Below we give the information we possess concerning the May strikes and disturbances of the Petersburg workers. Here let us examine the government's report on the massacre of May 7. Of late we have become somewhat accustomed to government (that is, police) reports about strikes, demonstrations, clashes with troops; we now possess sufficient material to judge the degree of reliability of such reports, we can sometimes guess, through the smoke of the police lie, at the fire of popular indignation.

"On May 7 of this year," the official report states, "after the dinner-break, at the Obukhov steel-casting works, in the village of Alexandrovskoye, along the Shlisselburg tract, about 200 workers from various departments of the works stopped work and, in a discussion with the assistant works manager, Lieutenant-Colonel Ivanov, presented various groundless demands." If workers stopped work without giving two weeks' notice — supposing that this cessation of work was not called forth by illegal acts on the part of the owners, as happens quite often — then this constitutes, even under Russian law (which of late has been systematically supplemented and made stricter against the workers), a simple police misdemeanour, tried before a magistrate. But the Russian government finds itself falling into an ever more ridiculous position with its own severity: on the one hand, laws are issued establishing new offences (for instance, voluntary refusal to work, or participation in a gathering damaging another's property, or forcibly resisting armed force), penalties for strikes and so on are increased; on the other hand, both the physical and the political possibility of applying these laws and imposing law-conforming penalties is lost. There is no physical possibility of holding to account, for refusal to work, for a 'strike,' for a 'gathering,' thousands and tens of thousands of people. There is no political possibility of arranging, in every such case, a judicial hearing, for however one packs the composition of the court, however much one castrates publicity, some shadow of a trial will still remain, and, of course — a 'trial,' not over the workers, but over the government. And so criminal laws, issued with the direct aim of easing the government's political struggle with the proletariat (while at the same time concealing its political character by means of considerations of 'public order' and the like), are inexorably pushed into the background by direct political struggle, by open street clashes. 'Justice' throws off its mask of impartiality and lofty aims and takes to flight, leaving the field of action to police, gendarmes and Cossacks, upon whom stones are thrown.

Recall, indeed, this reference by the government to the workers' 'demands.' From the point of view of the law, cessation of work is an offence regardless of what these demands might have been. But the government has precisely lost the possibility of standing on the ground

of that very law which it so recently enacted, and it tries to justify its reprisal by 'its own means' by asserting that the workers' demands were groundless. And who was the judge in this question? Lieutenant-Colonel Ivanov, the assistant works manager — that is, the very same authority against whom the workers were complaining! It is no wonder that, to such explanations by those in power, the workers reply with stones!

And so, when the workers all came out into the street, halting the tram traffic, a genuine battle began. The workers fought, evidently, with all their strength, since they managed twice to repel the assault of police, gendarmes, mounted guards and the works' armed detachment*) — and this despite the fact that the workers' only weapon was stones. True, 'several shots' rang out from the crowd too — if one is to believe the police report — but no one was killed by these shots, while stones flew 'like hail,' with which the workers showed not

* Incidentally, the government report claims that the 'armed detachment of the works' was 'already standing ready in the yard of the works,' while the gendarmes, mounted guards and constables were only summoned afterward. Since when, and why, was an armed detachment kept ready in the works yard? Not since May 1? Were they not expecting a workers' demonstration? This we do not know, but there is no doubt that the government is deliberately concealing the factual data it possesses about how the workers' discontent and agitation grew and spread.

only stubbornness of resistance, but also resourcefulness and the ability to instantly adapt themselves to circumstances and select the best form of struggle. They occupied the neighbouring courtyards and showered the tsarist thugs with stones from behind the fences, so that even after three volleys, which killed one (only one, supposedly?) worker and wounded eight (?) (one died the next day), even after this, despite the flight of the crowd, the battle continued, and requisitioned companies of the Omsk infantry regiment had to 'clear the neighbouring courtyards of the workers.'

The government has won. But every such victory will steadily bring nearer its final defeat. Every clash with the people will increase the number of the indignant and of workers ready for battle, will bring forward ever more experienced, better armed, more boldly acting leaders. According to what plan the leaders should try to act, we have already had occasion to say. We have already more than once pointed to the absolute necessity of a strong revolutionary organisation. But apropos of events like May 7, we must also not lose sight of the following.

Of late there has been much talk of the impossibility, of the hopelessness, of street fighting against a modern army; this has been especially insisted on by those 'critical' wiseacres who passed off the old rubbish of bourgeois learning as new conclusions of impartial science, distorting in the process the words of Engels, who spoke — and with reservations at that — only of the temporary tactic of the German Social-Democrats. We now see, even from the example of a single clash, that all such talk is entirely groundless. Street fighting is possible; it is not the position of the fighters that is hopeless, but the position of the government, if it should have to deal with the population of more than a single factory. The workers in the clash of May 7 had nothing but stones — and, of course, no order of the governor-general will stop them, next time, from arming themselves with something else. The workers were unprepared, and there were only 3½ thousand of them, and nonetheless they beat off several hundred mounted guards, gendarmes, constables and infantry. Recall how hard it was for the police to storm just one house, No. 63 on the Shlisselburg tract! Think how hard it would be to 'clear of workers' not two or three courtyards and houses, but whole workers' quarters of St Petersburg! And will it not also be necessary, when it comes to a decisive struggle, to 'clear' the houses and courtyards of the capital not only of workers, but of all those who have not forgotten the vile massacre of March 4, who have not made peace with the police government, but are merely intimidated by it and do not yet believe in their own strength?

Comrades! Try to gather the names of all those killed and wounded on May 7. Let all the workers of the capital honour their memory, and prepare for a new decisive struggle against the police government, for the freedom of the people!

FROM OUR PUBLIC LIFE

YAROSLAVL

The twentieth century has brought a certain invigorating current into the grey, quiet life of the town of Yaroslavl. The inhabitants have grown agitated with an unaccustomed anxiety amid the events now unfolding; local *raznochintsy*, who till now dozed peacefully in their cosy quarters, have suddenly awoken, while the police, who hitherto slept peacefully at government expense, have suddenly woken up and hastened to plug the cracks that had appeared in the solid edifice of the inhabitants' submissiveness.

At the start of January 1901 a fierce battle broke out between the governor and the *raznochintsy*, which ended in victory for the latter, though at the cost of two men 'killed.' The occasion for the governor's declaration of war was the following circumstance. The local governor, Shturmer, formerly chairman of the Tver *zemstvo* board by appointment, who had once, at that time, scattered liberal thoughts and words left and right, has not, even now, freed himself from his own sympathy for enlightenment, but he loves to be first in every enlightened undertaking, so that nothing should be done in this sphere without his will, and, should anyone ever stand in his way, he takes revenge, and takes it in the meanest fashion possible. The affair of the founding, in Yaroslavl, of a society of present and former teachers will show the reader the methods to which Mr Shturmer is not ashamed to resort. As everywhere, he did not fail, in this case too, to express his sympathy for the new society and wished to see his own candidates put on its board, but the local public (the *raznochintsy*, that is) grew stubborn and elected their own candidates. This liberty on the part of the *raznochintsy* was, of course, not to the governor's taste, and he set about taking revenge. A few days after the elections, two *zemstvo* employees — the statistician Sadikov and the secretary of the school commission, Minayev — were told, without explanation, to leave their posts. When they raised the matter with the chairman of the board (who serves by appointment and represents the typically cowardly official, ready for any baseness to please those in power), it emerged that the reason for this disgrace was the fact that these persons had been elected to the board of the aforementioned society, and had allegedly engaged in illegal agitation during the elections. Minayev was dismissed at once, as a man against whom the governor had long borne a grudge. Sadikov, meanwhile, was offered a choice between the two: either to give up his position as board member and remain in the *zemstvo*'s employ, or leave the office. The governor, of course, wished to conceal the illegality of his act, and so gave no official reasons for the dismissal: he 'influenced' the board chairman, and the chairman was 'glad to oblige.' And so we have a curious, unsigned letter from the board chairman, in which Sadikov is invited to renounce his position as board member, in which case, it is hinted, he might be allowed to keep his post. Sadikov refused, and was dismissed. It is characteristic that, even now, when Sadikov no longer serves, he is still being offered this disgraceful bargain. After this affair, the board chairman, always ready to be of service to the governor, in his eagerness to oblige, went beyond all bounds. In one house he seriously spoke of his intention to post a notice at the board, that employees of the board should take no part in any societies or commissions, and only when it was pointed out to him that this would place all lawfully permitted societies in the position of illegal ones did he abandon his 'noble' intention.

Teachers and Priests in the Role of Gendarmes

Standing alongside the police, of whose exploits we have already written, are our own teachers, headed by the gymnasium director, the informer Vysotsky. Soon after the arrests of January 12 he summoned

one pupil, at whose parents' house one of the arrested men had lodged, and subjected him to a formal interrogation: who had visited the arrested man, what were their names, and so on. The frightened pupil told him everything he knew. Of course, all this was at once reported by the director to the proper authorities. There were other similar cases.

No better is the inspector of the boys' gymnasium, Krasovsky. Here is the speech he delivered on the death of the merchant Noskov, the father of the arrested gymnasium student Noskov: "Today there died an esteemed citizen of the town of Yaroslavl, A. V. Noskov. The cause of his death were his own little sons, who, by their criminal conduct, prematurely drove him to the grave." The inspector ended his speech with a text from the Gospels: "Children, love your parents!"

Other teachers assist the police by rearing their pupils on the Domostroy. The teacher of literature at the girls' gymnasium, Pervukhin, delivered a farewell address to the seventh class: "In my teaching I have always tried to place foremost the woman question (which he presented according to the Domostroy), to acquaint you with the ideal of womanhood, vividly outlined in the writings of Pobedonostsev."

Our priests, too, those first and most faithful servants of tsarist-police policy, are not idle. Here are a few facts.

At a memorial service for Bogolepov, the priest tried to convince the pupils of the girls' gymnasium that this murder was an act of purely personal revenge, since Karpovich had twice been expelled from the university. 'Personal scores must fall silent before public duty,' concluded God's servant, not embarrassed to shamelessly slander a martyred youth.

At a rehearsal of Scripture class in the girls' gymnasium, the priest asks a pupil: 'Who among us is a heretic?' The pupil is silent. The priest scolds her. 'At the exam you must say: Lev Tolstoy.'

During Holy Week the priest of the Yaroslavl boys' gymnasium heard confession from a pupil of the fourth or fifth form. Among the questions put to the boy was this one: 'Have you read any nihilistic books?' — 'I have.' — 'From whom did you get them?' — 'From so-and-so.' — 'Have you given them to anyone?' — 'I have.' — 'To read them yourself is no great sin, but to give them to others is not right,' the father concluded the confession. The next day he reported everything to the director: the director summoned everyone for questioning. The outcome is unknown.

A teacher at the orphanage confessed, in the orphanage's own church, to the priest who teaches at the girls' gymnasium. He asked her how she regarded religion and whether she had read Tolstoy. — 'I have read him, and, in my opinion, he views religion correctly,' she answered. The next day the teacher came with her class to take communion. Seeing her, the priest called her over and said: 'I have not yet finished yesterday's conversation; after our talk I will give you communion.' The teacher left and shut herself in her room. When communion was over, the priest sent for her, but she refused to come. Then he himself went to her with the holy gifts, but she did not open the door to him either. The headmistress gave the teacher a severe reprimand for her 'convictions' (the priest had told her everything). The teacher, in turn, complained to the bishop about the priest for having disclosed the secret of the confessional. What happened there we do not know, but two weeks later an order came from the bishop that she be given communion. As for the governor, who had earlier wished to have her dismissed, he sent the headmistress a note saying she might remain, and that the whole affair should be allowed to rest between them.

And it is to these spying, informing pedagogues that the government now addresses itself with its hypocritical phrases about 'heartfelt solicitude'! In an atmosphere of police omnipotence, 'heartfelt solicitude' can only be a police reading in the hearts.

Sedition in Vladimir-on-Klyazma

These two notions somehow fit poorly together. How, in this backwater official town, in this dead kingdom of petty-bourgeois stagnation and inhabitant submissiveness... and suddenly, 'sedition.' And yet, 'sedition' there was; it was discovered not long ago and rooted out by the faithful servants of the tsar's throne, the gendarmes. The 'seditionists' — local zemstvo statisticians, and the 'sedition' consisted in the sending of a demonstrative telegram to the St Petersburg statistician Annensky. The governor and other powers-that-be had long looked askance at the statisticians. What a nose they have for these things! For a long time now these local star-gazers have placed zemstvo statistics under a cloud of unreliability. Zemstvo statistics are generally not loved among us. The government does not love it, as it does not love anything in Russia that is honest and independent; nor do the capitalists care for it — all these Savvas and Vikulas Morozov — because it lays bare and exposes all their tricks and their exploitation of working folk; nor is it loved, besides, because statistics involve the valuation of factories and works, and this valuation is a sore point for our various merchant tycoons. It is no accident that, during the last session, they exerted every effort to escape a zemstvo valuation. Blow after blow has rained down on the statisticians, in the form of the governor's constant refusals to confirm them, in the removal of persons displeasing to His Excellency, and so on and so forth. All this was but a series of small skirmishes, small pinpricks, before the decisive engagement. The local administration was merely waiting for its chance — and the chance came: however remote our town, even to us there flew the news from Petersburg of the notorious March massacre, and word reached us that, among those who suffered, was one of the oldest zemstvo statisticians — Annensky. At once a telegram of sympathy was composed and sent, expressing solidarity with him not merely as a well-known statistician but as a fighter for freedom. Sixteen statisticians signed it. A copy was submitted by the head of the telegraph office to the governor. The demonstrative content and tone of the telegram are plain and obvious, and no further proof is needed that sedition has built itself a firm nest in the province entrusted to him... So, or roughly so, must the governor have thought. It was decided to take swift and decisive measures to root out this focus of infection. It was decided to act swiftly, without any softening, in accordance with the latest instructions of the chief of the all-Russian oprichnina, Sipyagin. 'To prison with them, I'll show them telegrams!' roared the pompadour. Someone from his retinue timidly ventured to point out that, first, one should check whether there were free places in the prison, and, second, that this would cause too great a sensation in the town. It ended with the governor demanding that the board immediately dismiss the 'seditionists.' Said and done. The board meekly bowed before the governor's will and dismissed all sixteen statisticians at once. Swift and decisiveness worthy of Alexander the Great — but why break the chairs? By a strange irony of fate, whenever the government and its lackeys try to cut through the Gordian knot with one stroke, they not only fail to cut the knot, but tangle it up still further. And so it was in this case. The governor's 'lock-out' turned into a strike. The dismissal of the sixteen statisticians led, in effect, to the closure of the bureau: the counting clerks were left without leaders and could not work. Our pasha, in his hastiness, had not thought of this. He evidently did not think that the dismissal of the sixteen statisticians would entail the closure of the whole statistical department; the counting clerks, along with the departure of the statisticians, dispersed too, and there was no one left to work. And the whole province's land valuation was thereby halted, though a great deal of money from the zemstvo treasury had already gone into it. The position of the Zemstvo Board is not enviable; every attempt to invite outside statisticians has met with utter failure, and refusals to serve the zemstvo, which does not know how to defend the interests of its own employees, keep coming in from every quarter. The whole statistical fraternity resounds with the cry: comrades, do not go to the Vladimir zemstvo! The slogan is having its effect. The

Board is more than a little worried by this; the work lies unfinished in the archives, materials rot away, and, on the horizon, the zemstvo assembly, which will surely demand an accounting of the state of the valuation work, of the reason for the statisticians' dismissal. Our pasha has understood the awkwardness of his position. The gendarmerie, headed by Colonel Zlobin, has entered into negotiations and taken up the role of... mediator between the dismissed and the governor. A gendarme has appeared at the homes of certain statisticians and proposed that they submit fresh applications to enter the zemstvo's service. But this mission too ended in complete failure. Having failed in his attempt to reconcile the 'strikers,' the gendarme understood that this had strayed from his own true and proper business, and tried to make a 'case' out of the 'telegram' affair. Interrogations and summonses to the gendarme administration began. By gentle persuasion and by rough intimidation they tried to extract the names of the ringleaders and initiators of the telegram. To assist the police and gendarmerie in its 'fruitful activity' there appeared, as always happens in the provinces, a volunteer inhabitant. There 'stood' the local liberal, Georgy Alexandrovich Smirnov, a member of the board. This gentleman, at the governor's suggestion, took handwriting samples from the dismissed men to compare against the telegram. But even in this all the efforts of the gendarmerie came to nothing, and the initiator could not be traced. What moral, then, is to be drawn from all this? For whom, reader? For the zemstvo, this is an instructive lesson in the necessity of a most persistent and stubborn struggle against administrative interference, if only because such interference reflects, sooner or later, on the pockets of the zemstvo's taxpayers. For the government, this is one more illustration of its impotence even when it does win. And for the statisticians, it is one more occasion to become convinced that there is no successful struggle possible outside of the revolutionary struggle of the labouring folk who fight for freedom. Go, then, comrades, into these ranks: from 'demonstrative telegrams' to more active deeds. Your own interests — the interests of freedom — imperiously demand it. Go, then... you will not regret it.

Nizhny Novgorod

We give additional details concerning the events in Nizhny Novgorod that were briefly noted in the last issue of *Iskra*.

On April 7 in Nizhny Novgorod, in the premises of the all-estates club, a meeting took place at noon between the student youth and representatives of local society. Present were people occupying prominent positions in state and public service, writers, representatives of the bar, doctors, teachers. The subject of the meeting was a street demonstration, fixed for April 8. In his opening remarks the chairman put the question thus: how should the local students, and that part of society sympathetic to them, react to the fact that participants in the protest against what is now officially recognised as an abnormal state of affairs remain dismissed, exiled, sent into the army as soldiers? At the beginning of the meeting, orators from among the students insisted on holding a demonstration, but another means was proposed: the submission of a petition. Representatives of society, while acknowledging that a petition was appropriate and necessary, spoke against a street demonstration. Pointing to the readiness, expressed by representatives of society, to actively come to the defence of the students, many of the students themselves began speaking in favour of abandoning the demonstration of April 8.

The question of the petition was put thus: is a petition possible, and do those present agree to help ensure its success? This question was unanimously resolved in the affirmative. After this, a vote on the question of the demonstration produced the following result: among the representatives of society, 19 voted for the demonstration, 53 against; among the students, 30 for, 50 against.

The following resolution of the students was unanimously adopted: while awaiting the promised active steps by Nizhny Novgorod society toward the main goal for which the students are now fighting — that is, a full amnesty for all those who have suffered in the student movement — we renounce our decision to hold a demonstration on April 8.

After an exchange of expressions of gratitude, in closing the meeting, the chairman expressed the wish ‘that this first free meeting of fathers and sons in Russia should not be the last...’ The meeting closed at 2:45 in the afternoon.

We give the text of the petition.

Petition to the Minister of Popular Education

Your Excellency!

The memorable words of the Most Gracious rescript by which You were called to the difficult post of Minister of Popular Education, which spread throughout Russia the joyous news of a proposed fundamental review and correction of the educational order, loudly summon Russian society, in the persons of parents and families, to help toward the success of a long and warmly desired reform. These words, calming hearts and minds tormented and confused by the tragic events in the life of the student youth, at the same time establish the sad fact of the abnormality of academic life in our country, and thus simply and truthfully explain the cause of those mass disturbances which, with a fateful regularity, arise ever more often in the midst of our young people. Entirely explicable by the imperfections of our educational order, these disturbances forcibly seize hold of the studying youth and force it to spend energy so precious and so necessary to the fatherland in resisting those conditions which arouse general discontent and hinder them from diligently studying and working for the good of their country. At the head of student movements stand the most gifted and energetic among the poorer students — precisely those who, had the abnormalities of the educational order been removed, would have developed into men rich in knowledge and strong in spirit, in the words of the Most Gracious rescript, into ‘the firm and true hope of the fatherland, and its steadfast

support in the future.’

It is precisely this youth which has always so heroically gone, with such readiness, to do battle with hunger — these very pioneers of culture who, on completing their course of study, go off into the remotest corners of our land, working alone for years in the darkness of the villages, bringing the light of knowledge and uncomplainingly dying at their posts: these are our doctors, judges, teachers, officials, lawyers, zemstvo activists, people from whom our country has every right to expect fruitful activity on the field of culture, and who are entirely capable of justifying the hopes placed in them by society and the state. Participation in the disturbances has brought down upon a great many such people penalties more or less severe, sometimes closing off, for their whole lives, access to education; in this way society and the state are permanently deprived of the services of these highly useful figures. In recent years Russia has lost a great many young talents, some sent as soldiers under the ‘Provisional Rules,’ some expelled forever, or for a fixed term, from institutions of higher education without the right of readmission, some subjected to administrative penalties and deprived of stipends and assistance toward continuing their education. These sad facts cannot but be reflected in Russian life through the impoverishment, among honest men sincerely devoted to the cause of life, of educated workers.

Our country is not rich enough in people to sacrifice, without loss to its own interests, hundreds of young people for the sake of preserving an order which, from the very height of the throne, has now itself been recognised as abnormal and requiring fundamental change.

A warm love for our homeland, our sincere wish for its happiness, our deep conviction of its great future, embolden us to turn to Your Excellency with the most respectful petition that you lay before the feet of His Majesty the Emperor our fervent request — to grant a full amnesty to all persons in any way connected with the sorrowful events of recent years among the student youth.

This act of the highest state wisdom, as a manifestation of His Majesty’s concern for the good of the homeland and the happiness of the Russian people, would put an end to one of the saddest phenomena of Russian life, would pacify young, impassioned, but most responsive hearts, would soften the great grief of parents for their ruined children, and would surely be inscribed among the finest pages of the historical chronicle of Russia.

Such are the full facts of this expression of protest in Nizhny Novgorod society. We cannot but add, for our part, that the chairman was entirely wrong to call this meeting, in his closing remarks, ‘free.’ In the first place, as we already pointed out in No. 4 of *Iskra*, the cunning administration permitted the meeting precisely in order to delay (and perhaps even to scuttle) the decision to hold a demonstration. In the second place, the composition of the meeting was plainly not free but engineered, since it was dominated by persons occupying — to use the characteristic police phrase — ‘a definite social position.’ Since when has a meeting engineered by the administration, so that the votes of the radicals should be outvoted by the votes of the moderates, been called ‘free’? Russian liberals have always shown a talented capacity for taking Jesuitical phrases and the deceptions of the government at face value, but we by no means intend to encourage such illusions. Russia has, thank God, lived to see the time when a meeting can only be called free if it is a genuinely popular gathering, called together not by the permission and not at the reckoning of the police, but accessible to anyone who wishes to attend. At such a meeting the voice of class-conscious workers, less trusting of the government, would always be heard as well.

Police Raid on Literature

The government torture-chamber has reached a pitch of unprecedented rage — it tears and rends, wreaking reprisals against peaceful men of letters, against old professors and scholars, against well-known liberal zemstvo men, and it does this as though it had before it the most terrifying ‘shakers of foundations,’ genuinely dangerous men. It takes petty vengeance on those very people who did not remain indifferent onlookers of the memorable March massacre and who, in a difficult moment, raised their voice of protest.

In the last issue of *Iskra* we already noted the mass raids of April 18, the police descents on the editorial offices of *Zhizn* (‘Life’) and *Mir Bozhy* (‘God’s World’). Now we must add to the martyrology of literature the following data: among the editors of *Zhizn*, V. A. Posse, the editor-publisher of the same journal, the zemstvo activist M. S. Ermolayev, and a contributor to *Zhizn*, the barrister A. A. Nikonov, are exiled for three years, under police supervision, forbidden residence in 25 provinces and parts of provinces. Under similar conditions, exiled for two years: the secretary of the Free Economic Society, Kulyabko-Koretsky (whose home was not even searched), the well-known Tver zemstvo man, the barrister F. I. Rodichev, P. F. Lesgaft, S. A. Karavayev, husband and wife Muratov (he a writer, she the owner of a bookshop in Moscow, now closed by government order), Kh. Gurovich, and Balmont, the well-known translator of Shelley and one other representative of the so-called decadent poetry. The same fate had already earlier befallen P. Struve and M. Tugan-Baranovsky; Professors Milyukov and Myakotin, and M. Gorky as well, remain under arrest.

Reading this list, one cannot help exclaiming: what desperate confusion must the Russian government be in, that it does not stop short of such measures! Without a trial, without even the usual administrative-judicial procedure, in accelerated fashion, observing only the swiftness and the drive, it throws people out of their accustomed setting and environment, heedless of anything. Let it continue in this same spirit: he who sows the wind shall surely reap the whirlwind!

A Secret Document

We draw attention to the note by Witte, published by *Zarya* in Stuttgart, directed against the project of the former Minister of the Interior, Goremykin, for the introduction of zemstvos in the non-zemstvo provinces. The ‘Note’ is interesting as a document that shamelessly exposes the innermost desires of our rulers. We hope, in a forthcoming issue of our paper, to discuss this remarkable document in detail, as well as the foreword to it by Mr R. N. S. This foreword, while revealing in its author an understanding of the political significance of the Russian labour movement, is, in all other respects, marked by that characteristic immaturity of political thought so typical of our liberals.

Escape of I. Pilsudski

Amid the sad news of ever new acts of gendarme violence, a particularly joyful feeling is aroused by an extraordinary instance of revolutionary success: the escape of comrade Pilsudski from the preliminary-confinement wing of the St Nicholas the Wonderworker hospital in St Petersburg.

Comrade Joseph Pilsudski spent five years in administrative exile in the Yakutsk region, to which he was sent in connection with the affair of March 1, 1887, among whose active participants was his brother Bronislaw, exiled to penal servitude in Sakhalin. On his return from exile, Joseph Pilsudski joined the Polish Socialist party and went underground. At the end of 1899 Pilsudski, together with three other persons, was arrested in Lodz at the secret printing press of *Robotnik* (‘The Worker’), of which he was the editor. Several months ago Pilsudski was transferred to the St Nicholas the Wonderworker hospital in St Petersburg for observation, as mentally ill. Into this same hospital

there was soon admitted a certain ‘Doctor’ Mazurkiewicz of Warsaw, who succeeded in ‘spiriting’ the supposedly ill man out from under his confinement. According to foreign newspapers, Pilsudski and the ‘doctor’ have already arrived safely in London.

We congratulate the Polish Socialist Party on this successful blow to the tsarist government, one that will take its place among the most brilliant pages of the heroic past of the revolutionary movement.

NEW WINE IN OLD SKINS

In the first issue of the newspaper of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, *Revutsionnaya Rossiya* ('Revolutionary Russia'), we read, among other things, a note: 'A Survey of Revolutionary Publications,' in which it is said that Russian revolutionary thought is now undergoing a 'predicted'* 'turn toward the principles of the era of Narodnaya Volya.' Although, in the era of Narodnaya Volya, various political parties held to different principles, we understood this remark to mean that Russian revolutionary thought is now moving in the direction of what is called Narodovoltism. We were very surprised, and, to tell the truth, not a little troubled by this remark. On the one hand, we had noticed no signs of a turn (more precisely, a return) of revolutionary thought toward the principles of Narodovoltism; on the other hand, *Rev. Rossii* speaks of this predicted turn with such unshakeable confidence that a doubt arose in us. Can it really be that we ourselves missed something, failed even to notice it? Can we really have overlooked so important a social phenomenon? To answer these anxious questions for ourselves, we began following the Russian revolutionary literature with redoubled attention. In doing so we were most interested in the publications of those people who had not only not overlooked the above-mentioned turn, but had actually predicted it. And so we were very pleased when we were sent the 'Manifesto of the Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries,' worked out at a congress of representatives of the united groups of this party. We were confident that it was here, above all, that we would find clear evidence of the turn predicted by the editors of *Rev. Rossii*. We read the manifesto and... found ourselves disappointed in our expectations. There is not a trace, not a shadow, of the 'predicted' turn in it. Quite the contrary! It represents the clearest and most vivid testimony in favour of that view — one that has long seemed to us beyond dispute — that Russian revolutionary thought is moving, more and more, in the direction of the principles of Russian Social-Democracy. The thought of the authors of the 'Manifesto' has come right up close to these principles.

* Emphasis ours.

The Narodnaya Volya party was, as is well known, a party of conspirators. Anyone thinking clearly about this will easily be convinced by attentively reading the memorandum 'Preparatory Work of the Party,' printed in the *Calendar of Narodnaya Volya*. In this memorandum we read that the party must prepare for an uprising, which, in all probability, would be facilitated by a combination of favourable circumstances for revolutionaries: a popular riot, an unsuccessful war, a state bankruptcy, and so on. These considerations, naturally, do not in themselves entitle us to call the Narodovoltsy conspirators *par excellence*. But further on, in this same memorandum, there follow lines that put a very heavy dot over a very prominent 'i.' Namely, it is said there:

"Of any such favourable combination of circumstances the party must be able to make timely use, but in its preparatory work it must not place all its hopes upon them. The party is obliged to accomplish its tasks no matter what, and must therefore conduct its preparations in such a way as not to find itself found wanting even under the worst, most difficult conditions. Such the least favourable conditions present themselves precisely in the event that the party should have to initiate the uprising itself, rather than joining a popular movement, and if, moreover, there is no extraordinary favourable circumstance to ease the first attack. It is for just such a state of affairs that we must be prepared. The party must have the strength to create for itself the favourable moment for action, to begin the affair and carry it through to the end. A skilfully executed system of terrorist undertakings, simultaneously destroying 10-15 persons — pillars of the present government — will throw the government into panic, deprive it of unity of action, and, at the same time, arouse the popular masses: that is, will create a favourable

moment for an attack. Making use of this same moment, forces gathered in advance begin the uprising and attempt to seize hold of the most important government institutions. Such an attack can easily be crowned with success, if the party ensures itself the ability to send to the aid of the first skirmishers no small number of workers and others besides. For success it is likewise necessary to have prepared, in advance, a sufficiently solid position in the provinces, so that, at the first news of the coup, it should be possible either to rise up at once, or at least to remain neutral. It is likewise necessary to secure the uprising in advance from assistance to the government from the European powers, and so on and so forth. In general, the preparatory work of the party must accomplish everything necessary for the success of an uprising begun by the party even without any extraordinary favourable conditions — that is, under something like the approximate position in which Russia now finds itself."

All this is, in its own way, very sensible, clever and consistent. But anyone can see that this is an entirely conspiratorial programme of action, and, had Russian revolutionary thought truly undergone a turn — 'predicted' and welcomed by the organ of the Socialist-Revolutionaries — then the Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves would likewise be offering us a programme of action bearing, to a greater or lesser degree, the imprint of conspiracy. But their manifesto proposes something entirely different. It puts in first place agitational activity in the milieu of factory and works labour, and defines the tasks of this activity as follows:

"The socialist party must take upon itself the leading role, uniting isolated outbursts and purely spontaneous manifestations of popular discontent into a single coherent whole; it must make use of this struggle for purposes of agitation, underlining and formulating the conclusions suggested by the very course of events, and constantly broadening its scope with new demands of a political and legal character."

This is precisely that political agitation, upon whose necessity Russian Social-Democratic writers have so often insisted*, and with which Russian Social-Democrats have busied themselves — now it may be said, without exaggeration, with quite noticeable success. Such activity is unconditionally necessary, and we are extremely glad that the Socialist-Revolutionaries are 'turning' in this direction.

* See, for instance, G. Plekhanov's pamphlet, 'On the Tasks of Socialists in the Struggle Against Famine in Russia,' Geneva, 1892.

"We are convinced," — thus the authors of the Manifesto sum up their thought — "that demonstrations, protests, strikes and a whole series of other manifestations of collective discontent with the existing social order, gradually intensifying and drawing ever wider and wider masses of the people, will shake the police-bureaucratic state and lead to its complete downfall."

In the epoch of the 'dominance of Narodnaya Volya principles,' revolutionaries reasoned quite differently. 'To draw into the organisation individuals from among the peasantry capable of joining it was, of course, always considered desirable,' says the memorandum on the 'preparatory work' of the party... 'But as for organisation, at the present time, among the mass of the peasantry, this was regarded, at the time the party's programme was drawn up, as a complete fantasy, and, unless we are mistaken, further practice could not change our socialists' views in this regard.'

Do the authors of the Manifesto not see that here, too, they are 'turning' away from Narodovoltsy principles, and not 'toward' them?

But neither are the Socialist-Revolutionaries 'turning' toward the Narodniks of the seventies. They are very far from the idea of concentrating all revolutionary forces in the countryside.

"However important and necessary revolutionary activity in the countryside," they say, "we, at the present time, for purely tactical

considerations, shall strive to concentrate our available forces in the cities — chiefly in view of the greater cultural level of the urban working population compared with the rural, and the greater productivity of work in this milieu.”*

* We think that even in industrial centres the socialist movement can and must embrace, not only ‘industrial workers’ narrowly defined, but the whole proletariat, the whole toiling and exploited population of these centres. We therefore think it wrong of those who speak only of ‘industrial workers’: they give too narrow an expression to a very broad idea.

This closely resembles the draft programme worked out by the ‘Emancipation of Labour’ group, which puts forward a series of demands intended to pave ‘a broad path toward bringing the workers’ party closer to the agricultural population,’ but where it is indicated that the work of the revolutionaries ‘must be directed, above all, toward the more developed section of the toiling population, that is, toward the industrial workers.’

In general, the view of the Socialist-Revolutionaries on revolutionary activity almost, down to the smallest details, coincides with the view of the ‘Emancipation of Labour’ group. Thus, for instance, the Manifesto says:

“As for the actual contingent of persons who might carry on propaganda and agitation in the countryside, we consider these to be, on the one hand, a certain part of the intelligentsia, who, by the conditions of their private life, are compelled to live permanently in the countryside, and likewise those industrial workers who move from the towns to factories and works located in rural areas, or who, while living permanently in town and maintaining ties with the countryside at the same time, visit it more or less often.”

The programme proposed by the ‘Emancipation of Labour’ group expresses the hope that ‘a proletarian thrown out of the commune as an impoverished member should, under the right circumstances, return to it as a Social-Democratic agitator.’ And, of those persons who, by the conditions of their private life, are constantly compelled to live in the countryside, the programme says: ‘It goes without saying that even now people who find themselves in direct contact with the peasantry could, through their own activity, render an important service to the socialist movement in Russia. Social-Democrats will not repel such people, but will make every effort to be in solidarity with them on basic principles and methods of activity.’

The Socialist-Revolutionaries say, in their manifesto, that although the bourgeoisie is hostile to them by the very essence of its interests, one cannot, nonetheless, deny the fact that the question of political freedom forms that common ground upon which the socialist party meets the advanced part of the ‘third estate.’ This is as true as almost everything else they say. But even here they speak not as Narodovoltsy, but as Social-Democrats.

Let us go further. The Manifesto says:

“We are convinced that, without the sympathy and support (on the part) of the peasantry, the class of factory and works workers, and of industrial workers in general, is not in a position to break the strength of the Russian government and to achieve so much as political freedom alone, not to speak of the economic transformation of society.”

And we must recognise that revolutionary activity among the peasantry is entirely possible at the present time, since within this estate there have already formed numerous groups equally interested in the destruction of the existing economic and political order, just as the industrial proletariat is.

Are the authors of the Manifesto really unaware that here too they are ‘turning’ away from Narodovoltsy principles, and not ‘toward’ them?

But nor are the Socialist-Revolutionaries ‘turning’ toward the Narodniks of the seventies either. They are very far from the thought of concentrating all revolutionary forces in the countryside.

This so closely resembles the draft programme worked out by the group ‘Emancipation of Labour’ that we cannot understand how its authors failed to notice this, or found it necessary to conceal it. Perhaps they were misled by Social-Democratic underlings, who denied political struggle and saw, in every attack on the autocracy, an odious reminder of Narodovolsism? But to judge Russian Social-Democracy one must look to its mature, serious representatives. And these latter have long recommended to Russian socialists that very same programme of action toward which the authors of the Manifesto are now ‘turning.’ The Socialist-Revolutionaries are flesh of the flesh and bone of the bone of the Russian Social-Democrats. This is why they need to unite with them, rather than ‘turning’ away from them, in every respect, toward a venerable but already irrevocably outmoded revolutionary past. Or do they fear that, by joining us, they will ‘betray the banner’? But our banner is the red banner of the revolutionary proletariat of all civilised countries, and to stand beneath it does not mean betraying the glorious memory of fallen Russian revolutionaries. Quite the contrary: whoever now fights in Russia beneath this banner continues everything that was of essential value in the work of these heroic fighters, renouncing only their mistakes, brought about by the conditions of place and time. Do the Socialist-Revolutionaries really think it their moral duty to call themselves, as Perovskaya and Zhelyabov did, at a time when Perovskaya and Zhelyabov would surely, today, call themselves differently?*

* We say ‘call themselves,’ because this is how present-day Social-Democrats are thought of. But, on the other hand, even the Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves do not dare call themselves Narodovoltsy. In that case, this talk of a ‘turn’ toward Narodovolsism loses even the last shadow of meaning.

CHRONICLE OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

LETTERS FROM FACTORIES AND WORKS

YAROSLAVL — *Strike of Pharmacy Workers*

The movement of workers for the improvement of their position is beginning to spread from factories and works into more cultured circles. I wish to speak of the movement among pharmacy workers. Everyone knows the working conditions of these labourers: 12-14 hours of work a day, not counting night duty in rotation (though, it is true, they are given one free day a week), poor food (eaten and drunk on the spot, hastily, during work), poor living quarters, rough treatment from their employers, low wages (apprentices 15 roubles, assistant pharmacists 30-45 roubles), which, given the requirement to dress well, is far from adequate. Discontent had long been simmering among the pharmacists, but until recently it had not taken any definite form. On March 25, 1901, the pharmacists of the Fisher pharmacy (formerly Schneider), dissatisfied with their breakfast, appealed to the owner with a request to improve their food and lodging, and to change his rude treatment of them (they did not mention a reduction of the working day, fearing their petition would be taken for a strike). In answer to their request, Fisher, through one of the pharmacists, sternly declared that he considered their breakfast perfectly good, and that, if they were not satisfied with it, they could leave. Then fourteen men, one by one, informed Fisher that they would work out, as required by law, their two weeks' notice and then leave. The owner accepted the employees' notice and, for four or five days, did not speak to them. Then the pharmacists told Fisher that, since they were leaving his service, they might as well seek other conditions (two shifts around the clock). Fisher, unwilling to give in, tried to find replacement staff, but in vain. He went to Moscow, where he tried to hire pharmacists, but no one there would agree to go work in Yaroslavl, having heard of the movement among pharmacists there. Sixteen men left. At last he turned to a 'worthy' colleague, the medical inspector Bukhovtsev. The latter, on April 9, sent a private constable from the provincial board to the Fisher pharmacy with an order for the pharmacists to return to work at once. They, of course, refused, since no force could compel them to work at Fisher's pharmacy. The constable drew up a report noting the pharmacists' reasons for leaving: poor food, cramped quarters and rude treatment. Subsequently this report somehow disappeared. Fisher had nothing left to do but give in. And so the pharmacists achieved, not only an improvement of their food and lodging, but even a halving of their working day: instead of fourteen hours, they will now work only seven, in two shifts (the first from 8 in the morning to 3 in the afternoon, the second from 3 in the afternoon to 10 at night). Greetings to you, comrades! Well done! Remember only your solidarity with all working folk.

FROM THE PARTY

MAY DAY IN RUSSIA

PETERSBURG

The celebration of May Day here gave rise to two major clashes between workers and armed force. On May 1 (old style) the workers of the Vyborg side went on strike (at nearly all the factories, it is said).

On May 4 workers from several factories set off for the city with the intention of holding a demonstration. Near the Sampsonievsky Bridge their way was blocked by mounted and dismounted police. The workers took to using stakes and stones. The fighting lasted several hours. As a result, we are told, there were up to 70 wounded on both sides, and some killed; several hundred people were arrested. We reproduce a letter from a woman worker, written under the fresh impression of what had just happened. The author writes to an intelligentsia friend of hers, informing him of the death of comrade V. From the letter it is clear what impression was made on the workers by the absence, at this critical moment, of Social-Democratic organisations, smashed by the pogroms of arrests. Hence the need for the workers to 'decide for themselves,' to take upon themselves the responsibility for such a step as an attempted demonstration; hence, too, the resentment against 'the intelligenty' who — whether exiled (like the comrade to whom this letter is addressed) or arrested (like comrade A.) — could not come to the workers' aid on the days of May. The author, of course, feels that the Social-Democratic organisations are not to blame for having been broken up precisely at the critical moment, but, we think, behind the unjust reproaches of her letter there stands a fair question: why did the Petersburg comrades put off the workers' demonstration for so long, and, instead of acting with full energy in March, delay the matter until May, thereby giving the police time to gather their forces and inflict upon the Petersburg proletariat a preliminary defeat by smashing its organised vanguard.

Here is this letter:

"Do not take my letter for faintheartedness, I am very worn out and do not know what to do... You surely know we had a riot, and that V. is no more. I did not see him after the 29th, and he told me then that, most likely, on the first they would not be working. As soon as I heard there was a battle on the Vyborg side, I dropped my work and ran there, but I could not get through to the bridge: they were not letting women through, and I began waiting for V. at his lodgings, but he never came back. I went to ask at the barracks, they tell me nothing, at the police headquarters likewise... either they killed him or wounded him to death... Others said they saw him at the front, this was he who shouted 'Long live the revolution!' and how he then fell. The police did not leave until everyone had retreated, and whoever could not get up, they picked up themselves.

You do not know how hurt I feel, and it is the same for all of us, we all wanted very much to march down the Nevsky or into the town, it is so bitter to die like dogs in a corner, so that no one should even see, as though it were, truly, the workers' lot to die unseen: a red death is a pity even for them. And it is also hurtful that the whole winter people came to us and quarrelled over us, and now, just when it matters, not one of you is here: you have gone away, A. is not here, and no one is here in his place. V. always used to say that we must decide these things ourselves, and that it is frightening to die, but not frightening! And I keep thinking, if only one of you had been there, everything would have gone differently, and maybe he'd still be alive. And I keep thinking, when V. and the others were dying, you were spending your time pleasantly, and A.'s wife came to visit, or something else. I know none of you are to

blame, it is simply that some have no luck, but judge for yourselves, isn't it hurtful...

One more thing I wanted to tell you: though many of us were taken, and though perhaps many of us are gone forever, we shall still stand firm. Do not think that, because there is no work to be had now, this is a time for throwing down tools: now, more than ever, everyone needs work, everyone wants to get out onto the streets. [RECONSTRUCTED TEXT] the name of a surviving worker quoted here is uncertain in the source scan[END RECONSTRUCTED TEXT] said it was a pity we had no banner. Next time we shall have a banner. One cannot go far with stones and knives alone, once they start attacking with sabres.

I think it would have been better if there had been nothing at all, and I am ashamed of myself for it: there, I have let slip a word of faintheartedness. Do not be angry at my harsh words, this is my grief speaking, though I understand well enough that all this is for the best, and I tell others so too, and many of us think this is drawing to a close, only I myself do not believe it: it has all happened too fast. B. says that next time everything will go still better, and only complains that there are no leaflets, that no one comes — he has even written a leaflet himself. I hope you will not be angry that I have written everything just as it is; you yourselves said to write when things become very hard, and it is hard now to know what to write when nothing harder than the present can be imagined."

At the Obukhov (state-owned) works, 300 men did not turn up for work on May 1. The management began dismissing these 'offenders' in groups of ten. By May 7 the number dismissed had reached 70. The workers asked the management to take them back and for certain improvements in working conditions. When the management refused, the workers stopped the machines and, some 3,600 strong, poured out onto the Shlisselburg tract. Further details are known from the police report. Provoked by the challenging conduct of the authorities, it led to a full-scale battle, in which the workers displayed remarkable steadfastness and courage. We are told that six workers were killed. The arrested were taken by boat to the city that night. After the massacre, the works manager invited a delegation of workers for negotiations.

KHARKOV

May 1 passed entirely peacefully. In the evening, around 9-10 p.m., a small crowd gathered in the university garden — some thirty workers and as many women students. They sang the 'Song of the Cudgel,' 'Volya' and so on, then shouted: 'The eight-hour working day! Long live the first of May! Down with the autocracy!' Someone suggested going out onto Sumskaya Street — they went. They walked the whole length of Sumskaya down to the square. Both sides of the pavement were lined with a crowd of the curious, who carefully kept to their own side, alongside the marching group. They passed the theatre, where, of course, the police took notice. Word had already been sent ahead, and as soon as they reached the square and stood there for a quarter of an hour, having sung 'The Cudgel' and 'Volya' once more and shouted 'Down with the Tsar, down with the autocracy,' the police appeared. The police chief, out of breath, muttered: 'Disperse, gentlemen, disperse,' waving his hand rather feebly. The precinct captains persuaded the public to disperse, saying that nothing good would come of all this. The public heeded their pleas, and partly dispersed, partly moved off. The police did not follow, so as not to let them come to a stop. When the crowd began to move off, the university garden was closed. By eleven o'clock troops appeared on Nikolayevskaya Square, and Cossacks rode along Sumskaya.

During this episode, one of the constables spitefully and triumphantly remarked: 'Gentlemen of the intelligentsia, disperse then, since there are only about 20 workers here after all.' There was no demonstration in the workers' districts.

KIEV

The proclamation of the Kiev Committee of the Party reports that, on May 1, thousands of Kiev workers stopped work. The Kiev Committee did not organise the demonstration. Nonetheless, on May 6, some Kiev workers attempted to organise an anti-government demonstration, in the course of which they were subjected to a police beating. Protesting against this, the Kiev Committee simultaneously distances itself from the demonstrators, as people 'not belonging to the fraternal family of workers of the whole world,' and as people whose interests were, evidently, quite far from being fully understood by them, and 'among whom there was almost no one belonging to the Workers' Party.' Not knowing who initiated the demonstration of May 6, we must nonetheless observe that, given the present fragmentation of Russian Social-Democratic forces, it is more than inappropriate to place all those who do not belong to committees of our own party 'outside the fraternal family of the world's workers.'

In addition to what has already been reported in the government's communication about the demonstration in Tiflis, we are told that, besides the crowd at the bazaar square, another, numbering a thousand people, gathered on the boulevard and attempted to unite with the first, but failed. The 'red badge' mentioned in the government's communiqué about the demonstration at the bazaar square was a red banner bearing portraits of Marx, Engels and Liebknecht and the inscription: 'Proletarians of All Countries, Unite!' The banner was on display for some 15-20 minutes.

IVANOVO-VOZNESENSK

On April 16 the leaflets of the local committee were distributed, describing the May Day festival and demanding an eight-hour working day and political freedom, along with the general leaflet of the Russian Social-Democratic Party and other May pamphlets. The public (workers) followed all this with lively interest. The mood was excited, particularly over the question of the autocracy.

FROM THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN POLAND AND LITHUANIA

WARSAW

This year, before May Day, the local administration was more zealous than usual, owing to the March disturbances in Russia. From February on, arrests and searches took place several times a week. To further intimidate the population, at the start of February the acting governor-general, Podgorodnikov, issued a proclamation throughout the Kingdom of Poland, forbidding street gatherings within it and threatening participants with a three-month prison term and a fine. Soon afterward there appeared proclamations of the Polish Committee of the Social-Democratic Party of Poland and Lithuania, in which the workers were called upon to answer Podgorodnikov's proclamation with a solemn May Day demonstration and to prepare for it. In the April issue of *Robotniczy Kurier* ('Workers' Courier') the party again reminded everyone of May Day. For its part, the police too were busy. On its instructions, for a full four weeks before May Day, factories and mills, when hiring workers, made them promise not to take part in the demonstration. From April 20 janitors were summoned to police stations, where it was announced: whichever janitor caught someone posting proclamations would receive a 5-rouble reward. If proclamations were found on any building, the janitor was fined 10 roubles and expelled from Warsaw. Nonetheless, on April 26 and 27 the fourth (May) issue of *Robotnicze Przeglądy* (2,500 copies in all, throughout the province) was posted in Warsaw and in every large town of Poland and Lithuania, along with proclamations of the party administration (12,000 in all) and, besides this, invitations issued by the Warsaw Committee to the demonstration, on Marszałkowska Street near the Vienna railway station, at five in the evening on April 28 (10,000 copies), and — by order of the bakers' trade union — May proclamations to bakers (600 copies). On Sunday morning Warsaw took on the appearance of an armed camp. In the old part of town, on the Ujazdowskie Avenue, there were masses of Cossacks, but the crowd was small. Around noon there was noticeable movement on Marszałkowska Street. Around two o'clock a regiment of infantry marched past with a band. One could see detachments of Cossacks hiding in courtyards. At almost every few houses there stood a knot of constables and police-sergeants. Mounted patrols rode up and down the streets. Around five o'clock workers began gathering in Jerusalem Avenue. By the start of the sixth hour there were as many as 15,000. The police did not disperse the crowd nor prevent it from growing. Cossacks charged out of courtyards at those who tried to move forward. Toward eight o'clock a scuffle broke out between part of the demonstrators, who had moved toward the Saxon Garden, and the police. At this moment the majority of those gathered, numbering about 12,000, taking advantage of the moment, broke through the line and marched down Marszałkowska toward the Saxon Garden, unfurling and raising a red flag. The procession was interrupted twice. Nonetheless the majority reached Royal Street, where they were joined by a fresh crowd of workers; here too a red banner was raised, and there rang out the cry: 'Long live the constitution!' In answer, from Marszałkowska and Royal Streets, there came a deafening 'hurrah!' After this the workers began to disperse. Only a few dozen were arrested.

LODZ

Lodz is at present passing through a severe crisis, particularly in the cotton industry; thousands of workers are without work, others wait to be paid off, the general mood is depressed. In view of this, the Lodz Committee of the SDP of Poland and Lithuania, after long hesitation, decided to arrange a demonstration of the most peaceful character — rather, as the workers said, a rehearsal for next year's May Day demonstration. The police, however, as always, remained on the alert.

Police chief Krzhizhanovsky spent the whole month summoning janitors to give them instructions on how they were to conduct themselves before May Day. At the start of April several hundred Cossacks appeared in the town; they could be found in great numbers on almost every street. Police strength was reinforced. Despite this, the Lodz Committee managed, already by April 26 (13th), to distribute the May issue of *Robotnicze Przeglady* and May proclamations in Polish and German. On the day of the 15th/28th of April, at five in the afternoon, on the main street — Piotrkowska — as agreed, more than 30,000 workers gathered. The police behaved calmly, trying to provoke a scandal among the workers. Spies played out a comedy, arresting one another and pretending to be undercover agents in order to induce the arrested to be released. But the assembled workers calmly strolled the pavements and, noticing that the flow of people entering was diminishing while the number of police and Cossacks kept growing, and that a procession would not be able to take place without heavy casualties, began to disperse, convinced that, if 30,000 had turned out this year, next year an even more successful demonstration, matching the size of the town, could be arranged.

Addendum

Before May Day (old style) janitors were issued whips and belts, and Cossacks and police were kept on standby. The police strained every effort to provoke the workers before May Day, wishing to bring about a massacre which might set back the movement several years, as had happened in 1892. But this did not succeed, since the workers wisely decided to save their strength for the coming year.

KOVNO

On May 1 (new style) 1,200 proclamations of the Polish Social-Democratic party were distributed, in Polish, Lithuanian and German. On May 1 (new style), near the boys' gymnasium building, some 600 Polish and Jewish workers gathered, and walked up and down the street for several hours. When cries of 'Long live the constitution!' rang out unexpectedly, the police began very amicably to calm the public and asked them to disperse. The stroll continued for about an hour more; then the workers dispersed to their homes. On May 12 (new style), on the street, two people were arrested: a bank clerk, Revkovsky, and two seamstresses, Piotrovskaya and Byalopiotrovskaya. Several proclamations were found on those arrested.

THE POST-BOX

Received by the Southern Department of the Iskra organisation: from 'The Horseman,' 79 r.; from M. K. of Kozlov, 18 r.; from M-vy, from young comrades, 32 r.; the same, 69 r. 75 k.; from the Petersburg Committee, for literature, 85 r.; from an acquaintance, 5 r.; from Kh-v, from young comrades, 50 r.; M. Z. 3 r.; from the provinces, 7 r. 55 k.; from S. and Kh., 10 r.; from a young man, 7 r. Total: 366 r. 30 k.

Received: from 'friends-readers,' 41 r. 42 k.; 'from the Volga capital,' 10 r.; from L., 20 r.

370 roubles have been received by the editors from the St Petersburg representative of Iskra.

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