

Chapter Sixteen

'Our Tasks' (13 November 1905)

Parvus

This article appeared in the first edition of the Menshevik newspaper *Nachalo*, edited by Parvus and Trotsky, on 13 November 1905. It was republished in Parvus's book *Rossiya i revolyutsiya* in 1907. It was also translated into German for anonymous publication in the journal *Die Neue Zeit*, 1906, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 151–8, under the title 'The Tasks of Social Democracy in Russia: Programmatic Article from the First Number of the Russian Social-Democratic Daily *Nachalo* [*The Beginning*]'. The editors of *Die Neue Zeit* added this prefatory note:

Although this translation has reached us somewhat late, the article seems to us to be of topical interest even today. *Nachalo*, as is well known, was the Petersburg organ of a fraction of our Russian sister party [the Mensheviks], which was earlier grouped around *Iskra*. The organ of the other fraction [the Bolsheviks] was *Novaya Zhizn'*. In the meantime, both were suppressed and then reappeared as *Severnyi Golos* [*The Voice of the North*], the common organ of both tendencies, which, however, soon suffered the same fate as its predecessors. Nonetheless, we hope that the union of both tendencies, which was brought about by the prohibition of the

magazines, will not be a passing one, but will lead to a general and lasting union, and that the ravings of reaction today in Russia will produce the same results as in Germany thirty years ago: the close amalgamation of all the Social-Democratic elements in a united organisation.

There is no doubt that Parvus sincerely shared this hope for party unity and, like Ryazanov, considered it vital to the success of the Russian revolution. While Ryazanov insisted that the Duma must be destroyed, however, Parvus was becoming more circumspect. By the closing months of 1905, neither party unity nor the revolution's triumph seemed quite so imminent as in the days immediately following Bloody Sunday. Although the autocratic régime was gravely shaken by military defeat, peace had been declared at the beginning of September and new political forces were rapidly consolidating at the same time as factional divisions deepened within Social Democracy. This article was written after the St. Petersburg Soviet, in which Trotsky and Parvus were key figures, had been forced to call off a general strike in the capital. Liberals had opposed the strike, and employers had responded to the demand for an eight-hour day with a lockout that affected as many as one hundred thousand workers.

In *What Was Accomplished on Ninth January*, Parvus had entered Russian revolutionary history as the visionary who inspired Trotsky's interpretation of permanent revolution.¹ However, even then he cautioned that overthrow of the autocracy would be only 'the *starting point*', beyond which lay 'a long process of revolutionary development'. A successful outcome presupposed an independent and unified workers' organisation, which would 'take care not to divide and dissipate the proletariat's revolutionary energy' and, at the same time, would avoid 'either the political isolation of the proletariat or indifference to the political struggle of the other parties'.

Parvus thought the latter observation applied particularly to Russian liberals. 'It is an easy matter,' he wrote in January, 'to say: "Together with the liberals" – or "Against the liberals!" Nothing could be simpler, but these would be extremely one-sided and therefore false responses...'. The real issue was to 'make use of all revolutionary and oppositional tendencies' by adopting a tactic

¹ L. Trotsky 1960, p. 167. Trotsky wrote that it was Parvus who, 'for me, definitely transformed the conquest of power by the proletariat from an astronomical "final goal" to a practical task for our own day'.

of marching separately but striking in unison. 'Revolutionary consolidation' required 'revolutionary organisation' – the *mass* organisation of workers – but it was also imperative 'to struggle continuously for the expansion of political rights and for the rights of parliament in particular'.²

By the time 'Our Tasks' was published, the Tsar had issued a manifesto promising civil liberties and an elected Duma. The founding congress of the Constitutional Democrats (Cadets) was in session when the manifesto appeared; the Octobrist party was already emerging to represent the right wing of the liberal movement; reactionary groups were proliferating; and the Socialist-Revolutionaries were becoming a mass party fuelled by spontaneous peasant revolts. Parvus thought that Social Democrats were compelled to determine an appropriate response to the changing circumstances.

For Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the answer seemed perfectly clear and straightforward. The workers' party must organise an 'active boycott' of any elections and prepare an armed insurrection leading to the 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry'.³ Lenin explained that the tactic of 'active boycott' by no means meant 'passive abstention': 'an active boycott should imply increasing agitation tenfold, organising meetings everywhere, taking advantage of election meetings, even if we have to force our way into them, holding demonstrations, political strikes, and so forth.'⁴ An active boycott meant provoking confrontations with the police and the military with a view to inciting the insurrection.

Parvus replied that 'If we interfere with these meetings, if we disrupt them, we shall merely be rendering a service to the government' by creating an excuse for martial law. Instead, he looked to the experience of German Social Democracy and urged that the various parties should come to an agreement

² In this volume, see p. xxxxxx.

³ In 'Friends Meet', published on 13 (26) September, Lenin wrote:

Only an uprising holds out the possibility that the Duma farce will not be the end of the Russian revolution, but the beginning of a complete democratic upheaval, which will kindle the fire of proletarian revolutions all over the world. Only an uprising can guarantee that our 'United Landtag' will become the prelude to a constituent assembly of a non-Frankfurt type, that the revolution will not end in a mere March 18 (1848), that we shall not only have a July 14 (1789) but also an August 10 (1792). (Lenin 1905b, pp. 253–61).

⁴ Lenin 1905d.

to safeguard electoral procedures from reactionary intervention 'just as agreements are made between the various parties in a parliament'.⁵

Each party should organise its own election committee for the conduct of the election campaign throughout the country. The parties should agree among themselves about practical measures for extending freedom of speech, of assembly, and so forth, during the elections. They should bind themselves together by joint political responsibility so that if an official representative of any political party is prosecuted...by the police or condemned in court, the representatives of all the other parties should declare their solidarity with him and all together organise a popular protest and, if possible, a popular uprising in his defence.⁶

Lenin reacted with bitter invective. Parvus, he exclaimed, had been duped into adopting the tactics of 'parliamentary cretinism'. Only 'clowning intellectuals' could propose such 'playing at parliamentarism'. This 'bourgeois' reasoning was merely 'so much empty and sentimental phrase-mongering'. The 'esteemed heroes' of parliamentary agreement – including both Plekhanov and now Parvus – thought they were 'supermen' who could ignore party resolutions. In fact they were expressing '*all the shortcomings of the turncoat*'. In the Bolshevik publication *Proletarii*, Lenin wrote that Parvus was a 'confused', 'stupid' and 'ignorant' political infant with whom he declared a rupture of all political relations: 'Good riddance to you, my dear Parvus!...our ways have parted.'⁷

Parvus answered in a little-known article entitled *What Are Our Disagreements?*.⁸ It was Lenin, he claimed, who was posturing – as a super-revolutionary – but now it was time to explain to him some changing political facts. To begin with, the manifesto announcing plans for a State Duma was a fact. It was also a fact that no one could be certain of overthrowing the autocracy before the Duma assembled. In the meantime, the only prudent tactic was to use the elections to make active propaganda rather than continuing the ritual of calling for immediate armed insurrection. Lenin's problem was that he was

⁵ Ibid. (quoted by Lenin).

⁶ Ibid. In 1893 Parvus had also supported Bernstein's call to participate in Prussian elections despite the restricted suffrage.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Parvus 1905b.

seeing 'double': between 'revolutionism' and parliamentarism' all he could discern was a 'metaphysical' divide with no dialectical space for real 'political struggle'.⁹ Proponents of 'exclusive revolutionism' could not see beyond

absolute contradictions: Yea is yea; nay is nay; whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. This is why, for Lenin, a 'parliamentary tactic' and a 'revolutionary tactic' are mutually exclusive. He does not understand how a parliamentary tactic can be used in order to revolutionise the working masses.¹⁰

Parvus worried that the Bolsheviks' demand for an 'active boycott' would simply isolate Social Democrats and effectively exclude the proletariat from real 'political life'.¹¹ When German Social Democrats could not elect their own candidates, they voted for liberals as the 'lesser evil'. Russian liberals were now demanding universal suffrage, and they should be held to their commitment not only by criticism but also by support. In exchange, they should be obliged to support Social Democrats where liberals could not be elected. 'We condemn liberalism,' Parvus objected, 'for not supporting us adequately in our struggle against absolutism – so how can we refuse them support when they actually wage this struggle?'¹² Claiming that Lenin saw revolution as 'an affair of the moment' – a passing moment that 'might be lost' – Parvus spoke of 'an irreversible historical process'. He continued:

He [Lenin] thinks that a revolutionary uprising is what creates the revolution; but I suggest that the revolution is what makes an uprising victorious. He looks about for allies to support a revolutionary uprising because he does not believe in the revolutionary energy of the proletariat, whereas I lead the workers into the political struggle and into political relations with other parties in order to manifest their revolutionary energy.

Lenin divides tactics into two stages – the revolutionary and the parliamentary, whereas for me a revolutionary tactic arises from the class struggle of the proletariat at all times and in all circumstances, including parliamentarism, which itself has to be transformed into class struggle.

⁹ Parvus 1905b, p. 4.

¹⁰ Parvus 1905b, p. 14.

¹¹ Parvus 1905b, pp. 6–7; cf. p. 9.

¹² Parvus 1905b, p. 5.

Lenin thinks of tactics from the point of view of overthrowing the autocracy and the direct victory of the revolution, whereas I regard the matter from the point of view of organising the proletariat's social-revolutionary army, which will make the revolution uninterrupted [permanent].

Not only the State Duma, as it is presently being convened, but even the most developed capitalist parliament would not for many years be capable of dealing with the confusion of social and national relations and the resulting political struggle that is the consequence of Russia's social development and the retarding yoke of absolutism. There will be agitation and uprisings together with heated and complex parliamentary struggle – and in all of this the proletariat will play a more prominent role, and will use political development all the more to serve its own interests, the sooner, the more consciously, the more diversely and the more decisively it takes part in all forms and manifestations of the country's political life, subordinating them all to its final goal – the conquest of political power.¹³

Lenin thought revolutionary tactics were limited to overthrowing the autocracy by armed force; Parvus reminded him that, barely three years earlier, when liberals were of no political significance, it was Lenin himself who had insisted upon supporting them with Social-Democratic organisation and publications.¹⁴ Now Lenin had adopted a new 'political scheme' – springing like Minerva from the forehead of Jupiter – and was once again ignoring political reality. 'At the basis of his revolutionary ardour,' Parvus wrote, 'is *lack of revolutionary confidence*.'¹⁵

Lenin's fixation on armed insurrection was a variation of arguments he had first made in *What Is To Be Done?* Flailing so-called 'economists', condemning trade unions as spontaneously opportunistic, and insisting upon centralised control of the entire workers' movement, Lenin was consistent only in his mistrust of workers and his commitment to the worst aspect of the Russian revolutionary tradition: the narrow-mindedness and manipulative proclivities of 'revolutionary circles of the intelligentsia'. Unlike Social Democrats

¹³ Parvus 1905b, pp. 18–19.

¹⁴ Parvus 1905b, p. 11. See also Lenin 1905d.

¹⁵ Parvus 1905b, p. 15.

in Germany, Lenin intended to subordinate the masses to 'a handful of ideologues'.¹⁶ The revolution had to respond to changing circumstances, but

In front of this grand historical process there stands a little man with a menacing grimace and a revolutionary hand outstretched, fussing and bustling to ward off the disappearance of socialism and the revolution!

Parvus recalled an article he had published in December 1903 in the German party press. Although he did not mention Lenin, he sympathised at that time with Ryazanov's criticism of the *Iskra* programme¹⁷ and the object of his concern was perfectly apparent:

We know that it is not within our power to determine events. Our entire task consists of keeping the proletariat prepared so that it can drive political development forward when events do occur. It follows that for Social Democracy in Russia, there is one requirement that takes precedence over all others – *organisation*. But organisation does not mean throwing a rope around the masses in order to keep them together... Whoever suggests that the whole purpose is to collect every thread into a single hand at some single point, whether it is Petersburg or Geneva, in order to give commands to the workers, is really succumbing to the absurd notion that Social Democracy can tyrannise the masses to a greater degree even than Russian absolutism. Above all else, Russian workers must learn how to unite and go forth as a single political force with a conscious will. Whoever tries merely to create an organisation of agitators, ignoring organisation of the masses, really believes that he can make use of the workers as material for the revolution in the same way as they provide cannon fodder for the army.... At all times and in every circumstance, our hope and support must focus on the social-revolutionary character of the working class.¹⁸

Whereas Lenin saw election meetings as liberal gatherings to be broken up by force in order to incite a police response, Parvus saw in the same meetings an opportunity to organise the working class in real political engagements. Lenin, he claimed, saw organisation as nothing more than a fixed plan laid down by a leader, who would blow his own horn and expect to bring down

¹⁶ Parvus 1905b, p. 23.

¹⁷ Parvus 1905b, pp. 20–1.

¹⁸ Parvus 1905b, pp. 24–5.

both the towers of absolutism and the walls of capitalist Jericho. As a result, Lenin

sees his main task not in using every possible means to lead the proletariat into political struggle but rather in preventing the political struggle...from becoming opportunistic...That is why he tries to suppress and smother everything that cannot be compressed into his own narrow template for the party; that is why he declares that all who do not share his political ideas are traitors to the revolution. It is also why he has been doing destructive work in the party for the past two years. He aims for revolutionary dictatorship, but he has shown himself to be completely incapable of uniting and leading the revolutionary forces. He wants to organise the revolution with propaganda, but he is provoking internecine warfare within the party and disorganising it all the more...An organisation that is detached from the working masses and suspended above the working masses is...not Social-Democratic...There is nothing worse than a tactic that disorganises and demoralises a fighting army through internal discord.¹⁹

At the end of *What Are Our Disagreements?*, Parvus declared that he had no interest in debating further with Lenin but had been compelled to respond to personal attacks and provocations. He summarised by comparing the sweep of revolutionary transformation with the pettiness of an intellectual's conspiracy. The essential point was that the workers must not only overthrow the capitalists but also acquire the knowledge and skills to replace them. Socialism must transform the whole of social life, eliminate wage labour, reconstruct the entire process of production, transform family and human relations in general, and create the opportunity for unprecedented cultural advance. This 'grandiose historical process' would be long and difficult, and it would never succeed unless Russian comrades transcended their own limitations by recognising that it was not *their* job to free the workers – that was inescapably the task of *the workers themselves*.²⁰

The Russian proletariat did not lack revolutionary energy; what it lacked was *consciousness* and the enlightenment that springs from active political life: 'To a mind that is made despondent by slavery, there is much that seems

¹⁹ Parvus 1905b, pp. 25–6.

²⁰ Parvus 1905b, p. 27.

impossible and there are many decisions that cannot be made, whereas others make such decisions freely and regard doing so as their natural right.' To date, the workers had been carrying the revolution on their own shoulders, enabling every other stratum of society to speak out loudly and freely for the first time, but the workers themselves had still said virtually nothing. In place of factional fighting, he urged Bolsheviks and Mensheviks alike to strive for the workers' enlightenment:

Make them speak out. Make them write. Awaken their thoughts. Awaken their initiative in the economic and political struggle and in every other form of social life. Open up before them every small detail of political life, for there is much that they cannot see due to lack of knowledge. It is much better to commit a tactical error while expanding the political activity of the workers than to restrict their political activity out of fear of a tactical error. The main thing is to conceal nothing from them ... for in that case you build your plan not on the basis of their political understanding but rather on the people's ignorance. Teach the workers to create organisations and manage them themselves. Do all of this in order that they will be able to manage on their own, even without you. To the extent that you succeed, you will then make the workers into a conscious political force. By virtue of their class position, they will also be a social-revolutionary force that will block the road to any betrayal of the revolution by the bourgeoisie and will not permit the revolution to die out. This force will open up new opportunities and a new basis for the organisation of revolutionary uprisings.²¹

What Are Our Disagreements? provided the political context for 'Our Tasks', which appeared at approximately the same time. As in his earlier work, *What Was Accomplished on the Ninth of January*, in 'Our Tasks' Parvus portrayed a multiplicity of class relations in varying stages of maturity, all the result of Russia's late capitalist development. In Western Europe, more than a century of revolutionary struggle had clearly defined class positions and ranged the proletariat directly against the bourgeoisie so that a final settling of accounts could come at any time. In Russia, however, this work of clarification was at a much earlier stage. Russian history had created an 'unusual tangle of class relations', requiring various contenders to measure their strength in conditions

²¹ Parvus 1905b, p. 28.

where the old state was coming apart but nothing new had replaced it. The task of Social Democrats was to build trade unions and a political party that would have the strength to transform a bourgeois revolution into a régime of *workers' democracy*, which would institutionalise freedoms and create the conditions in which organised workers could drive capitalism and liberalism beyond their own limits. *Permanent* revolution was a process, not an event, and its final outcome would depend on class consciousness and a unified Social-Democratic organisation.

* * *

'Our Tasks'

Political revolution is the foundation of the programme of Social Democrats in all countries – the proletarian revolution that will complete the cycle of revolutions that began with the Great French Revolution.

To break up the old estates-based society, the bourgeoisie had to set the nation against the estates and rely upon support from the people. But from the first moment of the common struggle, when liberty, equality, and fraternity were declared, it turned out that the nation was not united. Although differences between estates were eliminated, class differences became clear and determined the further course of the revolution. Having overthrown absolutism, the bourgeoisie was divided by its own internal contradictions and was unable to create a stable state power. Amidst the general political chaos, the rudder of state passed from one hand to another and from one social stratum to another. The political system changed like the light of a kaleidoscope, but under pressure from the petty bourgeoisie and the workers it became ever more radical in moving towards political democracy. Because of its indeterminate class character and resulting lack of coordination, the petty bourgeoisie was unable to govern the country. It proved helpless, and in its helplessness it became a perpetually resentful and agitated element of political demoralisation within the bourgeois parties while at the same time fomenting revolutionary excitement among the popular masses. With the help of workers and handicraftsmen, the petty bourgeoisie assumed power, but, since it was unable to provide an economic programme that would create a bond with the workers, in order to maintain its power it was compelled to bring out the guillotine, only later to become its victim. The proletariat,

in turn, could not help but see that political equality would never free it from the oppression of the factory owners and masters. It struggled against bourgeois domination and drove the revolution forward, vaguely hoping that a state system would eventually emerge that would free it from economic subservience. But it was only at the end of the revolution, under determined class pressure from the proletarian opposition, that the conspiracy of Babeuf brought forth a socialist programme.

Passing swiftly through these changing phases, the Great French Revolution completed the entire development that has since become typical for Western Europe and for all bourgeois countries: the ascendancy of the capitalist class, the democratic opposition of the petty bourgeoisie, and the social-revolutionary opposition of the working class in anticipation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. These forms of development were repeated during the revolution of 1848, but because class relations were more defined by that time and more clearly expressed in political programmes, the transition occurred much more rapidly and ended in open struggle between the first and the last, that is, between the capitalist class and the proletariat. At the time of the Commune in 1871, the intermediate phase passed almost without notice. The proletariat found itself in power from the outset and had to defend its position against the bourgeoisie. In the form of a long drawn-out process, these phases of development have occurred throughout the whole parliamentary history of Europe. The process has yet to reach completion anywhere, but its beginning and end points are now clearly confronting each other in Western Europe.

The capitalist class of Western Europe long ago betrayed the revolution and is now looking to support itself through strengthening governmental power. On the other side the proletariat, united in the Social-Democratic party, sees the starting point of its struggle in overthrowing the political supremacy of the bourgeoisie and seizing state power. In this connection, however, Social Democracy has set out a number of legislative demands that can be achieved without destroying the capitalist order. The goal of its programme is to democratise the state and free the workers from the most oppressive forms, methods and consequences of exploitation, so that they might win more promising conditions for political struggle and thus intensify their social-revolutionary energy.

Following a revolutionary overthrow of the state system, the bourgeoisie has never succeeded, anywhere or at any time, in rapidly and smoothly

establishing its own 'order'. This has always and everywhere been preceded by a more or less prolonged period of political turmoil and cruel class struggle.

The same thing is happening in the revolution that we are now experiencing.

The revolution in Russia was delayed. It was held back by European capital, which for many years supplied the autocracy with weapons and cash, fortifying it in the interest of European capital's own profits and supremacy. While our proponents of Russia's distinctive character looked for the basis of autocracy in the Russian soul of the orthodox peasant, the autocracy had long been sinking its roots into the cash boxes of Rothschild, Mendelssohn, the Crédit Lyonnais, etc. However, that same European capital transformed the entire social and cultural condition of Russia, created the revolutionary proletariat, and ultimately drove the government into a war that destroyed its military power and shook the state to its foundations.

Presently, we are living through a time of political anarchy. The old bonds of the state have broken apart, and nothing new has replaced them. The new can only emerge when all classes have measured their strength in the struggle for political power.

The delay of revolution in Russia is due to the unusual tangle of class relations that the revolution must take into account. Moreover, the revolution is also happening in new international circumstances. The European *bourse* is strongly represented within the capitalist class and is independent of the Russian state. Rather than being subordinated to the state, the *bourse* endeavours to subordinate the state to itself. Yesterday it speculated on the rising stock of the autocracy; today it speculates on its decline. From its own point of view, the fate of the Russian state matters no more than that of the Ethiopians in Abyssinia. It does fear, however, for its capital, and if it had its own way it would be willing to send Prussian or Austrian troops to Russia in order to restore order and guarantee against any default in interest payments on its loans. Associated with the money market is a group of foreign capitalists who have, in one form or another, invested large sums in Russian commercial and industrial enterprises. This means that Russian plutocrats and banks are connected by credit ties with the financial institutions of Europe. Behind all of them stands world capital, which is impatient to plunder the wealth of Russia and enslave its people.

At the same time, the 'national' capital of Russia is engaged in every form and variety of capitalist predation: this includes the 'enlightened' factory owner of the English type; the mill owner who gets rich on state orders; the trader with a far-flung sales organisation; the supplier, whose entire commercial technique consists of bribery; the old-testament merchant, who more closely resembles a Chinese than a European trader; and all those engaged in numerous varieties of primitive accumulation – from the money-lender and the well-to-do peasant, who fleece the people, to the shopkeeper who gets rich by selling spoiled fish.

Relations in agriculture are just as complex, including the aristocrat with enormous landed estates that he visits only to go hunting; the gentry-merchant who has connections with the grain exchanges in Berlin and London; the Prussian type of gentry-industrialist, who depends upon industrial activities such as brick works, distilleries or sugar mills as a side-line to agriculture; the gentry-farmer, engaged in modern agriculture; the merchant-landowner, looking principally for a rapid turnover of capital, as in the case of ruined gentry-landlords; peasant-traders in the vicinity of large cities; millions of peasants who are semi-serfs; millions of impoverished peasants and peasant-proletarians; and vast expanses of land owned by principalities, the treasury, the church or monasteries.

There are millions of poverty-stricken and vagrant people in the country. There is a very poor stratum of handicraftsmen. And then there are the extremely numerous members of the intelligentsia. Finally, there is the factory proletariat, forged into a single class not by the pitiful mills and factories of eighteenth century France, but by modern large-scale industry, while, at the same time, large numbers of factory workers still have not severed their connection with the land. Each of these groups has its own special needs, its own demands, and its own political character. And all of these diverse needs, demands, and economic and political elements of the revolution are colliding with one other in the general whirlpool of political struggle.

It was no decree of ours that started the revolution, nor is it for us to decree its end. The essence of the matter is not whether we regard the revolutionary struggle as desirable or undesirable. Revolutionary struggle is not the same as revolutionary insurrection. The insurrection did not create the revolution; rather the revolution created the insurrection as its natural and

decisive, although by no means its sole, mode of struggle. The revolution is an historical process of the most intensive political struggle, and it assumes all possible forms and variations: it is a desperate struggle between different social classes, strata, and groups for state power. To arrive at a final historical outcome of this maelstrom of social forces, given the tangle and confusion of class relations that we have described in present-day Russia, involves a long and agonising process that is replete with shocks and sudden transitions.

We must reckon, therefore, not with any single moment, but with a long, drawn-out development, and we must determine our tactics with this perspective in mind.

Our first and most fundamental task is to clarify for the proletariat its class position and historical role, thereby facilitating its separation from other classes, a process that is occurring due to objective conditions. This is a question of forming a Social-Democratic workers' party. In this connection, we must merge the old conspiratorial organisation with a new mass organisation. Propaganda to this end, together with agitation based upon the facts of political struggle, is our most immediate objective.

Along with the political organisation of the proletariat, we must also develop its professional organisations. The trade unions constitute the closest possible bond between workers. By organising their direct struggle against capitalist exploitation, they promote class awareness. It is true that, at a certain stage of development, they pass through a period of opportunism, or adaptation to the capitalist state system, but this danger is still remote as far as the workers' organisations in Russia are concerned, and it is absolutely non-existent at a time of revolution, when the struggle for state power is at the centre of political life. In the case of Russia, it may be possible to avoid such a danger entirely thanks to the experience of Western Europe and, more importantly, because the class struggle has intensified throughout the entire world and has led even the English trade unions to organise an independent workers' party.

Organisation of the proletariat is the basis of all our further activity. In this regard, the upsurge of social interest and energy, created by the revolution, opens up vast opportunities for us. What would have required years at another time can be accomplished today in months or even weeks. The entire working class of the factories and plants must join the Social-Democratic party. Also, we now have greater access than ever before to the agricultural

proletariat. Our task is to cover the entire country with political clubs and workers' professional organisations. We must also promote development of a workers' press with every possible means.

The widest and most energetic use of political rights is the best possible guarantee against any return to the previous condition of arbitrary rule. And since peaceful parliamentary development in Western Europe has enabled the class organisation of the proletariat to become a revolutionary force that is leading inevitably to a political catastrophe, there can be no doubt that the proletariat's class organisation in Russia, during a time of revolution, will both fortify revolutionary energy and increase the political possibilities for the revolution.

The direct revolutionary goal of the Russian proletariat is to achieve the kind of state system in which the demands of workers' democracy will be realised. Workers' democracy includes all of the most extreme demands of bourgeois democracy, but it imparts to some of them a special character and also includes new demands that are strictly proletarian. For instance, the freedoms of assembly and association, from a general democratic point of view, are only variations of freedom of thought and speech, but for the workers they are fundamental guarantees for their class struggle. Hence the workers formulate this part of a democratic programme by taking particular care to include in freedom of organisation the right to strike. The proletariat also adds to the democratic programme the demand for labour legislation, especially for a normal eight-hour working day. Along with political guarantees of civil rights, the proletariat demands for itself economic guarantees of the opportunity to make use of them, that is, the right to time off from work.

In this way, the revolution in Russia creates a special connection between the minimum programme of Social Democracy and its final goal. This does not imply the dictatorship of the proletariat, whose task is a fundamental change of production relations in the country, yet it already goes beyond bourgeois democracy. We are not yet ready in Russia to assume the task of converting the bourgeois revolution into a socialist revolution, but we are even less ready to subordinate ourselves to a bourgeois revolution. Not only would this contradict the first premises of our entire programme, but the class struggle of the proletariat also drives us forward. Our task is to expand the limits of the bourgeois revolution by including within it the interests of the proletariat and by creating, within the bourgeois constitution itself, the greatest possible opportunities for social-revolutionary upheaval.

Even now, the government has made greater concessions than would have been needed in order to satisfy the liberal parties before the revolution, and there is no doubt that it will have to go still further. It was the stubbornness of reaction that created the revolution and made every political question more decisive. But this refers only to appearances on the surface of events. Whatever the form of transition to a parliamentary order, the social forces responsible for the revolution would have manifested themselves and driven it beyond any remaining limitations. The government was quite justifiably afraid of revolution, and this fear prevented it from undertaking any reforms. The stubbornness of the government merely determined its own fate, but the revolutionary course of events is determined by the chaotic social relations that have been created in Russia by historical circumstances.

Fearing the growing political power of the proletariat, the bourgeoisie is becoming reactionary. But its own class relations lead to a struggle for power in its midst and struggle against the government. This means it will waver back and forth between revolutionary excitement and reactionary embitterment. A politics of vacillation is merely a politics of impotence. The class that the revolution prepares for political supremacy turns out, during the revolution itself, to be the one least capable of controlling events. This will work to the political advantage of the organised proletariat, which from the very beginning of the revolution has become its leading force as a result of its class ties and revolutionary energy.

We will drive the bourgeoisie onwards. It is frightened by every step it takes in democratising the state because it benefits the proletariat. This is exactly the reason why it is in the proletariat's interest to support the bourgeoisie in the liberal opposition. We have no fear of liberalism's successes; on the contrary, they are the conditions for our own further successes. Then, whenever liberalism retreats, we will pursue it in every way possible. In every circumstance and at every opportunity, we will mercilessly criticise the class character of the bourgeois parties, whether they be liberal or democratic.

The victory of the revolution also brings the peasantry onto the political scene. The peasants assisted the revolution by amplifying political anarchy, but they were not capable of focusing their political struggle. They are now imposing on the struggle of parties all the confusion of their own economic demands and frustrations.

The capitalist system is incapable of resolving the peasant question, with the result that peasant involvement will complicate and prolong the revolution and prevent any stabilisation of bourgeois order.

Social Democracy bases itself on the proletariat not merely because it is exclusively a workers' party, but also because it sees in the proletariat the sole force that is capable of reconstituting production relations in a way that will free the entire population of toilers from exploitation. Insofar as the workers and the peasantry are subjected to exploitation, either directly or indirectly, it immediately defends their interests. But in the interest of the workers and the peasantry itself, Social Democracy also opposes any return to obsolete kinds of economic relations that impede the development of production. Our task is to express and broaden the economic demands of the peasantry while leading it towards socialist transformation.

In this connection, we simultaneously reveal all the forms of class struggle based upon agrarian relations and endeavour to merge with the workers of the factories and cities those strata of the agricultural proletariat and small-holding peasants whose position is close to that of the workers.

The revolutionary period has also bequeathed to us the socialist intelligentsia. Our task is to take the enormous intellectual and revolutionary energy that has accumulated in its midst and to employ it within the ranks of the Social-Democratic workers' party to extend the political and cultural tasks of the revolution and thus delay as long as possible the inevitable final result of the bourgeois intelligentsia going over to the vital ideals and commitments of the bourgeoisie.

The political confusion of the Russian revolution is also intensified by the struggle between the nationalities, which the autocracy has kept in a state of mutual hostility through use of discriminatory laws and a policy of national oppression. The national question has been resolved through democratic-republican practice in Switzerland and in the United States of America. We must achieve the same kind of free community of nations in Russia. Our task is to remove all obstacles in the way of independent political and cultural development on the part of all the individual nationalities. At the same time, it is equally important for us to separate the proletariat of each nationality in Russia from all the other classes and to unite them in a common social-revolutionary army. The result will be a closely knit all-Russian bond – not

in opposition to the will of individual nationalities, but simply because of the internal class contradictions that inevitably dissolve national consciousness within the capitalist system. We shall unite all the nationalities not through use of state power, but rather in the struggle against the capitalist state.

The Russian autocracy has been supported by West-European capital. The Russian revolution will find its support in the West-European proletariat. If we presently have no fear of military intervention by Germany or Austria, that is exclusively due to West-European Social Democracy. Any attempt to put down the Russian revolution through use of outside military force will certainly provoke the proletarian revolution in the countries involved. As the social-revolutionary army of the proletariat is organised in Russia, it will expand and deepen its ties with Social Democracy throughout the entire world. The transition from struggle against autocracy to struggle for a workers' democracy will create a community of immediate political struggle. The struggle for an eight-hour day will immediately bring the Russian proletariat into step with the proletariat of the entire world. The successes of the revolution in Russia have thoroughly frightened the governments of Western Europe and significantly inspired the revolutionary energy of West-European Social Democracy. What we have accomplished in Russia still lags far behind what has been accomplished by the peoples of the West, but the very possibility of revolution has evoked a mighty response in the extremely tense political atmosphere of Western Europe. The Russian proletariat's further revolutionary successes on the road to achieving a workers' democracy will also be successes for the proletariat of the whole world and may provide a powerful impulse for decisive struggle between the social-revolutionary organisations of the proletariat and the state authorities of Western Europe. By that time, the Social-Democratic organisations of the Russian proletariat will have become steadily stronger, embracing the entire working masses, developing and raising their political consciousness, and strengthening their revolutionary conviction. Then we shall face the task of extending our revolutionary programme beyond the limits of workers' democracy.

The Russian revolution is still at the beginning of its development, but in the process it will inspire peoples everywhere and shake the entire capitalist world to its very foundations.

Long live the Russian revolution!

Long live socialism!