

# ***Building the Old Bolsheviks***

**1881-1903**



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*For Ian*

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'The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves.' Karl Marx, 1867

'Plekhanov once said to me about a critic of Marxism (I've forgotten his name): *'First, let's stick the convict's badge on him, and then after that we'll examine his case'*. And I think that we must 'stick the convict's badge' on anyone who tries to undermine Marxism, even if we do not go on to examine his case. That's how every sound revolutionary should react. When you see a stinking heap of the road you don't have to poke around in it to see what it is. Your nose tells you it's shit, and you give it a wide berth.'

Vladimir Ulyanov, 1900

'It is possible for a prominent Party worker, the pride of the Party, a comrade who selflessly devoted his whole life to the cause of the working class, to disappear without trace ... We intend to publish a pamphlet with the biographies of these workers. Such a pamphlet will be the best answer to all the doubters and deprecators of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. Such a pamphlet will be the best guide to our young workers, who will learn from it how every thinking worker should live and conduct himself.'

Vladimir Ulyanov, 1910

'The generation of worker-Bolsheviks dating from the *Iskra* period has not only departed from the industrial field of combat, it has, with some minor exceptions, actually died out.'

Semën Kanatchikov, 1934

#### Questions from a Worker Who Reads

Who built Thebes of the seven gates?  
In the books you will find the name of kings.  
Did the kings haul up the lumps of rock?  
And Babylon, many times demolished.  
Who raised it up so many times? In what houses  
Of gold-glittering Lima did the builders live?  
Where, the evening that the Wall of China was finished  
Did the masons go? Great Rome  
Is full of triumphal arches. Who erected them? Over whom  
Did the Caesars triumph? Had Byzantium, much praised in song,  
Only palaces for its inhabitants? Even in fabled Atlantis  
The night the ocean engulfed it  
The drowning still bawled for their slaves.

The young Alexander conquered India.  
Was he alone?  
Caesar beat the Gauls.  
Did he not have even a cook with him?  
Philip of Spain wept when his armada  
Went down. Was he the only one to weep?  
Frederick the Second won the Seven Years' War.  
Who else won it?

Every page a victory.  
Who cooked the feast for the victors?  
Every ten years a great man.  
Who paid the bill?

So many reports.  
So many questions.

Bertolt Brecht, 1935

'It is often said that 'the germ of all Stalinism was in Bolshevism at its beginning'. Well, I have no objection. Only, Bolshevism also contained many other germs, a mass of other germs, and those who lived through the enthusiasm of the first years of the first victorious socialist revolution ought not to forget it. To judge the living man by the death germs which the autopsy reveals in the corpse – and which he may have carried in him since his birth – is that very sensible?' Victor Serge 1937.

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# Maps

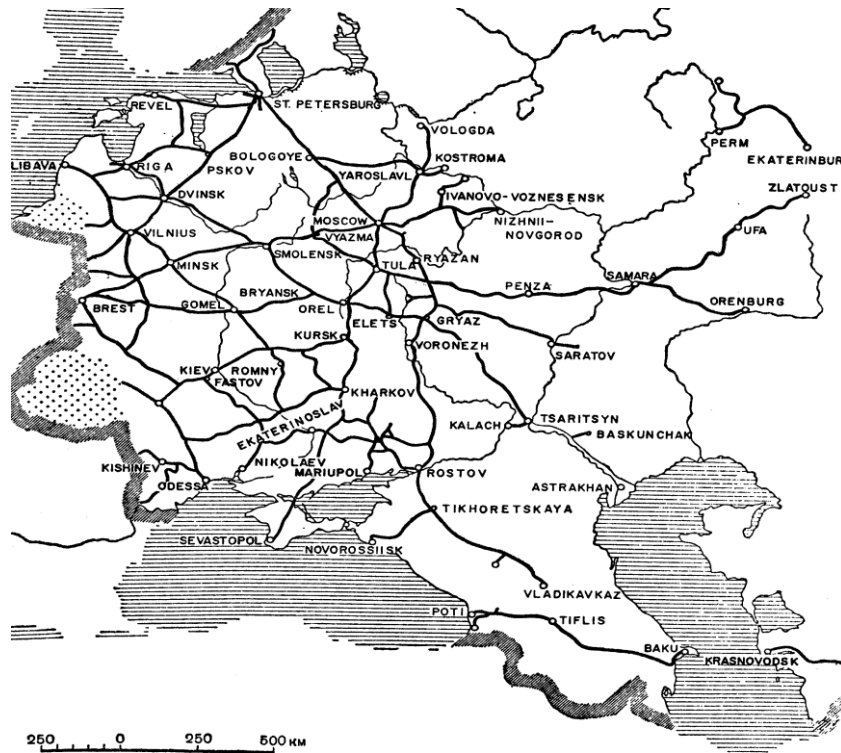
## European Russia in 1887



Asiatic Russia in 1887



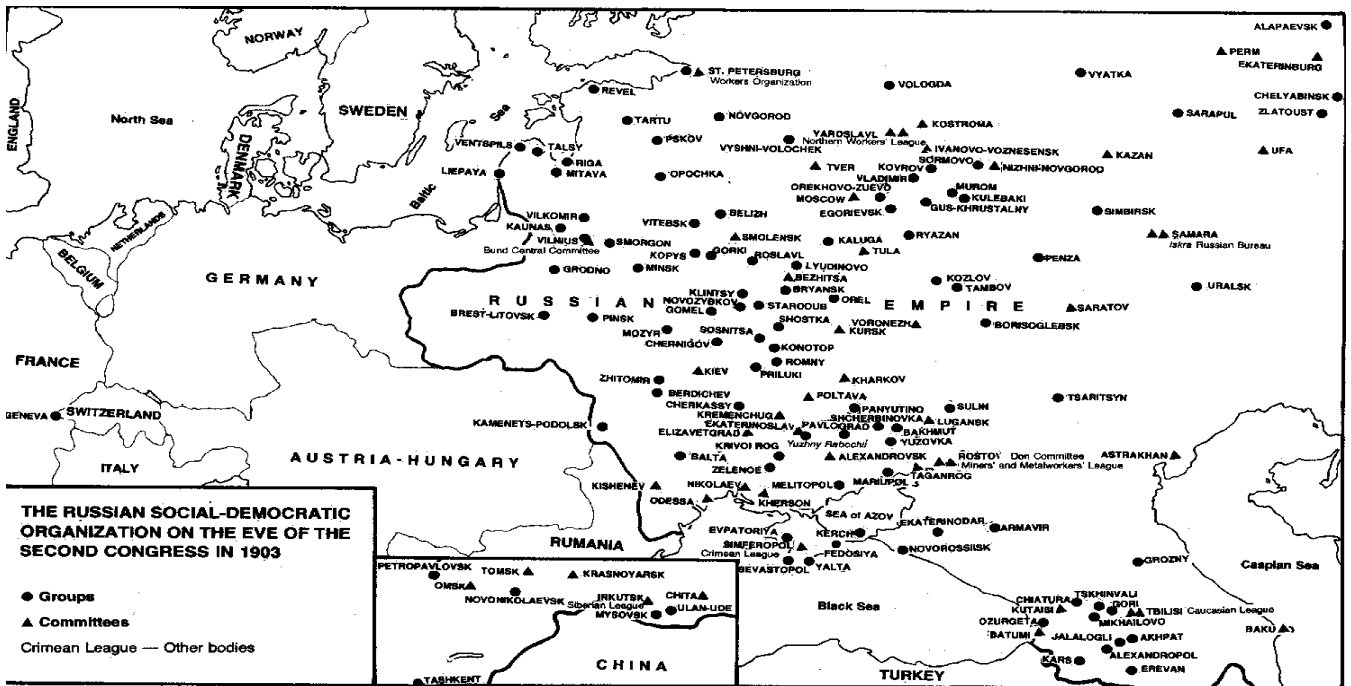
The European Russian rail network in 1900



Social Democratic circles and groups claimed between 1883 and 1893



Social Democratic organisations claimed in summer 1903



# Abbreviations

AUCP (B)	All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)
Bund	General Jewish Labour Union of Lithuania, Poland and Russia
CC	Central Committee
CPRF	Communist Party of the Russian Federation
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
EC	Executive Committee
GOT	Emancipation of Labour Group
GSD	St. Petersburg Group of Social-Democrats
LSDP	Lithuanian Social-Democratic Party
PPS	Polish Socialist Party
Proletariat	Social Revolutionary Party Proletariat
RSDP	All-Russian Social-Democratic Party
RSDRP	All-Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party
RSDRP (B)	All-Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party (Bolsheviks)
RUP	Revolutionary Ukrainian Party
SAV	Finnish Active Resistance Party
SD	Social-Democrat, Social Democratic
SDAP	Socialist Workers' Party of Germany
SDKP	Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland
SDKPiL	Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania
Soyuz borby	League of Struggle
SPD	Social-Democratic Party of Germany
SR	Social Revolutionary
S-R	Socialist-Revolutionary
TRK	Central Workers' Circle
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VPSR	All-Russian Party of Socialist Revolutionaries
ZRL	Workers' Union in Lithuania
ZRP	Union of Polish Workers



# Preface

*Building the Old Bolsheviks* is a long overdue attempt to trace the complex and contradictory process of how the original Bolsheviks were built, and how they were active in their own building, between 1881 and 1903. This book will challenge haters of the devils Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky, and worshippers at the shrines of saints Vladimir, Joseb and Lev, and it will seek to offer provisional answers to four questions. Who were the original Bolsheviks? How did they become revolutionaries? What were their ideas? How did they organise?

Russian revolutionaries were not socially homogeneous. A male *intelligent* and a female *intelligentka* almost always had a secondary, and often a higher education, but many became émigrés. A *praktik* was a practical underground worker who often had a primary education, at best, but almost all *praktiki*, and some *intelligenty*, risked their lives by working under dangerous tsarist conditions.

Very few Western European academics have translated any of the surviving full-length auto biographies and biographies of *praktiki*, and none of them appear to have had any practical involvement in a revolutionary organisation, while the microscopic number of writers with any revolutionary experience have just as ‘top down’ a perspective. Proletarian revolutions, by definition, come from ‘below’, but hardly any writers acknowledge that the thousands of *praktiki* and hundreds of *intelligenty* in Russia were often the real leaders for most of the time.

This study is by a retired academic with 25 years’ experience in a revolutionary socialist organisation and almost twice as much as a trade union activist. I have studied the lives of as many of the original Bolsheviks as I can, and I have tried not to let the comparatively rich sources for the usual *intelligenty* suspects dominate my account. I have not engaged with academic or sectarian squabbles, but since none of the works I have read are 100 percent reliable, I use ‘according to’ and ‘reportedly’ to indicate my misgivings. I include some information from the internet, for want of anything better, but it comes with the usual health warning.

Hundreds of *intelligenty* and *praktiki* will appear in this narrative, sometimes momentarily, and often with the barest biographical detail, and many will disappear into emigration, prison, deportation or exile, often without trial. Many survivors will reappear, after they escaped or completed their sentences, and some became active again, as did some émigrés who returned; but some will disappear. Tsarist prisons were often rife with fatal diseases, and when the temperature in Siberia reached 30 degrees below zero it burned the lungs, but it could reach 46 degrees below in Yakutsk, where Jewish ‘state criminals’ (political suspects) were sent, often without trial. To avoid making the well-known émigré *intelligenty* dominate this narrative, and avoid the bewildering multiplicity of *klitchki* (underground pseudonyms) which can make us forget that they were human beings, this book uses transliterations of given and family names. It also gives the transliterated titles of books and periodicals, and the names (and acronyms) of organisations.

The reader does not need a detailed knowledge of Russian geography, history or culture, but this book travels across the vast empire and much of Western Europe, following the refugees and émigrés who relied on the few states that would take them in. In this period British law stipulated that ‘fugitives’ should ‘never be surrendered for extradition if their crimes were of a political character’: the Swiss government resisted deporting foreigners charged with a political crime; and the French government gave limited sanctuary to political refugees.

The reader does not need to know what Anglophones call Belarussian, Estonian, Finnish, Georgian, German, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Yiddish or any of the 170 or so other languages which were spoken in the Russian empire. This book accepts the westernised names for the subject nations, but since the tsar sought to ‘Russify’ the names of their towns and cities, it uses the names favoured by the majority of their inhabitants. The capital of Suomi (Finland) was Helsinki, not Helsingfors, that of Eesti (Estonia) was Tallinn, not Reval, that of Latvija (Latvia) was Riga, not Rīga, that of Lietuva (Lithuania) was Vilnius, not Vilna, that of Królestwo Polskie (the Kingdom of Poland) was Warszawa, not Warsaw, that of Ukrajina (Ukraine) was Kyiv, not Kiev, that of Sakartvelo (Georgia) was Tbilisi, not Tiflis, and that of Azərbaýcan (Azerbaijan) was Bakı, not Baku.

The Old Style Russian calendar was 12 days behind the western calendar until 1 March 1900, then 13 days behind until February 1918. This book uses the Russian calendar, but gives both dates where there is potential confusion, and it gives Russian weights, measures and distances in metric quantities.

I would particularly like to thank Dave Ayre, Einde O’Callaghan, Frank Ellis, Ian Birchall, Katy Turton, Paul Baker and Sebastian Budgen. I have tried to follow Marx’s mottos: ‘ignorance never yet helped anybody’, ‘doubt everything’ and ‘go your own way, and let people talk’. These are excellent guides, particularly if they are applied to the few well-known *intelligenty*; but much information about the original Bolsheviks comes to us via their subsequent murderers, so we can barely see most of them at the end of the Stalinist Hall of Mirrors.

# *The Stalinist Hall of Mirrors*

The leaders of today's Communist Party of the Russian Federation claim that it is a democratic-federalist organisation, but in reality it is a nationalist and imperialist empire, so the CPRF tries to cover its roots, not least by failing to release historical documents. Around 700 letters signed by Lenin were first published in 2011,<sup>1</sup> but up to 7,000 documents he signed reportedly remain unpublished,<sup>2</sup> as do many of those written by his wife, Krupskaya, his sisters Anna and Maria, and many more Old Bolsheviks.<sup>3</sup> In 2005 422 previously unpublished documents signed by Lenin were published;<sup>4</sup> but Katy Turton, who worked in the party archives in the early 2000's, recalls that while 'Almost all the documents I received were complete', Lenin's sisters and Krupskaya had 'exercised careful self-censorship' long after his death.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, in the 1990s Tovah Yedlin was unable to see all the papers of one of the original Bolsheviks' main financial supporters, Maxim Gorky.<sup>6</sup>

The CPRF was founded in 1993 and claimed to be the legitimate successor of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; yet the CPSU had been banned after a failed coup in 1991, during a crisis mainly caused by the unmanageable internal economic and political consequences of over 40 years of military competition with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, led by the USA. The CPSU had recently dissolved the Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance (the 'Warsaw Pact'), but its hegemony over its satellite states had been under serious pressure for decades. In 1981 the Red Army suppressed the Independent Self-governing Trade Union 'Solidarity' in Poland, and it crushed the 'Prague Spring' in Czechoslovakia in 1968. In 1965 the Lenin's 'complete' works in English included over 4,300 letters,<sup>7</sup> but some were incomplete, and it included only one of the pieces he wrote to defend Roman Malinowsky, the police spy.<sup>8</sup> In 1961 the Communist Party of China denounced the CPSU as 'revisionist traitors', and in 1960 the Communist Party of Albania left the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In autumn 1956 the Red Army massacred Hungarian revolutionaries, even though the CPSU had hoped to appease the Communist Party of Yugoslavia by dissolving the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties (the 'Cominform') in spring. Nikita Khrushchev, the CPSU's First Secretary, acknowledged the 'cult of personality' around his predecessor, Stalin, and listed some of his crimes,<sup>9</sup> but not those in which he had been personally complicit. In 1955 the CPSU formed the 'Warsaw Pact' to counter NATO, but in 1953 Khrushchev oversaw the repression of a workers' revolt in East Berlin, days after he became First Secretary, following the death of the Stalin, the last survivor of the late 1917 Central Committee. In 1952 the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) became the CPSU, after Stalin reportedly declared that 'There are no more Mensheviks. Why should we call ourselves Bolsheviks?'<sup>10</sup>

In 1949, as the Cold War set in between the former wartime Allies who had defeated Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, the USA and 27 of its satellite states in Europe, plus Turkey, formed NATO. In 1948 the Communist Party of Yugoslavia distanced itself from the AUCP (B), even though the Cominform's headquarters had been in Belgrade since 1947. When the Allies partitioned Germany in summer 1945, East Germany, including East Berlin, joined the USSR. By then 10.6 million Red Army troops were dead or missing, and 22.6 million were sick or wounded, while 10 million Russian civilians had died during military actions and six million from malnutrition or disease. Albania, Poland, Romania and Hungary had joined the USSR in 1944; but in 1943 Stalin dissolved the Third International (the 'Comintern'), hoping to appease the wartime Allies, and dropped the *Internationale* in favour of the *State Anthem of the USSR*. He gave his granddaughter a flat in the Kremlin, on condition that her Jewish husband never visited him, since he was convinced that the 'entire older generation' of Jews was 'contaminated with Zionism'.<sup>11</sup> World War 2 began for the USSR in 1941 when Adolf Hitler broke the Treaty of Non-Aggression, and Stalin's agent assassinated his main rival, Trotsky, in 1940.

In 1939 the AUCP(B) claimed 1,588,812 members and 888,814 candidate members.<sup>12</sup> In autumn Russian troops invaded Poland, days after Vyacheslav Molotov had signed the Treaty of Non-Aggression with the Nazis. By then between 950,000 and 1.2 million people had died in purges in the USSR.<sup>13</sup> In 1938 Khrushchev joined the AUCP (B)'s leading Politburo, soon after he purged Old Bolsheviks in his native Ukraine. In 1938 and 1937 two million people were condemned to death, over 681,000 executed and over one million deported to the Main Administration of Corrective Labour Camps and Labour Settlement (the 'Gulag'). Over 114,000 died there,<sup>14</sup> or in prison, including 43 of the 60 members of the 1922 CC,<sup>15</sup> while 98 of the 139 members and candidate members of the 1934 CC were executed, and 1,108 of that year's 1,966 Congress delegates were imprisoned.<sup>16</sup> All but two of those who were shot had become party members well before 1917.<sup>17</sup>

In 1935 the CC controlled the publication of 'Old Bolshevik' memoirs.<sup>18</sup> According to the official encyclopaedia, the All-Union Society of Old Bolsheviks dissolved itself because it had 'completed its tasks'.<sup>19</sup> In reality, Stalin had ordered its dissolution because these 'fault-finding old men' had not grasped 'the needs of the times',<sup>20</sup> and had

protested against the Moscow show trials.<sup>21</sup> The Association of Former Political Exiles and Prisoners also ceased to function,<sup>22</sup> since it had been organising a petition against executing oppositionists.<sup>23</sup> In 1934 the All-Union Society of Old Bolsheviks had over 2,000 members, but stopped publishing its periodical, *Stary bolshevik (Old Bolshevik)*,<sup>24</sup> after it drew the Politburo's attention to Lenin's injunction not to execute comrades.<sup>25</sup> The purge got underway after the assassination of Sergey Kirov, Stalin's main domestic rival, and soon after Khrushchev's election to the CC.<sup>26</sup> In 1933 over 1.4 million people were arrested,<sup>27</sup> and the first conference of what had become the All-Union Society of Old Bolsheviks' elected Yemelyan Yaroslavsky, the leader of the League of Militant Atheists, and of the failed Moscow rising in 1905, as chair of its leading Presidium.<sup>28</sup> Applicants had to prove that they had had a continuous party membership of at least 18 years, though the Presidium and Council could grant exceptions.<sup>29</sup> In 1931 the Association of Former Political Exiles and Prisoners had 2,759 members.<sup>30</sup> The Society of Old Bolsheviks' first *Stary bolshevik* appeared in 1930,<sup>31</sup> but Stalin ordered Georgians he had known for decades not to visit him, and angrily sent them away if they arrived.<sup>32</sup> The bureaucracy and leadership had been considerably expanded. By summer 1,268 Congress delegates had votes, and there were 891 'alternates' (probationary candidates) without a vote.<sup>33</sup>

In 1929 the official encyclopaedia contained biographies of 246 people, or under 0.02 percent of the membership, who were deemed to have been 'personalities' during the October 1917 revolution; but 237 were men and nine were women. Of the 231 whose birth date was recorded, 12 were born before 1868, 35 in 1868-1873 and 34 in 1877-1880, but 103 (44 percent) in 1882-1891. Of the 226 with a named birthplace, 27 were from St. Petersburg or Moscow, or their provinces, but 99 (43.8 percent) were from subject nations or border provinces, including 50 from Ukraine and New Russia. Of the 178 whose father's status can be deduced, 23 percent were workers, artisans or day labourers, 23 percent were engaged in agriculture, and 13 percent were traders and merchants. Of the 211 whose status can be identified more precisely, 67 had humble or modest origins, including ten children of artisans, 12 of proletarians and 16 of poor peasants, but 144 (68.2 percent) were from comfortably-off, wealthy or aristocratic families. Of the 246 with an identifiable ethnicity, up to 127 (51.6 percent) were (or were probably) Russian, while the 119 from ethnic or national minorities included at least 41 Jews and 15 Germans. Of 225 entries about formal education, nine men and women (including eight Russians) received none, 45 attended primary schools, 25 elite classical gymnasia, eight realschulen with a broader curriculum, while 12 had some form of vocational training, 11 attended other educational establishments and three women had been privately educated. Ten of those with some form of secondary education did not complete their course, but 114 (51 percent) had some form of higher education. Of the 83 who attended a named university, 50 did so in Moscow or St. Petersburg, while six, or possibly eight, studied in Kyiv, and 17 attended foreign universities, mainly in Switzerland. Of the 58 who stated the faculty, 20 studied law, ten medicine, nine mathematics and physics, seven history and languages and six natural science. In addition 18 attended higher institutes of technology, notably in St. Petersburg, but around 15 percent did not complete their course.<sup>34</sup>

By 1929 Stalin and his allies controlled the party and state bureaucracies. In 1928, in exile, Trotsky published Lenin's four-year-old letter to Congress, his 'Testament',<sup>35</sup> which demanded that Stalin be sacked.<sup>36</sup> (The CC had previously prevailed on him to deny its existence.<sup>37</sup>) In 1927 party membership had risen to 1,200,000,<sup>38</sup> but less than a third were industrial or transport workers, and 100,000 had left in 18 months. Ten percent of the members of leading bodies had once been proletarians, but over 75 percent were also full-time bureaucrats.<sup>39</sup>

In 1925 the party reportedly had 1,025,000 members in a population of 147 million,<sup>40</sup> but fewer than 2,000 had joined before 1905.<sup>41</sup> That year the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party (Bolsheviks) became the AUCP (B), soon after Stalin and his allies denounced Max Eastman's publication of extracts from Lenin's 'Testament'.<sup>42</sup> From 1924 biographical articles of selected party members began to appear;<sup>43</sup> but around 540,000 out of 600,000 had joined after 1917, less than 54,000 during 1917, 12,000 in 1906-1916, and 3,600 (0.6 percent) before 1905;<sup>44</sup> and many had opposed Lenin from 1908 to 1914.<sup>45</sup> Lenin died early in 1924, after the revolution failed to spread to Germany, and Russia was isolated.<sup>46</sup> He had his third stroke in spring 1923 and his second at the end of 1922,<sup>47</sup> days after the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and its Caucasian, Ukrainian and Belorussian counterparts formed the USSR.<sup>48</sup> Reportedly there were 44,148 pre-1917 party members,<sup>49</sup> but only 68 of the 522 Congress delegates had joined the party before 1905,<sup>50</sup> while the bureaucracy had grown to 15,000.<sup>51</sup> By late autumn the Red Army, led by Trotsky, had defeated the White Army and 14 armies from capitalist states, though 800,000 Red soldiers had been killed or had died from wounds or disease.<sup>52</sup> In May Lenin had his first stroke, soon after the Politburo appointed Stalin as General Secretary.<sup>53</sup> In February Stalin addressed the inaugural meeting of the Society of Old Bolsheviks,<sup>54</sup> and the 64 present elected Mikhail Olminsky as their chair,<sup>55</sup> even though he had once been a terrorist.<sup>56</sup> The Society was accountable to Istpart, the Commission on the Study of the History of the October Revolution and the RCP (B). Applicants had to have joined before 1 January 1905, but other social democrats who had been active for the time could apply, if they had later joined the party.<sup>57</sup> By the end of 1921

136,386 members, a fifth of the total, had been expelled.<sup>58</sup> In December Istpart became directly accountable to the CC, which appointed its nine leading members, and another commission, led by the Pole Feliks Dzierzynski, would study the history of the Polish revolutionary movement.<sup>59</sup> During that year Lenin reportedly acknowledged that when the Politburo was 'faced with a problem which needed a lot of sorting out', Stalin was 'our nutcracker'.<sup>60</sup> By the end of 1920 1,400,000 people had joined the party since 1917, and two-thirds had peasant origins, but 30 percent had left.<sup>61</sup> In summer Lenin claimed that as 'a current of political thought and as a political party, Bolshevism has existed since 1903'.<sup>62</sup> In spring the newly-formed Association of Former Political Exiles and Prisoners had 200 members.<sup>63</sup>

In October 1919 20 percent of party members had joined before October 1917, but only eight percent before February.<sup>64</sup> In 1918 the party reportedly had around 200,000 members.<sup>65</sup> Early that year Lenin acknowledged that the revolution was 'doomed' unless it spread to Germany,<sup>66</sup> and late in 1917 he was clear that the 'final victory of socialism in a single country is of course impossible'.<sup>67</sup> A few hundred people died during the October revolution in St. Petersburg.<sup>68</sup> During 1917 many Bolsheviks and Mensheviks had worked together, and in that summer's CC elections all but one of the 134 Congress delegates voted for Lenin, and all but three for Trotsky, while Stalin came seventh.<sup>69</sup> When Lenin, Trotsky and other leaders were in hiding or prison, Stalin had been a spokesman for the CC;<sup>70</sup> but he had not been elected to the Presidium of the All-Russian Conference in spring,<sup>71</sup> after Lenin inveighed against 'people who readily call themselves "old Bolsheviks"', who more than once already have played so regrettable a role in the history of our party by reiterating formulas senselessly *learned by rote*, instead of *studying* the specific features of the new and living reality'.<sup>72</sup> In February the party had no more than 5,000 active members.<sup>73</sup>

By 1915 Lenin had forgotten Stalin's real name,<sup>74</sup> He had been exiled to Siberia in 1913,<sup>75</sup> and in 1912 Lenin had co-opted him onto the CC, in spite of serious opposition, when the Bolsheviks split *Rossyskaya Sotsial-Demokraticheskaya Rabochaya Partya* (the All-Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party) and formed the RSDRP (Bolsheviks).<sup>76</sup> In 1910 Lenin noted that 'Bolshevism as a tendency' had taken 'definite shape' by summer 1905.<sup>77</sup>

By summer 1906 tsarist punitive detachments had killed over 14,000 revolutionaries and other people and wounded 18,000 across Russia,<sup>78</sup> but the total number of executions and deaths in prison and exile is unknown.<sup>79</sup> Early that year the 'hard' and 'soft' *fraktions* (temporary groupings) of the RSDRP had failed to 'fuse', following the crushing of the Moscow uprising late in 1905, soon after the St. Petersburg Sovet elected Trotsky as a leader, even though he had been 'outside the fractions' for years.<sup>80</sup> By autumn the war with Japan had cost the lives of 12,000 Russian sailors, and 41,000 soldiers had been killed or died from disease or other causes, while 57,000 had been disabled, 148,000 wounded,<sup>81</sup> and around 75,000 captured.<sup>82</sup> The autocracy was extremely vulnerable, but the RSDRP was in disarray. By late 1904 hardened *Bolsheviki* and *Mensheviki* factions had formed in Russia,<sup>83</sup> following the split among the *intelligenty* who had formed the overwhelmingly majority of delegates at the RSDRP's Second Congress in summer 1903, and who were referred to in the minutes by their underground *klitchka*.<sup>84</sup>

Late in 1902 Krupskaya greeted 'Piero' in London,<sup>85</sup> but he had reportedly used the passport of an Irkutsk man called Trotsky when he escaped from Siberia.<sup>86</sup> In summer 1901 a letter from 'Lenin' arrived at *Iskra's* press in Munich. Nobody recognised the pseudonym, yet 'Lenin' used at least 160 others before and after that.<sup>87</sup> Iuly Tserderbaum used several pseudonyms,<sup>88</sup> but evidently not 'Martov' (March) before 1901.<sup>89</sup>

The RSDRP's First Congress had taken place in 1898, but the tiny and overwhelmingly intelligenty leadership was soon decimated by arrests. The formation of the RSDRP was largely on the initiative of the General Jewish Labour Union of Lithuania, Poland and Russia, the Bund, which had been formed in 1897, and Jewish social-democrats in the Pale had developed a programme of propagandising and agitating workers. During the 1890s dozens of Russian intelligenty and workers had been imprisoned, deported or exiled, after intelligenty influenced by social-democratic ideas tried to lead organised workers, especially in St. Petersburg. During the 1880s social-revolutionary ideas and terrorism remained influential, especially among intelligenty, but there were pogroms, and no peasant uprisings, after social-revolutionary terrorists assassinated the tsar in 1881. By 1874 hundreds of young social-revolutionary intelligenty were in jail, after they had 'gone to the people' – the peasantry – to propagandise in favour of an uprising. The overwhelming majority of the population were peasant farmers, and only a tiny minority of migrant peasants and townspeople were proletarians. The first translation of the first volume of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* was into Russian in 1872, and the censors passed it, but to many of the few intelligenty who could get hold of such works, and could read German, the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels seemed irrelevant in an overwhelmingly peasant country, and a salutary warning about the consequences of proletarianisation.

# 1. Never have I witnessed such hideous butchery

## (i) The most extreme the West has to offer

In 1842 the radical Russian writer Vissarion Belinsky paraphrased part of Friedrich Engels' 1842 critique of Friedrich Schelling,<sup>1</sup> and by 1848 Mikhail Petrachevsky's St. Petersburg circle had a copy of Engels' *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klassen in England (The Condition of the Working-Class in England)* and Karl Marx's *Das Elend der Philosophie (The Poverty of Philosophy)*.<sup>2</sup> In 1860 Marx heard that his *Beitrag Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechts-Philosophie (A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy)*, which critiqued Georg Hegel's philosophy on law, had 'caused a considerable stir' in Russian academic circles;<sup>3</sup> and in 1862 a Russian prince told a censor about a conversation he had had in a Berlin bookshop.

'Would you care for some Russian books?' a helpful salesman asked me. 'What kind?' 'Well, for example, Herzen's: I have every one of his works, the older ones and the very latest.' 'No', I replied. 'They watch such things very carefully these days, and I am afraid that I would never get them to St. Petersburg: they'd be confiscated at the border.' 'That's a lot of nonsense! I'll deliver as many as you want to St. Petersburg, directly to your home, in fact right in your study.' 'Amazing!' 'But what if I suddenly decide to detain the person who delivered them?' 'Do not worry about that! You would not be able to do that; you would not even see the person delivering them to you.'<sup>4</sup>

Alexandr Herzen was a wealthy utopian socialist émigré in London.

In 1864 the social revolutionary (SR) 'Petr Lavrov' (Petr Lavrovich Mirtov) paraphrased part of the Marx and Engels' *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei (The Manifesto of the Communist Party)*. He did not name his source or pursue its ideas,<sup>5</sup> but during the 1860s some of Marx's ideas appeared in *Russkoye slovo (The Russian Word)*.<sup>6</sup>

Volume I of Marx's *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (Capital. Critique of Political Economy)* appeared in Hamburg in autumn 1867,<sup>7</sup> and considered the Russian village commune. 'Everything, to the minutest detail, except for its 'patriarchal nature' and its 'collective responsibility' for paying taxes, was 'the same as in the ancient Germanic community'. The commune was beginning to 'decay',<sup>8</sup> but the Russian army frightened him.

If on the continent of Europe the influence of capitalist production continues to develop as it has done up to now, enervating the human race by overwork, the division of labour, subordination to machines, the maiming of women and children, making life wretched etc., hand in hand with competition in the size of national armies, national debts, taxes, sophisticated warfare, etc., the rejuvenation of Europe by the knout and the obligatory infusion of Kalmyk [Caucasian] blood so earnestly prophesied by the half-Russian and full Muscovite *Herzen* may become inevitable.<sup>9</sup>

A few more Russian intelligentsy read Marx.

Nikolai Danielson was born in Reval (today's Tallin) in Estonia in 1844. He entered St. Petersburg University in the early 1860s,<sup>10</sup> and later worked with the SR German Lopatin at the Society of Mutual Credit, which gave them access to all kinds of economic data.<sup>11</sup> In 1868 Nikolai Liubavin, a student friend of Danielson's,<sup>12</sup> went to Berlin to study, and then to Leipzig to find Marx's works. He acknowledged to Marx's friend Johann Becker in Geneva that 'the liberation of the working class' was 'the common cause of all people', though 'I cannot yet apply this principle to my country, where no labour movement whatever exists'. Liubavin joined the International Working Men's Association to be 'better acquainted with the West European labour movement', and Becker gave him a copy of *Das Kapital* and suggested that it be translated into Russian. Back in St. Petersburg Liubavin gave the book to Danielson,<sup>13</sup> and Nikolai Poliakov agreed to publish a translation.<sup>14</sup>

In London Marx was 'extraordinarily pleased', but found it ironic that the Russians, 'against whom I have been fighting incessantly for 25 years', had 'always been my "patrons"', since *Das Elend der Philosophie (The Poverty of Philosophy)* and *Zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie (A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy)* 'have nowhere had such good sales'. He believed that Russian aristocrats educated at French and German universities 'yearn for the most extreme the West has to offer', though that did not stop them 'becoming scoundrels as soon as they enter government service'; yet Marx knew that a Russian translation of *Das Kapital* would not reach tailors and cobblers. When Liubavin asked him if Volume II was available, he thought it would not be ready for 'perhaps another six months', but wanted Danielson to go ahead with Volume I. (Volume II was eventually published 17 years later.)<sup>15</sup> By 1869 bookshops and libraries in St. Petersburg Moscow,<sup>16</sup> were distribution centres for illegal literature and student meeting-places.<sup>17</sup> An intelligent was translating Marx's critique of Hegel when he was arrested,<sup>18</sup> and Danielson was briefly detained for contacting an SR terrorist in 1870.<sup>19</sup>

In 1870 Marx found the Russian *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii (The Communist Manifesto)* 'very interesting'.<sup>20</sup> Reportedly the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin and the terrorist Sergey Nechaev had translated it,<sup>21</sup> and a Russian translation of *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich (The Civil War in France)* appeared in Zurich in 1871.<sup>22</sup>

In 1871 Russian censors banned the importation of Engels' book on the English working class, but not *Das Kapital*, which was 'a difficult, inaccessible, strictly scientific work' with a 'colossal mass of abstruse, somewhat obscure politico-economic argumentation'. 'It can be confidently stated that in Russia few will read it and even fewer will understand it,' and its conclusions did not apply to Russia. Bakunin had agreed to translate the whole book, but managed only part of the first chapter, which Liubavin probably completed. Lopatin translated chapters 2, 3 and part of chapter 4, and Danielson translated the rest. In spring 1872 *Kapital. Kritika Politicheskoi Ekonomii* went on sale in St. Petersburg. Many news papers praised it, and 900 of the 3,000 copies had been sold in six weeks. It convinced a tiny number of mainly young intelligenty that the Russian economy was developing on capitalist lines, but most of them were desperate to avoid the horrors of proletarianisation and hoped to build on what they considered to be the 'socialism' of the village commune.<sup>23</sup> In autumn the police seized Poliakov's stock,<sup>24</sup> and charged him with publishing 'subversive' stories by the French philosopher Denis Diderot, which were burned;<sup>25</sup> but one intelligent read *Das Kapital* in German.

Nikolai Ziber was born in Crimea in 1844. He later studied law at Kyiv University, graduated in 1866,<sup>26</sup> read *Das Kapital*, and, even before he published his masters' thesis in 1871,<sup>27</sup> he was convinced that capitalism would take root in Russia.<sup>28</sup> In 1872 he studied at Zurich University,<sup>29</sup> and became a professor at Kyiv University in 1873.<sup>30</sup> His *Ekonomicheskaya teoriya Karla Marksa (The Economic Theory of Karl Marx)* popularised Marx's ideas among SRs,<sup>31</sup> but because of censorship 'economic materialism' became code for Marxism.<sup>32</sup> Ziber reportedly called SRs 'Ignoramuses' and 'Utopians' who 'do not understand the first thing about scientific socialism and political economy'. 'We shall have no sense in this country until the Russian *muzhik* [peasant] is cooked up in the factory boiler'.<sup>33</sup>

By spring 1874 all 3,000 copies of *Kapital* had been sold, but Poliakov's bankruptcy prevented him from reprinting it.<sup>34</sup> When Marx asked Danielson about the 'historical development of communal property',<sup>35</sup> Danielson sent him Ziber's articles.<sup>36</sup> Marx was an assimilated Jew, and lived in London, but all the Jews in Russian were oppressed.

## (ii) The Pale

The Pale of Settlement for Jews dated from 1791.<sup>37</sup> It included the south-western border provinces of European Russia, and from 1793 the ten provinces of the former Kingdom of Poland. The southern Pale shared long borders with western Europe and the Black Sea, and the northern Pale bordered the Baltic and was within 600km of both Moscow and St. Petersburg.<sup>38</sup> From 1804 Jews were legally entitled to be educated at all levels, set up schools and factories and buy or lease land, but they could not take part in the liquor trade or join the armed forces. In practice the assimilatory parts of this legislation remained a dead letter, but from 1827 12-year-old Jewish boys faced conscription into the army.<sup>39</sup> Many Jewish families were forced to leave the southern ports of Luhansk and Sevastopol, and parts of Poltava and Kyiv provinces, and most went to the western Russian provinces of the Pale.<sup>40</sup> They had to live in towns, and many self-employed artisans were already under pressure from mechanised factories.<sup>41</sup> By 1835 the Pale included the provinces of Hrodna, Vilnius, Volhynia, Podolia, Minsk, Katerynoslav, Bessarabia, Białystok, Kyiv (except the city), Kherson (except the navy port of Mykolaiv), Taurida (except the navy port of Sevastopol), Magiłoŭ, Vitebsk and Chernihiv. Jewish families Courland, Livonia, Poltava and Poland had to obey different laws to people in the rest of the empire, and could not live within 53km of the Prussian border, allegedly to prevent smuggling.<sup>42</sup>

By 1840 there were three million Jews in the Pale, and artisans in Vilnius, Minsk, Magiłoŭ, Vitebsk and other towns had built mutual aid funds. Only 45 Vilnius Jews had a European standard of education, and during the 1840s there were only about 50 Jewish *gymnasia* pupils and very few university graduates; but after wealthy St. Petersburg Jews petitioned the tsar, there were more. From 1859 Jews could buy licences to trade outside the Pale, and Jewish university graduates became eligible for civil service posts across the empire in 1861.<sup>43</sup> By 1863 railways ran from St. Petersburg via Daugavpils, Vilnius, Hrodna and Białystok to Warszawa, from Vilnius to Moscow by 1866, and from Vilnius to Rīga and the Prussian border by 1870.<sup>44</sup> In 1871 the Baltic port of Königsberg became part of the German Empire, and had rail connections to Switzerland and England.<sup>45</sup>

Yankel Finkelshtein was born into a lower middle class Jewish family in Vladislavov, Suwalki province, in 1851, but they later moved to Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. He entered the rabbinical Seminary in the later 1860s,<sup>46</sup>

and got illegal literature from Moscow.<sup>47</sup> In 1872 he was expelled for possessing a 'library of socialist literature' and organising an illegal 'educational society', but he wanted to get hold of more illegal literature.

Anna Epshtein was born into Jewish family in Vilnius, around 1843. She later graduated from a girls' gymnasium and became the first Jewess to enter higher education when she attended the Medical-Surgical Academy in St. Petersburg in 1869. She met intelligentsy from Nikolai Chaikovsky and Mark Natanson's *kruzhki* (clandestine circles), and became an SR; and after she graduated in 1873 she returned to Vilnius and organised the smuggling of illegal literature, and recruited.

Aron Zundelevich was born into a Jewish family in Vilnius in 1852. His mother ran an inn and his father was a scholar. Neither was overly orthodox, but Aron became extremely pious. He attended the Smorgon yeshiva run by a distant relative, where he encountered the 'heretical books' of the Haskalah, the liberal Jewish Enlightenment, and became increasingly secular. In the late 1860s he entered Vilnius Rabbinical Seminary, and by 1871 he had organised a *kruzhok* to read banned works by radicals such as Nikolai Chernyshevsky, and realised that Russians needed liberation as much as Jews. In summer 1873 Zundelevich helped Epshtein to smuggle illegal literature and travelled repeatedly to Königsberg, where Finkelshtein ran a transport route from London, Geneva and Zurich via Berlin. Zundelevich worked with professional Jewish smugglers, and set up facilities for receiving, storing and forwarding 'red mail' in Vilnius. Late that year the Seminary became a teacher-training institute, and Zundelevich organised a *kruzhok* of 12, with a periphery of 14. In summer 1875 the institute authorities searched the dormitory and found illegal literature, but Zundelevich had left. He was in Königsberg, where he had joined a radical *kruzhok* and organised the smuggling of revolutionary literature. It went from London and Geneva to the Volksstadt publishing house in Leipzig, then it was posted to the Bernshtein family's business premises in Berlin, where it was repacked and sent to Königsberg. Finkelshtein and Jewish students took it to the border and handed it over to German, Polish or Lithuanian peasants, and Zundelevich sometimes took it to St. Petersburg.<sup>48</sup> He favoured both political struggle and terror,<sup>49</sup> since 'Jewry as a national organism' was not 'worthy of support'.<sup>50</sup> Another young Jew had reached similar conclusions.

Lev Deutsch was born into an assimilated Jewish family in Odesa in 1855. His father had been born in Austria, but had moved to Odesa in the 1840s. He sold medical supplies to military hospitals during the Crimean War and achieved the rare status of becoming a merchant of the first class. He insisted that the children had a Christian education, but a *pogrom* (an anti-Jewish riot) at Easter 1871 'stirred up' the Jewish community.<sup>51</sup> Lev's father was bankrupted, but Lev's mostly Jewish *kruzhok* wondered whether Jews' 'non-productive and profitable occupations' were responsible for riots. Deutsch met Yakob Stefanovich,<sup>52</sup> the son of a Ukrainian priest,<sup>53</sup> at secondary school,<sup>54</sup> and after the government inspector closed talmud-torah schools the boys became convinced Jews caused this hostility by their 'abnormal' and 'parasitic' life; so they decided to work for Jewish 'self-improvement' through secular education and vocational training.<sup>55</sup> Stefanovich went to study medicine at Kyiv University,<sup>56</sup> and though Deutsch could not matriculate because of his ethnicity and status, he went too, and got involved in the student movement.<sup>57</sup> In 1873 he and Stefanovich went 'to the people' as SR propagandists, but in 1874 'initiated' peasants betrayed 'hundreds of their comrades to the authorities'.<sup>58</sup> In spring 1875 Deutsch propagandised in the village of Astrakhanka, but the peasants 'remained firmly convicted of the worthlessness of my preaching'.<sup>59</sup> Late that year he joined propagandists in Chirigin province, but one betrayed them. They beat him with an iron ball and chain,<sup>60</sup> poured sulphuric acid over his face and attached a note to his body which read 'Such will be the fate of all spies'.<sup>61</sup> He survived.<sup>62</sup> but another young Jew was radicalised in Kyiv.

Pavel Axelrod was born into a tavern-keeper's family in the small town of Pochev in Chernihiv province around 1849. He was a star pupil at primary school, then entered Magiloŭ gymnasium and tutored wealthy Jews' children to make ends meet. He could not enter university, but he went to Kyiv, organised SR University students and went 'to the people' in summer 1874. Late that year he went to Germany illegally, stayed with a young socialist, met socialist workers and read *Das Kapital*, but did not understand it. He moved on to Switzerland in January 1875, met leading SRs, and married Nadezhda Kaminer; but they could not make ends meet. Axelrod returned to Russia illegally in summer and met leading SR survivors in St. Petersburg.<sup>63</sup>

### **(iii) The peasants are sheep**

Lev Tikhomirov was born in the town of Gelendzhik, on the Black Sea coast,<sup>64</sup> in 1852, into the family of a priest who had become a military doctor. Lev became a republican and an SR at secondary school,<sup>65</sup> and later entered Moscow University,<sup>66</sup> but had moved to St. Petersburg and joined Natanson's SR *kruzhok* by late 1871.<sup>67</sup> Lopatin was also a member.<sup>68</sup> In 1872 Tikhomirov's *Skazka o chetyrekh bratyakh* (*The Tale of Four Brothers*) and *Pugachev* (about the 18<sup>th</sup> century peasant leader Emelian Pugachev) were the *kruzhok's* key propaganda pamphlets,<sup>69</sup> but

while Tikhomirov contacted factory workers,<sup>70</sup> as did another member,<sup>71</sup> most worked with students. One noted that 'We wish to save the people, but know nothing ourselves', so 'we should begin by studying'. Some sold books, or sought donations so they could give them away. They had 2,500 copies of the radical Vasily Bervi-Flerovsky's *Azbuka sotsialnykh nauk* (*The ABC of the Social Sciences*) printed,<sup>72</sup> and left about 150 at the printer's, so the police would confiscate them;<sup>73</sup> but took 800 to bookshops. Chaikovsky sold the rest to friends, including 300 to a medical student. Students raised money for 'a commercial enterprise on socialist principles' and a literacy school for workers.<sup>74</sup> In 1873 Tikhomirov was imprisoned,<sup>75</sup> but a young SR intelligent remained active.

Valentin Plekhanov was born into a family of landed Tatar gentry near Lipetsk in Tambov province. He became an army officer, married, and his wife bore seven children. Maria Fedorovna, their governess, came from an impoverished gentry family, but had attended the elite Smolny Institute in St. Petersburg and held strong liberal views. After Plekhanov's wife died he married Fedorovna, and her dowry doubled the size of his small estate. But in 1855 he left to fight in the Crimean War. Georgi was born in 1856 and in 1858 Valentin sold some land to support his growing family. In 1861 the 'emancipation' freed his 50 serfs and halved his estate, and in 1863-4 he helped to suppress the Polish uprising. Georgi's mother taught him to read, and he devoured the family library, but preferred military works. In 1866 he entered Voronezh Military Academy, but broke with religion after reading Chernyshevsky's coded radical novel, *Chto delat?* (*What Is To Be Done?*) In 1873, after Valentin died, Plekhanova became a teacher, and Georgi entered Constantine Military Academy in St. Petersburg, but moved to the Mining Institute in 1874. His mother wanted to sell the estate, but he threatened to burn the barn unless she sold land to 'our peasants'; so she agreed, but the peasants burned down her manor house. Late in 1875 Plekhanov attended clandestine kruzhki of students and workers, and he met Axelrod and Deutsch early in 1876. When the Institute expelled Plekhanov, he joined the embryo SR organisation *Zemlia i volya* (Land and Freedom),<sup>76</sup> whose members encouraged strikes, defended comrades against arrest, released prisoners and assassinated 'harmful' officials.<sup>77</sup> Late in December there was a memorial mass in Kazan Cathedral for the volunteers killed in the Balkan War.<sup>78</sup> Up to 250 SR intelligentsy,<sup>79</sup> and about 50 workers,<sup>80</sup> including 40 from one workshop, assembled outside.<sup>81</sup> Plekhanov praised the revolutionary 'martyrs', condemned peasant oppression, and reportedly concluded with: 'Death to the tsar. Long live freedom! Hurrah!'<sup>82</sup> Afterwards Ignaty Bachin told him that he would conduct revolutionary propaganda only among fellow workers. 'I'll never go back to the village, not for anything'. 'The peasants are sheep.'<sup>83</sup>

Plekhanov was probably in contact with the Königsberg kruzhek, whose members translated socialist literature into Hebrew and Yiddish to help to create 'social-revolutionary sections' among Jews in the Pale. Zundelevich was mainly responsible for establishing kruzhki in Daugavpils, Minsk and Hrodna, and a small town in Biełaruś, while others established one in Białystok in north-east Poland. They included around 70 people, of whom 65 were Jews; but two spies had infiltrated the network and 19 members were arrested in spring 1876. When *Zemlia i volya* was formally founded in January 1877, Zundelevich joined. He later bought two printing presses in Berlin, and had them taken apart and smuggled to St. Petersburg.<sup>84</sup> Plekhanov's kruzhek bought one of them, and Zundelevich 'mastered the compositor's art', trained four others,<sup>85</sup> and strengthened the smuggling operation.<sup>86</sup>

Plekhanov escaped to Paris and went on to Berlin, but returned to St. Petersburg in summer. He carried a brass knuckle-duster, practised using a dagger and slept with a revolver under his pillow. He and some workers propagandised in the countryside, and though he was arrested, he escaped.<sup>87</sup> Back in St. Petersburg he criticised SR intelligentsy, led workers' kruzhki and wrote leaflets for strikers.<sup>88</sup> The worker Diakov Smirnov read translations of Marx and John Stuart Mill's *Political Economy* with Chernyshevsky's notes, but 'understood little'. 'The intelligentsia never spoke to us about Marx – they said we wouldn't have understood it.' Plekhanov recalled that the 'centralists', Marx and Engels, 'were seen as quite mischievous reactionaries'. 'Occasionally we would tell our audiences about the International Association of Workermen' (IWMA), 'but only in our role as "buntary" [insurrectionists] – making the activities of Bakunin our model'.<sup>89</sup> There were other 'buntary' in the south.

Vera Zasulich was born into an army captain's family on his estate near Smolensk, the provincial capital, in 1849. Her father owned 40 or so serfs, but most paid him quitrent to work for wages elsewhere. After he died in 1855 Vera lived with wealthy relatives near Moscow and her tutor encouraged her to read radical books. She went to a private boarding school in 1864, and later trained to be a governess. An older sister was a member of an SR student kruzhek, and in 1866 she encouraged Vera to read Chernyshevsky, Lavrov and Mill, and attend SR lectures, and she stopped believing in god. By 1867, as a magistrate's assistant in a nearby town, she saw the peasants' poverty and ignorance, and returned to St. Petersburg in 1868 to learn the 'phonetic method' of teaching literacy. In 1869 she performed conspiratorial tasks for the terrorist Nechaev - *konspiratsia* was the art of avoiding arrest by adhering to strict rules – but she was arrested and imprisoned for a year without trial. She spent another year in the Fortress, and in 1871 she was deported to Novgorod province, then allowed to go to Tver, but was deported to Kostroma in 1872. In 1873 she studied midwifery at Kharkiv University, and in 1875 she



joined 15 or so buntary in Kyiv. In summer 1877 she read about the illegal flogging of a student propagandist in a St. Petersburg prison, learned to shoot, threw dice with another woman to decide who would assassinate the police chief, and won. Early in 1878 she went to St. Petersburg, walked into the chief's office and shot him. She was badly beaten, but he had a severe wound in the pelvis and thought he was going to die, so he made a will and left a fortune. When he recovered the tsar sacked him for taking bribes, and in spring his enemies got Zasulich treated as an ordinary criminal. The judge picked the most incompetent prosecutor he knew, and her barrister proved that the police chief had lied and was guilty of provocation, so the jury of minor officials and intelligenty found Zasulich innocent 'out of conscience'. Sympathisers hid her, but the Senate nullified her acquittal and issued an order for her arrest.<sup>90</sup> She got a letter published in a St. Petersburg paper, and copies were 'snatched up like hot cakes', but the paper was closed,<sup>91</sup> so SRs helped her to escape to Switzerland.<sup>92</sup>

#### **(iv) You must be destroyed and you will be destroyed!**

Mikhail Kravchinsky was born into a petit-bourgeois family. He later graduated from medical school, achieved gentry status,<sup>93</sup> and married. Sergey was born in the village of Novyi Starodub, Kherson province, in 1852. He later entered Orel military gymnasium, moved to Moscow Military Academy in 1867 and St. Petersburg Artillery Institute in 1869. He joined a radical kruzhok,<sup>94</sup> and was inspired by Bakunin's ideas.<sup>95</sup> After he graduated he became a second lieutenant and circulated anarchist literature among fellow officers. He resigned in 1871, entered the Forestry Institute early in 1872,<sup>96</sup> and he and a serving army officer dressed as peasants and 'went to the people in 1873'.<sup>97</sup> They were arrested early in 1874,<sup>98</sup> but peasants helped them escape. They went to Moscow 'to carry on the propaganda among the youth', met two women 'just arrived from Zurich with the same object',<sup>99</sup> and told the anarchist prince Petr Kropotkin that they had worked as sawyers for a fortnight and produced 'quite a stir in a number of villages'.<sup>100</sup> A civil servant's wife let them use her house as and they gave men and women peasant clothes, money, forged passports, addresses and simple propaganda. Kravchinsky and others arranged the transport of books, maps and false passports,<sup>101</sup> but he came to believe that many whose 'faith was Socialism', and whose 'god' was 'the people', 'no longer saw any hope in victory, and longed for the crown of thorns'. It 'resembled a religious movement', 'not a political movement',<sup>102</sup> because 'scientific socialism' 'bounces off the Russian masses like a pea off the wall'.<sup>103</sup> By 1875 he felt that he 'movement' had 'changed its aspect', since propagandists in Odesa, Kharkiv and Kyiv favoured 'an immediate rising'.<sup>104</sup> Lavrov had escaped from exile to Paris in 1868, and in 1875 Kravchinsky told him that 'We cannot change the thinking of even one in six hundred peasants, let alone of one in sixty'. 'A revolt has to be organised.'<sup>105</sup>

From 1873 to 1876 15 percent of 1,611 prosecuted or administratively-sentenced SR propagandists had been women,<sup>106</sup> and 68 women and men were Jews.<sup>107</sup> Early in 1877 the tsar increased the sentences of those convicted at the trial of 193 SRs,<sup>108</sup> and empowered the director of the Third Section (the political police) to exile those who had been found not guilty.<sup>109</sup> Gendarmes arrested 80,<sup>110</sup> including Tikhomirov.<sup>111</sup> In April the tsar declared war against the Ottoman empire,<sup>112</sup> and Kravchinsky fought with the Serbs against the Ottoman army in Herzegovina until the war ended early in 1878,<sup>113</sup> with 450,000 Russian dead.<sup>114</sup>

Deutsch had enlisted a soldier in Kyiv, but helped a friend to escape from prison in 1876, and was arrested, but escaped.<sup>115</sup> In 1877 100 Chirigin peasants were arrested, and Deutsch and Stefanovich were imprisoned in Kyiv, but escaped to Switzerland in May 1878. Thousands of Jews lived there, and Zurich, Bern and Geneva universities allowed Russian Jews to enrol.<sup>116</sup> When Zundelevich arrived in Switzerland he found that Zasulich, Deutsch and Stefanovich believed that terror 'might hinder political work among the people', but they wanted to return to Russia. Zundelevich taught them not to attract attention by their speech or dress - 'Please don't pull your hats down over your eyes' - and they and another woman returned to Russia posing as two couples.<sup>117</sup>

In Russia the inner circle of Zemlia i volya included Plekhanov.<sup>118</sup> He supported agrarian terror and partisan warfare, and Tikhomirov argued that SRs had to '*replace the emperor in the people's mind as the symbol of power and legitimacy*, and 'this would never be done by propaganda, but only through violent deeds'.<sup>119</sup> Kravchinsky took part in an uprising near Naples, and was condemned to death, but escaped to Switzerland. When he heard about Zasulich's assassination attempt he returned to St. Petersburg,<sup>120</sup> and helped her get to Geneva, where almost all the Russian émigrés were anarchists.<sup>121</sup> He acknowledged that over one million soldiers in Russia could 'transform the five or six principle towns, the only places where any movement whatever is possible, into veritable armed camps'; but if revolutionaries were willing to kill a 'vile spy', why not kill a gendarme or higher officials? The 'logic of life could not but compel the Revolutionaries to mount these steps by degrees', and some argued that 'bullets were better than words'.<sup>122</sup> He argued that it was necessary to remove socialism's 'German dress' and 'put it in peasant costume'.<sup>123</sup>

In summer one clandestine press in St. Petersburg printed *Zemlia i volya* and another printed *Nachalo (The Beginning)*, which was aimed at unaligned socialists. Several members of *Zemlia i volya* favoured pushing political demands, but Zundelevich argued for the primacy of terror.<sup>124</sup>

In August a cab followed a general and the director of the Third Section near its St. Petersburg headquarters.<sup>125</sup> The passengers were Kravchinsky and Alexandr Barannikov, the 20-year-old son of a small tradesman in Gomel. His shot missed the director, so Kravchinsky stabbed him. He died almost immediately, and the assassins and their supporters got away.<sup>126</sup> Zundelevich had been a signaller.<sup>127</sup> Kravchinsky had previously described his motives in a pamphlet,<sup>128</sup> which was released.<sup>129</sup> 'We are socialists. Our aim is to destroy the existing economic structure.'<sup>130</sup> The government had driven socialists 'devoted to the work of liberating the suffering people and condemning ourselves to any hardship so as to avoid it for others' to 'embark on a whole series of murders.' 'Gentleman of the government, policemen, administrators this is our last word to you.'

You are representatives of authority; we are opponents of any enslavement of man by man, therefore you are our enemies and there can be no reconciliation between us. You must be destroyed and you will be destroyed! But we do not believe that political slavery gives birth to economic slavery but rather the contrary. We are convinced that the destruction of economic inequality will bring about the destruction of the poverty of the people and with it also the ignorance, superstition and prejudice with which all authority supports itself ... Our real enemy is the bourgeoisie which is now hiding behind you, although it hates you because you have tied its hands. You are an outsider! If you do not prevent us from fighting our real enemies we will leave you in peace. You can sleep peacefully until the overthrow of the present economic order.<sup>131</sup>

As for the tsar, 'whether you share power with the bourgeoisie is not our concern. Whether you grant or do not grant a constitution is a matter of complete indifference to us. Do not violate our human rights'.<sup>132</sup> Kravchinsky called for an end to persecution for political opinions and arbitrary behaviour by officials, and an amnesty for political prisoners.<sup>133</sup> Otherwise, 'For each political activist hanged by the government, a tsarist official will die.'<sup>134</sup>

In two days there were up to 1,000 arrests and from his hiding-place Kravchinsky saw several spies.

It was the easiest thing in the world to recognise them. That embarrassed air, that glance full of suspicion and fear which they fix upon the face of every passer-by, are signs which do not deceive an experienced eye. These, however, were professional spies. The others, that is, the 'temporary spies', had a much more comical appearance. They were evidently only private soldiers dressed up as civilians as could be seen at a glance. They always went about in little parties, and ... whole detachments had the same hats, the same overcoats, the same trousers. Some wore great blue spectacles, as large as cart-wheels, to give them the appearance of students.<sup>135</sup>

Almost 2,000 suspects were soon under arrest,<sup>136</sup> but Kravchinsky escaped to Switzerland.<sup>137</sup>

In autumn, as trustee of *Zemlia i volya's* funds, Zundelevich gave 6,000 rubles towards reconstructing its 'centre'. It still focussed on the peasantry,<sup>138</sup> but during 1878 women workers at a St. Petersburg tobacco factory had gone on strike and put a notice on the gate. 'We cannot stand any further deduction in our wages' which 'do not allow us to dress decently'.<sup>139</sup> Some members of *Zemlia i volya* were influenced by Marx's ideas.

#### **(v) The most enlightened members of the peasantry**

By 1879 Plekhanov had a 'great respect' for the 'materialist conception of history' from reading Bakunin.

Marx shows us how life itself indicates the necessary reforms in the economic cooperation of a country, how the forms of production itself predispose the minds of the masses to accept socialist teachings, which until the necessary preparations exists, would be incapable not only of making a revolution but even of forming a more or less significant party. He shows us in what forms, and within what limits socialist propaganda can be considered to be a waste of energy.

Plekhanov believed that influencing the 'entire mass' of the peasantry was 'impossible as long as one saw in the city workers only *a material* for the recruitment of individual persons'; yet workers were the 'most enlightened representatives of the peasantry', 'the most mobile, the most susceptible to incitation' and 'the most easily revolutionised stratum of the population', and they would support a peasant revolution. What was needed was 'daily and hourly' agitation about 'the most trifling facts of the worker's life',<sup>140</sup> and strikes to develop 'a sense of opposition to all privileged classes and a sense of their own class solidarity'.<sup>141</sup> As long as peasants supported the

commune, 'we cannot consider that our country has entered the path of that law by which capitalist production becomes an obligatory station on its line of progress',<sup>142</sup> and he endorsed terror for self-defence.<sup>143</sup>

By spring Tikhomirov had initiated Svoboda ili smert (Liberty or Death), a top-secret organisation inside Zemlia i volya,<sup>144</sup> and a 'secondary' circle included Zundelevich.<sup>145</sup> Alexandr Soloviev told them that he intended to kill the tsar, but as soon as the tsar saw his revolver he ran away. Soloviev fired five shots, missed,<sup>146</sup> and was hanged.<sup>147</sup>

At a Zemlia i volya meeting in Voronezh, Plekhanov and Deutsch described the perspective of the majority of Zemlia i volya members as 'liberalism with bombs'.<sup>148</sup> The organisation split, and 20 or so, including Plekhanov, Deutsch, Zasluch and Stefanovich, formed Chyornyi peredel (Black Repartition).<sup>149</sup> The majority called themselves Iсполnitelnyy komitet narodnaya volya (The Executive Committee of the People's Will), and elected a leading committee of three which included Alexandr Mikhailov and Tikhomirov.<sup>150</sup> The EC were mainly intelligenty in their late twenties,<sup>151</sup> and while no more than 30 of 44 those whose names are known were active at any one time, they probably had 500 supporters,<sup>152</sup> and 1,000 or more sympathisers.<sup>153</sup> Eight of the 18 EC members were women, and women formed a substantial minority of their periphery.<sup>154</sup> The EC aimed to assassinate the tsar, hoping to spark a peasant uprising, take over the government, eliminate private property in land and introduce a constituent assembly.<sup>155</sup> Zundelevich was elected to the EC.<sup>156</sup> He secured the Zemlia i volya press and a large stockpile of type, the passport bureau and 8,000 rubles, or four or five times as much money as Chyornyi peredel. The EC also retained the 'Department of Foreign Affairs' – the smuggling network – and the dynamite workshop,<sup>157</sup> and supporters donated 23,000 rubles,<sup>158</sup> and Kravchinsky took money abroad to buy a press.<sup>159</sup> In autumn Zundelevich was arrested and faced a long sentence of *katorga* (hard Labour) in eastern Siberia.<sup>160</sup>

St. Petersburg police suspected Plekhanov of conspiring to kill the tsar, so he went underground. Axelrod had formed the tiny Yuzhnyy Soyuz Rossiyskikh Rabochikh (The Southern Union of Russian Workers), and the tiny Severnyy Soyuz Rossiyskikh Rabochikh (The Northern Union of Russian Workers) invited him to edit their paper in St. Petersburg.<sup>161</sup> He wanted to focus on 'the development of the independent revolutionary activism of the masses in preparation for the socialist revolution',<sup>162</sup> but he did not reach St. Petersburg in time.

Maria Krylova was born into an impoverished gentry family in 1842. Her father was a minor government official. Maria later attended a boarding school in Moscow, stayed on after she graduated and taught workers at a Sunday school. She lived independently and joined women's organisations, including a commune whose leader's brother was associated with the SR terrorist Nikolai Ishutin. Krylova joined the 'Organisation' that was a cover for Ishutin's kruzhok and helped to extend its female contacts. In 1866 she was briefly detained after Dmitry Karakozov failed to assassinate the tsar, but was released under surveillance. By late 1879 she worked on Chyornyi peredel's press in St. Petersburg. Late one night in January 1880, when the printers were asleep, the doorbell rang.<sup>163</sup> Gendarmes, 'by lifting the doors from their hinges, as the official report said, or by using skeleton keys, as ran the rumour', caught the printers in bed.<sup>164</sup> Krylova met them with 'arms in hand',<sup>165</sup> but the gendarmes seized the press,<sup>166</sup> and most copies of the paper,<sup>167</sup> and arrested her. (She was later exiled).<sup>168</sup> Narodnaya volya's press printed Chyornyi peredel's manifesto,<sup>169</sup> but gendarmes got close to Plekhanov, Zasluch, Deutsch and Stefanovich, so their comrades told them to go abroad.<sup>170</sup> Axelrod was the only leader left in Russia,<sup>171</sup> and someone assassinated the person who betrayed the press.<sup>172</sup>

During the 1870s the police had spotted 5,664 intelligenty political suspects aged 18 or older, of whom 65 percent were students or professionals, 21 percent were workers, artisans or peasants, and 14 percent were *raznochintsy* (people of indeterminate rank).<sup>173</sup> Early in 1880, after several attempts to kill the tsar, and the hangings of several would-be assassins, the government merged the regular police and the Third Section into the Department of Police, whose St. Petersburg headquarters had a secret section dealing with political suspects and *gosudarstvennyye prestupniki* (state criminals), linked to *okhrannye otdelinya* (security sections) in Moscow and Warsaw,<sup>174</sup> which became known as the *Okhrana*.

Candidate gendarmes underwent a three-to-six month training course in law, history, regulations and operational procedures, and 6,708 of them included 521 officers who were mainly landless Orthodox gentry. Around 60 percent were stationed on railway lines, and the rest were based in provincial and district headquarters.<sup>175</sup> The interior minister ordered that the political criminals who had been sentenced to *katorga* should be sent to Siberia, and the justice minister withdrew permission for those who had completed their sentences on Sakhalin Island off the Pacific coast to return to the mainland. Many men were sent to Lower Kara prison beyond Lake Baikal in southern Siberia, and women to nearby Ust-Kara. Peasants got three rubles for capturing a common criminal who escaped, but 50 for a state criminal.<sup>176</sup>

Tikhomirov's revised programme for the Narodnaya volya EC appeared in *Narodnaya volya* without discussion.<sup>177</sup> It involved the 'creation of a central fighting organisation capable of initiating a revolt' with provincial organisations to support it. The aim was to 'ensure the active support of the factory workers in the towns' and that of 'the Armed Forces, or at least to paralyse any assistance they might give to the Government',

and 'win over the sympathy and co-operation of the intelligentsia' and 'public opinion in foreign countries'.<sup>178</sup> Tikhomirov's 'irregular methods' were challenged,<sup>179</sup> and he offered to resign,<sup>180</sup> but most EC members accepted the new programme,<sup>181</sup> and one organised an escape route from Siberia.

Yuri Bogdanovich was born into a family of gentry in Nikolskoye, Pskov province, in 1849. In 1871 he entered St. Petersburg Medical-Surgical Academy, but left without graduating in 1873 and agitated Saratov province peasants. He joined Zemlia i volya in 1876, Narodnaya volya in 1879, its EC in 1880, and then founded *Krasny Krest* (the political Red Cross) to give exiled 'politicals' an escape route from Krasnoyarsk in Siberia to Kazan.<sup>182</sup>

Chyorny peredel brought a press from Smolensk to St. Petersburg, a typesetter arrived from Saratov and two female comrades rented an apartment.<sup>183</sup> Praskovia Ivanovskaya, the 27-year-old daughter of a village priest, and Ludmila Terenteeva, the teenage daughter of a schoolteacher, worked as typographers;<sup>184</sup> but Axelrod had a second *Chyorny peredel* printed in London and copies were smuggled into Russia.<sup>185</sup>

Peasants were under severe pressure. The average holding was around 6.7 hectares in the northern region of European Russia, 2.7 in the central region and Ukraine and 2.3 in the south west,<sup>186</sup> but they remained largely quiescent. Danielson noted that the government used 20 percent of taxes to underwrite railway shareholders' dividends, and poor peasants suffered most,<sup>187</sup> but *Kapital* did not apply to Russia.<sup>188</sup> Marx disagreed.

#### **(vi) There will be bloody revolution in Russia**

In London in 1877 Marx drafted a letter to the liberal St. Petersburg monthly, *Otechestvennyye zapiski* (*Notes of the Fatherland*). He noted that the Russian empire was 'tending to become a capitalist nation', but it would 'not succeed without having first transformed a large proportion of its peasants into proletarians'. He crossed out 'if it continues along the path it has followed since 1861 it will miss the finest chance history has ever offered to a nation, only to undergo all the fatal vicissitudes of the capitalist system', but did not post the letter. Early in 1879 the *Chicago Tribune* published an interview with Marx. "No socialist," remarked the Doctor, smiling, "need predict that there will be bloody revolution in Russia." A Liberal MP understood that Marx expected 'a great and not distant crash in Russia', sparked by 'reforms from above which the old bad edifice will not be able to bear and which will lead to its tumbling down altogether'. For 'a long time Russia would be unable to exercise any influence in Europe', but 'the movement will spread to Germany' and lead to 'a revolt against the existing military system'.

In spring Engels felt that the struggle between the Russian state and the 'secret societies' had 'so violent a character that it cannot last'. The government seemed to be 'on the brink of exploding,' and its agents were 'committing incredible atrocities'. 'Against such wild animals one must defend oneself as one can, with powder and lead. Political assassination in Russia is the only means which men of intelligence, dignity and character possess to defend themselves against the agents of an unprecedented despotism.'<sup>189</sup>

In January 1880 Marx felt '*the Russian Revolution*' would 'get underway' that year,<sup>190</sup> and offered to help. In spring Engels noted that 'everything is proceeding splendidly', since 'You cannot banish sheer lack of money'.

*Not one banker will make a loan* without a guarantee from the Imperial Assembly. Hence the present desperate recourse to an *internal* loan. *On paper* it will be a success, in reality a total failure. And then they will have to convene some assembly or other if only to obtain cash – always supposing something else does not happen in the meantime.

In summer Marx received Narodnaya volya's programme,<sup>191</sup> and late that year the EC member Lev Hartmann visited London.<sup>192</sup> Marx was sympathetic, but declined to write for their publications since they were not socialists.<sup>193</sup> Marian Skinner often visited Marx's daughters and met 'a courtly young Russian' who 'had attempted to blow up the tsar', but who was 'one of the mildest mannered men that ever cut his country'.

He warbled Russian love songs delightfully, and punctuated them with languishing glances, and he told us that he had spent over a year in a Petersburg prison cell where there was not room to stand up, or to lie down at full length, and that snow drifted in through the paneless window until it was chest high. He was accused of being an anarchist – which accusation was probably not true at the beginning of his incarceration, but pretty correct at its end.<sup>194</sup>

Marx knew that the programme of the '*terrorist Central Committee*' had 'aroused considerable ire amongst the anarchist Russians', and believed Chyorny peredel was guilty of 'Bakuninist doctrinarianism'. According to them Russia was 'to leap head-over-heels into the anarchist-communist-atheist millennium!', yet its members were 'opposed to politico-revolutionary action'.<sup>195</sup>

In Geneva Plekhanov was impressed with Marx's critique of bourgeois philosophers and believed that a bourgeois revolution was most likely in Russia.<sup>196</sup> He argued for a 'mass organisation' to propagandise 'more highly developed' workers and raise their 'consciousness', so they could begin 'rousing' other workers, lead strikes and move strikers 'into the streets' to support insurgent peasants.<sup>197</sup> He was unclear how Marx's 'law' of economic progress applied to Russia,<sup>198</sup> but capitalism was developing in the countryside, and taxation and usury had caused contradictions within the peasantry.<sup>199</sup> The Narodnaya volya EC was mistaken: 'Revolutions are made by the masses and prepared by history'.<sup>200</sup> The Russian translation of Marx and Engels' *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* impressed Plekhanov, but he felt it was inadequate, so he asked Zasulich to retranslate it.<sup>201</sup> In summer Plekhanov was impressed by Engels' *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft* (*Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*), and his wife joined him.

Rosalia Bograd was born into a well-to-do Jewish family in Kherson in 1856. She later became a medical student in St. Petersburg,<sup>202</sup> and in 1877, during the war with the Ottoman empire, she went to the front to care for the sick and wounded; but their treatment was inadequate and the military authorities stole and were corrupt. The experience radicalised her, and back in St. Petersburg she distributed illegal literature to fellow students and organised workers.<sup>203</sup> The war ended in 1878, and by 1879, when Chyornyi peredel had around 100 members, Bograd was one of its leaders.<sup>204</sup> She had married Plekhanov, but stayed in Russia after he escaped abroad early in 1880, because she was about to give birth and take her final examinations to qualify as a doctor. She passed, but after the authorities discovered that she had lived with Plekhanov they withheld her diploma. In summer she decided to go to Geneva with her daughter,<sup>205</sup> and persuaded a young magistrate to look after a large suitcase, but next day police found political letters and illegal presses and the judge's career was ruined.<sup>206</sup>

Soon after Rosalia reached Geneva the family moved to Paris, and Lavrov helped Plekhanov to write pseudonymously for liberal Russian journals. In autumn he wrote in *Chyornyi peredel* that Russia would have a bourgeois revolution before a socialist revolution,<sup>207</sup> and by late that year he was convinced that 'economic relations' were the basis of 'all the phenomena of political life'. 'Free communal organisation and self-government' in Russian villages would ensure the right to free use of land and equal allotments, and an 'economic agrarian revolution' would automatically bring a 'transformation of all other social relations'.

The social-revolutionary party should lead the people from passively waiting for 'black repartition' from above, to demanding actively 'Land and Liberty' from below by inciting the people to active struggle with the state, by instilling independence and activism in them, by organising them for struggle, using each small opportunity to arouse popular discontent and instilling in the people correct opinions about existing social relations and those desirable in the future by means of propaganda through word and deed.<sup>208</sup>

Narodnaya volya was 'without foundations and influence among the people', and so 'a staff without an army'.<sup>209</sup>

On 27 February 1881 (according to the Russian calendar) Marx wrote to Zasulich in Switzerland that the Russian village commune would be 'the fulcrum of 'social reorganisation'', but only after all communal property had been '*transformed into private property*' to ensure 'the normal conditions of spontaneous development'.<sup>210</sup> There were no short cuts.

### **(vii) Coffee, cakes and an execution**

In 1879 Zundeleovich had recruited Andrey Zheliabov to Narodnaya volya,<sup>211</sup> and by 1881 the 30-year-old son of a Crimean serf was a leading member of the EC, but he was arrested on 27 February; so his 27-year-old partner, Sophia Perovskaya, the daughter of a former city governor and the only other leading EC member who was fully informed about the latest plan to assassinate the tsar, took command.<sup>212</sup>

On the morning of 1 March she took a cab and nursed two bombs on her lap, in case a jolt set them off. She met 24-year-old Ignacy Hryniewiecki, the son of a small landowner near Hrodna, and Nikolai Rysakov, a 19-year-old artisan from Tikhvin in St. Petersburg province. At 10.00am Nikolai Kibalchich, the 27-year-old son of a Chernihiv province priest, brought two bombs, and they went to a café for coffee and cakes.<sup>213</sup> Early that afternoon Perovskaya positioned the bomb-throwers and gave them their bombs. At 2.15pm she dropped her handkerchief as a signal to begin, then walked along Nevsky Prospekt and crossed over Kanal Ketrin.<sup>214</sup> As the tsar's carriage went along beside the Kanal,<sup>215</sup> Rysakov threw his bomb under the back axle, killing a Cossack and badly injuring a small boy. The horses bolted, but the tsar returned. Rysakov had been arrested, but Hryniewiecki threw his bomb and injured 20 people, including himself and the tsar, who lay covered in blood with both his legs broken.<sup>216</sup> He died within an hour,<sup>217</sup> but a foreigner noted that people went about their business, 'calm and

carefree', with 'no curiosity or anxiety on their faces'.<sup>218</sup> The Narodnaya volya EC anxiously waited for news at the home of the writer, Gleb Uspensky,<sup>219</sup> but Hryniewiecki died that evening without giving his name.

By 3 March troops were digging deep trenches around the tsar's Gatchina palace outside St. Petersburg, and 800 suspects had been arrested. Next day thousands of Cossacks patrolled the city centre, but the Narodnaya volya metalworker Timofei Mikhailov, a 20-year-old peasant from near Smolensk, shot several policemen before he ran out of ammunition. When Perovskaya failed to free Zheliabov, she was arrested, and Rysakov identified her and Kibalchich, but while she and Mikhailov did not talk, Kibalchich betrayed a young Jewess.

Gesya Gelfman, the 26-year-old daughter of a tradesman, was born near Kyiv.<sup>220</sup> Since 1879 she had managed Narodnaya volya's conspiratorial headquarters in St. Petersburg, raised funds and represented the organisation in Krasny Krest.<sup>221</sup> She had worked in the underground press since autumn 1880,<sup>222</sup> and lived in the apartment where bombs were stored, but was not an EC member and knew nothing about the planned assassination.<sup>223</sup>

A leaflet from 'worker members' of Narodnaya volya circulated.

Alexandr I, torturer of his people, was killed by us socialists. He defended only the rich and himself, feasted and lived in luxury, while the people starved ... Alexandr was a wolf. Now we have Alexandr II on the throne. Don't let him follow in the footsteps of his father; let him call to the senate as his advisers those whom the people will elect. Then the tsar will give land to the peasants and will lower taxes. Send petitions to him, you in the towns and villages. If he doesn't listen to the people and gets to be like his daddy, he too will have to be *replaced*.<sup>224</sup>

On 10 March Tikhomirov addressed the new tsar in a leaflet on behalf of Narodnaya volya.

The movement must grow and increase, terrorist attacks must be repeated and intensified, the revolutionary organisation will replace eliminated teams by more sophisticated and stronger groups. The total number of malcontent people in the country is growing; the people's confidence in the government should decline, the idea of revolution, of its possibility and inevitability will develop in Russia all the more strongly. A tremendous explosion, a bloody confusion, a convulsive revolutionary upheaval across all Russia will complete the process of the destruction of the old order.<sup>225</sup>

'A revolutionary movement, your Majesty, does not depend on individuals', since it is 'a process of the social organism', and gallows were 'just as impotent to save the existing order of state as was the crucifixion of the Nazarene to preserve the crumbling ancient world from the triumph of reforming Christianity'. The EC 'set no conditions', since they had been set 'by history', and a revolution was 'absolutely inevitable' unless there was 'a voluntary turning of the Supreme Power to the people'. The EC hoped the tsar would summon 'representatives of the whole of Russian people' to 'examine the existing framework of social and governmental life' and 'remodel it in accordance with the people's wishes', with elections based on freedom of speech, assembly and the press. After a 'general amnesty to cover all past political crimes', which the EC saw as 'fulfilments of civic duty', it would 'voluntarily terminate its own existence', and its members would 'devote themselves to the work of culture among the people'.<sup>226</sup> Narodnaya volya supporters distributed 10,000 copies across the city.<sup>227</sup>

The assassins' trial began on the 26<sup>th</sup>, before a special bench of the Senate. Someone took a stenographic record, but censors later edited it. Officials and a few others were present, but journalists were barred. Perovskaya, Kibalchich, Mikhailov, Zheliabov, Rysakov and Gelfman were charged with belonging to Russkaya sotsial-revolutsionnaya partiya (The Russian Social Revolutionary Party). Zheliabov insisted that it was 'the duty of a sincere Christian to fight on behalf of the weak and oppressed; and, if need be, to suffer for them'. The 'main enemy of the Russian social movement was the Russian Bureaucracy', but he 'would willingly abandon violence if there were the possibility of serving my ideals by peaceful means'. Mikhailov also claimed that the aim of Narodnaya volya was 'protecting the workers',<sup>228</sup> and next day the tsar fled to Gatchina.<sup>229</sup>

On the 29<sup>th</sup> the court condemned all six defendants to death. Perovskaya could have asked the tsar to reconsider her sentence, because of her high social status, but she refused to do so. Mikhailov petitioned for a reprieve, and Rysakov offered to betray other EC members, but both were unsuccessful.<sup>230</sup> Gelfman was pregnant, and the tsar decided to let her live until her child was born.<sup>231</sup> The prison authorities barred relatives from visiting the condemned and the 'most sinister rumours' of torture circulated in the city.<sup>232</sup> On 2 April priests visited the prison, but Zheliabov and Perovskaya refused to see them.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> 12,000 troops guarded the route to Semenovskaya square. At 9.20am, in front of 80,000 spectators, the drunken Frolov hanged Kibalchich; but he knotted the rope badly for Mikhailov and had to hang him three times, while Zheliabov strangled for several minutes.<sup>233</sup> Perovskaya fastened her feet to the platform, and two men had to struggle to dislodge them,<sup>234</sup> before she became the first Russian woman state criminal to be executed.<sup>235</sup> Rysakov showed the crowd his mutilated hands and shouted that he had been tortured.<sup>236</sup> He hung

on to the woodwork, but was pulled away, and it was all over by 9.30am.<sup>237</sup> The *Kölnische Zeitung* correspondent had 'been present at a dozen executions in the East, but never have I witnessed such hideous butchery'.

Officially, the courts had sentenced over 2,000 people to death during the tsar's reign,<sup>238</sup> and 31 were executed.<sup>239</sup> About 1,200 had been deported within European Russia, and 60 of the 230 exiled to Siberia were sentenced to katorga.<sup>240</sup> Reportedly at least 2,348 political suspects had faced trial in the past four years,<sup>241</sup> but three-quarters of the 67,000 in Siberia had had no trial.<sup>242</sup> According to Kravchinsky, 1,767 of the 'administrative' exiles, including some in eastern Siberia, were from Odesa, Kyiv and Kharkiv alone.<sup>243</sup>

Before the assassination, 6,790 people had been under surveillance,<sup>244</sup> but that grew to 31,000,<sup>245</sup> and by summer 4,000 were under arrest.<sup>246</sup> A new law systematised existing emergency legislation, but curtailed the powers of police and gendarmes. In districts under a 'state of emergency' they could detain anyone they suspected of planning a 'state crime', or belonging to an illegal organisation, for a week. They could recommend that the interior minister exile them for up to five years without trial, while he and the justice minister could transfer cases involving violence against officials to military courts martial. In places under 'reinforced security' police and gendarmes could detain anyone they deemed 'politically unreliable' for two weeks, or a month if the governor agreed, and could search premises and sack unelected local officials. Provincial governors and governors-general could ban meetings, close businesses, deport people, fine them up to 500 rubles and imprison them for up to three months, and they and the interior minister could transfer cases to courts martial. In places under 'extraordinary security' governors-general and military commanders could sack civil servants and elected officials (except the top ranks), suspend publications, close educational institutions for a month, sequester the property and income of people deemed 'harmful to state or public security', fine them up to 3,000 rubles,<sup>247</sup> and create units of military police. Provincial governors could declare states of emergency, give police and gendarmes more power, establish provincial security sections accountable to the Police Department in St. Petersburg,<sup>248</sup> and ask for cases that might 'disturb the public peace' to be tried in camera, except for a member of the accused's family.<sup>249</sup> The tsar imposed 'reinforced security' in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kharkiv, Poltava, Chernihiv, Kyiv, Volhynia, Podolsk, Kherson and Bessarabia provinces, plus districts of Simferópol, Evpatoria, Yalta, Feodosia, Perekop and Voronezh provinces, the cities of Voronezh, Berdiansk, Rostov-na-Donu and Mariupol, and the city governorships of Odesa, Taganrog and Kerch-Enikalsk.

Anyone deemed 'politically unreliable' was excluded from civil and military service and educational institutions, denied state privileges and pensions, and barred from running a bookshop, library, news paper, journal, society or professional association. They could not give a public lecture,<sup>250</sup> sell spirits, work in a typographic or photographic laboratory, or practice medicine, midwifery or pharmacology without an Interior Ministry licence. Almost 100,000 police carried out surveillance and could search homes at any hour, restrict suspects' movements and confiscate internal passports.<sup>251</sup>

The 14,000 gendarmes included 1,000 officers,<sup>252</sup> and the organisation now had an annual budget of one million rubles.<sup>253</sup> Gendarmes operated independently of the civil administration,<sup>254</sup> but needed the governor's permission to act in St. Petersburg. Around 7,000 were at railway stations, 5,000 at border crossings and ports and 2,500 in provincial sections; but most cities, large towns, and some provinces had only half a dozen.<sup>255</sup> The St. Petersburg headquarters had sections dealing with administration and finance, and domestic and foreign security, while the surveillance section had charts of revolutionary and liberal groups with suspects' names circled in red. (The library eventually grew to half a million files and tens of thousands of dossiers, including 4,000 'secret collaborators'.) Another section could exile suspects to Siberia without trial.<sup>256</sup> The Moscow headquarters was responsible for 13 provinces,<sup>257</sup> and around a quarter of the empire was under martial law.

Successful applicants to become a gendarme were often men who had been born into a noble family and had done well at a military college and in the army. The training lasted six months, and those who did best could choose where to be deployed. A *fileur* (spinner), who was often a former junior army officer, followed suspects in the streets and reported where they went and who they met. Gendarmes could arrest known revolutionaries on sight and subject suspects to conditional arrest.<sup>258</sup> Orthodox priests swore in gendarme recruits, so Catholics and Jews were ineligible;<sup>259</sup> and one section at the St. Petersburg headquarters focussed on 'Jewish affairs'.<sup>260</sup>

In 60 years the empire's population had grown by 87 percent, but the Jewish community by 150 percent,<sup>261</sup> and the population of the Pale, at 611 per square kilometre, was the densest in the empire.<sup>262</sup> No more than three members of the Narodnaya volya EC had been Jews, but a Vilnius official noted that Jews had been influenced by SR 'ideals' since 1878,<sup>263</sup> and Jews formed around 12 percent of political suspects.<sup>264</sup>

In Ukraine the city of Kherson had a large police force, but whole districts of the province had nine policemen and some large towns had five, while 20 of the 70 or so troops in the district centres protected only government buildings and banks. Elizavetgrad had large police force,<sup>265</sup> for a population of 32,000,<sup>266</sup> since it was a garrison town. There was a large Jewish community, but some ethnic Russians resented the success of Jewish merchants

and alleged that Jewish councillors did not represent them. After the tsar's assassination a brawl involved a Jew and a Russian, and a Russian mob destroyed over 700 Jewish homes and shops.

In Kyiv, a week later, after a Russian hit a Jew, other Russians demanded free vodka from Jewish taverns. They seriously damaged Jewish-owned buildings and warned that 'a gang of Muscovites' would soon arrive and start a riot. Three days later troops guarded the Arsenal, but did not interfere next day as 4,000 rioters attacked Jewish shops and homes and looted a Jew's vodka warehouse. The following day a brawl involved 600 people, and a mob destroyed a synagogue and Jewish buildings in poorer districts, including the homes of army veterans. Three Jews and three Russians died, 187 Jews were injured, around 4,000 were homeless and 1,800 crowded into temporary shelters under the governor's protection. The overwhelming majority of the 1,789 rioters were Russians from Kyiv and Chernihiv provinces, but courts later convicted 89,<sup>267</sup> and the Kyiv police chief enforced the residence rules until only 3,200 Jews remained in the city.<sup>268</sup>

The government limited the number of Jewish army medical personnel to five percent,<sup>269</sup> and barred Jews from renting, leasing or buying land,<sup>270</sup> establishing new settlements, living outside large towns and *shtetls* (small towns),<sup>271</sup> and in villages with a Russian majority,<sup>272</sup> unless they converted to Orthodoxy.<sup>273</sup> The government suspended Jewish mortgages and leases on land, deprived Jews of the power of attorney for managing estates, and barred them from working on Sundays and the main Christian holidays,<sup>274</sup> thereby further disadvantaging pious Jews who could not work on Saturdays or Jewish religious holidays. The government imposed a ten percent limit on Jewish pupils in secondary schools in the Pale, five percent in schools and universities outside and three percent in St. Petersburg and Moscow,<sup>275</sup> but there were international consequences to this policy.

The riots led to a reduction of 152 million rubles in the value of government bonds on the international market.<sup>276</sup> Some foreign bankers refused to buy bonds or lend capital,<sup>277</sup> and one financed a 'colonisation scheme' in Palestine.<sup>278</sup> By summer 225,000 Jewish families had emigrated in just over 12 months;<sup>279</sup> but many Russian-speaking Jewish workers went south,<sup>280</sup> and weavers built a trade union in Białystok.<sup>281</sup> They contributed 50 kopeks (half a ruble) a week until they raised 240 rubles, then went on strike. Other Jewish and German weavers gave them money and refused to blackleg, so the employer gave in;<sup>282</sup> and this success was later noted in periodicals published abroad which circulated illegally across the empire.<sup>283</sup>

A Narodnaya volya EC member published a leaflet claiming that the anti-Jewish riots were the beginning of a popular revolt against the autocracy. Other EC members failed to destroy many leaflets, which influenced other members and some in Chyorny peredel. In Switzerland, Stefanovich denounced the leaflet as anti-Semitic, and Axelrod and Deutsch wanted to condemn it publicly, but Zundelevich persuaded them not to do so.<sup>284</sup>

There were further anti-Jewish riots in Chişinău in Bessarabia and Yalta in the Crimea, but wealthy St. Petersburg Jews gave the victims little aid. Jewish socialists in Vilnius saw themselves 'as "men," not as Jews', and believed that 'workers of whatever religion and nation must unite' and 'work against the common enemy', the bourgeoisie. There were no restrictions on Jewish residence in Odesa,<sup>285</sup> and Jewish students formed armed defence squads, but 150 were arrested and there was a riot, while fires destroyed Jewish neighbourhoods in Minsk, Bobruisk, Vitebsk and Pinsk. Some Jewish student SRs felt they 'belonged to the Russian people', and 'all Jews were swindlers', so they welcomed the riots. In autumn many Jews were expelled from Orel, Tambov, Kyiv, Dubno and Warszawa provinces. By the end of the year there had been over 200 riots. At least 40 Jews had died and tens of thousands made homeless; but the community continued to increase by 120,000 a year,<sup>286</sup> and socialists, some of them influenced by Marx, had built a party in neighbouring Germany.

### **(viii) The Socialist Workers' Party of Germany**

The German confederation of states had collapsed after a war with Austria in 1866, but by 1867 Prussia was the strongest state in the north German confederation, which allowed four southern states to join in 1870, and in 1871 the Prussian army defeated the French army, and allowed the provisional French government's troops to crush the Paris Commune. The Prussian king became the *Kaiser* (emperor), and the *Reichstag* (parliament) would be elected by men aged over 25, but the large number of the lowest tax payers, a sizeable number of the medium tax payers and a small number of the highest payers would elect the same number of deputies. There would be a two-stage election for each *Landtag* (state assembly), which would send delegates to the *Bundesrat* (federal council), which would include 17 Prussians, and a majority of the 58 members could veto any Reichstag decisions.<sup>287</sup> Socialists won 124,000 votes in the Reichstag elections, or 3.2 percent of those cast, but only two, or 0.5 percent, of the 382 seats,<sup>288</sup> since the chancellor had gerrymandered the constituency boundaries.<sup>289</sup> Jews were given full legal rights.<sup>290</sup> In 1874 socialists won over 350,000 votes, or six percent of those cast, but nine, or 2.2 percent of the 397 seats.<sup>291</sup> In 1875 the Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein (The General German Workers'



Association) formed the Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands (The Socialist Workers' Party of Germany).<sup>292</sup> Its members vowed to fight 'by every legal means for a Free State and a Socialist Society', demanded state-aided socialist producers' co-operatives and workers' control, and aimed to 'annul the wage system and its iron laws', 'remove exploitation in every form' and 'abolish all social and *political inequality*'.<sup>293</sup> The SDAP soon claimed almost 24,500 members,<sup>294</sup> and in 1876 it published *Vorwärts (Forward)* in Leipzig.<sup>295</sup> In 1877 its candidates won over 437,000 votes in the Reichstag elections, or 7.59 percent of those cast, and nine, or 2.26 percent, of Reichstag seats,<sup>296</sup> but it attracted a wealthy supporter.

Karl Höchberg was born in 1853,<sup>297</sup> into a wealthy Jewish merchant family in Frankfurt. His father secured him Swiss citizenship so he would avoid serving in the army, but when Karl was at the gymnasium his father died.<sup>298</sup> Karl joined the SDAP in 1876, and published a socialist weekly, *Die Zukunft (The Future)*, in 1877.<sup>299</sup>

The SDAP had 42 periodicals, and paid its leaders 300 marks a month, while the Reichstag *fraktion* functioned as its Central Committee. By 1878 *Vorwärts* sold 150,000 copies, but in May a former member failed to kill the kaiser and another would-be assassin failed in June.<sup>300</sup> The chancellor denounced the SDAP as a 'menacing band of robbers',<sup>301</sup> blamed them for the assassination attempts and dissolved the Reichstag. The police harassed the SDAP, searched houses, dispersed meetings and confiscated newspapers.<sup>302</sup> The Reichstag debated a bill to empower the police to close socialist organisations, ban events, and, where the government imposed a 'minor state of siege', deport anyone they deemed politically dangerous.<sup>303</sup> The former worker and Reichstag deputy August Bebel insisted that SDAP members would 'get together in workshops and factories, in the family circle and in pubs', and on Sunday walks. 'Everyone will take two or three or perhaps a dozen pamphlets' for 'friends and acquaintances in the country and the distant parts of the city';<sup>304</sup> but in October the Reichstag passed the 'exceptional law' by 221 votes to 149, and the SDAP dissolved itself before it came into force. The government imposed a minor state of siege in Berlin and the police expelled 67 SDAP leaders. The SDAP had 47 papers, and a dozen appeared six days a week, but the police closed *Vorwärts*,<sup>305</sup> and 44 others, and the two survivors moderated their politics.<sup>306</sup> The police banned trade unions, or forced them into inactivity, often on flimsy evidence of a link to the SDAP, but the printers' union survived by becoming a mutual aid society.<sup>307</sup> The SDAP deputy Wilhelm Liebknecht began a three-month prison term for allegedly insulting a government official, but in summer 1879 the SDAP retained two Reichstag seats in bye-elections.<sup>308</sup> By then the police had closed 82 periodicals and 278 other publications, so the SDAP decided to publish a paper in Switzerland, and Bebel appointed his friend Julius Motteler as business manager to report about its staff, informers and *provocateurs* (police infiltrators tasked with provoking arrestable offences).<sup>309</sup> Höchberg helped to finance the paper and Bebel and Liebknecht chose the aristocrat Georg von Vollmar as editor. *Der Sozialdemokrat (The Social Democrat)* was printed in Zurich in autumn, but Liebknecht wrote much of it and checked the rest. Just over 1,000 copies went to Germany and 300 to elsewhere in Europe;<sup>310</sup> but by the end of the year the print run was 3,600.<sup>311</sup> The paper was legal in Switzerland, but not in Germany, so Joseph Belli organised Swiss workers to row consignments across Lake Constance.

In 1880 Motteler, the 'Red Postmaster', posted a few copies to German subscribers, directly or indirectly, and his wife put bundles in packages of every size and shape and addressed them to 'men of trust' in 110 towns and cities in different handwriting. Motteler put the packages in a suitcase, bought a ticket on a fast train to a point across the border, put the case in the luggage compartment with an envelope containing the baggage receipt and directions, but did not board the train. If the copies were distributed the 'man of trust' telegraphed 'Anna has departed'. If some were lost, the message might be 'Uncle sick, letter follows'. If all were lost it could be 'Uncle extremely ill, recovery hopeless', so Motteler would send another package via Austro-Hungary, Belgium or Holland. The German police sometimes interrupted the operation, but could not link it to the SDAP.

In spring, ten months before the 'exceptional law' was due to lapse, the Reichstag renewed it for four years and four months.<sup>312</sup> By summer 1,600 copies of *Der Sozialdemokrat* reached Germany and 600 went elsewhere.<sup>313</sup> A secret SDAP conference in Schloss Wyden, Switzerland,<sup>314</sup> formally recognised the Reichstag *fraktion* as the party's leading body, endorsed *Der Sozialdemokrat* as the party organ, set up a subscription system, removed 'legal' from the policy of using 'all legal means' to gain power and planned illegal meetings in clubs, choral societies, gymnastic organisations, beer halls and other innocent-looking organisations.<sup>315</sup> In autumn the Reichstag declared a minor state of siege in Hamburg-Altona, and later extended it to Harburg. Over 100 socialists were expelled and most left for the USA. In summer 1881, after the tsar's assassination, the Reichstag declared a minor state of siege in Leipzig. By autumn 600 socialists were in prison, and the SDAP lacked candidates for the Reichstag election. Its total vote fell to almost 312,000, or 6.1 percent of those cast,<sup>316</sup> and its candidates won only 12, or three percent, of the seats;<sup>317</sup> but German financiers had invested heavily in neighbouring Poland.

German banks and capitalists could not invest in European Russia, on account of protectionism, so they had invested in industry in neighbouring Poland since 1877,<sup>318</sup> and by 1882 socialist ideas had taken root there.

## (ix) Proletariat

In the 1850s the Pole Tadeusz Warynski, a Kyiv University graduate, was a well-to-do tenant farmer in Kyiv province, and one of 26 Catholics among 3,000 Orthodox villagers. Ludwik was born in 1856. His father was reportedly active in the 1863 Polish uprising, and by 1865 the teachers at Ludwik's *pro-gymnasium* (preparatory school) used Russian. In 1869 they were ordered to stop teaching Latin because it allegedly encouraged thoughts of western Europe, but Ludwik and other pupils studied Polish culture in secret. In 1874 he entered St. Petersburg Technological Institute and joined a *koło* (secret circle) of Polish socialists, but was sent home for a year under surveillance in 1875.<sup>319</sup> By late 1876 he worked as a locksmith in the largest metal plant in Warszawa and met other well-educated socialists. Kazimierz Dluski, who had attended Odesa University, propagandised students with revolutionary socialist ideas. He proposed forming workers' *koła* and became a metalworker. Henryk Duleba left his gymnasium to work as a soap-maker; and though Kazimierz Hildt stayed at his gymnasium, he worked in a factory part-time, while Stanisław Mendelson, the son of a wealthy Warszawa banker, worked as a tailor.<sup>320</sup> He was also a student at Warszawa University, and in 1877 he helped to establish the first Polish socialist *koło*.<sup>321</sup> In the suburbs up to 60 young people discussed the ideas of Marx, Bakunin and Ferdinand Lassalle.<sup>322</sup>

In autumn 1877 Warynski enrolled at Pulawy Agricultural Institute to be exempt from conscription,<sup>323</sup> but returned to Warszawa by the end of the year, and joined 30 or so others who studied SR and SD ideas. They propagandised workers at factory gates, in taverns, workers' quarters and at the University, but Warynski insisted on 'No political innuendoes'. 'Talk only of economic matters of exploitation and oppression of the workers, of capital, of the fact that work is the only basis of wealth and gives worth to products.'<sup>324</sup> Early in 1878 Hildt took some of the propagandists' manuscripts and Polish translations of German pamphlets to Leipzig, and in spring Warynski crossed the border and brought back large numbers of books and 6,000 pamphlets. He tried to persuade Warszawa factory workers to use their mutual aid funds to support strikes, but while most were unenthusiastic, some formed *koła* of ten to 15 and elected a treasurer and an organiser. The organisers formed their own *koło* and made decisions by a majority vote. Each organiser could form *koła* of members and non-members, including those who did not necessarily agree with all the programme, but were willing to help in some way. There were *koła* for finance, publications, propagandising, supporting arrested comrades and their families, contacting socialists outside Warszawa and smuggling literature from Germany and Switzerland.<sup>325</sup> By summer there were 300 organised workers,<sup>326</sup> and by autumn their programme was allegedly printed in 'Brussels'. The police bribed two workers to betray their *koło*, and made arrests, but Mendelson, Warynski and other *intelektualiści* (radical intellectuals) escaped to Kraków in Austrian-controlled Galicia.

Mendelson founded *Równość* (*Equality*) in Geneva in 1879.<sup>327</sup> It advocated propagandising 'socialist principles by word of mouth and writings' and 'agitation' by 'protests, demonstrations' and 'active struggle' against the 'social system'. Its aim was the 'complete social equality of all citizens irrespective of sex, race or nationality', and the transfer of all means of production to common ownership, with 'collective labour' in factories, workshops and farms. It wanted 'federal associations with socialists in all countries', and included the IWMA's 1866 resolutions. It noted the success of peaceful German and Swiss labour movements; but 'the ineffectiveness of legal means' in Poland meant that socialism was achievable 'only through social revolution'.<sup>328</sup>

During the 1870s the value of Polish industrial output had more than doubled from 247 to 541 million rubles. Russia imported a quarter of Polish cotton goods, and by 1880 9,600 inspected Polish factories and workshops employed almost 119,000 workers. The average workforce was 12, but it was 63 in Warszawa, and three cotton mills in Łódź employed almost 1,700 between them. Around 7,500 workers in 181 Polish metallurgical factories produced 9.3 million rubles' worth of output, while 4,400 workers in 72 machine-building plants produced almost 5.5 million rubles' worth, and Polish workers each made their employers 300 rubles a year more than their counterparts in Russia.

Kraków police had put Warynski and the Polish socialist *intelektualiści* in jail in 1879, and deported the Russians in spring 1880.<sup>329</sup> Warynski went to Geneva and attended a meeting of 500 socialists commemorating the 1830 Polish uprising. He spoke in Russian, and sought to disassociate Polish workers and socialists from nationalists, criticised the IWMA, Marx and Engels for supporting them, and praised *Narodnaya volya*.<sup>330</sup> In spring 1881 *Równość* applauded the assassination of the 'hangman' tsar,<sup>331</sup> but while the new tsar stationed 240,000 Russian troops, gendarmes and police in Poland,<sup>332</sup> they could not imprison, deport or exile socialist ideas.

Szymon Dikshtein was born into a comfortably off Jewish family in Warszawa in 1858. He entered the University in 1872, joined a socialist *koło*,<sup>333</sup> by 1877, and began translating *Das Kapital* Volume I,<sup>334</sup> but in 1878 he had to escape to Geneva to avoid arrest. He co-edited *Równość* in 1879, and his summary of *Das Kapital*, *Kto z czego żyje?* (*Who Lives By What?*), appeared in Warszawa as by 'Jan Młot' (Jan Hammer) in 1881.<sup>335</sup> A third of the

city's workers were in manufacturing plants, but 60 percent lived in one room. Almost 128,000 Jews formed the largest urban community in Europe.<sup>336</sup>

Felix Kon was born into a Jewish family in Warszawa in 1864,<sup>337</sup> and in 1881 he and other Narodnaya volya supporters at the University helped a koło of 25 Polish students at St. Petersburg University, and others in Vilnius and Kyiv.<sup>338</sup> Students imprisoned in Warszawa Fortress taught workers 'the exact and deep principles of socialism', but late that year, when Warynski returned,<sup>339</sup> the large plants were laying off workers.<sup>340</sup> A retired Russian colonel kept a list of Jewish shops,<sup>341</sup> and on Christmas Day an alarm panicked a large congregation in a Catholic church and 20 died in a stampede. Outside there were rumours about Jewish pickpockets, and mobs beat Jews and plundered their homes. For three days, as troops looked on and police impeded Jewish self-defence groups, two Jews were killed and 24 were injured.<sup>342</sup>

By 1882 Duleba led a small koło of Warszawa-Vienna railway workshop machinists,<sup>343</sup> and spoke and distributed leaflets and pamphlets at other factories. He recruited socialist workers, including Teodor Kallenbrun, Jozef Szmaus and Jan Ptaszynski,<sup>344</sup> and by spring there was a koło at all the largest factories. When one German foreman cheated workers, a blacksmith slapped his face, and managers called the gendarmes, but they retreated from a crowd of angry workers. Two blacksmiths faced charges, but 2,000 workers demonstrated, demanding their reinstatement and the sacking of the foreman were not intimidated when police and gendarmes surrounded them; but while the managers conceded their demands to get them back to work, they later reneged. In summer Duleba printed a leaflet calling on workers to 'deal' with managers, 'lackeys', 'traitors' and spies 'without witnesses or anything that could leave a trace', and this policy influenced a new clandestine organisation.

Stanislaw Kunicki attended the St. Petersburg Road Engineering Institute and contacted Narodnaya volya. In summer he arrived in Warszawa with the mandate of his Polish student koło and discussed forming a party with Warynski and others. They hectographed a programme, but while the machine was theoretically capable of printing 100 copies, 50 was the effective maximum. By autumn the manifesto of Międzynarodowa Socjalno-Rewolucyjna Partia 'Proletariat' (International Social Revolutionary Party 'Proletariat') circulated in Warszawa factories and at the University. It declared its solidarity with 'all exploited' people and had clear aims.

- (1) The self-government of political groups; (2) everybody's participation in law-making; (3) election of civil servants; (4) full freedom of speech, press, associations, etc., etc.; (5) full equality for women; (6) full equality of religions and nationalities; (7) international solidarity as the guarantee of universal freedom.

Proletariat's operational perspective involved four main elements.

- (1) incite the workers against all forms of exploitation; (2) organise combinations and secret workers' associations; (3) terrorise capitalists and their servants for their inhuman treatment of the workers or for calling on the police during the workers' conflicts; (4) found, as far as possible, associations consisting of workers only.

Proletariat aimed to 'manifest our sympathy with all those who fight against the despotic Russian government', 'incite the population against paying taxes', 'resist government orders which are directed against the workers', 'oppose any interference on the part of government organs in the conflict between workers and factory owners', join anti-government demonstrations, and 'punish spies, traitors' and those who 'betray the cause'.<sup>345</sup>

Proletariat had a branch of Krasny Krest,<sup>346</sup> and its leading Warszawa workers' committee took decisions by a majority vote and co-opted. It aimed to organise 'propaganda among workers', agitate on their 'daily interests' and 'not miss anything, which demonstrates the present-day misery'. Each koło of five or six workers, but never more than ten, had a knowledgeable and reliable organiser. 'Recognising that in some cases terror is the only weapon against the political rulers, the capitalists, spies, etc.', the workers' committee published statements after assassinations. On New Year's Eve it called on factory and railway workers to form 'associations for the collective ... defence of their rights and interests', combat abuses, lead 'every collective action or strike' and 'punish spies and traitors'. Workers' kola met weekly in pubs or restaurants at a prearranged time, and someone, often Warynski, spoke about exploitation or read agitational literature aloud, since some workers were illiterate. They paid five kopeks a week into a fund, and often knew little about each other, but key individuals distributed large quantities of illegal literature and delegates formed a 'section'.<sup>347</sup> The workers' committee formed *kola* at the University and at other higher educational institutions across Poland, and recruited students, school pupils, officials and troops, and Polish émigrés in Geneva published a translation of Marx and Engels' *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*. In 20 years to the end of 1882 the number of inspected Polish workers had almost trebled,<sup>348</sup> to 144,000 in over 9,500 factories;<sup>349</sup> In *Przedświt* Mendelson argued that democracy could come to Poland only after it was separated from the Russian empire,<sup>350</sup> and Proletariat's ideas had reached St. Petersburg.

## (x) Sedition in the ranks of student youth

By 1880 there were around 32,000 zemstvo (local authority) and state primary schools in European Russia, though most had only one teacher.<sup>351, 352</sup> The 22,000 schools in rural areas of European Russia and Poland had over a million pupils, and while 38 percent of teachers were Orthodox clergy, 30 percent were peasants,<sup>353</sup> though 37 percent of the 4,900 women had only a primary education or had been taught at home.<sup>354</sup> The rural literacy rate averaged almost ten percent,<sup>355</sup> but varied from six percent in Kharkiv and Kherson provinces to 20 percent in Moscow and St. Petersburg provinces, and over a third of town-dwellers, and a higher proportion in major cities, were literate.<sup>356</sup> There were 238 boys' gymnasia,<sup>357</sup> and around 8,000 men were at university, including 43 percent in St. Petersburg and Moscow, while 7,000 men were at institutes of higher education. University scholarships averaged 62 rubles and 19.6 percent of students received tuition waivers. Nationally, around 46 percent studied medicine, 22 percent law and 20 percent natural sciences and mathematics, and overall state expenditure per student was 311 rubles a year,<sup>358</sup> but only 556 students were Jews.<sup>359</sup> After the tsar's assassination in spring 1881, the government closed all the higher courses for women, except those in St. Petersburg, but limited its enrolment, banned the study of natural science, required students to live in dormitories or at home, provided no funds,<sup>360</sup> and cut the number of scholarships; but male students organised social events to raise money for them.<sup>361</sup>

In autumn there were 9,344 male undergraduates in seven European Russian universities.<sup>362</sup> They represented less than 0.0001 percent of the population, but 15 percent of them were from peasant, artisan or workers' families,<sup>363</sup> and though there were around 2,000 women 'auditors', or less than 0.00002 percent of the population, who attended university lectures, they could not take degrees.<sup>364</sup> Two ministers reported that many St. Petersburg University students were from 'an almost uneducated environment', and the 'outlook bequeathed to them in their families loses any moral authority'. They had illegal mutual aid funds and held 'disorderly' secret meetings, but the ministers proposed legalising funds, cheap canteens and student-run 'courts of honour', and letting them to discuss 'subjects of academic concern; but most ministers disagreed,<sup>365</sup> and repression continued.

There had been 62 legal papers in 1880, but there were 83 by the end of 1881.<sup>366</sup> The journalist Vladimir Korolenko had been deported to Vyatka province in 1879 for being 'politically extremely unreliable and harmful for public tranquillity'. In summer 1881 he refused to swear an oath of loyalty to the new tsar, and late that year the interior minister sent him to Yakutsk with a monthly allowance of six rubles. The journalist Mikhail Borodin was exiled on account of 'dangerous and pernicious' manuscript about conditions in Vyatka province, but months after he arrived in Yakutsk St. Petersburg censors allowed it to appear in *Otechestvennye zapiski*.<sup>367</sup>

The tsar had commuted Gelfman's death sentence to exile for life in Siberia,<sup>368</sup> but her baby was born in a St. Petersburg prison in autumn 1881,<sup>369</sup> and the authorities put it in an Orthodox foundling home.<sup>370</sup> Gelfman died in prison early in 1882,<sup>371</sup> and the baby died soon after;<sup>372</sup> but terrorist ideas and methods were being challenged.

Dimitar Blagoev was born into a Bulgarian family in a Macedonian village in 1856. He attended Orthodox schools in Istanbul, Adrianople, Gabrovo and Stara Zagora, and in 1878 he was enthusiastic about the Bulgarian volunteers who helped Russian troops to defeat the Ottoman army. He attended a realschule in Odesa,<sup>373</sup> but in 1880 he somehow got around the rules and managed to enter St. Petersburg University.<sup>374</sup> He met Vasily Kharitonov, a graduate of Troitsk gymnasium, and other University, Technological and Forestry Institute students in 1881. They ran a communal kitchen,<sup>375</sup> and read illegal philosophical and political texts, and Blagoev joined them early in 1882.<sup>376</sup> A police raid found SR leaflets, traced them to a legal print shop and found more;<sup>377</sup> but some students smuggled handwritten and hectographed copies of the *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii*, learned Polish to read Proletariat literature and brought in Polish workers to propagandise in factories. The police arrested 52 intelligentsy and workers, but a warrant officer's kruzhki survived. Ivan Popov believed that Narodnaya volya's over-centralisation and workers' indiscipline made it easy for spies to penetrate student-led kruzhki, and that terror 'depleted revolutionary forces to no purpose', but while he argued that the 'liberation of the workers' must be in 'the hands of the people', students should 'create the foundations of a systematic revolutionary struggle'.<sup>378</sup>

From spring repression escalated. Almost 100,000 police were authorised to subject anyone to surveillance, search living quarters at any hour, take passports and restrict suspects' movements. Suspects could not hold a government or public post, belong to private associations, teach, lecture, operate typographic or photographic laboratories, work in libraries or deal in spirits, and they could practice medicine, midwifery or pharmacology only under licence from the interior minister, who decided if they got mail and telegrams.<sup>379</sup>

The Russian army had 800,000 men and 30,000 officers, but almost 400 of those in 25 places were members or sympathisers of Narodnaya volya, and its military organisation had kruzhki in St. Petersburg's Artillery Academy, Constantine Military Academy, the Engineering Academy, the Bombardiers' Academy and the civilian

Communications Institute. Many lieutenants and ensigns specialised in ordnance, and a navy sailors' kruzhok on the nearby island of Kronstadt published SR literature and planned a journal. There were similar kruzhki in Odesa, Mykolaiv, and Tbilisi, and by late that year, there were others in Vilnius, Hrodna, Dinaburg, Bobruisk, Magiloŭ, Minsk, Pskov, Riga and Smolensk. The Narodnaya volya EC decided to assassinate the military prosecutor in Odesa,<sup>380</sup> and an assassin succeeded, but failed to reach the getaway carriage. The driver ran after him, but they were both arrested, court-martialled and hanged in days.<sup>381</sup>

Bogdanovich had helped to organise the tsar's assassination, and in May Moscow police charged him with belonging Narodnaya volya, conspiring to commit terrorist acts and running a bomb factory. He was sentenced to death, but that was later commuted to life in Shlisselburg Fortress. (He died of tuberculosis six years later.)<sup>382</sup>

Officially, 430 state criminals were in exile in eastern Siberia, including 123 in Kara katorga prison. In May the state criminals in Kara heard that their heads were to be half-shaven like common criminals, and barricaded themselves in their cells, but 800 Cossacks put them in chains and marched them out of the prison. After a convict was flogged for smuggling out letters, 73 of the 113 remaining state criminals began a hunger strike, but eventually gave in, and some were transferred to Alexandrovsk katorga prison. The government merged the administration of Semipalatinsk and Akmolynsk provinces to form the governor-generalship of the Steppe, abolished the western Siberian governor-generalship and took direct control of Tomsk and Tobolsk provinces.<sup>383</sup>

In summer Narodnaya volya dismantled its Moscow press,<sup>384</sup> but the St. Petersburg police chief noted that the 'inactivity, hunger, and privation' of imprisoned students destroyed any 'hope of advancement' and functioned as a 'recruitment service, producing sedition in the ranks of student youth'.<sup>385</sup> The Senate could suppress periodicals, and the government established a censorship committee of three ministers and the Procurator of the Holy Synod.<sup>386</sup> It also secretly extended and systematised 'perustration', the illegal opening, reading and copying of letters,<sup>387</sup> in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odesa, Kyiv, Kharkiv, Tbilisi and Warszawa post offices. The deputy interior minister was made responsible for the Okhrana, and by the end of the year 20 so called 'black office' clerks had opened 380,000 letters and copied about 3,600 of them.<sup>388</sup> Two soldiers charged with passing messages between political prisoners in St. Petersburg Fortress had died in preliminary detention. Another army officer was sentenced to six months in prison, another got four years' katorga and some got five years, while 15 soldiers were sent to punishment battalions.<sup>389</sup>

Niko Nikoladze was a leading Georgian intelligent and disavowed violence, but met Vera Figner of Narodnaya volya EC in Kharkiv, and she trusted him. In December he managed to reduce the EC's demands to freeing one political prisoner, granting amnesties and permitting a free press,<sup>390</sup> but the tsar gave the police a free hand.

Late that year the rektor of Kazan University illegally deprived a student of a state bursary, and when fellow students protested they were illegally 'beaten, whipped, thrown on the ground, dragged about by the hair' and 'hauled into prison' by police. Students hectographed leaflets and some reached St. Petersburg, where students hectographed leaflets calling for a demonstration. On the day the police ordered them to disperse, but they stayed put and criticised the authorities, so the police arrested and imprisoned 280. The University was closed, and after more disturbances, the women's medical school stopped recruiting. Police also attacked students in Kharkiv, Yaroslavl, Moscow, and in Kyiv,<sup>391</sup> where only half the students were gentry.<sup>392</sup> Student interest in socialist ideas began to generalise; but the ideas had yet to reach many, if any, of the growing number of industrial workers.

## **(xi) Russia does not have to crawl at a snail's pace from stage to stage**

During the 1870s Russian industrial production had risen by 130 percent, and by 1880 French speculators had invested almost 27 million rubles, Britons 29 million and Germans almost 30 million, out of a total of 92 million. Foreigners owned 17 percent of joint-stock capital and had almost 23 million rubles invested in mining and metallurgy.<sup>393</sup> Around half a million workers were in 3,316 inspected enterprises, and 9.2 percent were under 15; but many were peasants.<sup>394</sup>

By 1881 St. Petersburg's 928,000 inhabitants included 390,000 peasants and 240,000 workers,<sup>395</sup> over 31,000 of whom were metalworkers.<sup>396</sup> The province was sparsely populated, so employers had to pay relatively high wages in order to attract new workers,<sup>397</sup> though over 70 percent, including 90 percent of textile workers, returned to their villages for harvest.<sup>398</sup> There were 27 women workers for every 100 men,<sup>399</sup> but women formed 42 percent of textile workers.<sup>400</sup> A power-loom weaver could earn 12 to 18 rubles a month, or 15 percent more than in 1861, but the price of staples such as rye flour had doubled and that of meat had more than trebled.<sup>401</sup>

In the central industrial region around Moscow women formed 20 percent of textile workers in Tver province, 35 percent in Kostroma province and 36 percent in the town of Shuya in Vladimir province, but they earned eight

rubles a month at best,<sup>402</sup> and workplace discipline was harsh. When dirty water dripped onto one weaver's material she complained to her foreman about the resulting fines, but he ignored her. She followed him and told him again, but he 'grabbed me by the hand and flung me from the door. I hit my head on the door' and 'clutched at my eyes because the blow produced sparks in my head. I went back to my machine, crying.' 'My eye swelled up, and now two weeks later there is still a yellow mark on my neck and under my eye'; but she dared not complain, since she might 'fall into the black book'.<sup>403</sup> Being 15 minutes late could cost a day's pay.<sup>404</sup>

By 1882 around 74 percent of the 754,000 inhabitants of Moscow were migrant peasants.<sup>405</sup> In just over a decade the number of spindles in the city's textile mills had increased by 55 percent.<sup>406</sup> There were 58,000 textile workers,<sup>407</sup> and 40 percent came from Moscow province, where a quarter of peasants were literate, as were 51 percent of Moscow's population. Almost all handloom weavers returned to their villages in summer, but 57 percent of power loom weavers,<sup>408</sup> including 86 percent of workers at the huge Tsindel Mill, did not. Around 83,000 of the 549,000 migrants had been in Moscow less than a year, 92,000 for five to ten years and 228,000 for 11 years or more. The median age of that year's migrants was 25, but around 500,000 workers were separated from their families. An average of nine people lived in each dwelling, two or three to a room, and ten percent lived in basements, 57,000 in factory barracks and 120,000 in *arteli* (cooperatives). Waged workers constituted a third of the labour force, including almost 30,000 metalworkers and machine-toolmakers. and 62 percent of women workers were single.<sup>409</sup> Women textile workers' wages were between a half and two-thirds of men doing the same job, and while a male cotton spinner spent a third of his pay on food, a woman had to spend two-thirds of her pay to buy 71 percent of the men's protein and 65 percent of their fats,<sup>410</sup> so 72 percent of her calories came from grain and nine percent from potatoes.<sup>411</sup> The death rate had almost equalled the birth rate for a decade, and while almost half of the 100,000 people arriving each year were peasants, almost 100,000 left.<sup>412</sup>

Sergey Semënov was born into a Moscow province peasant family in 1868,<sup>413</sup> and recalled that in the 1870s 'all the strong, healthy and able fled the village for Moscow, and got jobs wherever they could – some in the factories, others as domestics. Others turned into real entrepreneurs – the carrying trades, street vending etc. All left – men, women, boys'. Youngsters like Sergey 'eagerly awaited the time when we would be old enough to be fit for something in Moscow', and he had taught himself to read by the age of 11,<sup>414</sup> and in one provincial district 38 percent of literate workers had not been to primary school.<sup>415</sup> In 1880 Sergey was sent to a Moscow ribbon factory, and 'worked there until sowing time, when I was summoned home to help with the housework'. He went back to Moscow to work in the same factory and stayed there all winter until Easter, then went home again. By 1882 he had worked in St. Petersburg, Poltava, Belgorod and Moscow,<sup>416</sup> but returned to his village in summer.<sup>417</sup>

In autumn Moscow police arrested S.K. Belov, a Pskov province peasant, for distributing anti-government literature, but released him after he agreed to be a spy. His information led them to an apartment where they found the names and addresses of 46 members of Chyorny peredel in over a dozen cities, including their Moscow headquarters, and they arrested them all,<sup>418</sup> but the government's finances were precarious.

Industry could not meet domestic demand. In 1882 coal production was 3.5 million tonnes, iron 500,000 tonnes, steel 300,000 tonnes and oil 700,000 tonnes;<sup>419</sup> but debts incurred during the war with the Ottoman empire still took 30 percent of the state budget, and military expenditure took 32 percent.<sup>420</sup> Peasants' direct tax arrears had risen substantially in 15 years,<sup>421</sup> and the state budget deficit was 4.6 billion rubles,<sup>422</sup>

Professor Ivan Ianzhul, a factory inspector,<sup>423</sup> had studied 137,000 workers in 229 factories and mills in 48 European provinces. Children aged 15 or younger formed 5.5 percent of the workforces, but only nine plants had a school.<sup>424</sup> In 158 factories employing 85,000 workers, 80 of over 8,000 children were under ten, and three-quarters were under 15, while one-third were girls. The working day averaged 12 hours; but in 34 plants it was up to 14, in seven it was 15 or 16, and in some it was 18. Workers in a factory near Moscow were fined

for singing songs after 9.30pm, in the factory or in places not allocated for that purpose by the owner; for bringing tea, sugar or other provisions into the workshop; for washing underclothes in the common bedrooms; for having a wash under the pump in the court of the factory; for writing on the walls; for wandering from one workshop to another; for singing songs during work hours; for visiting the common bedroom of married workmen (this applied to bachelors only) or women's apartments.

Most workers lived in barracks to save a ruble or two a month on rent. There were many verbal agreements, but few pay books, and only 71 of the 158 factories paid wages regularly. The rest did so two or three times a year, or at the end of the contract, so most workers were in debt to the factory shop where provisions cost up to 80 percent more than elsewhere. Children formed over a quarter of the workforces, and suffered over half the 'accidents', but there was no compensation. Administrators notified the zemstvo only when the injuries could not be kept secret, and children were fined for refusing to work on Sundays and three rubles for fighting in the yard.

The total fines could amount to thousands of rubles a year, and Ianzhul concluded that the factory owner was 'an absolute sovereign'. If workers strike 'he fines them ten rubles apiece; if they leave the factory grounds he fines them one ruble each'. 'No complaints about fines can be lodged with a magistrate', and the owner 'often applies and interprets existing regulations at his own discretion'.<sup>425</sup> Ianzhul recommended state intervention and balanced economic development, but the government largely ignored him;<sup>426</sup> and SRs disagreed.

Vasily Vorontsov was born into a noble family in 1847. He later graduated from St. Petersburg's Medical-Surgical Academy, became a country doctor, and began to publish articles, mainly in *Otechestvennye Zapiski*.<sup>427</sup> During the 1870s he contacted SR activists, but did not join them, and later worked as an economist.<sup>428</sup> In 1882 he published *Sudby kapitalizma v Rossii (The Fate of Capitalism in Russia)*, which argued that the home market for large-scale industry, and the potential number of peasant workers, were both limited.<sup>429</sup> Competing in the world market 'might utterly extinguish the weak sparks of our scarcely awakening capitalism', but Russia could 'make use of all the forms created in the west and does not have to crawl at a snail's pace from stage to stage'.<sup>430</sup>

## (xii) A specifically Russian and historically inevitable mode of action

In 1880 Marx and Engels had refused to contribute to the SDAP's *Der Sozialdemokrat*, even though Höchberg had no editorial control.<sup>431</sup> In spring Engels privately referred to Höchberg as 'moneybags', and argued that the 'old party' was 'finished'. In spring 1881 Marx thought the Narodnaya volya assassins were 'heroic' at their trial. Their 'vigorous action' and 'manifestoes of exquisite "moderation" showed they were 'at pains to teach Europe that their *modus operandi* is a specifically Russian and historically inevitable mode of action', while Chyornyi peredel were 'muddle-headed anarcho-syndicalists' whose influence on the 'theatre of war' was 'ZERO'.<sup>432</sup>

In summer the Chyornyi peredel's Stefanovich left Switzerland, returned to Russia and joined Narodnaya volya.<sup>433</sup> Only a lack of money prevented Zasluch and Deutsch from following him.<sup>434</sup> And when Axelrod arrived in Zurich,<sup>435</sup> he believed that Russia was 'living through the eve of a major revolution'.<sup>436</sup>

In Russia Elizaveta Durnovo, Chyornyi peredel's main source of finance, was arrested.<sup>437</sup> A leaflet, bearing the name of Zemlia i volya, opposed anti-Jewish riots, but criticised the 'Jew-kulak'. Late that year *Zerno (Seed)* questioned whether a kulak was any better than a factory owner who did not 'flinch before extracting from the workers the last penny of his wages?' 'Even among the Jews there are many who must live by their labour and who are opposed by their wealthy fellow Jews'.<sup>438</sup> The third *Chyornyi peredel* turned out to be the last.<sup>439</sup>

At Lavrov's suggestion Marx and Engels had written a preface for Zasluch's translation of their *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, and early in 1882 it appeared anonymously in *Narodnaya volya* in St. Petersburg.<sup>440</sup> They doubted whether the peasant commune, 'even if greatly undermined', could 'pass directly to the higher form of communist ownership', but if a 'revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that the two complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting point for communist development'. They believed that the tsar was 'a prisoner of the war of the revolution' in Gatchina, and Russia 'formed the vanguard of revolutionary action in Europe'.<sup>441</sup> Engels thought it was 'a question of months' before 'the avant-garde of the revolution will be going into battle'; and in spring he and Marx were 'proud to find ourselves contributors' to *Narodnaya volya*.<sup>442</sup>

In Switzerland Zasluch welcomed what she took to be Marx and Engels' 'confirmation of one of the basic propositions' of herself and the other former terrorist émigrés,<sup>443</sup> and believed the dissolution of the peasant commune was inevitable.<sup>444</sup> In summer her Russian *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii* appeared in Geneva, and included Marx and Engels' preface, Marx's IWMA rules and his *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*. Plekhanov's introduction acknowledged that 'the final goal must be the same for socialists of all countries', and Russian socialists had to study Marx and Engels's works, but the Russians' tasks 'differ essentially from those of our western-European comrades', because there was no large industrial proletariat.<sup>445</sup> He attempted a reconciliation with the Narodnaya volya EC, despite unresolved differences, but he failed,<sup>446</sup> and by the end of the year he was sure that Russia had 'come upon the path of her natural law of development', since 'other paths' were closed.<sup>447</sup>

Vorontsov had mentioned 'socialists of the Marxian school', and late that year, in London, Marx, crowed that '*recent Russian publications*, printed in Holy Russia, not abroad, show the great run of my theories in that country'. It gave him satisfaction to 'damage a power, which, besides England, is the true bulwark of the old society', and Engels believed that the Russian terrorists were 'on the eve of victory'.<sup>448</sup>

## 2. The Emancipation of Labour Group

### (i) A social revolutionary party for a social democratic period

Early in 1883 the Russian government merged the Departments of Executive and State Police as the Department of Police, with its headquarters in St. Petersburg, and appointed a 'secret police inspector'.<sup>1</sup>

1. To investigate, with the help of special active collaborators, quarrels and disputes amongst diverse revolutionary groups.
2. To spread false rumours to threaten and terrorise the revolutionary milieu.
3. To transmit accusations that the most dangerous revolutionaries were spying for the police and, at the same time, to discredit revolutionary proclamations and various printed organs by depicting them as provocations of the secret police.

The Okhrana's annual budget for was over one million rubles,<sup>2</sup> and Figner, the last active founder-member of the Narodnaya volya EC, was arrested in February.<sup>3</sup>

In spring Engels sent Marx's 1877 draft letter about the commune to the former Russian SR terrorists in Switzerland. Marx died days later,<sup>4</sup> and next day Eleanor Marx received a telegram from Russia.

Please be so kind as to convey to Mr. Engels, author of *The Working Classes in England* and intimate friend of the late Karl Marx, our request that he lay a wreath on the coffin of the unforgettable author of *Capital* bearing the following inscription:

In memory of the defender of workers' rights in theory and their implementation in practice the students of the Petrovsky Agricultural Academy in Moscow.

Mr. Engels is requested to tell us his address and the cost of the wreath. The amount due will be forwarded to him without delay.<sup>5</sup>

By summer Engels believed that 'A shell between the legs of Alexandr II' would make 'all prison doors in Europe and Asia' 'fly open', except for those in Ireland;<sup>6</sup> and when Lopatin of the Narodnaya volya EC visited London in autumn he found that Engels believed that it was vital to 'cause disorder' in order to make the tsar convene a constituent assembly: 'Everything now depends on what is done in the immediate future in St. Petersburg'.<sup>7</sup>

In Russia 29-year-old Vasily Ignatov,<sup>8</sup> a landowner's son,<sup>9</sup> sent 500 rubles to Plekhanov, Deutsch, Axelrod and Zasulich. After Ignatov attended a student demonstration and was deported, he escaped to Switzerland,<sup>10</sup> and gave the émigrés 1,500 francs.<sup>11</sup> They did not describe themselves 'Social Democratic', for fear of alienating SR intelligently by appearing to identify with the German SDs,<sup>12</sup> but chose the name of Gruppya osvobozhdenie truda (The Emancipation of Labour Group).<sup>13</sup> The GOT announced that they were 'breaking with the old anarchist tendencies' and their Library of Contemporary Socialism would include the 'most important works' of Marx and Engels and original works of 'scientific socialism'.<sup>14</sup> Their focus would be on 'spreading socialist ideas in Russia' to help to organise a 'workers' socialist party' based on three main principles.

- i. The economic emancipation of the working class will be achieved only by the transfer to collective ownership by the working people of all means and fruits of production and the organisation of all the functions of social and economic life in accordance with the requirements of Society.
- ii. The modern development of technology in civilised societies not only furnishes the *material opportunity* for such organisation but makes it *necessary and inevitable* for solving the contradictions which hinder the peaceful and all-round development of those societies.
- iii. This radical economic revolution will entail the most fundamental changes in the entire constitution of social and international relationships.

The GOT supported both the 'great principles' of the IWMA and 'terrorist struggle', and agreed with Narodnaya volya that the 'underdeveloped' bourgeoisie was 'incapable of taking the initiative', but disagreed about the 'seizure of power by the revolutionary party'. Instead the 'socialist intelligentsia' was 'obliged to head the contemporary emancipation movement' and '*immediately set to work to organise the workers in our industrial centres*' into a network of kruzhs, with a 'social and political programme that corresponds to the present-day needs of the entire class of producers' and to inculcate 'the basic tasks of socialism'. A detailed programme would be possible only when the working class was 'united in its own party', and meanwhile the GOT would aim



propaganda 'primarily at the most advanced stratum of the population, the industrial workers', who could influence the peasantry; though this policy would change 'if an independent revolutionary movement emerges among the peasantry'.<sup>15</sup>

The GOT's first pamphlet was Plekhanov's *Sotsializm i politicheskaya borba* (*Socialism and the political struggle*),<sup>16</sup> which argued that there was 'no essential difference between Russian history and that of the West'.<sup>17</sup> Narodnaya volya had opened 'the epoch of *conscious political struggle*',<sup>18</sup> but trying to 'replace the initiative of a class by that of a committee' was dictatorial and utopian. Since 'bourgeois revolution' would be the 'immediate prologue' to a 'workers' revolution',<sup>19</sup> intelligenty had to build a 'social revolutionary party' for a 'Social-Democratic period'.<sup>20</sup>

Zasulich told Engels that a translation of his *Die Entwicklung des Sozialismus von der Utopie zur Wissenschaft* (*The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science*) was in the press and *Marx's Lohnarbeit und Kapital* (*Wage Labour and Capital*) would follow.<sup>21</sup>

## (ii) *Underground Russia*

In autumn 1881 the assassin Kravchinsky had escaped to Milan, where he published articles exposing the autocracy's brutality, and in 1882 he published *La Russia Sotterranea* under the pseudonym of 'Stepniak' (Man of the Steppes).<sup>22</sup>

Lavrov's preface noted that most political defendants were 'no longer apostles who impart ideas to the people developed in an atmosphere not their own', but 'men sprung from the people themselves, upon whom it used to be said, until lately, the Revolutionary propaganda had taken no hold'. Kravchinsky argued that 'genuine Nihilism' was 'the negation in the name of individual liberty, of all the obligations imposed upon the individual by society, by family life, and by religion'. There was 'no country in the world where, among the cultivated classes, religion has such little root' as Russia, and among those 'with any education at all, a man who is not a materialist, a thorough materialist, would really be a curiosity'. 'No father now threatens to cut off the hair of his daughter if she wishes to go to St. Petersburg to study medicine, or follow the higher courses there of the other sciences. A young girl is no longer compelled to fly from her father's house', and female Nihilists 'no longer need to have recourse to "fictitious marriages"'. The 'Revolutionary nation' was 'a very large party' of 'hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions of men, disseminated everywhere'. Most supporters did not 'take a direct part in the struggle', but they could 'maintain a militant organisation' with limited numbers and 'entrusts its interests and its honour, its hatred and its vengeance, to those who make the Revolution their sole and exclusive occupation'. The 'real Revolutionary party' was a minority: 'it always has been, and will always be, while the present conditions of the struggle last', because of the 'continual changes of dress, of place, of lodgings', 'only to be abandoned, perhaps, in turn a week afterwards'. Machiavelli was correct about secret societies, 'the many ruin them', but 'the few are not enough'; yet there was 'no country in the world where the peasantry would be so ready to accept the principles of Federative Socialism'. Kravchinsky had propagandised peasants in the early 1870s, and recalled that 'the news immediately spreads throughout the village, and half an hour afterwards the hovel is full of bearded peasants, who hasten to listen to the new-comer without warning either him or his host. When the hovel is too little to hold all this throng, he is taken to the communal house, or into the open air, where he reads his books, and makes his speeches'. Though 'society remains with arms folded, to see what the Terrorists will do. In secret it rubs its hands, and not only does not denounce the Terrorists, but willingly assists them, if not restrained by fear, because it feels that they are working for its own advantage'. The government was like 'a hated foreigner in a conquered country' and its position was 'untenable'. 'By yielding to the legitimate requests of the nation, by conceding the most elementary political rights demanded by the times in which we live, and by civilisation, everything will enter upon a peaceful and regular course.' The terrorists 'will be the first to throw down their deadly weapons, and take up the most humane, and the most powerful of all, those of free speech addressed to free men.' Terror, 'directed against the whole body of Government officials' would leave Russia 'strewn with dead bodies', since 'the Governors, the Gendarmes, the Procurators, the Judges, could not all have their Gatchina', and there were 'whispers' of 'agrarian Terror' against landowners.<sup>23</sup>

In spring 1883 Kravchinsky went to Geneva, but declined the invitation to join the GOT, and left for London, where he published his book as *Underground Russia*.<sup>24</sup> He had agreed to publish a journal with Plekhanov and Lavrov, and to help to establish a foreign section of *Krasny Krest*, headed by Zasulich and Lavrov.<sup>25</sup>

During 1883 almost 20,000 people were exiled to Siberia without trial, and up to 1,900 were sentenced to *katorga*. There were now 3,000 in *katorga* prisons and others at the salt-works or the Kara gold-washings, where almost 2,000 worked all day for four months when the water was free of ice, up to their knees or stomachs in icy

water, and many were in chains, then slept in sodden clothes. That year 104 of the 846 state criminals in Kara katorga prison died;<sup>26</sup> but early in 1884 the foreign section of Krasny Krest closed for lack of money.

Axelrod later recalled that Deutsch took responsibility for 'all the material and administrative tasks' associated with the GOT in Switzerland, with 'inexhaustible energy', and had 'established ties that might, by any chance whatever, be useful to us'. He managed the press, sought financial donations, corresponded with 'revolutionary-minded youth' in several Russian cities and distributed publications; but in February 1884, when he was trying to smuggle literature into Russia via Freiburg, the German police arrested him.<sup>27</sup> The GOT had no more than ten supporters in the Russia, and none in St. Petersburg,<sup>28</sup> but they had written to the addresses they had, outlined their aims and hoped to recruit 300-400 supporters in three to four years. By spring the responses encouraged them to send their printer, Saul Grinfest, to Vilnius, St. Petersburg and Moscow, but Königsberg police intercepted the supply of GOT literature, and Moscow police arrested Grinfest's contacts, thanks to a spy.<sup>29</sup>

Anna Serebriakova (as she became) was born in Tobolsk province, and during the 1870s she was educated in Moscow. She consequently entered a marriage of convenience with P.A. Serebriakov, and in the early 1880s, after he bought type for an illegal press, he was briefly arrested. The police hounded him to be a spy until he had a nervous breakdown, and Serebriakova agreed to be a spy in Krasny Krest instead; but the police hounded the couple again, so she agreed to be a spy in revolutionary kruzhki.<sup>30</sup> She collected and distributed funds, illegal literature and forged passports, and revolutionary intelligenty met at her home;<sup>31</sup> but a kruzhok of revolutionary students operated independently.

### (iii) The Society of Translators and Publishers

Early in 1884 Vasily Raspopin led a kruzhok of Siberian students at Moscow University.<sup>32</sup> They read *Kapital* and insisted on the centrality of the working class in the struggle for socialism, but anticipated a 'military revolution', so they propagandised soldiers, students and workers. Their lithograph could produce up to 100 leaflets at a time,<sup>33</sup> and they described foreign workers' achievements and called for self-education, solidarity and workers' strike funds;<sup>34</sup> and they organized intelligenty kruzhki at the Military Law Academy, the Technological Institute and the higher courses for women.<sup>35</sup> They believed Narodnaya volya had 'degenerated into impatience', though terror might be needed, while Plekhanov underestimated the peasantry, and failed to apply Marx's ideas to Russia. L.F. Yanovich, a Lithuanian student at the Petrovsky Academy, tried to organise a union of higher education institutions and financed Obshchestvo perevodchikov i izdateli (The Society of Translators and Publishers). They published Plekhanov's *Sotsializm i politicheskaya borba*, translations of Marx's *Lohnarbeit und Kapital* and *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, Engels' *Zur Wohnungsfrage (On the Housing Question)*,<sup>36</sup> *Die Entwicklung des Sozialismus von der Utopie zur Wissenschaft*, and part of *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England*.<sup>37</sup> By spring N.A. Yankovskaya had lithographed the GOT's *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii*, works by Lavrov and the SDAP's Liebknecht, plus three volumes of a magazine and leaflets for workers.<sup>38</sup>

Establishing a periodical required petitioning the local censors. The petition had to include the periodical's programme, its subscription price, the frequency of publication, documents about the identity of the editor and publisher and the printer's name. The censors also consulted the police to determine the petitioner's political sympathies and reliability. If all that was satisfactory, they required a signed agreement that the rights would not be transferred without their approval. They would reach a preliminary decision, seek approval from St. Petersburg, and if that came they would issue a licence.<sup>39</sup> By 1885 there were 44 censors,<sup>40</sup> based in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kharkiv, Kazan, Tartu, Warszawa, Rīga, Odesa and Tbilisi, while provincial vice-governors, police chiefs or other government officials acted as censors elsewhere.<sup>41</sup> Between them they had banned 800 periodicals, including many from the 1860s, and 125 books, including Adam Smith's 1779 *Wealth of Nations*.<sup>42</sup> The police discovered that 20 University *zemliachestva* (mutual aid associations of students from the same province or provinces) had formed six kruzhki. Members donated two percent of their income, and half went to needy students, 15 percent to purchase periodicals and 20 percent for publishing,<sup>43</sup> and closed the press, but Society publications had reached St. Petersburg, Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, Rostov-na-Donu, Perm, Orenburg and elsewhere.<sup>44</sup>

In summer the interior minister purged public libraries and reading rooms of Marx's works,<sup>45</sup> and banned 300 other books.<sup>46</sup> The tsar raised university fees from 40 to 60 rubles a year,<sup>47</sup> and banned student-run organisations and events without an 'academic character', even if they 'pursued no harmful goals'. Government-appointed rektors could not to communicate with the education minister directly, and rektors and faculty councils could not disburse funds, while lectures had to 'serve the interests of the state'. Rektors could appoint inspectors and administrators to award scholarships, and rektors and inspectors could imprison students for four weeks, and suspend, expel and bar them, while students had to pass a state examination administered by external examiners

to graduate. Would-be students from peasant and townsmen's families would need a certificate that freed them from obligations to pay taxes, and another from the police confirming their political reliability. They had to register with the police at the start of each term and wear a visored cap, blue tunic and green trousers, to make them easily identifiable to the police and their spies.<sup>48</sup>

In autumn the number of first-year university students fell to around 3,900, nationally,<sup>49</sup> but 80 percent of the 2,700 at St. Petersburg University were from modest backgrounds, and one of the 15 illegal zemliachestva included 500 from the Don, Kuban, Perm and western Siberian provinces, and 250 from Poland. The Studencheskaya korporatsiya (Student Corporation) had 50 members and 20 'candidates', and sought 'peaceful goals' by 'conspiratorial' means. Their library had most Russian and western European works on political economy and social theory, and SR students failed to discourage or marginalize those who propagandised workers.<sup>50</sup>

In five years 99,000 inspected Russian workers had been involved in 101 strikes,<sup>51</sup> including recent ones Moscow, Tver and Vladimir provinces.<sup>52</sup> Many power loom weavers worked all year, because employers wanted the maximum profit from their investment in expensive machinery. Over 20 percent of weavers who had worked in the same mill for 25 years were the likeliest to leave for harvest, but a quarter went for six weeks or less,<sup>53</sup> mainly to renew their internal passports, since many had no land or house in their native village. Around 63 percent had started factory work when they were juveniles and another 27 percent before they were 25. Half of their fathers had worked in factories, so they considered themselves 'cooked in the factory boiler'.<sup>54</sup>

That year 303 political suspects were sentenced without trial. The government had merged the Justice Department and Police Department,<sup>55</sup> but the tsar hardly ever met the chief of the Okhrana.<sup>56</sup>

The German chancellor had agreed to extradite suspected Russian terrorists,<sup>57</sup> on condition that they faced trial, and Deutsch was taken to Odesa, where he was sentenced to 13 years and four months of katorga in Siberia. He was taken to a Moscow prison for eight months, and in spring 1885 the state criminals were able to take their books, and when one asked an official if he could take *Kapital*, he was told to hand it to the convoy commander who looked after their money. At the end of the year, after a seven-month walk, Deutsch found that Siberia was 'perhaps the only place where one could study the history of Russian Socialism from the testimony of personal experience'. Few had read Marx, and those who knew his ideas dismissed them, but Deutsch had a copy of Plekhanov's *Sotsializm i politicheskaya borba*.<sup>58</sup>

#### **(iv) Our Differences**

By early 1885 Zasulich was ill in Switzerland, but Axelrod raised enough money from students and émigrés to publish Plekhanov's *Nashi raznoglasya (Our Differences)*.<sup>59</sup> It argued that workers had to emancipate themselves, and could learn to organise a revolution only through struggle. Socialist intelligenty had to understand what workers wanted, help them to consolidate their class-consciousness and build a party, led by workers, to 'draw the countryside into the channel of the world-wide historic movement'.<sup>60</sup> Axelrod's *Rabochee dvizhenie i sotsialnaya demokratia (The Workers' Movement and Social Democracy)* stressed that the 'workers' intelligentsia' should not be 'trailing after the tail' of intelligenty; and used simple language and concrete examples.<sup>61</sup>

In St. Petersburg Kharitonov's kruzhek included 15 or 16 male and female students, an engineer-architect, a journalist and two Chyorny peredel survivors who had gone underground, but no factory workers.<sup>62</sup> Blagoev supported the village commune;<sup>63</sup> but when he and Kharitonov read the GOT's draft programme they told them that they understood the need for a 'strong labour organisation to force home the attacks' to win concessions, and they focused on workers' demands.<sup>64</sup> Their draft programme acknowledged that the state underpinned class rule, but the working class was being 'organised, through the socialisation of labour, into large units of production', and 'through long suffering' it would 'come to the idea of socialism'. That would lead to the 'expropriation of the tools of production (factories and plants)' and 'state ownership', and they favoured both industrial and agricultural arteli. They wanted 'freedom of conscience, speech, the press, education and assembly', a federal state, a democratically-elected national assembly, local self-government, tax reform and the 'transformation of the standing army into a militia'. Terror was permissible for 'self-defence against spies' and the 'higher administration', but the 'immediate task' was to organise kruzhki of intelligenty with 'complete autonomy', linked to a 'centre' of 'representatives' with no 'compulsory power'. They aimed to get 'material assistance', build libraries and form kruzhki of workers who were capable of being 'moulded into active members', then bring about 'the unification of the largest possible number' of 'prepared' workers and 'the most suitable elements of the peasantry' into a 'workers' party'. The potential for propagandising soldiers was limited, but 'prepared' workers should propagandise officers.<sup>65</sup>

Blagoev told the GOT that they had 'much in common' and that *Nashi raznoglasya* was a 'radical instrument' for 'clearing up' the 'mental confusion' of Narodnaya volya.<sup>66</sup> Axelrod and Plekhanov sent articles,<sup>67</sup> and Kharitonov printed up to 300 copies of *Rabochy (The Worker)*. It argued for socialist intelligenty to lead 'class-conscious' workers and peasants and to begin 'transforming the state for the benefit of the people', but it acknowledged that without civic freedom there could be 'no security' or progress to 'final demands'.<sup>68</sup>

The GOT acknowledged that workers' kruzhki had to be 'tightly bound together', and terror might be necessary.<sup>69</sup> A 'communist revolution' would lead to the 'transfer to social ownership of all the means and objects of production' and 'a new system of social production' through 'direct popular legislation'. Many Russian intelligenty were timid or naïve, and revolutionaries received 'almost no support, sympathy or understanding' from peasants, so socialist intelligenty had to spread socialist ideas to workers, agitate and build a 'workers' party'. 'Thrown out of the village as an impoverished member of the commune, the proletarian will return to it as a Social Democratic agitator' and ally with the 'poorest part of the peasantry'; but to 'consolidate' a revolution there would have to be revolutions in 'several civilised countries'. Hectographed copies of the GOT's revised programme circulated widely across the Russian empire.<sup>70</sup> Ignatov left Switzerland for Egypt, hoping to recover from tuberculosis, but died there.<sup>71</sup>

In London Engels believed the 'rapid disintegration' of the Russian village commune was increasing the number of landless peasants, so the empire was 'a charged mine' and 'all that is needed is to apply the match'; but while a 'handful of men' could 'release, by a single and intrinsically insignificant act, explosive forces which later become uncontrollable', those who 'boasted of having effected a revolution have always found on the morrow' that the results bore 'no resemblance at all to what they intended'.<sup>72</sup> In spring he published Marx's *Das Kapital* Volume 2 in Hamburg. It noted that Russian cottage industry was part of 'capitalist production' and artisans were 'more dependent on merely accidental subsidiary employments'.<sup>73</sup> Russian censors saw the book as a 'serious piece of economic research' that was 'comprehensible only to specialists', and passed it, and smugglers brought the GOT's translation of Marx's critique of bourgeois philosophers;<sup>74</sup> but it was a Russian SR intelligent who produced a pamphlet that workers could easily understand.

## (v) *Tsar Hunger*

Abram Bakh was born into a Jewish family in Rostov-na-Donu in 1857.<sup>75</sup> He graduated from a gymnasium, entered Kyiv University in 1875 and worked as a tutor to make ends meet. He became politically active in 1878, but the University suspended him for three years, barred him from attending any higher educational institutions,<sup>76</sup> and deported him to Vologda province,<sup>77</sup> where he developed tuberculosis. In 1882 he was allowed to return to Kyiv University, joined Narodnaya volya, propagandised workers and was an EC member by 1883.<sup>78</sup> He led workers' kruzhki in Kazan, Rostov-na-Donu and other southern cities,<sup>79</sup> and began with legal publications, then raised social and political issues and introduced illegal literature, including the Narodnaya volya programme,<sup>80</sup> but opposed terrorism. He took ideas from *Kapital* and explained the labour theory of value, the division of labour, exchange, commodities, surplus value, the conflict between capital and labour and socialism. He raised issues from the worker's perspective, and used accessible language, so the workers asked for his notes.<sup>81</sup> Bakh published *Tsar-golod (Tsar Hunger)*, which argued that 'the tremendous amount of energy' involved in a 'united protest of the workers' should be turned against 'the whole class of employers' and the state that supported them.<sup>82</sup> Early in 1884 he went to St. Petersburg and was tasked with establishing a press to produce *Narodnaya Volya*. He returned to Rostov-na-Donu and he and Raisa Krantsfeld produced the tenth issue in summer. Bakh and Genrieta Dobruskina selected literature for workers, including the hectographed *Tsar-golod*, *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii* and a popularisation of *Kapital*.<sup>83</sup> Terror remained influential, but the EC was in trouble.

Maria Olovennikova had been born in Orel province in 1850.<sup>84</sup> She later became an SR,<sup>85</sup> was involved in attempts to free defendants in 1878,<sup>86</sup> and by 1881 she was a member of the Narodnaya volya EC.<sup>87</sup> In autumn 1882 the EC's Tikhomirov left Russia, and from spring 1883 he and Lavrov issued *Vestnik 'narodnoi voli' (The Messenger of the 'People's Will')* in Paris.<sup>88</sup> Olovennikova joined Tikhomirov, but in January 1884 they dissolved the EC, but stayed in Paris to be responsible for members' addresses and *Narodnaya volya*, which was printed in Geneva, while 17 others would operate as a 'commission' headed by Lopatin in Russia.

When Lopatin arrived in Moscow he insisted on using his own name, visited friends, slept at their houses, ate in the students' refectory where police spies were common, and antagonised young comrades with his arrogance. In summer he visited groups in Odesa, Kharkiv and Rostov-na-Donu, and tried to link them with Moscow.<sup>89</sup> Narodnaya volya students were building workers' kruzhki in Luhansk, and robbing to finance presses and bomb factories.<sup>90</sup> Lopatin wanted to assassinate senior government officials, while younger comrades favoured

'economic terrorism' against factory owners, foremen and landlords; but they agreed to rejoin Narodnaya volya and get a press and dynamite for Lopatin.

Blagoev had been marginally involved in printing what turned out to be the last *Narodnaya volya*,<sup>91</sup> and copies reached Russia by autumn.<sup>92</sup> It blamed the party's decline on the weakening of trust and discipline.<sup>93</sup> Soon after, when Lopatin was in St. Petersburg and carrying dynamite caps, revolutionary leaflets and the uncoded names and addresses of members and sympathisers, the police arrested him.<sup>94</sup> He got the list to his mouth, but they overpowered him before he could swallow it.<sup>95</sup> It contained 101 addresses,<sup>96</sup> and the police rounded up 500 members,<sup>97</sup> including survivors of the military organisation.<sup>98</sup> Bakh and Krantsfeld escaped arrest and retained their press,<sup>99</sup> but Tikhomirov was under pressure.

Petr Rachkovsky was born in 1853 and had a private tutor as a boy. He became a postal worker in Kyiv province by 1867, and a postal investigator in Archangelsk province in 1877. In 1879 a police spy heard drunken students describe him as a leader of revolutionary kruzki, and the police arrested him, but he claimed to be in contact with the GOT, so they let him go and arrested the students instead.<sup>100</sup> He drifted to Vilnius and Kraków, but in 1881 he applied to join the 'Holy Brotherhood', a self-appointed protection force for the new tsar. In 1882 the head of St. Petersburg Okhrana offered him a job, and he rapidly became his right hand man.<sup>101</sup> In summer 1883 the Okhrana set up a Zagraichnaia Agentura (Foreign Agency) in the Russian embassy in Paris, and appointed Rachkovsky as its head in summer 1884.<sup>102</sup> He hired retired French detectives, cooperated with the Sûreté,<sup>103</sup> and put Tikhomirov under constant surveillance. His letters were intercepted and his money transfers disrupted, and doctors refused to treat his sick child.<sup>104</sup>

In Russia a Pskov peasant had been charged with distributing anti-government literature, but agreed to work for the police, and led them to an apartment where they found the names of 46 Narodnaya volya members in a dozen cities, and they arrested them all and destroyed the central organisation in Moscow.<sup>105</sup> In autumn the EC member Figner, another female comrade, six officers and two other men were sentenced to death. Notices of the trial and reports of the proceedings did not appear in the papers, but eight days later the women's sentences were commuted to katorga for life. Two days after that their arms and legs were fettered and they were marched out of prison between two lines of soldiers, and taken to Shlisselburg Fortress,<sup>106</sup> which contained 40 new solitary cells.<sup>107</sup> Some SRs who had formerly been workers had been there a long time.

#### **(vi) Kill me, but do not beat me!**

Ippolit Myshkin was born in Moscow into the family of a non-commissioned army officer,<sup>108</sup> and a serf woman.<sup>109</sup> Myshkin later became a registered townsman,<sup>110</sup> and spent three years at a military school, but could not enter a gymnasium because of his origins. He wanted to be 'useful' to his class, and to enter a military secondary school to train as a primary school teacher. The War Ministry excluded poorer students,<sup>111</sup> but he trained as a scribe and stenographer,<sup>112</sup> worked for the General Staff and the tsar commended him in 1866.<sup>113</sup> By 1873 Myshkin considered himself a socialist,<sup>114</sup> and contacted Chaikovsky's SR kruzok,<sup>115</sup> which lacked legal literature, so Myshkin set up a press in an Arbat district commune.<sup>116</sup> An imprisoned kruzok member in Saratov sent a letter to Myshkin via a warder, and gendarmes raided his shop,<sup>117</sup> but he escaped.<sup>118</sup> In 1874 the government feared 37 provinces were 'infected' with socialist ideas,<sup>119</sup> and the police traced books in a Saratov shop to Myshkin's press.<sup>120</sup> By 1875 he had been a student at St. Petersburg Technological Institute, but later went to Irkutsk, became a gendarme, made himself useful, had the freedom of the office, stole blank forms and a captain's uniform, authorised himself to escort Chernyshevsky, resigned, and went to Viluisk. An official thought it odd that a gendarme captain on an important errand had no escort, and wanted to send his papers to the Governor. Myshkin volunteered to take them, but the official insisted on an escort of two Cossacks. On the journey Myshkin ran into the forest, wounded a Cossack and escaped, but was captured and sent to St. Petersburg Fortress.<sup>121</sup>

By 1877 over 87 percent of the SR prisoners whose details are known were under 30: 38 percent were between 21 and 25 and over 27 percent were 20 or younger.<sup>122</sup> The police list included 1,665, but they charged 612 men and 158 women, bailed 452 pending trial, and kept 265 in prison, and though 53 subsequently escaped,<sup>123</sup> over 70 went insane, committed suicide,<sup>124</sup> or died from exposure or malnutrition.<sup>125</sup> Arrested textile workers outnumbered the 140 metalworkers, but only textile workers were sent for trial.<sup>126</sup> In autumn Zheliabov and others out on bail were put in the House of Preliminary Detention, where they discussed the indictment and decided that Myshkin would make a speech.<sup>127</sup> The trial of 193 SRs began before a special bench of senators, who sat without a jury.<sup>128</sup> The hall was large enough only for the defendants and officials,<sup>129</sup> and there was no stenographer, so defence lawyers asked for permission to make a shorthand record. The government newspaper printed only the indictment in full,<sup>130</sup> and other papers could publish only what it printed.<sup>131</sup> The defendants had

'Deathly pale faces, greenish-yellow, some of them swollen, some of them emaciated.' Some were on crutches. Others 'coughed terribly', because they were approaching death, and 'looked eagerly around as if seeking support from their comrades who were in good health'; but none paid any attention to the judges. Next day they were split into groups, but Myshkin explained why they could not listen to the indictment and addressed the judges 'as a judge usually addresses a defendant'.<sup>132</sup> On the third day the judges announced that they would try 17 groups separately,<sup>133</sup> but Myshkin demanded that they be tried together. A judge exclaimed: 'But this is a revolution!' Three-quarters of the defendants refused to attend the court,<sup>134</sup> but Myshkin reported back to them.<sup>135</sup> He told the court he was a member of the 'Social-Revolutionary Party',<sup>136</sup> and accused it of being 'worse than a house of ill-fame; there they sell only bodies, but here you prosecute honour, and justice, and law!'<sup>137</sup> Defendants kept one gendarme away, but Myshkin was dragged out shouting about senators who, 'out of cowardice and servility and the hope of promotion and decorations', were 'selling truth and justice'.<sup>138</sup> Early in 1878 he was sentenced to ten years' *katorga*.<sup>139</sup> The court petitioned the tsar for leniency, except for Myshkin,<sup>140</sup> who was sent to Kharkiv prison. Soon after he struck the prison priest in the face, hoping to be shot, but large numbers of deaths and cases of insanity had prompted officials to inspect the prison. They found it unfit for human habitation and the ordered that the prisoners be sent to Kara in Siberia. After one prisoner died at Irkutsk on the journey, Myshkin delivered a funeral oration, and was given a further 15 year sentence. In spring 1882 he and seven other state criminals escaped, but they were all captured, in spite of the fact that they had daggers and revolvers. Myshkin, who had reached Vladivostok, was sent to Shlisselburg Fortress near St. Petersburg.<sup>141</sup> In the next two years he tried 'several times to instigate a general revolt against its murderous regime', but received no support. When more political prisoners were sent there, Myshkin insulted an official, hoping to be tried so he could reveal the prison's 'cruel secret' and win 'an easier lot for his comrades'. After Figner arrived, late in 1884, she heard 'metal dishes falling on the floor, sounds of scuffling, and a nervous, half-strangled voice crying, "Kill me, but do not beat me!"'<sup>142</sup> Myshkin was condemned to death by court martial and shot;<sup>143</sup> and Narodnaya volya had collapsed. Bakh had concluded that Narodnaya volya had 'outlived its era', and emigrated.<sup>144</sup>

Ziber had resigned from Kyiv University in 1875 and left for Switzerland. He met Marx and Engels in London in 1881, and published a book in St. Petersburg in 1885. He argued that since Russian capitalism was in its infancy, and socialism was a long way off,<sup>145</sup> and though Danielson published a translation of *Das Kapital* Volume 2 in St. Petersburg,<sup>146</sup> the police and gendarmes still focussed on SRs, since they believed that SDs were 'theoreticians' and 'not dangerous'. From Paris Tikhomirov advised Narodnaya supporters in Russia to ignore the GOT; but their publications were influential, and he eventually approved joint work.<sup>147</sup> The police intercepted Blagoev's letters to Tikhomirov and Lavrov in Paris, and they deported Blagoev to Bulgaria, where he wrote to Plekhanov that a Russian socialist party was possible only after capitalism had developed.

In St. Petersburg Kharitonov's *kruzhok* worked with a Narodnaya volya workers' *kruzhok*, and some of the 15 other SD intelligenty *kruzhok* leaders followed suit. One led four *kruzhki*, while others took *Rabochy* to SR *kruzhki*, and its second issue reported on a strike in Vladimir province.<sup>148</sup>

### **(vii) Penetrating the factory workers' milieu**

Petr Moiseenko was born into a peasant family in a Smolensk province village in 1852. By 1865 he worked in a Moscow factory, then became a weaver in Orekhovo by 1871 and in St. Petersburg by 1874. He joined workers' *kruzhki*, met Plekhanov, and led a strike, but was exiled to Siberia for four years in 1879.<sup>149</sup> In 1883, on his release, he worked at Savva Morozov's cotton-weaving mill at Nikolskoe in Vladimir province, which was unventilated, badly lit, noisy and dangerous. The working day was 14 hours or more, and some workers slept on their clothes on the factory's bare boards.<sup>150</sup> They had had five pay cuts in two years,<sup>151</sup> and in 1884 the total fines amounted to 300,000 rubles, or almost half their collective wages.<sup>152</sup> Moiseenko, V.I. Ivanov, who was another veteran trade unionist,<sup>153</sup> a young worker called L.I. Volkov and others met secretly and drew up a list of demands.<sup>154</sup> In January 1885 the director lowered piecework rates, cut the basic rate by a quarter and told supervisors to extract another quarter in fines. After deductions for charcoal for the samovar, lighting and the bathhouse, a weaver might take home 2.5 rubles a month, but being caught smoking resulted in a fine of five rubles.<sup>155</sup> Days later, after the director refused to grant a traditional holiday,<sup>156</sup> the activists led the male weavers out on strike.<sup>157</sup> Some ransacked the office, shops and the director's and supervisors' quarters, until the leaders stopped them. Next day the provincial governor brought battalions of troops, and the director offered minor concessions, but the strikers demanded the restoration of the 1881 pay scale,<sup>158</sup> the return of former fines with a limit of five percent of earnings and up to one ruble on new fines. They wanted the director to abide by factory laws and agreements, negotiate piece rates, deliver the food they had paid for, pay for the time lost because of poor material, faulty

machinery and strikes, sack obnoxious supervisors, pay wages regularly and let workers elect *starosty* (like the elders in peasant villages) every three months.<sup>159</sup> The male weavers picketed out the women, and 8,000 picketed out the other 3,000.<sup>160</sup> Moiseenko left to for Moscow to get support from SR intelligenty,<sup>161</sup> and three days later Volkov led a deputation of strikers to present the governor with their demands, which now included the state regulation of pay and laws to improve working conditions.<sup>162</sup> They carried a red flag, fought troops and rescued workmates; but next day 800 strikers went back to work, 600 were subsequently deported and 33 remained in jail pending trial.<sup>163</sup>

Illegal papers celebrated the strike as 'a link in the colossal chain of the workers' movement' that had 'affected practically every industrial centre'.<sup>164</sup> A legal paper noted that 'our factory stratum' was 'forming literally the same demands as workers in western Europe', and the ideas of Marx and the IWMA were 'penetrating the factory workers' milieu'.<sup>165</sup>

Nationally, women formed 22 percent of inspected factory workers, but 36 percent in St. Petersburg and the surrounding provinces, including 84 percent of tobacco workers and 42 percent of textile workers.<sup>166</sup> Moscow textile mills exploited women and children to undercut their St. Petersburg rivals, whose owners pressured the government to restrict female and child labour. In summer a law stipulated that wages were to be paid in cash, not kind, and employers should not retain any to cover debts, medical services, lighting or tools, while inspectors would regulate factory shop prices. Workers had to hand in their passports at the factory office, but would receive a written statement of wages and conditions,<sup>167</sup> and they could elect representatives, as long as they 'did not show any affinity to the revolutionaries'.<sup>168</sup> Workers were usually paid twice or four times a year, but managers had to pay those on short contracts monthly and others bi-monthly, and give them a book to record earnings and fines, which could be no more than one-third of earnings and had to be used for maternity assistance, injury compensation and burial costs.<sup>169</sup> Employers could not cut pay during a contract, and workers could not demand a raise or leave,<sup>170</sup> but could end contracts for non-payment of wages, beatings, severe insults, violations of agreements about food or lodgings and being ordered to do work that damaged their health. Workers who failed to fulfil their contract risked a month in prison, strikers were liable to four months, those who damaged tools to a year, 'instigators' to eight years, and anyone who threatened or used violence against strike-breakers or property up to 16 years. Managers could sack workers for 'insolence or bad conduct' that 'endangers the factory's property or the personal safety of any member of the factory administration'.<sup>171</sup> Those who sacked workers unfairly would pay a small fine, but lockouts remained legal. Women and children up to the age of 17 could work in mills from 9.00pm to 5.00am, but employers could make women work any hours at busy times.

The number of children in factories subsequently fell to two-thirds of the 1882 level and almost disappeared in tobacco factories. Women took the children's places, and more women than men worked in mechanised weaving mills. Females formed 31 percent of inspected workers in Moscow province and most neighbouring provinces, and 36 percent around Vladimir. In Ukraine women formed a third of textile workers in and around Kyiv, and over half in and around Kharkiv, plus around 90 percent of wool cleaners.<sup>172</sup> Some managers cut the working week, but raised fines and shop prices.<sup>173</sup>

The police knew that workers carried 'all kinds of false doctrine' to their villages,<sup>174</sup> so they allowed them to renew their internal passports at the police station or their factory.<sup>175</sup> In St. Petersburg Nevsky cotton mill made an annual profit of 38 percent and Thornton wool works made 45 percent that year.<sup>176</sup> There were only 20 factory inspectors,<sup>177</sup> who were accountable to employers' nominees,<sup>178</sup> and they supervised over 400,000 males,<sup>179</sup> and 192,000 females.<sup>180</sup> The finance minister announced that inspectors would be 'constables' and maintain 'order',<sup>181</sup> but a gendarme could 'find very little difference between their position and that of the earlier serfs; the same want, the same need, the same rights; the same contempt for their spiritual needs. In one case the person was yoked to an animal, in the other he is a senseless machine, differing very little from the machine at which he works'. Workers did not seem interested in politics, but 'that evil day is coming closer and closer'.<sup>182</sup>

In spring 1886 the 33 Orekhovo strikers delivered a devastating indictment on Morozov at their trial.<sup>183</sup> He had sacked the director, who corroborated the strikers' testimony, and the jury threw out all 101 charges,<sup>184</sup> but the police detained 17 for three months,<sup>185</sup> and exiled Volkov,<sup>186</sup> and Moiseenko, to Archangelsk province;<sup>187</sup> but there were further developments elsewhere in European Russia, the Pale and Poland.

### **(viii) Proletariat**

Early in 1883 four Proletariat leaders from Warszawa, two from St. Petersburg and one from both Moscow and Vilnius met in Vilnius, while another may have come from Kyiv. They wanted an All-Russian socialist party with a unified leadership, and agreed to establish federal links with Narodnaya volya. Proletariat's local organisations

would have a workers' committee, and the Warszawa workers' committee, which would be the central committee, had to include one woman.

Weeks later the Warszawa police chief announced compulsory fortnightly medical examinations for female workers, like those for prostitutes. Proletariat workers distributed thousands of leaflets, and stuck them on walls, while intelektualiści distributed them on trams and at factory gates, and the governor-general countermanded the order.<sup>188</sup> In spring the Russian chief inspector of schools sent several Pulawy Agricultural Institute students to Warszawa Citadel, because their library included biographies of two of the tsar's assassins. He visited the Institute, met an angry reception, suspended 129 students and banned 57 from attending any university. The first public protest in Warszawa in 20 years was dispersed by police, and the University suspended 199 students for up to three years. The police sent eight students they suspected of contacting socialists to a St. Petersburg prison for up to 18 months, yet Proletariat recruited hundreds of members and thousands of sympathisers.<sup>189</sup>

Mill workers in Łódź and Żyrardów had a six-day, 84-hour week, but managers cut women's pay by a quarter, but after Proletariat leaflets reached them some went on strike. Managers called the police, but the men came out two days later. The governor-general arrived with four companies of infantry and 50 Cossacks, and arrested the strike leaders, but others picketed the prison demanding their release. A young officer ordered troops to fire and they killed or mortally wounded three teenagers and injured many more. More troops arrived, but next day strikers ransacked the factory and the managers' homes. Managers promised to cut an hour off the day and restore the women's wages, and ten of them joined thousands of mourners walking to the cemetery. Soon after Warszawa metal factory strikers won more pay, though the managers subsequently sacked the leaders.

Marceli Janczewski had built three printing presses in Hrodna in the Pale and sent them to the Narodnaya volya EC in Kharkiv, who gave one to Proletariat. Janczewski set it up in Warszawa and built a koło of dual members. A Proletariat leader went to St. Petersburg and Narodnaya volya's Varvara Shchulepnikova arrived in Warszawa. Proletariat moved the press to the outskirts, and though the young printers had little typographical training, they carried revolvers, knives and knuckledusters in case the police raided. In summer 'the printing shop of Proletariat' published a 'Manifesto to those toiling on the land from the Central Committee of the Social Revolutionary Party', 'with a request to 'read it to the illiterate' and 'hand it over to others'. It argued that the gentry had cheated peasants, so only 'half of you possess anything and only one in five has enough to feed himself'. Proletariat was fighting so that 'city workers will get the *factories*' and a 'country revolution' would 'give' peasants land and 'everybody freedom'. Proletariat members collected addresses of workers' relatives and reportedly posted 5,000 copies to peasants in seven provinces, and sent a Lithuanian translation to Suwałki and Vilnius. Proletariat members holidaying in the countryside distributed copies, but police arrested four, and two talked. The police discovered Proletariat's existence for the first time,<sup>190</sup> and found that the Warszawa leaders were highly-educated and 'indoctrinated' workers.<sup>191</sup> Meanwhile, Warszawa students attended Jadwiga Szezawinska's weekly 'Flying University' to hear lectures by University professors.<sup>192</sup> A Proletariat leaflet calling the tsar a 'blood-soaked executioner' argued that most educated Polish people failed to understand that 'only the revolution shows the way out from fatal slavery'. The organisation got type from Germany and Austria,<sup>193</sup> and type and presses from Odesa, Kyiv and Vilnius. Jewish smugglers in Kalisz and Częstochowa brought German literature to Vilnius, where Poles, Russians and Jews supported both Proletariat and Narodnaya volya, and Proletariat established a press in Łódź, where the workers' committee included Poles, Germans and Jews. Proletariat also had contacts in Moscow, Riga, Tartu, Kyiv, Odesa, Vitebsk, Magíloŭ,<sup>194</sup> Hrodna and Pinsk, plus students in Kyiv, Moscow, St. Petersburg and Odesa, and émigrés in Geneva, Leipzig and Paris.

In autumn the four-page *Proletariat*, the 'organ of the Social Revolutionary Party', bore no price, since readers were expected to donate, and called on the 'Defenders of the Workers' Cause' to 'distribute this paper!' It bore the slogans of 'Freedom, Factories, Land!' and 'Workers of all countries unite!', but did not mention the IWMA. It described Proletariat's position on Narodnaya volya, developments in the Russian empire and factory conditions in Poland and abroad. Most of the paper consisted of CC appeals and instructions, warnings to spies, provocateurs and employers, with their addresses, plus donations (using initials or nicknames) to Krasny Krest, with the amounts paid to the families of those arrested, and obituaries. Warynski wrote or edited much of the material,<sup>195</sup> and welcomed only poor peasants 'into the socialist constellation', as workers' allies.<sup>196</sup>

Soon after he left illegal literature in a shop, and the owner called the police. When he returned, they arrested him, but Shchulepnikova escaped.<sup>197</sup> Police found a contact list in Warynski's flat,<sup>198</sup> and arrested two CC members, one of whom was Alexandra Jentys, a teacher at a girl's elite boarding school.<sup>199</sup> There was a huge protest demonstration and police arrested 1,000 suspects,<sup>200</sup> but they did not find the press. In Łódź and Zgierz two workers betrayed their koło, and Szmaus stabbed one of them, but the police made more arrests.<sup>201</sup>

Kunicki and others close to Narodnaya volya joined the Proletariat leaders in Warszawa.<sup>202</sup> A second *Proletariat* appeared late that year, and soon after a third issue mentioned 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat', but



did not mention Marx. It announced Proletariat's solidarity with Narodnaya volya and pronounced a death sentence on the surviving Zgierz informer. The police arrested 40 workers, including 21 activists, and only two or three *koła* survived. The next *Proletariat* appeared in a reduced format, and called the police 'anti-semitic agitators',<sup>203</sup> but 43 police raids found Proletariat literature and two of them netted over 10,000 items.

By 1884 Proletariat's Stanislaw Pacanowski had organised 200 Łódź workers in 30 *kola*,<sup>204</sup> and intelektualiści led others in Warszawa, Zgierz, Żyrardów and Białystok,<sup>205</sup> but imprisoned Warszawa workers betrayed Duleba and the city's last *koło* disintegrated. The CC appealed to Narodnaya volya for support, and sent Kunicki to Paris, where he signed a confidential agreement limiting Proletariat's activity to Poland; but weeks later Warszawa police surrounded workers' districts and made arrests. The textile workers Stanislaw Bugajski and Kazimierz Tomaszewski tried to kill the Zgierz informer, but the police arrested Bugajski. A *Proletariat* of 18 pages of thinner paper in an even smaller format appeared on May Day, but Tomaszewski gave himself up.

In summer police arrested Kon, who remained silent, and Pacanowski, who talked. Kunicki persuaded the Russian army officer Petr Bardovsky to write a manifesto, but Edmund Baranowski, a spy in Proletariat's fighting squad, betrayed him, and gendarmes raided his flat, where they found Proletariat's archives, its stamp and that of Narodnaya volya. The shoemaker Michal Ossowski killed a spy, but police arrested the fighting squad.<sup>206</sup> The Narodnaya volya EC told Proletariat leaders that 'the differences in social conditions between the Russian and Polish peoples' did 'not allow for identical means in the preparatory work of Russian and Polish socialists', so 'merging would likely inhibit the activities of Russian and Polish socialists, constraining their freedom in selecting the most appropriate methods of organization and struggle'.<sup>207</sup> After Lopatin was arrested in St. Petersburg the confidential agreement with Proletariat lapsed.<sup>208</sup> Kunicki offered to become a spy, in return for his freedom, but then withdrew his 'confession'. He drafted an article supporting the assassination of officials and spies for another *Proletariat*, but gendarmes raided the press, and Łódź police arrested a CC agent looking for another.

Early in 1885 Warszawa police closed the files on 190 Proletariat prisoners of both sexes, aged 17 to 60, and in spring, when 200 Proletariat workers demonstrated about unemployment, 146 were arrested. In summer Proletariat University students produced a popularised translation of *Das Kapital* Volume I, but a CC leaflet called on peasants to unite 'in the name of the Redeemer'.

In autumn 55 Proletariat members were arrested, and others were bailed, but 100 stayed in prison, and 24 were exiled to eastern Siberia for up to five years without trial.<sup>209</sup> In December a Warszawa court martial tried the Proletariat leaders,<sup>210</sup> and found 30 guilty of plotting the 'violent overthrow of the existing state' and the 'social and economic order'.<sup>211</sup> Kon and Pacanowski got ten years and eight months in prison, and 18 others, including Warynski and the fighting squad got 16 years' *katorga*. Two Russian army officers were sent to eastern Siberia for life, but six received death sentences. The authorities commuted the sentences on Szmaus and Nikolai Lury to 20 years' *katorga*, but Bardovsky, Kunicki, Ossowski and Jan Pietrusinski were hanged early in 1886.

Marian Ulrych arrived from Geneva to organise the survivors, but she and others were arrested in spring. In summer the locksmith Wladislaw Kowaleski and the weaver Viktor Hipszer shot a spy, but he survived, and Hipszer was sentenced to *katorga* for life. Other members received short sentences, but 21 got five years' in eastern Siberia, and Kowaleski was hanged that autumn. Polish university graduates in Leipzig published a translation of *Das Kapital* Volume I,<sup>212</sup> and Proletariat's 20 or so leaflets and over 50 translated works printed in Geneva remained influential in Poland and Russia;<sup>213</sup> but Narodnaya volya was on its last legs in Russia.

#### **(ix) Good will and readiness to sacrifice has been wasted**

Natan Bogoraz was born into a Jewish family in Taganrog, near Rostov-na-Donu, in 1865.<sup>214</sup> He entered a gymnasium,<sup>215</sup> but left for St. Petersburg with an older sister in 1880. He attended Narodnaya volya student meetings in 1881, entered the University in autumn 1882, was arrested and briefly detained for taking part in student unrest, then expelled and deported to Taganrog. He formed a revolutionary *kruzhok*, and contacted others in Rostov-na-Donu and Odesa, but was briefly detained in summer 1883. From autumn he helped to print thousands of leaflets and pamphlets in the name of Narodnaya volya, but the printers soon scuttled the press and left for Moscow.<sup>216</sup> Bogoraz was arrested and charged with illegal activity in Katerynoslav in southwestern Ukraine and the Narodnaya volya press in Tula,<sup>217</sup> and kept in jail for 11 months.<sup>218</sup> When he was released the Taganrog *kruzhok* had survived and had enough money for a press.<sup>219</sup> Bogoraz set up tightly organised workers' *kruzhki*, and in 1885 Zakhary Kogan, who had worked on émigré presses, returned to supervise Narodnaya volya's presses in Rostov-na-Donu and Novochoerkassk. Narodnaya volya still had contacts elsewhere.

A Moscow *kruzhok* had set up an underground press in 1884 and lithographed and distributed illegal works. In spring 1885, after the *kruzhok* leader died, the treasurer took over. A student organisation sought to coordinate

propaganda in the army and raise funds for Krasny Krest, but after a former Petrovsky Academy student returned from Paris he convinced them to form workers' kruzhs. They visited factories, handed out illegal pamphlets and books, and recruited; but one was arrested carrying a manuscript describing basic Marxist political economy and arguing for workers' kruzhs. Arrests broke the organisation, the Rostov-na-Donu press was closed, and the Novocherkassk press was transferred to Taganrog; but the southern leaders aimed to rebuild the organisation.<sup>220</sup>

Mikhail Poliakov had joined a kruzhek of Jewish Narodnaya volya intelligentsy in Katerynoslav by 1884, and by 1885 they were well-organized and extremely active propagandising Jewish tailors, shoemakers and female tobacco workers. That autumn the southern Narodnaya volya leaders decided to meet near Katerynoslav,<sup>221</sup> and understood that the Paris EC was 'in no condition to carry on' without support.<sup>222</sup> They elected a central group, including Bogoraz, agreed to focus on publishing illegal literature,<sup>223</sup> and use terror only when it could be justified on agitational grounds. They subsequently terrorised police and officials,<sup>224</sup> and Bogoraz established an explosives store and a passport bureau. By the end of the year they had printed thousands of leaflets and pamphlets, and had bound 2,000 copies of the eleventh and twelfth issues of *Narodnaya volya* together like a journal. In January 1886 the printers were arrested and the press seized. Most leaders were arrested in February, but Bogoraz escaped,<sup>225</sup> and returned to St. Petersburg,<sup>226</sup> where an attempt to regroup had failed;<sup>227</sup> but late that year he was deported.<sup>228</sup> There were isolated members, and a few workers' circles in Kharkiv, Tula, Moscow and in St. Petersburg,<sup>229</sup> where strikes at Shaw Mill and Pal Mill sparked others across the city;<sup>230</sup> and Narodnaya volya was losing credibility.

In Astrakhan Chernyshevsky's only income was from 'wretchedly paid' writing. He revised one of his books in 1887, but censors banned it. He denied the existence of any transhistorical, monolithic, built-in 'national character', and stressed that the 'mode of life and the events in the lives of people' were 'determined partly by external factors that have no relation to their qualities, and partly by their own qualities'. The 'principal force that elevates human life' was 'mental development', but while 'class strife' and 'political economy' were important factors,<sup>231</sup> far too many educated young propagandists had wasted their lives.

How much true good will and readiness to sacrifice has been wasted by our young intelligentsia in trying to establish the truth, on trying to do good to people. And what has been done? Nothing. Worse than nothing. Immense spiritual forces have been destroyed. Stakes have been broken and the earth has been trampled harder than ever before, so that it will not take a spade.<sup>232</sup>

Chernyshevsky was now a 'faithful follower' of the German materialist Ludwig Feuerbach.<sup>233</sup>

The government was clamping down on access to education. In 1883 55,100 girls had enrolled at gymnasia, but by 1885 around 9.3 percent of all primary pupils had gone on to secondary education, and 0.9 percent to higher education; but the higher courses for women were run down from 1886. In 1887 the Education Ministry budgeted nine million rubles for gymnasia and universities and 2.2 million for vocational schools and technical institutes. There were almost 71,000 boys in gymnasia, around 21,000 in realschulen and over 44,000 in municipal and district schools;<sup>234</sup> but early that year the minister ordered officials to stop 'children of coachmen, servants, cooks, washerwomen, small shopkeepers and persons of a similar type' getting a secondary or a higher education.<sup>235</sup> He raised student fees from 60 to 100 rubles a year,<sup>236</sup> reduced fee waivers to 15 percent of a class,<sup>237</sup> and ordered universities to close zemliachestva and expel students who failed to promise not to join them;<sup>238</sup> but this helped to further radicalise a determined minority.

#### **(x) The Terrorist Fraction of Narodnaya volya**

Nikolai Ulyanin was born a serf in Nizhni-Novgorod province in 1768, but in 1791 his owner hired him out in Astrakhan province, where serfs were legally freed in 1799. Ulyanin worked as a village tailor until the governor let him live in Astrakhan in 1803, and he later joined the tailor's guild. In 1811 he married Anna Smirnova, a Kalmyk teenager,<sup>239</sup> and Vasily was born around 1818, Maria around 1820 and Fedosia around 1822. In 1830 Ulyanin's name appeared on documents as 'Ulyanov',<sup>240</sup> and Ilya was born in 1831.<sup>241</sup> In 1835 the family lived on the ground floor of a small house that Nikolai was buying by instalments from a military gun foundry foreman. He rented out the attic, and paid poll tax, but had no political rights,<sup>242</sup> and he died in 1836. Vasily did not marry, but became the breadwinner,<sup>243</sup> and sold salt from a cart. He and a priest got Ilya into the gymnasium, and after he graduated with the silver medal (second top) in 1850 he won a place at Kazan University, where he tutored merchants' children to make ends meet and Vasily paid his fees. Ilya graduated in 1854 and became a senior master at Penza Institute, a boarding school for the sons of the nobility, in 1855.<sup>244</sup> In 1860 he received the title of

Honorary Councillor,<sup>245</sup> and saw the next few years as 'a period of light'.<sup>246</sup> He sang one of Nikolai Nekrasov's least subversive songs, subscribed to the radical journal *Sovremennik (The Contemporary)*,<sup>247</sup> and married.

His father-in-law, Moisei Blank, had been born around 1760,<sup>248</sup> reportedly in Lübeck in the north German state of Schleswig-Holstein; but he later came into conflict with the rest of Jewish community and moved to Zhytomyr in north west Ukraine.<sup>249</sup> He learned Russian and Yiddish, and could read a Hebrew prayer book, but he did not practise the Jewish religion; yet he married the devout Miriam Froimovich from the town of Starokonstantinov in western Ukraine, where two-thirds of the population were Jews. Blank registered as a townsman and traded in agricultural products, wine and vodka, and Abel was born in 1794, Liba around 1799 and Israel in 1804. Mosiei refused to send the boys to a Jewish school, or hire a Jewish tutor, and their state school taught Christianity and everything else in Russian. In 1820 Abel and Israel were baptised into the Orthodox Church as 'Dmitry' and 'Alexandr', so they could enter St. Petersburg Medical Academy. In 1823 their father bought a small house in Zhytomyr, and lived with Miriam and Liba, who called herself 'Lyubov', and she and her father became moneylenders. In 1824 Dmitry became a police surgeon in St. Petersburg and Alexandr became a doctor in Smolensk province, but subsequently returned to St. Petersburg to work as a police surgeon, and in 1829 he married Anna Grosschopf, who had a Baltic German father and a Swedish Lutheran mother. In 1831 an angry crowd threw Dmitry out of a third floor window of the cholera hospital, and he died. His mother died in 1834, and Alexandr's wife died in 1838, but her married sister, Ekaterina Essen, educated the six children. In 1841 Mosiei spent time in prison for insulting a district court, but had himself baptised 'Dmitry' in 1844, and suggested ways of making Jews more loyal to the tsar in 1846. Alexandr was now a medical board inspector in Perm, but retired as a hereditary nobleman in 1847,<sup>250</sup> and bought an estate at Kokushkino with around 500 hectares and 39 serfs in 1848. In 1854 his father successfully suggested to the tsar that Jewish religious practices and dress codes should be proscribed and that Jews should be made to pray for him. Alexandr pioneered the use of thermal baths in Smolensk, Perm and Kazan, and Maria travelled with him,<sup>251</sup> but in 1863 she qualified as a teacher,<sup>252</sup> and visited Penza, where the Institute teacher V.I. Zakharov courted her. Two of his former pupils had become terrorists, so he was sacked and left town,<sup>253</sup> and Maria married Ilya Ulyanov on her father's Kokushkino estate.<sup>254</sup>

Penza Institute closed, but Ulyanov became a senior master at Nizhni-Novgorod gymnasium,<sup>255</sup> where a former teacher was the headmaster. Anna was born in 1864 and Alexandr in 1866.<sup>256</sup> Ulyanov wanted to 'serve the welfare of the people' by eradicating 'ignorance and illiteracy',<sup>257</sup> and in 1869 he became director of education in Simbirsk, a town of around 40,000 inhabitants,<sup>258</sup> with two secondary schools, a Seminary, a school for Chuvash Turkic speakers and a Tatar madrasa. The prison had held Pugachev almost a century earlier, and there were a few political exiles in and around the town.<sup>259</sup> The Ulyanovs lived near the prison, so the children saw 'pale, hairy wild faces' behind bars and heard chains rattling. There were no factories or trams, and travelling by coach in winter was uncomfortable and slow, but the town 'livened up' when the Volga ice broke in spring.<sup>260</sup>

Alexandr Blank died in 1870,<sup>261</sup> and Ulyanova inherited part of his Kokushkino estate.<sup>262</sup> Four-year-old Alexandr could read newspapers,<sup>263</sup> Vladimir was born, Olga followed in 1872 and Dmitry in 1874. Anna recalled that Vladimir was 'big-headed and top-heavy, bulky and red-faced', and started walking late, but was 'constantly tumbling down and knocking his head'. He was 'exceptionally vigorous and nimble', a 'great rascal, full of mischief', 'a lover of noisy games' and broke his toys.<sup>264</sup> Varvara Sarbatova, a peasant girl, looked after the younger children.<sup>265</sup> Vladimir's favourite book was a translation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and he cut toy North American Union soldiers out of cardboard to play war games against the slave-owning Confederates.<sup>266</sup> Ilya became director of the province's state primary schools and a hereditary nobleman,<sup>267</sup> but was away from home for weeks,<sup>268</sup> since 460 schools were scattered over four million hectares. The 526 badly-educated and poorly-paid teachers included 294 priests and three mullahs, and the pupils' annual attendance averaged 21 days; but Ilya inspected 70 or so schools a year,<sup>269</sup> taught poor children without charge,<sup>270</sup> and appointed and trained new teachers. Peasants and gentry obstructed his secondary school curriculum, and in 1875, when he opened a teacher-training institute,<sup>271</sup> Orthodox clergy and gentry criticised its emphasis on science. Two graduates had been imprisoned for going 'to the people',<sup>272</sup> and the province had been the heart of the movement,<sup>273</sup> which frightened Ulyanov.<sup>274</sup> His children were christened, but not made to attend church.<sup>275</sup> Ulyanov usually did, but Ulyanova rarely. When eight-year-old Alexandr entered the pro-gymnasium there were no fees to pay, since his father worked for the Education Ministry. The younger children's tutor was Vasily Kalashnikov,<sup>276</sup> a governess taught them German and French and there was a cleaner and a cook. Anna recalled that her father as a 'peaceful Narodnik' (populist). His favourite poet was Nekrasov, and he 'sang banned student songs for his children'.<sup>277</sup>

In 1877 Ulyanov collected money for the troops wounded in the war with the Ottoman empire, which ended in 1878.<sup>278</sup> Maria was born that year,<sup>279</sup> and Anna completed her gymnasium course 18 months early. She won the gold medal (top prize),<sup>280</sup> but was ill, and it was months before she became a teacher's assistant.<sup>281</sup> The parish schoolmaster coached Vladimir, who entered the pro-gymnasium in 1879,<sup>282</sup> and he was always top of his class.

Some days Uyanova insisted that the children spoke French or German at home, but while she accompanied Uyanov to church, she did not take communion.<sup>283</sup> She had Adolphe Thiers' *Histoire de la Révolution Française*,<sup>284</sup> and the library also included an illegal book on science, Nekrasov's poems and a book by the *Iskra* (*Spark*) poets, who attacked serfdom and the 'indignity, foulness and evil' of bureaucrats.<sup>285</sup> Uyanov sang songs by Kondraty Ryleev, the hanged Decembrist, and recited Nekrasov's poem about them on walks in the forests.<sup>286</sup> In 1881 he told the children that the tsar's assassins were criminals; but Alexandr and Anna borrowed works by the 1860s radical Dmitry Pisarev,<sup>287</sup> from a doctor,<sup>288</sup> and became atheists.<sup>289</sup> In 1882 Uyanov received the Order of St. Vladimir, Third Class, for 'outstandingly diligent service', and Uyanova registered the children's noble status.<sup>290</sup>

In 1883 Alexandr won the gold medal at the gymnasium, and in autumn he sailed up the Volga to Nizhni-Novgorod, took his first train journey to St. Petersburg and entered the University. Anna enrolled on the Bestuzhev courses, but she was the only student from Simbirsk, where people 'frowned' on her. The 'nihilistic' students shocked her, and Latin and ancient history were boring. She and Alexandr went to the writer Ivan Turgenev's funeral, but police stopped them entering the cemetery.<sup>291</sup> Subsequently Ivan Chebotarev, a friend from Simbirsk, invited them to join the illegal Simbirsk zemliachestvo,<sup>292</sup> whose members pooled resources, bought illegal literature, 'pumped drunk' the policeman sent to supervise a 'fictitious family celebration or engagement party', 'held a political discussion in a separate room', arranged 'conspiratorial matters', sang 'revolutionary songs' and recited 'revolutionary poems'.<sup>293</sup> The siblings also met 21-year-old Mark Elizarov, the son of a wealthy Samara peasant, who had been in trouble with the police.<sup>294</sup> Reportedly he had SR friends in Simbirsk,<sup>295</sup> and he and Alexandr joined Viktor Bartenev's political economy kruzhek. Anna felt that she had not read enough for 'such an intellectual' circle; but she and Alexandr attended private seminars led by Vasily Semevsky, a historian of the peasantry who was barred from lecturing in public; and in 1884 Alexandr asked Anna to translate a Marx article on religion.<sup>296</sup>

In Simbirsk Vladimir Uyanov had read works by the 1860s radicals Nekrasov, Belinsky, Pisarev and Nikolai Dobrolyubov, and some foreign literature, and in 1885 he got the highest grades, even in divinity, at the gymnasium, where he was considered to be 'abundantly talented, diligent and precise'; but when one of his father's guests suggested that children who avoided going to church 'should be beaten, and beaten again', Vladimir reportedly ran into the courtyard, tore the baptismal cross from his neck and threw it on the ground.<sup>297</sup>

In autumn ten percent of St. Petersburg University's 2,200 students were Poles, as were 20 percent at the higher technical and medical institutes.<sup>298</sup> Josef Lukashovich, the son of a Polish gentleman who worked for the governor-general in Vilnius,<sup>299</sup> joined a student kruzhek that included a brother of a former Proletariat leader, read Plekhanov and joined the Obshchiy fond vzaimnoy pomoshchi (The General Mutual Aid Fund).<sup>300</sup> So did Petr Shevyrev, who was from a wealthy Kharkiv family and had enrolled at that University two years earlier, but transferred to St. Petersburg,<sup>301</sup> and was a committed terrorist. Orest Govorukhin was from a Kuban Cossack family.<sup>302</sup> The Don and Kuban zemliachestvo contacted Narodnaya volya, but shared resources with SD intelligentsy,<sup>303</sup> and Uyanov read works by Plekhanov and Marx.

Ilya Uyanov had doubled the number of primary pupils in Simbirsk province, but the tsar wanted no more rural schools and transferred responsibility for the existing ones to Orthodox priests. The Education Ministry told Uyanov to retire, and though friends won him five more years, he died from a brain haemorrhage early in 1886, aged 55. Uyanova did not tell Alexandr, who was preparing for his examinations, and he won the gold medal. Soon after he joined 400 students marking the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of peasant emancipation at Dobrolyubov's grave.<sup>304</sup> The police let 30 lay a wreath, but forbade speeches,<sup>305</sup> so they sang *Vechnaya pamyat* (*Memory Eternal*).<sup>306</sup> It was the first public demonstration in the city for almost a decade,<sup>307</sup> and the police closed student canteens, because the 'lean, hungry, savage, anti-everything' conspired there.<sup>308</sup> In summer Uyanov studied *Kapital*,<sup>309</sup> and criticised SR terrorists.<sup>310</sup>

That autumn there were 2,700 students at St. Petersburg University. Vasily Generalov, the son of a Cossack landowner in Novocherkass, organised gymnasium kruzhek in the city, while Mikhail Kancher, the son of a Poltava province postmaster, and Petr Gorkun, who was from a family of gentry, helped Shevyrev to establish a cheap student canteen. Vasily Osipov, the son of a former soldier who had become a townsman in Tomsk, transferred from Kazan University, determined to assassinate the tsar, and met Shevyrev and Lukashovich. Pakhomi Andreyushkin, the illegitimate son of a Greek father and Cossack mother, had joined SR kruzhek at Yekaterinodar gymnasium, and met Anna Serdyukova, a primary teacher from a poor family. Andreyushkin graduated from the gymnasium and then from Kuban military academy in 1885, and when Andreyushkin entered St. Petersburg University in 1886, after he contacted Bogoraz, police spies reported that SDs were looking for SR explosives experts to kill governors, factory owners and spies.

Reportedly around 1,500 University students belonged to zemliachestva. The Don and Kuban had 200 or so members, and Uyanov frequented their canteen, so the spies assumed he was a member.<sup>311</sup> He shared rooms

with Chebotarev, stored the Simbirsk zemliachestvo library, and hosted 20 or so men and women who discussed the economic position of the peasantry.<sup>312</sup> Sergey Nikonov, a Medical-Military Academy student and a secret member of Narodnaya volya, recruited Ulyanov to the Don and Kuban zemliachestvo.<sup>313</sup> He found that most members took Marx seriously, and one kruzhok studied Plekhanov's book on socialism and the political struggle, which Ulyanov found interesting.<sup>314</sup> The prestigious Scientific-Literary Society invited him to join,<sup>315</sup> and the mutual aid fund wanted to take it over, so they recruited him.<sup>316</sup> The Don and Kuban economics kruzhok agitated students in other higher educational institutions, including the Bestuzhev courses, to demonstrate on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dobrolyubov's death. On the day 400 tried to reach the grave,<sup>317</sup> but while the police locked the gates and forbade a ceremony,<sup>318</sup> they let 30 lay wreaths. Ulyanov, Ulyanova and others tried to march to Kazan Square, but Cossacks cornered them, so they sang revolutionary songs and chanted slogans, and were among last to be set free that evening. About 40 students faced expulsion, and the leaders of the mutual aid fund wanted to appeal,<sup>319</sup> so Ulyanov wrote *Dlya obshchestva (To Society)*, which condemned political repression and called on intelligently to emulate their revolutionary forbears.<sup>320</sup> Ulyanova, Chebotarev, Kancher, Gorkun and others hectographed copies,<sup>321</sup> and addressed them to professors, writers and lawyers,<sup>322</sup> but used similar envelopes and posted them near the University,<sup>323</sup> and the black office intercepted them.<sup>324</sup> The police deemed Ulyanov 'politically unreliable',<sup>325</sup> and arrested Bogoraz.<sup>326</sup> (After three years in prison he went to Yakutsk for ten more.<sup>327</sup>)

At the beginning of 1887 St. Petersburg University's Don and Kuban zemliachestvo had 287 members,<sup>328</sup> and some SDs led workers' kruzhki.<sup>329</sup> Reportedly, Ulyanov led a Vasilievsky Island kruzhok that studied Marx and Engels,<sup>330</sup> and translated Marx's critique of Hegel's philosophy of law. He believed that there could be a proletarian revolution in Russia without a previous bourgeois revolution,<sup>331</sup> and he later acknowledged that his disagreements with SDs were 'very insignificant and only theoretical',<sup>332</sup> but terrorists influenced him.

Vasily Brazhnikov had studied in Kharkiv, where he organised SR terrorists, but arrests decimated them, so early in 1887 he arrived in St. Petersburg and contacted Revecca Shmidova,<sup>333</sup> an SR midwife from Kherson. Ulyanov now favoured 'systematic terrorism', and offered technical assistance, but while Shevyrev refused to give him the names of the central kruzhok, Nikonov gave him the last 1,000 rubles of his inheritance. Lukashovich knew Bronisław Piłsudski, a young Polish nobleman in Vilnius, and sent Kancher to get a double-barrelled pistol, money and nitric acid, but he brought back 110 rubles,<sup>334</sup> two old revolvers that would not fire,<sup>335</sup> and acid that was too weak to make explosives;<sup>336</sup> so Ulyanov contacted Mikhail Novorussky, a Theological Academy graduate, who lodged with the peasant-born midwife, Maria Ananina. Her son, Nikolai, was preparing to enter a gymnasium, and his mother paid Novorussky to teach him scripture. He let Ulyanov organise a laboratory to make nitroglycerine, and Shmidova stored it.<sup>337</sup> Osipov organised Andreyushkin and Generalov as bomb-throwers, and Kancher, Gorkun and Stepan Volokhov from south Russia as signallers. Before Shevyrev went to recuperate from tuberculosis in the Crimea he co-opted Ulyanov into the central kruzhok, and he wrote a programme for Terroristicheskaya fraktsiy narodnoy voli (The Terrorist Fraction of the People's Will) that was almost identical to the EC's,<sup>338</sup> but omitted the term 'socialist Narodniks'. He argued that socialism was 'a necessary result' of capitalist production and class society,<sup>339</sup> and workers were the 'natural bearers of socialist ideas' and the 'main revolutionary force'. A 'change in the correlation of the social forces' would come from 'the quantitative and qualitative increase in the power of the working class', but '*vanguard*' intelligently had to 'educate and organise' workers to ensure an '*immediate transition from the peasant-based economy to a form of economy which is close to socialism*', including universal suffrage, local self-government, elected officials, nationalised means of production, freedom of conscience, speech, press and association and free primary education.<sup>340</sup> The empire's financial problems, isolation and 'extremely tense relations with Germany' made terror 'compelling', and it would force the tsar to make 'concessions to the people'.<sup>341</sup>

The conspirators aimed to assassinate the tsar on 26 or 28 February, but he failed to appear.<sup>342</sup> Govorukhin was under surveillance, so Ulyanov pawned his gold medal for 100 rubles so Govorukhin could escape abroad. On the 29<sup>th</sup> the city's black office opened a letter to a Kharkiv University student from Andreyushkin, who favoured 'the most relentless terrorism'. On 1 March police followed him, and arrested the bombers and signallers, but though Osipov dropped his bomb at the police station,<sup>343</sup> it did not explode,<sup>344</sup> and Gorkun and Kancher talked. The police prepared an ambush at Kancher's room, arrested Ulyanov and found a ciphered notebook with Piłsudski's address. Ulyanov had given him Anna's address for a coded telegram,<sup>345</sup> and the police decoded it.<sup>346</sup> Ulyanov had asked his sister Anna to accommodate Hannah Leibovich, a Vilnius terrorist,<sup>347</sup> and though Anna knew nothing of the conspiracy, police arrested her when she visited Alexandr's room.<sup>348</sup> He faced interrogation six times, but did not deny involvement,<sup>349</sup> and wrote out the programme from memory.<sup>350</sup> After police arrested Lukashovich, Ulyanov confessed. The black office opened a letter from Serdyukova to Andreyushkin, which the police decoded, and Yalta police found Shevyrev carrying cyanide and arrested him. St. Petersburg police

questioned 200 suspects,<sup>351</sup> and detained 31 of them.<sup>352</sup> Government papers published a brief report,<sup>353</sup> but nobody from Simbirsk accompanied Maria Ulyanova to visit Alexandr in prison.<sup>354</sup>

In April senators tried 15 people in St. Petersburg.<sup>355</sup> Only the closest relatives were allowed in court,<sup>356</sup> but a London journalist found an informant. Most defendants were in their early twenties,<sup>357</sup> and 14 faced charges of having 'conspired to assassinate the sacred person of His Imperial Majesty', while Serdyukova had 'failed to perform her duty of informing the authorities'.<sup>358</sup> Ulyanov refused a lawyer and acknowledged that the 'only correct way to influence the life of a society' was 'propaganda by *pen and by the spoken word*', yet socialist propaganda was illegal, so 'the scientific elaboration of questions and problems' was 'greatly impeded'.<sup>359</sup> 'Our intelligentsia is physically so weak and so unorganised that it is incapable of waging an open struggle', so it 'can only defend its right to think and to participate intellectually in public life through a terrorist form of struggle'.<sup>360</sup>

The senators sentenced 14 to death,<sup>361</sup> but the tsar commuted some of them.<sup>362</sup> Kancher, Gorkun and Volokhov would spend 20 years in prison, but Shmidova, Lukashevich and Novorussky were sentenced to life. Piłsudski got 15 years katorga in Siberia, and Ananina got 20 years' katorga, while Serdyukova would go to prison for two years. Anna Ulyanova faced exile in eastern Siberia for five years, but was allowed home under surveillance. The tsar described Ulyanov's confession as 'Purest Communism' and confirmed the sentences on him and four others. In May, in Shlisselburg Fortress, Generalov and Andreyushkin shouted 'Long live Narodnaya volya!' before they died, but the hangman put a hood over Osipanov's head to muffle his shout, and then hanged Ulyanov and Shevyrev. Government papers published a brief report next day.<sup>363</sup> At St. Petersburg University 261 students faced expulsion,<sup>364</sup> but others applauded the rektor's denunciation of the conspiracy,<sup>365</sup> and when Maria Ulyanova returned to Simbirsk she read about Alexandr's execution in a leaflet distributed in the street.<sup>366</sup>

Many others were sentenced. Józef Piłsudski had been born near Vilnius in 1867, when the defeat of the 1863 rising still 'ate away' at his parents, who imbued him with Polish nationalism, and in 1877 he hated the teachers at the Russian gymnasium who lied about Poles and their history. In 1885 he entered Kharkiv University and joined a socialist kruzhok in 1886. When he visited Vilnius in 1887, Bronisław implicated him in the conspiracy, and Józef was exiled to eastern Siberia for five years,<sup>367</sup> without trial, along with 50 Vilnius and Kharkiv activists.<sup>368</sup>

In St. Petersburg Nikolai Ananin was exiled to the Caucasus, and his 16-year-old sister Lidia to the frozen North, while their mother, who knew nothing about the bomb-making, was sent to Kara katorga prison in Siberia,<sup>369</sup> whose regime was being publicly exposed in Russia and abroad.

## (xi) Kara

By 1884, in London, the former terrorist Kravchinsky wrote about Russian prisons, focussing on St. Petersburg Fortress, and in 1885 he published *Russia Under the Tsars* in London.<sup>370</sup> He noted that 60 million peasants paid up to 90 percent of taxes, but elected fewer than 40 percent of zemstvo deputies, while one million landowners who paid seven percent of taxes elected 46 percent. The village commune 'may be convened by its humblest member at any time', and settled questions unanimously, so it was 'essentially republican and democratic'; yet the 'great majority' of young male revolutionaries were undergraduates or recent graduates, under the age of 30, and they were mainly from 'the lower nobility and the lower clergy'. 'All are familiar with the literature of Liberalism and free-thought, and the great majority are imbued with democratic and anti-despotic ideas'. The revolutionary movement had reached an important stage. 'Having begun by terrorism, it is entering on a period which may be called insurrectional. The attempts against the functionary and the Emperor are no more its means of struggle. Having acquired great adherence in the army, and among the working classes of the capital and other principal towns, it has enlarged its aims and its prospects.'<sup>371</sup> Kravchinsky had readers in the USA.

George Kennan was born into a poor Calvinist family in Norwalk, Ohio, USA, in 1845. When he was 12 his parents could not afford to keep him at school, so he became a messenger and later a manager at the Cleveland and Toledo Company. During the Civil War he tried to enlist, but was rejected.<sup>372</sup> After the first Atlantic telegraph cable failed, he helped to survey a line from the USA to Europe, via Siberia, and met the descendants of 'compulsory emigrants' (exiles).<sup>373</sup> He visited the Caucasus in 1870, and in 1877, after the people of Chechnya and Dagestan rebelled against the autocracy, he defended the tsar's 'enlightened policy'.<sup>374</sup> By 1878 he was a war correspondent for Associated Press,<sup>375</sup> and after the tsar's assassination in 1881 he wanted to study 'revolutionists',<sup>376</sup> but defended the 'exile system'.<sup>377</sup> He argued that the stories about suffering were the inventions of the English Tory press, and in 1883 he believed that Kravchinsky had 'greatly misrepresented' the autocracy, since the 'terrorists' were 'unreasonable and wrong-headed fanatics of the anarchist type'. In 1884 *Century Magazine* asked Kennan to visit Siberia, and though most St. Petersburg and Moscow officials were uncooperative, the government allowed him back in 1885.

Kennan and a friend went to Moscow and headed east. In Perm they gave their passports to an hotelier to take to the police, who detained them until they had explained their business. They learned that if village elders believed someone's presence was 'incompatible with public tranquillity' they could have them jailed for two years, put under surveillance for ten, or deported. Two-fifths of the political exiles they met had had no trial, including 40 'quiet, orderly, reasonable' men and women who wanted a constitution and civil liberties. In Tomsk the exiled SR Felix Volkhovsky showed them photographs.

That is Miss A, once a teacher in a peasant school; she died of prison consumption in Kyiv three years ago. The man with the full beard is B, formerly a justice of the peace in N; he was hanged in St. Petersburg in 1879. The thin-faced girl is Miss C, one of the so-called propagandists; she went insane in the House of Preliminary Detention while awaiting trial. ... Madame D, a Red Cross nurse in one of the field hospitals during the late Russo-Turkish war; she was sentenced to 20 years of penal servitude and is now in the mines at Kara ... Miss E, formerly a student in the Beztuzhef medical school for women in St. Petersburg; she cut her throat with a piece of broken glass, after two years of solitary confinement in the Fortress.

The exiled prince Alexandr Kropotkin (Petr's brother) convinced Kennan that SRs were 'educated, reasonable' and 'self controlled' people, but soon after Kropotkin committed suicide because he lacked enough money to survive.

In eastern Siberia Kennan met Egor Lazaref, who had been exiled without trial because he had not 'abandoned' the 'criminal activity' for which he had been acquitted.<sup>378</sup> Kennan met 'bright, intelligent, well-informed men and women, with warm affections, quick sympathies, generous impulses, and high standards of honour and duty'. The veteran terrorist Ekaterina Breshkovskaya gave him 'a carefully drawn plan' of Kara katorga prison, a list of the prisoners' names, details of what they ate and wore and how they spent their time. She also gave him a letter to Nathalie Armfeldt, who had completed her sentence but remained exiled nearby. When Kennan reached Kara he found that four prisoners had gone mad after Cossacks attached a small wheelbarrow to one of their legs, but he did not hear about the solitary 'naked command'.

On his return, in Chita, he put some papers in the hollow sides of a box, bound letters in book covers and hid his 'round-robin certificate of trustworthiness' and other 'dangerous documents' in a money-belt under his shirt. At Minusinsk Dmitry Klements introduced him to other exiled SRs, and Kennan posted his box to a friend in St. Petersburg. When he arrived, early in 1886, he posted documents to London. He needed the governor-general of eastern Siberia's permission to leave Russia, but officials found his old permit and let him go that summer. He later returned to interview officials, liberals, revolutionaries and their relatives,<sup>379</sup> met Petr Kropotkin and Kravchinsky in London,<sup>380</sup> and *Century Magazine* published Kennan's first article in 1887.<sup>381</sup>

In European Russia 344 suspects were under surveillance,<sup>382</sup> many others were in prison, and the SR Mikhail Grachevsky burned himself to death to protest at his conditions.<sup>383</sup> Most of the 2,972 political suspects exiled since 1885 had had no trial,<sup>384</sup> including 971 in 1887.<sup>385</sup> The government established the Irkutsk governor-generalship to administer Irkutsk, Yenesei and Yakutsk provinces, where there were about 6,000 katorga convicts, and 4,000 others were on Sakhalin Island.<sup>386</sup> The interior minister no longer checked the police's 'administrative' sentences.<sup>387</sup> Jewish revolutionaries risked being sent to Yakutsk without trial for up to ten years;<sup>388</sup> yet the proportion of Jews among arrested intelligenty was rising,<sup>389</sup> as Narodnaya volya faced a terminal crisis.

## **(xii) Why I stopped being a Revolutionary**

In 1886 Tikhomirov wrote an article for the fifth and what turned out to be the last *Vestnik 'narodnoi voli'*.

From the very beginning 'Narodnaia Volia' committed a big mistake by including destructive and terrorist activities in the party program. The following years only extended this mistake ... My rejection of terror is absolutely categorical. However, terrorism further developed in the party, undermining its forces, its educational work and also the role of revolutionaries themselves – after all, their role is not only to be a revolutionary, but also a cultural one. Hence the idea of terror narrowed and devalued the idea of revolution, by defining it as the (too often illegal) business of a limited number of people, and that is why the party could not become a broad social movement.

The article was not published,<sup>390</sup> but Tikhomirov had become 'convinced that revolutionary Russia, as a serious, creative force does not exist'. 'Revolutionaries are active and will remain active, but this is an eddy on the surface of the sea, not a storm'.<sup>391</sup> 'We have nothing to gain from the revolutionaries'. His only hope was in the Russian people, and he 'began to seek God'.<sup>392</sup> Henri Bint and other Okhrana agents from Paris liquidated the Geneva press of *Vestnik 'narodnoi voli'* in November, and another revolutionary press in Switzerland early in 1887.<sup>393</sup>

After three years in Shlisselburg Fortress Narodnaya volya's Figner got a notebook and the first thing she wrote in it was an extract from Nekrasov's poem *Komu na Rusi zhit khorosho? (Who can be happy in Russia?)*<sup>394</sup> That summer Lopatin was sentenced to death in St. Petersburg, but that was commuted to solitary confinement for life in Shlisselburg.<sup>395</sup> Reportedly the Decembrist Ryleev had invented the method of sending messages in prison by knocking on the walls of his solitary cell. He placed 30 letters in five vertical columns and six horizontal ones, and the first number of knocks indicated the column, and the second the place in that column.<sup>396</sup> In 1887 the prisoner in the next cell to Figner sent her poems by knocking on the wall.<sup>397</sup> It was Lopatin.<sup>398</sup>

In Paris Rachkovsky boasted that he had driven Tikhomirov mad, and in autumn 1888 he wrote to tell the tsar that he wished to renounce the revolution, beg forgiveness and return to Russia. Rachkovsky gave him 300 francs, and late that year Tikhomirov published *Pochemu ia perestal byt revoliutsionerom (Why I stopped being a Revolutionary)*.<sup>399</sup> Since revolutionary ideas, such as the concept of parliamentary democracy, had arrived in Russia from western Europe, they were condemned to failure, and he rejected terror.

There is a common and deeply engrained idea that we live in a time of destruction, a time that will someday culminate in a terrible upheaval with rivers of blood and blasts of dynamite and the like. Upon this, as many people assume, the creative period will begin. In fact, in real life destruction and creation go hand in hand with each other; one is unthinkable without the other. The destruction of one phenomenon occurs because on its place something new is already taking form, and the emergence of something new is nothing but the destruction of something old. ... Still, revolutionary destruction is the belief, the hope and the duty of each true radical. Everything which is riot, protest or overthrow is held for something useful, containing a germ of progress. And destruction is considered to be even more useful when it is directed against the administration or the government, i.e. against the very centre of the existing order.

Tikhomirov rejected revolution because Narodnaya volya had been unable to destroy the autocracy.

Terror as a method of political struggle is powerless or unnecessary: it is powerless if the revolutionaries do not dispose of the means to overthrow the government; it is unnecessary if they dispose of these means. In general terrorism, the practice of political assassination is a system of struggle which never explained to itself its right to exist, not even its basic idea. In fact this idea can only be the anarchic almightiness of the personality and its contempt for the power of society. Bringing up whole generations in the spirit of these ideas, terrorism does not even have the consistency of anarchism, it even dares to publicly renounce anarchism, to require centralisation and discipline ... Isn't this on the whole a real school for the troubling of the mind, a school that teaches people an activity that has not been thought through by any general sociological world-view?<sup>400</sup>

He argued that revolutionaries were detached from Russia realities and too bookish. The use of terror was morally and politically bankrupt, and only 'the people' could make a revolution, so instead of tearing down the autocracy, intelligently should focus on constructive activities.<sup>401</sup>

Tikhomirov did not betray revolutionaries or sympathisers,<sup>402</sup> but the Okhrana circulated copies of his book,<sup>403</sup> and they put one in the Shlisselburg Fortress library to demoralise the Narodnaya volya prisoners.<sup>404</sup> Tikhomirov was allowed to return to Russia in 1889,<sup>405</sup> and he visited Petropavlovsky Cathedral in St. Petersburg and bowed before the tomb of the assassinated tsar.<sup>406</sup> Thousands of Narodnaya volya supporters accepted defeat, and the organisation collapsed;<sup>407</sup> but SD ideas became influential among a minority of intelligenty in the Pale.



## 3. The prepared and the unprepared

### (i) The Vilnius Social Democratic Group

Emther Axelrod was born into a rabbi's family in a Vilnius province village in 1868. In 1883 she worked with SRs, and she was politically active in Kharkiv and Melitopol in 1884. In 1885 she qualified as a teacher in St. Petersburg, then returned to Vilnius,<sup>1</sup> and held a 'salon' for intelligenty,<sup>2</sup> which attracted the 18-year-olds Tsemakh Kopelzon, Isai Aizenshtadt,<sup>3</sup> a merchant's son,<sup>4</sup> and Lev Jogiches. He had been born into a liberal Jewish family in Vilnius, and his father owned four estates, but soon died. His widow celebrated Jewish religious holidays, but the children spoke Russian at home and attended Russian schools. In 1883 Lev left the gymnasium early and became an apprentice blacksmith, and Kopelzon 'assigned' him to work with Jewish workers and soldiers.<sup>5</sup> In 1885 Jogiches used Axelrod's books and contacts,<sup>6</sup> and built a short-lived female hosiery workers' cooperative, and a kruzhek of mainly Polish workers.<sup>7</sup>

Poland's economy was changing. Cheap US corn had led to falling prices for grain exports, but there were over 1,900km of railway lines.<sup>8</sup> Russia imported half of Poland's industrial output and three-quarters of its cotton thread and textiles,<sup>9</sup> and one Warszawa tobacco factory employed nearly 800 mostly Jewish workers.<sup>10</sup> Poles were forbidden to buy land in the Russian provinces of Volhynia and Lithuania,<sup>11</sup> where women formed 39 percent of textile workers in and around Vilnius.<sup>12</sup> By 1886 Poland's population was 7.9 million,<sup>13</sup> and wealthy Białystok Jews employed over 2,000 handloom weavers, including 1,268 Jews. The average workforce was 26, though it was 15 in nearby small towns.<sup>14</sup>

Some Jewish socialists hired tutors and learned Russian, in order to become *poluintelligenty* (semi-intelligenty), and they taught artisans,<sup>15</sup> trainee schoolteachers and rabbis, using the Narodnaya volya programme.<sup>16</sup> Jewish SD intelligenty taught artisans about the revolutionary movement in European Russia,<sup>17</sup> hoping to 'prepare' them to agitate outside the Pale, and their programme went from basic Russian, through natural history and political economy to a translation of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* and Marx;<sup>18</sup> and they also supplied St. Petersburg SD intelligenty with smuggled copies of Engels' *Die Entwicklung des Sozialismus von der Utopie zur Wissenschaft*, works by Plekhanov and the GOT's *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii*.

Emil Abramovich was born in 1864 into the family of a poor Hrodna dentist who had trained in Breslau in Silesia. The only way a Jewish man could get into a Russian university was by winning the gold medal at a gymnasium, and though Emil won the gold medal at his gymnasium in 1882, he chose to study medicine in Paris; but in 1884 he entered Tartu University in Estonia and became an SD. He spent his summer holidays in Minsk, and he and Isaac Gurvich contacted Jewish artisans' kruzhki and set up others.<sup>19</sup> Some artisans struck for a ten-hour day in 1886,<sup>20</sup> and the intelligenty soon led kruzhki with over 110 members. Thanks to the typesetter Iosif Reznik, one kruzhek composed mostly of typesetters read illegal literature. SR intelligenty taught a similar number of workers and they and the SDs ran a joint Saturday school to teach workers to read Russian, but members of the Jewish bourgeoisie convinced the authorities that they taught socialism and they closed the school.<sup>21</sup> Undeterred, Gurvich and his sister Evgenia led a kruzhek of school pupils and trainee teachers, and read the SRs' copy of Plekhanov's critique of SR politics. Abramovich took the book to Vilnius,<sup>22</sup> where workshops employed a dozen at most, and there were no factories.<sup>23</sup> He told SR intelligenty that Russia's future was the same as western Europe's and argued for a struggle for 'the transfer into common ownership of all the means and objects of production', through a social revolution 'by the people and for the people'. 'Every strike, every uprising, every conflict with a factory owner' would bring conflicts with the government, which could be 'transformed, under the influence of socialist workers', into demonstrations with 'demands for political freedom', though the timing depended on 'objective conditions' and 'the level of consciousness of the working class'. These ideas reached other kruzhki,<sup>24</sup> and a Jew managed to enter a university.

Lev Mandelshtam had been the first Jew to graduate from a university in the Russian empire in 1885,<sup>25</sup> but by 1886 1,857 Jews formed over 14 percent of undergraduates, though the police ensured that graduates returned to the Pale.<sup>26</sup> In spring 1887 Vilnius police arrested two Jews in connection with the conspiracy to assassinate the tsar,<sup>27</sup> and the government barred Jews from moving home,<sup>28</sup> reduced the maximum proportion of Jewish army doctors to five percent, required Jewish barristers to get the justice minister's approval in order to practise,<sup>29</sup> and limited Jews to ten percent of the places in secondary school pupils, and five percent in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Foreigners were forbidden to buy more land in the border provinces, and when foreign landowners died their estates were compulsorily sold to local people.<sup>30</sup>

When female stocking-makers in Vilnius went on strike for more pay,<sup>31</sup> Jewish SD intelligently learned about their *kassy* (mutual aid funds) for the first time.<sup>32</sup> Jewish locksmiths in Minsk struck for a 12-hour day, and pulled out artisans from other workshops, while Jewish and Christian weavers in Białystok supported strikers financially.<sup>33</sup> Most Lithuanians spoke Polish,<sup>34</sup> but Jews spoke Yiddish,<sup>35</sup> and smugglers brought hundreds of Shmul Rabinovich's Yiddish translation of Dikshtein's pamphlet from London. Vilnius SD intelligently gave them to *kruzhki*, along with Yiddish pamphlets explaining Russian socialist texts, and strikes broke out in 1888. Intelligently translated Russian socialist texts into Yiddish, and more intelligently arrived from London and New York.<sup>36</sup> Minsk artisans had *kassy*, and Jogiches led a strike of 30 printers,<sup>37</sup> but the police arrested 19 of them.<sup>38</sup>

The government knew that 90 percent of Jews lived 'amidst poverty and most oppressive sanitary and general conditions', and were 'occasionally a target' of 'popular uprisings' (riots).<sup>39</sup> The government converted free schools into Orthodox primary schools,<sup>40</sup> established schools to train technicians, foremen and skilled workers,<sup>41</sup> and reorganised *realschulen* to train officials, managers and agricultural and industrial technicians. After the first year these schools would offer a general education for four years, which included modern languages, but no classics. The fifth and sixth years would offer business studies,<sup>42</sup> and graduates could enrol in universities to study physics, maths and medicine.<sup>43</sup> Across the empire many of the 25,000 higher education students attended 52 technological institutes,<sup>44</sup> and 1,700 were Jews.<sup>45</sup> Those with government bursaries had to register as Orthodox,<sup>46</sup> but few 'persons of Jewish descent' were allowed to do that.<sup>47</sup>

After receiving his doctorate at Tartu University,<sup>48</sup> Abramovich went to Kyiv, where there were 16,000 Jews.<sup>49</sup> He contacted University students and factory workers,<sup>50</sup> got a job in the railway workshops, and, along with a former exile and four workers from Minsk, he organised a *kruzhok* formed mainly of locksmiths and typesetters.<sup>51</sup> The 23 of them paid 25 kopeks a month (one percent of their pay) for illegal Russian literature,<sup>52</sup> including Plekhanov's works, *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii*, *Kapital* and *Lohnarbeit und Kapital*; and their syllabus stressed that 'accomplishing' a 'social task' (revolution) depended on the 'working class'.<sup>53</sup> Jewish workers in Warszawa, Łódź, Białystok, Smorgon, Minsk and Vilnius went on strike,<sup>54</sup> and more Jewish intelligently arrived, including two women.

Liuba Levinson was born in Vilnius in 1866. She entered Geneva University in the mid-1880s,<sup>55</sup> and returned to Russia with GOT literature in 1888. Border gendarmes briefly detained her,<sup>56</sup> but by 1889 she had joined an SD intelligently *kruzhok* in Vilnius.<sup>57</sup>

Matla Srednicki was born into a wealthy Jewish family in Vilnius in 1867.<sup>58</sup> She later graduated from a gymnasium and trained to be a dentist in St. Petersburg.<sup>59</sup> In 1889 the police briefly detained her, but she returned to Vilnius and joined the SD *kruzhok*;<sup>60</sup> but *Narodnaya volya* ideas remained influential in the Pale.

In 1880 11 of the 82 known *Narodnaya volya* activists had been Jews,<sup>61</sup> and in 1884 the percentage of political suspects who were Jewish was around 11 percent.<sup>62</sup> By 1887 99 of the 473 *Narodnaya volya* activists were Jews,<sup>63</sup> and in 1888 one Jewish intelligent faced a political trial. In 1889 24 Jews formed 68 percent of those put on trial, and by 1890 the percentage of political suspects who were Jews had risen to 15 percent.<sup>64</sup>

Yoysef Shloyme was born into a family of acculturated Jews in the large town of Panevėžys, Kaunas province, in 1870. His father taught him Russian, and most of his childhood friends were Russian-speaking.<sup>65</sup> By 1887 he had joined a *realschule* pupils' *kruzhok*. When Kopelzon entered the fifth form he told them about the Russian revolutionary movement and the western European socialist movement, and they read illegal literature, including *Narodnaya volya*. In 1889 Shloyme joined a Vilnius *kruzhok* of *realschule* and gymnasium pupils, many of whose fathers were Poles who had suffered in the 1863 uprising, and Kopelzon introduced him to Jewish SD intelligently.

Arkady Kremer was born in a small Vilnius province town in 1865. His father taught Jewish religious studies and supported the enlightenment. In 1877 Arkady lived with a poor uncle in Vilnius, entered the *realschule* and met a Russian SR. He later entered the Polytechnical Institute in Rīga, Latvia, and met a Polish revolutionary. By 1889 he distributed illegal literature, but spent six months in a Warszawa prison. Early in 1890 he returned to Vilnius and joined the SD *kruzhok*. Its members were mostly from liberal middle class Jewish families, and many had attended secular Russian schools. They knew little about Jewish traditions and had not experienced a riot,<sup>66</sup> but they prepared 'cadres' (people trained to recruit others) for the Russian 'revolutionary movement'.<sup>67</sup> Kopelzon and Jogiches formed an SD *kruzhok* and claimed to represent all Jewish workers.<sup>68</sup> After the authorities found that Jogiches was involved in organising a strike, they sent him to a penal battalion,<sup>69</sup> but bristle workers, who combed pigs' hair to make brushes, had *kassy* and went on strike,<sup>70</sup> and a radical Russian arrived in Vilnius.

Evgeny Sponti was born in Bietaruś in 1866. He graduated from St. Petersburg Military Academy in 1887 and joined an officers' *kruzhok* in Vilnius which discussed SR and SD ideas. In 1889 he was discharged for being rude to senior officers,<sup>71</sup> and in 1890 he joined the Jewish SD *kruzhok* and led *kruzhki* of Russian-Jewish and Polish-Lithuanian artisans.<sup>72</sup> He and 20-year-old Stanislaw Trusiewicz, a Proletariat survivor,<sup>73</sup> taught Russian, arithmetic

and science, and used Dikshtein's pamphlet and Chernyshevsky's *Chto delat?* A key innovation was that kruzhek graduates went on to lead basic kruzki.<sup>74</sup>

The government barred non-Christians from being members of zemstva,<sup>75</sup> and that year 30,000 Jews left for the USA,<sup>76</sup> bringing the decade's total to 135,000.<sup>77</sup> New York was now the main hub for émigré Jewish activists;<sup>78</sup> but thousands of non-Jewish artisans across the Russian empire were migrating to the major industrial cities.

## (ii) The Society of St. Petersburg Artisans

August Tochisky was born in Ekaterinburg in western Siberia in 1864. His father was a Russianised Polish nobleman who was commandant of the convict transit prison, and his mother was a French noblewoman. At his gymnasium August formed a kruzhek which studied works by Russian radicals and Lassalle, but he had bitter arguments with his father, so he left school. He worked in a factory, and then the railway workshops, where an Englishman told him about trade unions, and in 1884 he and his sister Maria went to St. Petersburg. He studied metalworking at a Technical Society School in the Vyborg district, and met Dmitry Lazarev, another nobleman's son. They found jobs at the Franco-Russian machine-building works in the Nevsky Gate district, and contacted workers who had previously belonged to kruzki. Tochiskaya recruited women on the Bestuzhev courses, and Tochisky contacted some University students in the Perm zemliachestvo who were interested in SD ideas.

Vladimir Barybin, a founder member of Studencheskaya korporatsiya, had rejected SR politics and sought permission to found a workers' society with 200 members in the Nevsky Gate district, but the governor refused. In spring 1886, after the police deported him to Tver province, SRs led the University's Perm zemliachestvo. In summer Tochisky drafted rules for Obshchestvo Sankt-Peterburga Remeslenniki (The Society of St. Petersburg Artisans). He and Lazarev wanted to raise artisans' material and intellectual level and hoped that kruzhek graduates would form a workers' party; but the artisans and intelligentsy had separate kruzki by autumn.<sup>79</sup> Tochisky saw an intelligent as a 'fellow traveller' whose loyalty would last 'until the first constitution', then 'our paths would sharply diverge'.<sup>80</sup> According to Tochiskaya he wanted to create 'a mass movement, to draw in the masses, to give them a single, clear ... common language of economic interests', but avoid the 'political movement'. He was reluctant to use illegal literature, and preferred Dikshtein's pamphlet,<sup>81</sup> but his kruzhek built a fund to buy legal and illegal literature and support arrested and banished workers.<sup>82</sup>

Factory inspectors' reports revealed scandalous abuses. (They would not be published again for 14 years.)<sup>83</sup> Some doctors did what they could. Ekaterina Slanskaya had graduated from the Women's Medical Courses and worked for the city дума. Most of her patients were peasant women and children, and she regularly made 16 or 17 house calls a day, instead of the officially-required 11. One old woman who had lost an arm in a factory looked after workers' children in return for food and shelter, and Slanskaya issued a death certificate for a male worker, without examining the corpse, because it was in his family's apartment on a very hot day.<sup>84</sup>

Petr Onufriev, his wife Olga and their four children had left their village to live in one room in St. Petersburg, five minutes from the Baltic Shipyard where Petr was a metalworker, while Olga did laundry and washed floors to make ends meet;<sup>85</sup> but other young workers were looking for a radical organisation to join.

Gavril Mefodiev was in his mid-twenties and worked at the Warszawa railway workshops. He knew SRs, but attended Narva district Technical Society School, met Tochisky in 1885,<sup>86</sup> and joined the OSPR in 1886. Egor Klimanov was born into a Pskov province peasant family and had arrived in St. Petersburg in the early 1880s to be an apprentice blacksmith at the government paper mill and print works near Nevsky Gate. He enrolled at the Technical Society School, joined an SD kruzhek and Tochisky recruited him in 1886. Klimanov thought that intelligentsy 'must direct the choice of books, set up libraries and impart and disseminate knowledge', and 'obtain funds, which is easier for the intelligentsia due to the erroneous value placed upon intellectual labour',<sup>87</sup> but some kruzhek graduates now led basic kruzki.

Vasily Shelgunov was born into a peasant family in Pskov province in 1867. By 1879 he worked in a St. Petersburg foundry, and then in a bookbinder's workshop.<sup>88</sup> He attended a Technical Society School,<sup>89</sup> and considered himself an SR by 1886,<sup>90</sup> but by 1887 Tochisky had recruited him to a kruzhek led by Klimanov. Shelgunov found *Kapital* difficult, so Klimanov gave him Dikshtein's pamphlet.<sup>91</sup> Workers bought second-hand books, but since *Kapital* cost up to 50 rubles, Shelgunov tore a copy into chapters so that it could 'be read simultaneously in three or four kruzki'.<sup>92</sup>

Nikolai Bogdanov was born in Vitebsk province in 1870. He arrived in St. Petersburg in 1882, worked in a basket-making shop and attended a Technical Society School.<sup>93</sup> By 1884 he was an apprentice in the Warszawa railway workshops,<sup>94</sup> where he joined an SR kruzhek,<sup>95</sup> but he joined an OSPR kruzhek in 1886. By 1887 he and Ivan Timofeev led basic kruzki, as did Mefodiev and Vladimir Proshin at the All-Russian Rubber Works. Nils

Vasilev, a veteran of SR kruzhki, recruited in the Vyborg district, while Tochiskaya and Elizaveta Danilova propagandised Laferme cigarette factory women on Vasilievsky Island; and SR students were propagandists.

Gabriel Rodziewicz, a Military Medical School graduate, his wife, Julja, who was a Bestuzhev student, and Polish University students had formed an SR kruzhok. They may have contacted the ill-fated Narodnaya volya group in 1887, and after the conspiracy was crushed Bronisław Lelelew's Technological Institute SD kruzhok agreed to join them on condition that they renounced terror.<sup>96</sup> The kruzhok included the Lithuanians Waclaw Cywinski and Josef Buraczewski from Vilnius, the University student Dmitry Stranden, who was Russian, and Gury Pietrowski, a former member of Blagoev's kruzhok. They gave Proletariat literature to migrant Polish workers and influenced a few hundred of the city's 100,000 proletarians,<sup>97</sup> especially at the New Admiralty Shipyard, the Artillery Arsenal, Vargunin Paper mill, the Franco-Russian works, and the Stritter, Alexandrov,<sup>98</sup> and Putilov metalworks.<sup>99</sup> Lelelew helped Timofeev to build kruzhki at the Baltic Shipyard, while Mefodiev built one at the Warszawa Railway workshops.

Early in 1888 Tochisky proposed giving intelligenty a marginal role in the Obshchestvo, but in days the police arrested Lazarev and Danilova,<sup>100</sup> and subsequently deported Tochisky to Zhytomyr in Ukraine.<sup>101</sup> Andrey Breitfus, who had worked with Timofeev at the Baltic Shipyard, recalled 'not a single word about revolution' in Tochisky's propaganda, but Klimanov led a few workers to the cemetery on the anniversary of the poet Nekrasov's death.<sup>102</sup> In spring the Obshchestvo elected Ludwig Breitfus, Andrey's brother, as leader.<sup>103</sup> Intelligenty led intermediate workers' kruzhki and selected individuals for higher kruzhki, led by various intelligenty. They studied Marx, Engels and GOT publications, and graduates became 'independent leaders and propagandists' of intermediate kruzhki.<sup>104</sup>

Heinrich Fischer was born into a Lutheran family in the tiny Duchy of Sachsen-Altenburg in Germany. He later moved to Yaroslavl province in Russia to work as a herdsman, vet, miller and forester for a prince, and married the poultry expert, Emilie Winkler, the daughter of a land steward who hailed from Berlin. In 1871 they had a son. His godfather, Heinrich Freishtatsky, a Lutheran from Germany, was a metalworker on the Rybinsk-Bologoe railway,<sup>105</sup> and named the boy Heinrich. He learned to be literate and bilingual at home,<sup>106</sup> but when he was six or seven, the usual age for rural children to begin working, the family was so large that his parents sent him to his childless godfather, who was now a station master at Medvedevo, 200km away. Subsequently Freishtatsky bought a farm 280km away, but later sold it and worked on the railway at the increasingly important Volga port of Rybinsk. Young Heinrich probably attended a primary school and in 1885 he passed the examination for a secondary school. It was one of only eight in the province, which taught 1,177 pupils, or three percent of school-age children, and had three two-year classes. Heinrich entered the upper year of the second class, but also read western European and US novels and heard about Darwin; but in 1887 he used a slang word in a Russian language test and narrowly failed to win the gold medal. His godfather, who had taught him to 'tin samovars, knock out copper dishes, forge axes and instruments', found an advertisement in a German-language paper for an apprentice at a St. Petersburg factory,<sup>107</sup> which made printing presses.<sup>108</sup> The city's heavy industry was recovering and the teenager's skills got him a good wage. He lodged with Germans,<sup>109</sup> and met Ivan Keizer, a fellow apprentice who was 16, and had been born in St. Petersburg. They attended the factory school, and shared a room with another apprentice.<sup>110</sup> Ivan had been an SR,<sup>111</sup> but after Fischer taught them for a few months, Ivan introduced him to a kruzhok of 'conscious' workers, where he learned about the western European labour movement and constitutional systems, and a Swede taught him political economy. It was an Obshchestvo kruzhok.<sup>112</sup> When Fischer got a job in the Petersburg district he found Ivan Egorov, an unskilled labourer, leading a kruzhok studying Lassalle and Marx.<sup>113</sup> Fischer attended Petr Kaizo's Vasilievsky Island kruzhok and heard an intelligent expound Engels' *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats* (*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*). Fischer soon led basic kruzhki, and his 'German accuracy and cleanliness' raised no suspicions at the Iakovlev petrol engine works. He used irony so effectively with workmates who disagreed with him that they recognised the absurdity of what they had said and joined in the laughter, but Fischer preferred to canvass workmates individually, rather than at the communal breakfasts. His kruzhok forged links with a women servants' kruzhok and supported their refusal to accept unjust treatment.<sup>114</sup>

Vera Karelina's unmarried mother had left her in St. Petersburg's Foundling Home in 1870, and it later sent her to an illiterate peasant in a nearby village who encouraged her to go to school. After the peasant died, Vera worked in a St. Petersburg maternity hospital where supervisors beat her and stopped her reading;<sup>115</sup> but in 1887 Natalia Grigoreva,<sup>116</sup> a seamstress who was five years older, and who had supported Narodnaya volya,<sup>117</sup> loaned her books.<sup>118</sup> Bogdanov introduced Karelina to a kruzhok and helped her and Grigoreva to organise a strike of Foundling Home orphans who were servants at a school for girls from noble families, but the strike was defeated and the leaders were brutally punished.<sup>119</sup> In 1888 Bogdanov helped Karelina to build a women's kruzhok,<sup>120</sup> and young male cotton-spinners she had known at the Foundling Home took her to theirs. 'We would read an article, tell about it, and be expected to explain our own conclusions'. She was 'forced' to 'analyse' texts 'deeply', and

that challenged her belief in god, but after 16 hours' work she studied for six more,<sup>121</sup> and borrowed books. The kruzhok co-opted Grigoreva,<sup>122</sup> who led Vyborg women's kruzhki under Klimanov's supervision.<sup>123</sup>

Fyodor Afanasev was born in a St. Petersburg province village in 1869, but by 1881 he was a weaver at the huge Kreenholm mill near the Estonian border. After completing his military service he returned to his village and was elected as an elder. He later went to Odesa, using someone else's internal passport, and worked in the port, but was arrested and sent home. In 1887 he worked at the Voronin Mill in St. Petersburg, where he met SDs and organised a weavers' kruzhok,<sup>124</sup> which included at least one woman.

Anna Boldyreva was born into a Tver province soldier's family around 1870.<sup>125</sup> Many local peasants worked in St. Petersburg factories,<sup>126</sup> and Boldyreva's family did so from 1877. By 1879 the nine-year-old worked night shifts at Pal cotton weaving mill so that nursing mothers could work days, and in 1882, when they were in a 'state of half-starvation', Anna heard 'lectures' in workers' flats.<sup>127</sup> In 1884, during a month-long strike, Cossacks and police 'thrashed us with lashes without mercy', and 'feelings of anger and hatred and vengeance towards all oppressors grew up in me'.<sup>128</sup> In 1885 she attended a Sunday school,<sup>129</sup> and she joined Afanasev's kruzhok in 1888.<sup>130</sup>

Vasily Buianov was born in Kostroma in 1870, but arrived St. Petersburg and joined SR kruzhki in the early 1880s. The police deported him, but he returned in 1888,<sup>131</sup> and joined the Obshchestvo. Most of its 600 works related to western Europe, and the illegal section included *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii*, works by Plekhanov and *Rabochy*; but the workers preferred Bakh's and Dikshtein's pamphlets.

In autumn, after months away, Tochiskaya returned to St. Petersburg and found Ludwig and Eduard Breitfus were the only intelligently propagandising factory workers. The police arrested ten intelligently and one worker,<sup>132</sup> and found the fund and legal books, but not the illegal ones,<sup>133</sup> which Timofeev kept safe.<sup>134</sup> The SRs Alexandr Filimonov, a 21-year-old machinist, and Vladimir Fomin, were active,<sup>135</sup> as were Ivan Egorov and his brother Petr. Tochiskaya and Pietrowski linked several kruzhki to the Technological Institute SD kruzhok, which included seven Poles, three Russians and a Ukrainian. Tochiskaya found them safe meeting rooms, and they studied the émigré SR Lavrov's *Istoricheskie pisma (Historical Letters)*, which argued for training 'critically thinking' workers who could go on to lead the workers' movement; but Fomin's Baltic Shipyard kruzhok 'worked under the guidance of Poles who had links with Germany', and who were 'in close contact with developments in social-democracy abroad', and had 'a thorough grasp of social-democratic theory'.<sup>136</sup>

### (iii) St. Petersburg Central Workers' Circle

By 1889 over 32,000 inspected Russian plants employed over 1.4 million workers,<sup>137</sup> and 108 had workforces of 2,000 or more.<sup>138</sup> About 10 percent were in the St. Petersburg region, and 90 percent of those were in or near the city.<sup>139</sup> Its population had grown by 11 percent, to just over a million, in a decade,<sup>140</sup> and two-thirds were born elsewhere,<sup>141</sup> but 16 large machine-building plants employed 90 percent of the city's 25,000 metalworkers.<sup>142</sup>

Alexey Buzinov's father had been born a peasant in Smolensk, but when Alexey married he and his wife moved to St. Petersburg.<sup>143</sup> He became a lathe-operator at the Semyannikov Shipyard,<sup>144</sup> where German and Polish workers lived and ate well, looked healthy and dressed in expensive clothes. They were 'one unified family', and some were contemptuous of Russian workers' slovenly dress, shoddy workmanship and lack of culture, and tended not to mix with them.<sup>145</sup> But not all Russian workers were the same, and 'the more I became rooted in the factory family, the more clearly I saw the heterogeneity within the limits of even a single enterprise'.

Soon I felt that workers of the machine shops – fitters and turners – also looked at me from above. After this I clearly distinguished the humble position of workers in the hot shops: the foundry, rolling, and blacksmith shops. Among them I saw a more uncouth and clumsy sort of people, both in step and speech. In each individual face, through the strong fiery sunburn, the crude features showed through clearly, which said that in their work strength predominated and not a quickness of wit. I also saw that beside an experienced founder, even a shabby fitter seemed to be an educated and thinking person. The fitter held his head higher, was sharper and keener in his speech. He was able to fit in a dozen words with a bit of irony, while the founder found time only for one, 'yes and well', something very simple. With the fitter one was automatically inclined to talk about something in general and not only about wages. In a word, the worker of the machine shop was already not that semi-raw material of the foundry and blacksmith shops, but seemed to have passed through the exacting, shaping action of the machine tools and instruments.

Buzinov 'never lost an opportunity to pour scorn' on a textile worker looking like a 'country bumpkin' who had 'wandered into town by mistake', and would soon return to 'peck the land with an ancient wooden plough'.

The Baltic Shipyard employed over 2,150 workers, and Fomin recalled that each 'senior' chose men from his village for his squad, 'first, his own relatives, second, his favourites, friends, and so on'. This 'made the

introduction of propaganda more difficult because much effort was expended on "rooting out" the hostile attitudes' of men from Riazan and Novgorod provinces.<sup>146</sup> An intelligent led Fomin's weekly kruzhok, whose members often passively received knowledge, but 'life itself confronted' them with 'obstacles, unpredictability' and 'contradictions'. When Fomin repaired or installed machinery he propagandised and agitated. Ivan Egorov recalled that Lassalle 'strongly engaged us', but they modelled themselves on the SDAP's Bebel.

Konstantin Norinsky was born in St. Petersburg in 1872. In 1885 he became an apprentice in the Baltic Shipyard machine shop, and enrolled at its Technical Society School. Timofeev gathered workers in the 'club' (toilets), recommended books and explained Dikshtein's pamphlet. He introduced Norinsky to the Port kruzhok, and when Timofeev left in 1889 Fomin got Norinsky to study Darwin, Marx, Engels' *Der Ursprung der Familie* and workers' struggles in western Europe and Russia, and he bought books at the Alexandrovsk market.<sup>147</sup>

Vladimir Knyazev was born in 1871.<sup>148</sup> He became an apprentice locksmith at the New Admiralty Shipyard in 1884, and qualified by 1889. His equipment was primitive and slow, but one day young workers arrived from the Baltic Shipyard. They had used new machine-tools on piece-work and their wages had risen, but they had been sacked as 'dangerous elements'. They were socialists, and propagandised their workmates, then formed kruzhki. Knyazev joined one and began propagandising using legal and then illegal literature.<sup>149</sup>

'In the remote darkness of the harbour, in a dark room', A.A. Solovev's Port kruzhok lived 'another life', studying the 'laws of the universe and of human society', 'Cosmography and Darwinism', *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii* and GOT publications.<sup>150</sup> Gabriel Rodziewicz and Lelewel led the kruzhok and another at Obukhov steelworks in the Nevsky Gate, where workers compared data on pay, accidents, insurance and industrial relations with western Europe, and intelligently separated the 'prepared' from the 'unprepared'.<sup>151</sup>

Other workers were totally unprepared. Zakhar Trifonov recalled a foreman at the Alexandrov metalworks.

He would stop at a wagon being built and stare at someone with his dark eyes, and the worker would fidget furtively under his gaze, glancing at the foreman, but the victim was doomed. A black cloud of silence and then the wind rises, slowly seizing the victim by the collar and raising his huge right fist, like a sledge hammer, would bring it down with his full weight five or six times on the neck of the worker who collapsed under the burden of strokes tearfully begging the foreman 'Nikolai Ivanovich! Nikolai Ivanovich!' The foreman like the black cloud then silently sailed on. To see such a beating disgusted and aroused a feeling of disgust towards the victim, who, for a few minutes was unable to work, sitting at a box, stroking his neck, saying tearfully: 'What a devil!'<sup>152</sup>

Strikers at another factory built gallows to intimidate a director and almost drowned an engineer.<sup>153</sup>

The government had saved the Putilov metalworks from bankruptcy,<sup>154</sup> but its annual production was worth four million rubles, and the Briansk-Warszawa cartel had bought it to dominate rail-making.<sup>155</sup> Buraczewski, who rejected terror and wanted to build an independent workers' party, led a kruzhok that discussed western European workers' conditions, strikes and political parties, using Proletariat literature. They elected Buianov as treasurer, and built a strike fund, and a Polish intelligent built a kruzhok of Polish and Lithuanian workers.

In spring the radical writer Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin died. SD intelligently planned the funeral and Klimanov and other kruzhki leaders joined the procession. In summer Klimanov and the print-worker Alexey Karelin led workers at the funeral of Evgeny Andreev, the founder of the Technical Society Schools. Afterwards, in a tavern, they formed a fund for 'enlightening' workers, agreed to contribute 25 kopeks a month and elected Klimanov as treasurer. The authorities refused to approve their paper, *Borba (Struggle)*, but in autumn around 30 discussed forming new kruzhki. Klimanov, Karelin, Bogdanov and Mefodiev rented a flat for Mefodiev to live in, and they and others met there late that year.

Early in 1890 the leading activists met in Fomin's flat and drafted rules for a worker-led organisation.<sup>156</sup> In late spring 20 kruzhki of six or seven workers and eight groups of two or three kruzhki elected delegates to form Tsentralny rabochy kruzhok (The Central Workers' Circle).<sup>157</sup> Mefodiev represented the Warszawa Railway workshops, Fomin the Baltic Shipyard, Buianov the Putilov metalworks and Narva Gate factories, Afanasev the Vasilievsky Island district and Ivan Evgrafov the New Admiralty Shipyard and the Port. Bogdanov, the secretary, represented the Nevsky Gate district, and Klimanov the government paper mill and the Franco-Russian metalworks. The aimed to 'unite Petersburg workers for a struggle' for 'the political and economic liberation of the working class'. Each kruzhok would have no more than nine members, including an organiser who would build a fund and library, collect information on factory conditions, receive and distribute leaflets, pass on TRK instructions and appoint a deputy in case of arrest. Kruzhok members earning up to 30 rubles a month would contribute two percent to a fund, while those earning over 30 would pay three percent, and there would also be lotteries, subscriptions and collections at special events. Three quarters of the funds would go to support arrested members and their families, the unemployed and the victimised, and the TRK, which would one eighth for a strike

fund and another eighth for publishing leaflets, buying literature and assisting members. When a kruzhek had ten members, it would split in two. The deputy organiser would lead one of them, and both organisers would appoint a new deputy. When the number of kruzki in a district justified it, the TRK would appoint a district organiser. Other workers could build kruzki and apply to join the network, but the TRK would vet them first, at their meetings,<sup>158</sup> which were often at Klimanov's place.<sup>159</sup> Bogdanov insisted that an 'organiser of the working class' had to be honest and 'cultivated', be able to explain 'why there is day and night, seasons of the year, and eclipses of the sun', the origin of the universe and species, political economy, history and the history of culture and of the working class,<sup>160</sup> so they invited a student.

The University had expelled Vasily Golubev for propagandising, but later reinstated him,<sup>161</sup> and on Saturday afternoons he brought money and literature to a flat fitted out for a name-day celebration, in case police raided.<sup>162</sup> Fomin recalled that intelligentsy were 'messengers' from 'a world alien to us, a world where workers had the right to struggle openly'. Golubev 'infused new energy', so members had 'their hopes raised'.

TRK members changed jobs often and built new kruzki, or reoriented those 'not necessarily motivated to embrace the masses'. Bogdanov moved south of the city to Tsarskoe Selo railway workshops, which built locomotives, and was delighted when a Polish student led his kruzhek. Bogdanov moved to the Kartochnyi factory in Nevsky Gate. Police imprisoned 15 or so members of an Obukhov steelworks kruzhek, including its leader, I. Klopov, but he smuggled a contact's name and Bogdanov rebuilt the kruzhek. Evgrafov and Baltic Shipyard workers boosted Nevsky Gate kruzki and built new ones at the New Admiralty Shipyard. Ivan Yakovlev and activists at the Siemens & Galske electro-technical plant on Vasilievsky Island attracted an audience by eating their meals at their benches and debating topical issues. After 11.00pm, when supervisors made themselves scarce, they conducted deeper 'philosophical reflection and discussion', and in their spare time they distribute literature, made new contacts in workers' taverns, eating houses and charity dining rooms,<sup>163</sup> and met students.

#### **(iv) St. Petersburg Technological Institute Social-Democrats**

Boris Krasin was born into a civil servant's family in 1846, and they later moved to Tobolsk province in west Siberia.<sup>164</sup> By the 1860s Boris had 'democratic beliefs and vague, though quite strong, tendencies towards political and social radicalism', knew exiled SRs and Polish 'insurrectionists, and married a woman of peasant descent who four years his junior. Antonina Kropanina had had little formal education, but admired Nekrasov's poetry,<sup>165</sup> and had 'wide spiritual interests',<sup>166</sup> though the couple rarely attended church. They moved to Kurgan in south Siberia, where Leonid was born in 1870 and German followed in 1871. In 1880 Leonid entered the Scientific and Technical School in Tyumen, 200km away, and German followed in 1881. In 1883 their father became the town's police chief,<sup>167</sup> and in 1885, when Kennan visited the transit prison, Krasin admitted it was 'overcrowded and in a bad sanitary condition'.<sup>168</sup>

In 1887 Leonid graduated with the gold medal and was one of 100 or so out of 800 successful applicants to St. Petersburg Technological Institute. He found no books on economics or social science in the library, so he formed an illegal Siberian zemliachestvo and scoured the bookshops. Inspectors never visited the students' canteen, where some distributed illegal works,<sup>169</sup> collected money and recruited, and an SD told Krasin that revolutionaries should propagandise workers, not peasants.<sup>170</sup>

The tsar had agreed to the foundation of the first university in Siberia in Tomsk in 1878, and by 1887 Siberia was home to 11 percent of the empire's population.<sup>171</sup> Tomsk University eventually opened in 1888, but had only a medical faculty with eight professors and 72 students,<sup>172</sup> so German Krasin applied to St. Petersburg Technological Institute and was successful. He and Leonid stayed away from demonstrations, but they met other Siberian 'savages' two or three evenings a week and read works by 1860s Russian radicals, Narodnaya volya, the GOT,<sup>173</sup> Marx's unposted 11-year-old draft letter about the commune,<sup>174</sup> and articles by western European SDs which appeared in a legal paper, though censors had banned works containing the 'harmful doctrines of Socialism and Communism' that 'stir up class hatred' and 'establish anarchy', or disrespected Christianity and the tsar's family. The Institute SDs had an 'extract' of Plekhanov's critique of SRs, but they refused to loan it.<sup>175</sup>

Mikhail Brusnev was born in Kuban Cossack territory in 1864,<sup>176</sup> and became an SR when was 15.<sup>177</sup> In 1886 he reportedly contacted the SRs who failed to assassinate the tsar in 1887.<sup>178</sup> Spies spotted him at 'secret meetings' and 'student disturbances', and making 'propaganda among workers'.<sup>179</sup> When he entered St. Petersburg Technological Institute in 1888, he propagandised workers,<sup>180</sup> and the SD student kruzhek co-opted him in autumn 1889.<sup>181</sup> Leonid Krasin knew their programme was based on *Kapital*, and they led 'revolutionary clubs' of workers,<sup>182</sup> so he raised money for them and argued with SRs.<sup>183</sup>

S. Karelin, a veteran SR, visited the city and argued that SRs, SDs, liberals, students and workers should form an All-Russian Labour Party, but after he left police arrested the SD student Pietrowski. (He later committed suicide in prison.)<sup>184</sup> When the Institute unjustly expelled a student, others barricaded themselves in a building and appealed for demonstrations against the government. Leonid Krasin was an effective speaker, but police stormed the building and arrested 25 students. The Institute suspended the Krasin brothers,<sup>185</sup> and Cywinski,<sup>186</sup> and the Rodziewicz left the city; but Brusnev, who dressed and behaved differently, escaped arrest, and he and Golubev led a kruzhek of 20 SD Institute students,<sup>187</sup> some of whom had contacts with members of the TRK.

By winter the TRK led about two dozen kruzhek,<sup>188</sup> but at least ten, with from five to eight members, lacked an intelligent.<sup>189</sup> When one kruzhek identified an 'unknown' intelligent, the TRK asked Brusnev to check if he was 'reliable' before inviting him. The Institute SDs 'authorised' Brusnev to develop a programme to prepare workers to lead basic kruzhek.<sup>190</sup> It went from 'Reading, writing and thinking' to natural science (especially Darwin), the history of culture (from 'savagery' to religion, morality, family and property), the 'dependence of all aspects of human life on the economic situation', political economy (from slavery to capitalism and 'the inevitable evolution of the latter in the direction of collectivism'), the 'peasant question' in western Europe and Russia (especially the village commune), the condition of the working class and social movements in Russia and western Europe, and reformist ideas, including factory legislation, class structure, economic policy and 'minimum demands'.<sup>191</sup>

Leonid Krasin was an expert in SD theory,<sup>192</sup> and had 'a rare gift of explaining the most complicated questions in simple language'.<sup>193</sup> He had declined Brusnev's invitation to join the Institute SD kruzhek and lead workers' kruzhek, but police noted that he and German contacted 'dangerous, harmful people' and deemed them both 'politically unreliable'.<sup>194</sup> During 1890 over 500 St. Petersburg students had been arrested;<sup>195</sup> but Leonid Krasin joined Brusnev's 'tightly conspiratorial' kruzhek, though 'very little was imparted'. They used pseudonyms, kept their addresses secret,<sup>196</sup> and dressed as workers, hoping to fool spies. Krasin's TRK contact was Afanasev, who let him lead a kruzhek,<sup>197</sup> which included six or seven men and women aged 20 to 25.<sup>198</sup> He lectured on Marx and political economy in Afanasev's flat, initiated discussion and answered questions, then focussed on economic and political issues and workplace conditions. He also led a mechanics' kruzhek and a women's kruzhek.<sup>199</sup>

The weavers Karelina, Boldyreva, and Dorofei Nikitich, and Afanasev, had changed jobs and recruited around 25 women, including several of Karelina's former friends from the Foundling Home,<sup>200</sup> and the women attracted men, so there were 'love matches'.<sup>201</sup> Krasin used Lanzhul's report on factories, but later acknowledged that he gave western European factories a 'rather rosy colour',<sup>202</sup> and particularly those in Germany.

## (v) May Day

Eduard Bernstein was born into a Jewish family in Berlin in 1850.<sup>203</sup> His father was descended from rabbis and scholars, and had been a tinsmith, but was now an engine driver. Eduard was sent to the reform Jewish school for religious instruction, but his parents did not object when he attended a Protestant church. At the gymnasium there were few Jews, and none in his class, and he recalled that 'no Christian could have felt stronger disdain' for 'manifestations of orthodoxy' than he did.<sup>204</sup> He left in 1866, qualified as a bank clerk in 1869, and joined the SDAP in 1872.<sup>205</sup> He saw the 'great recession' in world trade as the 'final crisis of capitalism' in 1873,<sup>206</sup> sheltered Axelrod from the police in 1874,<sup>207</sup> and met other Russian exiles. He renounced his membership of the Jewish community, and studied Engels' critique of Dühring as it appeared in instalments in *Vorwärts*.<sup>208</sup> In 1878 Höchberg invited Bernstein to be his secretary in Lugano, and he left just before the 'exceptional law' against socialists came into force. The German police banned *Die Zukunft*, and when Höchberg visited Berlin, early in 1879, they deported him, so he and Bernstein moved to Zurich and invited a young man from Vienna to join them.<sup>209</sup>

Karl Kautsky was born in Prague in 1854, into the family of an artist and a former actress who wrote popular socialist novels.<sup>210</sup> His father was of Czech origin, and sympathised with the national movement, while his mother was partly of German origin, and spoke German with her children. The family moved to Vienna in 1863, and Karl attended a Seminary, then transferred to a gymnasium in 1867.<sup>211</sup> In the early 1870s he entered the University (which had admitted Jews for over a century), wrote for Austrian SD periodicals and SDAP papers, and contacted party leaders.<sup>212</sup> The Sociálně Demokratická strana Československá v Rakousku (The Czech Social Democratic Party) was founded in 1878.<sup>213</sup> Kautsky evidently did not join, and recalled that Höchberg criticised SDAP leaders for their lack of sympathy for 'bourgeois democracy'.<sup>214</sup> Many Russian Jews had left Germany for Switzerland, and Bernstein met Axelrod and Deutsch.<sup>215</sup>

Early in 1881 Vollmar resigned as editor of the SDAP's *Der Sozialdemokrat*, and Bernstein became the acting editor.<sup>216</sup> Bebel told Engels that Kautsky had 'all kinds of whims', which might lead to 'considerable differences of opinion', but took him and Bernstein to London, where Engels enthused about Bernstein. By spring he was the



paper's permanent editor,<sup>217</sup> with Motteler as business manager, Hermann Schlüter as publisher and Leonhard Tauscher in charge of the press.<sup>218</sup> (SDAP organisations included 'only people actually needed' for 'acquiring and spending financial resources' and 'setting up demonstrations'.<sup>219</sup>) After the tsar was assassinated Bernstein stressed that Narodnaya volya's methods were not 'our methods', but 'their goals are the same'.<sup>220</sup> In summer Kautsky visited London and met Marx, who privately described him as belonging to 'the tribe of philistines', but he was 'otherwise a decent fellow in his own way'. Engels view was only slightly less acerbic.<sup>221</sup>

In autumn the German government imposed states of siege in the SDAP strongholds of Leipzig and Hamburg-Altona,<sup>222</sup> and Bebel, Liebkecht and 29 others were deported.<sup>223</sup> Days later SDAP candidates won 312,000 votes in the Reichstag elections, or 6.1 percent of those cast,<sup>224</sup> but 13, or three percent of the seats,<sup>225</sup> and though Liebkecht was elected, Bebel was not. In summer 1882 the SDAP deputies, Bebel and another former deputy went to Zurich.<sup>226</sup> They accused Bernstein of 'slandorous attacks' and insisted that the paper had to submit to the 'directives of party officials'.<sup>227</sup> He refused to submit to 'the censorship of the *Fraktion*',<sup>228</sup> suggested that the SDAP use Engels' *Die Entwicklung des Sozialismus* for agitation, but got little support,<sup>229</sup> and knuckled under. In spring 1883 60 delegates attended a secret SDAP congress in Copenhagen.<sup>230</sup> Bebel knew other leaders 'dream more or less of a social reform in alliance with other elements', but predicted the collapse of the state's 'political apparatus'.<sup>231</sup> In London Kautsky was an executor of Marx's literary estate,<sup>232</sup> and edited the monthly *Die Neue Zeit* (*The New Time*),<sup>233</sup> under Liebkecht's remote supervision,<sup>234</sup> and it was printed in Stuttgart.

Johann Dietz, the son of a tailor and the daughter of an artisan, was born in Lübeck in 1843. After leaving school he became an apprentice typesetter, and later worked in St. Petersburg, where he met socialists. In 1866 he joined the socialist-oriented labour movement in Hamburg, and by 1875 he ran the new *Hamburg-Altonaer Volksblatt* (*The Hamburg-Altona People's Paper*),<sup>235</sup> but the police closed it after the 'exceptional law' came into force in 1878.<sup>236</sup> From 1881 Dietz was a moderate SDAP Reichstag deputy, and J.H.W. Dietz Verlag in Stuttgart published books by party leaders. After Marx died in spring 1883, Dietz was one of his literary executors,<sup>237</sup> and he began a business relationship with Engels.<sup>238</sup> Dietz printed the second edition of Bebel's *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (*Woman and Socialism*),<sup>239</sup> and *Die Neue Zeit*,<sup>240</sup> which propagated the ideas of Marx and Darwin, but the German censors passed it because of its 'scientific' seriousness.<sup>241</sup> In Zurich Bernstein wrote that the SDAP's 'final goal' was 'to seize power in the state', and the Reichstag passed a sickness insurance law,<sup>242</sup> but the German, Austrian and Russian monarchs formed the Emperors' League.<sup>243</sup>

In spring 1884 the Reichstag renewed the 'exceptional law' for two years and four months, but softened its implementation. Motteler sent 9,000 copies of *Der Sozialdemokrat* to Germany each week, but Basel police confiscated a shipment, so he sent a stereotype to a German printer. In autumn the SDAP received 549,000 votes in the Reichstag election, or 9.7 percent of those cast but 24, or six per cent of the seats. Bebel was elected, but 18 others were moderates.<sup>244</sup> The SDAP was represented on all major Reichstag committees, and an amended accident insurance law came into effect.<sup>245</sup> In London Kautsky told Engels that a 'genuine hatred for Marx and Marxism dominates our educated people' in Germany.

Early in 1885 Motteler dispatched a denunciation of the SDAP deputies who had supported a subsidy for colonial shipping, and Bernstein refused to print the deputies' rebuttal, but he had to back down,<sup>246</sup> even though Bebel and Liebkecht privately supported him. Kautsky took more control of *Die Neue Zeit*,<sup>247</sup> and SD intelligently in Kyiv, Vilnius, Kharkiv, Nizhni-Novgorod, Kazan, Saratov, Moscow and St. Petersburg translated and hectographed articles for their kruzhki; yet when Kautsky asked Plekhanov in Switzerland for an article about Russian revolutionaries he had 'very little to say'.<sup>248</sup>

Three years earlier three percent of almost 2.5 million German enterprises had employed six or more workers, but accounted for over 43 percent of the industrial workforce.<sup>249</sup> The number of strikes began to rise in 1883, and by 1886 there were over 90,000 trade unionists and at least 15 union papers. The government told the police and courts to take strict measures against strikers,<sup>250</sup> though SDAP leaders discouraged strikes; and after workers marched through Spremberg on May Day, singing the *Marseillaise*, the government imposed a state of siege. The chancellor narrowly won a vote to renew the 'exceptional law', and in summer nine SDAP leaders, including Bebel, went to jail for six months for attending the Copenhagen congress and circulating *Der Sozialdemokrat*. The SDAP Reichstag deputies dropped the paper as their official organ, but the police had spies in the organisation and brought more trials, and the government imposed a state of siege in Frankfurt and Stettin. Early in 1887 the SDAP received 763,000 votes in the Reichstag election, or 10.1 percent of those cast, but 11, or 2.8 percent of the seats, and the police threatened to arrest two of the seven who turned up. Liebkecht had lost his seat, and believed that reforms could achieve 'revolutionary demands';<sup>251</sup> but some workers looked to the USA.

On 1 May the previous year (by the western calendar) the American Federation of Labor had organised a strike for an eight-hour day in Chicago, but the police killed and wounded several demonstrators. On the 4<sup>th</sup> someone in Haymarket Square threw a bomb at the police, and six workers' leaders were arrested.<sup>252</sup> In 1887 the Chicago

Labor Union called for a strike for eight hours on May Day, and 300,000 workers came out across the USA,<sup>253</sup> but late that year four of the six arrested Chicago workers were hanged.<sup>254</sup>

German trade unionists had demonstrated in Hamburg and other industrial centres on May Day, but employers imposed lockouts.<sup>255</sup> In autumn a secret SDAP congress in Switzerland elected Bebel as leader;<sup>256</sup> but the Emperors' League was renewed.<sup>257</sup> Early in 1888 the Reichstag renewed the 'exceptional law' for two years and eight months, and in spring the chancellor pressured the Swiss authorities to expel the *Der Sozialdemokrat* staff. They went to London,<sup>258</sup> and operated as the German Publishing Company under Bernstein's name.<sup>259</sup> He lived 'quite far from the East End', where Jewish socialists sponsored a demonstration for 'work, bread, and the eight hour day', and 3,000 turned up.<sup>260</sup> Motteler now sent 11,000 copies to Germany,<sup>261</sup> and stereotypes to printers in Cologne, Altenburg, Burgstadt, Nuremberg and Hamburg.<sup>262</sup>

The number of large factory workforces in Germany had doubled in a decade,<sup>263</sup> and the government legalised trade unions.<sup>264</sup> Most of the 81 SDAP delegates at the founding of the Second International in Paris were trade unionists,<sup>265</sup> and the SDAP decided to celebrate international workers' solidarity with strikes, demonstrations and demands for an eight-hour day on May Day in 1889.<sup>266</sup> That year an old age and disability insurance law came into effect, but the chancellor aimed to make the 'exceptional law' permanent.<sup>267</sup>

By 1890 most German trade unionists were skilled artisans in small and medium-sized enterprises,<sup>268</sup> but there were eight million industrial workers. Over 1,800 trade unions had 237,000 members, and 148,000 subscribed to one of the 45 union papers; but the 10,400 organised cabinet makers almost equalled the 12,600 printers, almost 18,500 tobacco workers outnumbered 16,900 miners, the 30,800 organised bricklayers and 13,000 carpenters together outnumbered the 37,500 metalworkers;<sup>269</sup> yet steel production had grown 13 times in 20 years. Since 1878 the 'exceptional law' had led to the closure of 95 trade unions, 23 workers' insurance societies and 214 political and social organisations. The SDAP's cash had been confiscated, and pub and bookshop owners were forbidden to host meetings or allow the distribution of literature. Around 900 socialists had been deported, including 293 from Berlin,<sup>270</sup> and the police had jailed over 1,500.<sup>271</sup> In January the kaiser proposed a law to regulate Sunday work and shorten working hours for women and children, and next day the Reichstag declined to renew the 'exceptional law',<sup>272</sup> by 169 votes to 98. Over 60 socialist papers appeared,<sup>273</sup> and in February the SDAP contested almost every Reichstag seat,<sup>274</sup> and won 1,427,298 votes, or 19.7 percent of those cast, but 35, or 8.8 percent of the seats. The chancellor resigned,<sup>275</sup> and the Emperors' League lapsed,<sup>276</sup> but when Hamburg workers struck and demonstrated on May Day, their employers imposed a lockout.<sup>277</sup> Soon after 100,000 Ruhr miners went on strike for an eight-hour day, and after troops killed five and wounded nine, 50,000 more miners came out.<sup>278</sup> Bebel advised them to seek an 'acceptable compromise',<sup>279</sup> and the kaiser managed to persuade the mine-owners to concede a nine-hour day and a pay rise, and end compulsory overtime; but they subsequently victimised strike leaders.<sup>280</sup> On 1 October *Die Neue Zeit* became a weekly.<sup>281</sup> The SDAP Halle Congress changed the party's name to Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (The Social-Democratic Party of Germany),<sup>282</sup> and recognised May Day as a holiday, but suggested holding a social event the following Sunday.<sup>283</sup>

#### **(vi) The revolutionary movement in Russia will triumph as a workers' movement or it will never triumph**

In 1887 the former Proletariat leader Warynski had died in Shlisselburg Fortress. Most other leaders had been exiled to eastern Siberia for ten years, but two died on the road and others died or committed suicide after they arrived.<sup>284</sup> In spring 1888 30 political suspects exiled without trial had arrived in Yakutsk. They had walked for almost a year and the governor ordered them to walk for three months more in a direction that would imperil their lives, so they asked him to change his mind, but he sent troops. They had orders to use rifle butts and bayonets, but they fired 500 bullets. Several prisoners were horribly mutilated, nine were dangerously wounded, 13 were disabled, six died, and the survivors were court martialled. Two women were sentenced to four years' katorga; most were exiled for eight to fifteen years; five were sentenced to katorga for life and three were executed. One was taken to the gallows on his bed, a rope was put round his neck and the bed was taken away.<sup>285</sup>

In summer 1889 the Priamursk military governor-general announced that state criminals would be liable to corporal punishment like common convicts. In Kara katorga prison Natalia Sigida, who was 28-years-old and from a merchant's family in Taganrog, had been exiled for being a member of Narodnaya volya. She asked to see the prison governor and slapped his face, and he ordered that she should have 100 lashes with a birch rod, but the doctor refused to sanction the flogging. She and Maria Kovalevskaya, Maria Kaluzhskaya and Nadezhda Smirnitskaya took poison. Sigida died that evening and the others died within two days. Seven men took morphine. More followed, and six died,<sup>286</sup> but the former Proletariat leader Kon survived. He and two other men agreed to try again, but the justice minister reversed the governor-general's policy.<sup>287</sup>

Mikhail Poliakov, the Katerynoslav Narodnaya volya terrorist, had been exiled to the Stredne-Kolyma district of northeast Siberia in 1889, and joined 18 state criminals had arrived the year before. Food and warm clothing were scarce and cost extortionate amounts of money, so most could not afford them, and the temperature reached 30 degrees below by autumn. Poliakov felt he had been sent to 'a living death in a land cut off from all the world by 2,000 kilometres of swamps and mountainous desert'; but pamphlets about the 'despotic cruelty' of the Yakutsk authorities circulated across Siberia and European Russia,<sup>288</sup> and soon after the government closed Kara. It exiled non-Jewish state criminals to Akatui, Nerchinsk or Sakhalin Island.<sup>289</sup> In six years, officially, 579 exiled political suspects had been Jews,<sup>290</sup> and Jews still went to Yakutsk.<sup>291</sup> The government had apparently defeated the SRs.

Dr Gurev, a Russian radical, had given money to the GOT to produce a periodical in Switzerland,<sup>292</sup> and *Sotsial-Demokrat* had appeared in summer 1888. Plekhanov wrote: 'Let our intelligenty go to the workers; *life itself will make them revolutionaries*'.<sup>293</sup> 'Give us 500,000 politically conscious workers and nothing will remain of absolutism', though he did not see an '*independent* role for the proletariat *prior to the revolution*'. Axelrod argued that the 'final defeat of the tsarist power' would be in towns and cities,<sup>294</sup> so the 'worker-intelligentsia' should 'form a single workers' party';<sup>295</sup> but Plekhanov told Axelrod he had 'every right to check' his 'centralist and Jacobin tendencies'.<sup>296</sup>

In spring 1889 Russian terrorists caused an explosion in Switzerland,<sup>297</sup> and the authorities expelled the GOT.<sup>298</sup> Plekhanov and Zasulich moved to Mornex in France,<sup>299</sup> but Plekhanov suffered from tuberculosis, and when Zasulich nursed him she caught it too.<sup>300</sup> That summer, at the founding Second International Congress in Paris, Plekhanov argued that the Russian 'revolutionary intelligentsia', with 'the aid of the workers, must take the bastion of the autocracy by force',<sup>301</sup> but 'the revolutionary movement in Russia will triumph as a workers' movement or it will never triumph'.<sup>302</sup> Zasulich believed the development of Russian capitalism was inevitable, but it was unlikely that SR intelligenty would perform the same revolutionary function as the western European bourgeoisie had done.<sup>303</sup> The GOT published *Ezhegodnyi vsemirnyi prazdnik rabochikh (The Annual World Wide Labour Holiday)*, to encourage May Day events;<sup>304</sup> and there was a response in Poland.

Julian Marchlewski was born in Włocławek in central Poland, in 1866,<sup>305</sup> into a family of minor gentry.<sup>306</sup> He later joined a secondary school kruzhek associated with Proletariat, and was an apprentice dyer in Warszawa by 1887,<sup>307</sup> then went to work in a German factory,<sup>308</sup> and qualified by 1889.<sup>309</sup> Jerzy Warszawski was born in Warszawa in 1868. He later participated in student kruzki, joined Proletariat and founded Związek Robotników Polskich (The Union of Polish Workers),<sup>310</sup> with Marchlewski.<sup>311</sup> In 1889 two strikes involved 2,870 workers,<sup>312</sup> and in 1890 8,000 celebrated May Day in Warszawa and Łódź.<sup>313</sup> Since 1881 hundreds of thousands of Polish workers had taken part in over 450 strikes and other actions;<sup>314</sup> and since 1867 Poland's industrial output had trebled, while cotton production had risen 40-fold;<sup>315</sup> but European Russian industry no longer needed Polish coal.

## (vii) The Russian Social Revolutionary Group of Workers

The Donbass covered almost 2.3 million hectares of Katerynoslav and Kharkiv provinces in Ukraine, and the Don military region.<sup>316</sup> In 1873 coal was discovered near Luhansk,<sup>317</sup> and in 1875 a railway carried it to central Russia.<sup>318</sup> In 1881 high-grade iron ore was discovered at Kryvyi Rih, and railways linked the Donbass to Moscow.<sup>319</sup> The government built more lines to develop the metallurgical industry;<sup>320</sup> but that year there were almost 1,000 cases of anti-government activity in the south,<sup>321</sup> and police and troops guarded the tsar's Crimean estate.<sup>322</sup>

In 1882 the government took powers to dissolve foreign-owned companies, but approved a Belgian-led steel cartel to make rails. By 1883 Donbass pig-iron production satisfied two thirds of domestic demand,<sup>323</sup> but the largely peasant local population was locked in *temnota* (mental darkness). Ukraine was home to two million Jews,<sup>324</sup> and after a Jewish shop assistant in Katerynoslav smacked a boy thief, his mother ran out howling, and 'Christian' labourers beat the assistant so badly that he died next day. Others beat Jewish men, raped women and looted almost 2,000 homes, before troops shot 28 rioters and wounded many more.<sup>325</sup>

After the harvest Kursk province peasants went to luzovka in south-eastern Ukraine, which was named after the Welsh ironworks owner, John Hughes. They worked over winter, and by 1884 4,750 or so Russians and 440 Jews formed 95 percent of the town's population. The ironworks employed 3,274, but single men paid about 13 rubles a month, or half the average wage, to live in an artel. Eight percent of men were literate, but hardly any women, and fewer than 200 girls and 2,400 boys, or around 12 percent of school-age children, were being educated. Hughes employed 625 coal miners,<sup>326</sup> and Cossacks broke a strike with flogging and deportation.<sup>327</sup>

The ports on the Baltic coast and many inland waterways were frozen for several months a year,<sup>328</sup> and Black Sea ports imported 240,000 tonnes of coal annually,<sup>329</sup> but the finance minister imposed a 20 percent import

tariff.<sup>330</sup> In the five years to 1885 the natural population increase in much of Ukraine averaged 20 per 1,000,<sup>331</sup> and the Donbass industrial workforce numbered 32,000, but the government bought rails at inflated prices.<sup>332</sup>

In spring 1887 140 miners near Luzovka stopped coal leaving until they were paid, and the police chief borrowed 600 rubles from Hughes to tide them over. When managers at a nearby French-owned mine announced lower summer wage rates, 1,500 miners went on strike for the current rate, and demanded sacking of hated supervisors and the supplier of poor quality meat. The director agreed, but asked the authorities for troops, then reneged. Hundreds of miners attacked two taverns and a brewery, and set off for Luzovka, but Hughes' son organised ironworkers to drive them away. The vice-governor deported 60 or so miners to their villages and tried 62. Six went free and 35 spent a week in prison. (The others would stay there for up to 18 months.)<sup>333</sup> Katerynoslav's chief gendarme reported that Luzovka workers were 'wild and ungovernable'. 'They pay no respect to the police, and generally don't know how to conduct themselves'. On the tsar's name day, ironworkers gathered by the home of police chief, 'expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that no flags were hung' and 'threatened to report him to the higher authorities'.<sup>334</sup> In spring 1888, after an anti-Jewish riot, the provincial governor stationed Cossacks in Luzovka,<sup>335</sup> where intelligentsy were scarce.

Four years earlier Dmitry Bekariukov, the son of a rich landowner, had been one of 80 or so student 'conspirators' at Kharkiv University who were linked to about 20 other *kruzhki* in Kharkiv, Kyiv, Kazan, Katerynoslav and St. Petersburg. Bekariukov contacted SRs to propagandise Kharkiv workers, but then the student 'conspirators' dispersed. In 1885 Kharkiv artisan SRs donated three percent of their wages to build a small library, and by 1887 some doubted the usefulness of terror. They consulted Stepan Tkachenko and Sergey Veletsky, two Belgorod intelligentsy, and produced a programme for *Russkoi sotsialno-revoliutsionnoi gruppy rabochikh* (The Russian Social Revolutionary Group of Workers). They would use terror against spies, police and officials, but explain capitalism and exploitation to workers, and they hoped to join an All-Russian party, overthrow the tsar and win the means of production for the working class. They asked Bekariukov to edit their programme, lecture and write propaganda for peasants and workers. They split, but he reunited them, and by summer 1888 50 workers in seven *kruzhki* had contacted Veterinary Institute students. Bekariukov left Kharkiv, because the police got too close, but a student brought literature and Tkachenko led the railway workshop *kruzhki*.<sup>336</sup>

The Briansk Ironworks Company had built a metallurgical factory in Katerynoslav,<sup>337</sup> where there were no residence restrictions on Jews, and Jewish intelligentsy propagandised artisans and workers.<sup>338</sup> The provincial governor noted that 'Jewish youth, with very few exceptions' were 'tainted with the ideas of socialism',<sup>339</sup> and stationed Cossacks in the town.<sup>340</sup> In autumn Tochisky was deported from St. Petersburg to Katerynoslav,<sup>341</sup> and contacted a school pupil's *kruzhok* that read SR literature and *Kapital*.<sup>342</sup> He was arrested,<sup>343</sup> but the Donbass was increasingly important to the national economy.

During the 1880s up to one million men, women and children had migrated to the Caucasus and Ukraine each year.<sup>344</sup> Luzovka was home to 15,000, and the ironworks employed 2,580, including 112 children aged 12 to 15; but by 1890 there were 6,326 ironworkers and 1,773 miners, and 2,456 boys and 692 girls attended local schools, while another 70 attended an Orthodox school and there were others at small Jewish schools. There were around 21 people per square kilometre in the Donbass, or half the density of central Russia, and better-off peasants had large holdings,<sup>345</sup> but land prices in some districts had quadrupled in 30 years. The region's industrial workforce numbered 82,000,<sup>346</sup> and employers paid high wages to attract peasants, who changed jobs or went back to their village rather than strike. There were 20 primary schools, but sending a child to secondary school for a year cost an ironworker a month's pay. The schools at 27 of the 31 largest coalmines and 15 of the 22 metalworks taught skilled foreign workers to speak Russian; but many Russian workers attended Sunday schools. Almost a third of miners and three-fifths of metalworkers were literate and some owned books, but officials, police, troops and Orthodox clergy reinforced the *temnota* of the 'bottom strata' of Russians, and alcohol abuse was widespread. Jews formed over a third of Katerynoslav workers and about a quarter in the surrounding district, and many were literate clerks and artisans. In five years there had been 20 strikes and three 'riots', but now there were 'ghastly' anti-Jewish riots.<sup>347</sup>

After Efim Munblit, a Jewish student at Odesa University, joined a demonstration, the police deported him to Katerynoslav, where he led Tochisky's former *kruzhok* and used GOT literature.<sup>348</sup> The police had identified 24 political suspects, and had 82 others, plus ten temporary residents, under surveillance;<sup>349</sup> but the growth of the Donbass coal, iron and steel industries was relentless.

In 1885-1889 national pig-iron production had averaged 613,000 tonnes a year, but it reached 922,000 tonnes in 1890. Urals plants made 391,000 tonnes of steel out of a national total of 800,000 tonnes, but five Donbass plants made 218,000 tonnes,<sup>350</sup> and were five times as efficient.<sup>351</sup> The 37 Donbass coalmines employed almost 60 percent of all Russian miners,<sup>352</sup> and produced 2.7 million tonnes, or 85 percent of national output.<sup>353</sup> Luzovka ironworks made 100 percent profit,<sup>354</sup> but Cossacks broke a miners' strike with flogging and deportation.<sup>355</sup>

### (viii) The costs of industrialisation

In the 20 years to 1882 non-gentry had bought 18 percent of the gentry's remaining land,<sup>356</sup> but less than 11 percent was cultivated on capitalist lines.<sup>357</sup> Peasants were leaving their villages in increasing numbers, and the commune's main function was enforcing mutual responsibility for taxes,<sup>358</sup> but by 1883 direct tax arrears had averaged 30 percent for five years.<sup>359</sup> The government's new Peasants' Land Bank offered loans of up to half the purchase price at 5.55 percent interest for 25 or 35 years,<sup>360</sup> and kulaki often paid cash,<sup>361</sup> but the large deposit was beyond most peasants, so groups made three-quarters of purchases and prices rocketed,<sup>362</sup> and in 1885 1.3 percent of loans were to individuals.<sup>363</sup> The government's new Nobles' Land Bank charged 4.5 percent interest,<sup>364</sup> and rarely challenged gentry valuations; but by 1886 they owed 79 million rubles in unpaid loans and interest,<sup>365</sup> The finance minister raised indirect taxes and land tax,<sup>366</sup> and forced state peasants to make redemption payments for 45 years,<sup>367</sup> but it abolished direct taxes on other peasants and reduced rail freight rates for grain to encourage exports. The government collected taxes in autumn, so poor peasants had to sell grain when prices were low and buy it in winter when it was dear, to eat and to sow in spring.<sup>368</sup> The government empowered landowners to dismiss labourers for 'rudeness', but labourers could not break a contract for ill-treatment, and if they left the police brought them back.<sup>369</sup> In 1887 the finance minister initiated a drive to industrialise,<sup>370</sup> so he required customs duties and tariffs to be paid in gold.<sup>371</sup> In 1888 61.9 percent of peasant households had no horse,<sup>372</sup> and by 1889 the government had freed peasants from communal responsibilities,<sup>373</sup> but 385,000 migrated to Siberia and Turkestan,<sup>374</sup> because the government offered land at a small rent.<sup>375</sup> It had empowered provincial governors in European Russia to appoint 2,000 'land captains', and most were sons of gentry or army officers. They could overturn commune decisions, sack officials, decide legal disputes, order flogging for minor misdemeanours,<sup>376</sup> impose forced labour and surveillance, fine up to five rubles and order up to seven days' imprisonment; so their opportunities for demanding bribes were endless. The Nobles' Land Bank added the gentry's unpaid interest to their loans,<sup>377</sup> and they had little incentive to improve agricultural methods.

There had been famines in parts of European Russia in 1882 and 1886,<sup>378</sup> and though there were excellent harvests in 1887 and 1888,<sup>379</sup> there were localised famines in 1889.<sup>380</sup> For 30 years, by 1890, births had exceeded deaths by around 14 per 1,000 a year,<sup>381</sup> and in 20 years the rural population had grown by 50 percent, but the main grain yields by only 15 percent.<sup>382</sup> Peasants held an average of 5.1 hectares in the northern Region, 2.2 in the Central Region, 1.9 in Ukraine and 1.5 in the South West,<sup>383</sup> but in Tambov province 40 percent had primitive implements and no livestock.<sup>384</sup> Rye bread formed around 60 percent of the peasants' diet, plus potatoes and cabbage, but poor peasants had little to eat from October to May and were close to starvation until harvest.<sup>385</sup> The grain harvest was 20 percent below average, and provincial zemstva asked the government for help, but a general insisted that there was no famine and the interior minister ordered papers not to 'disturb the public mind' with stories about starvation or face severe fines or suppression. The famous writer Lev Tolstoy published the fact that ten million families could not feed themselves until the next harvest, and asked if the government had enough grain to feed them. In autumn the finance minister claimed that grain stocks were adequate, but banned exports, and set aside 12 million rubles for relief; but he did not admit that it would cost 400 million rubles to buy enough grain from dealers. He threatened to have anyone giving money to peasants without permission arrested, but citizens donated millions; and in December the government announced that it would not put 'any obstacles in the way of private initiative in the work of relief'. For five years direct tax arrears had averaged 42 percent, and in 1890 one Pskov province district almost 83 percent of babies died before their first birthday, but for five years the authorities had issued almost five million internal passports each year.<sup>386</sup> The government owned about 25 percent of the 32,400km railway network, but many locomotives used wood, since British coal was expensive, and private railway companies owed the government 310 million gold and 597 million paper rubles. Rail freight had more than quadrupled in 25 years, and over 252,000 railway workers included 167,000 full-timers.<sup>387</sup>

In 1881-1885 Russia had been responsible for 3.4 percent of global industrial production,<sup>388</sup> but from 1885 to 1889 annual industrial growth averaged 6.1 percent. The annual consumption of imported raw cotton averaged 150,000 tonnes, and coal production averaged 4.9 million tonnes.<sup>389</sup> During the 1880s entrepreneurs had built 3,030 factories and workshops,<sup>390</sup> and since 1867 industrial output had doubled.<sup>391</sup> In 1885-1889 the annual consumption of imported raw cotton had averaged 150,000 tonnes,<sup>392</sup> but by 1890 a quarter came from Russian Asia, and European Russian mills produced 120,000 tonnes of thread and 110,000 tonnes of cloth.<sup>393</sup> Since 1880 industrial production had risen by 63 percent.<sup>394</sup> In 1890 coal production was six million tonnes, and half of it came from the Donbass.<sup>395</sup> Nationally there were almost 1.65 million inspected factory workers,<sup>396</sup> or 1.4 percent of the population,<sup>397</sup> and government inspectors were empowered to let children aged ten to 12 work night shifts.<sup>398</sup>

In 1880 foreign investors had owned 91.5 million rubles' worth of Russian corporations. French investors owned 26.8 million rubles' worth, the British 29 million and Germans 29.8 million rubles. Foreigners also owned 5.7 million rubles' worth of Russian government bonds.<sup>399</sup> During the 1880s foreigners supplied around one third of industrial capital,<sup>400</sup> and received annual dividends of between 6.4 and 7.3 percent. By 1890 foreigners owned 186.2 million rubles' worth of Russian corporations. French investors owned 61.4 million rubles' worth, Britons 29.8 millions and Germans 68.8 millions. Foreigners owned half the engineering and machine-building plants and two-thirds of the metallurgy works and mines,<sup>401</sup> yet Russian industry produced six percent of the world's goods, and ranked seventh among industrialised nations.<sup>402</sup>

From 1880 to 1885 Russia's annual trade surplus averaged 50 million rubles; and by 1885 German banks held two billion marks' worth of Russian government bonds.<sup>403</sup> In December the Russian government reduced the gold content of the ruble so that one ruble was valued at four French francs.<sup>404</sup> From 1886 to 1889 the government's annual surplus averaged 116 million gold rubles,<sup>405</sup> and from 1886 to 1890 it averaged 250 million;<sup>406</sup> but one ruble was now worth 2.2 French francs.<sup>407</sup> Foreigners owned 28.5 million rubles' worth of Russian government bonds.<sup>408</sup> and thanks to German speculators, the paper ruble had lost 38 percent of its international value in a decade. The government had floated four substantial loans in France in just over a year, and it had placed a large order for infantry weapons with French firms.<sup>409</sup> The German chancellor forbade the Reichsbank to accept Russian government bonds as collateral,<sup>410</sup> and ordered investors not to buy them.<sup>411</sup> The Berlin Bourse transferred 640 million rubles of Russian debt to the Paris Bourse,<sup>412</sup> at four percent interest,<sup>413</sup> but French speculators snapped it up.<sup>414</sup> The government's annual deficit had averaged 28 million rubles since 1881,<sup>415</sup> and customs duty averaged 20 percent of its income,<sup>416</sup> while the annual trade surplus was 285 million rubles.<sup>417</sup> The government's revenue income was 959 million rubles,<sup>418</sup> but its foreign debt was the highest in Europe.<sup>419</sup>

## 4. We are uneducated and unorganised

### (i) Das Erfurter Programm

The Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands began publishing its newspaper *Vorwärts* in Berlin in January 1891. The SPD's editors, Bebel and Liebknecht, each received over 10,000 marks a year, while German workers averaged 700.<sup>1</sup> Trade union membership had reached 320,000, but Bebel told Engels in London that the SPD had 'to hold the masses within bounds' on May Day, so 'no conflicts arise'.<sup>2</sup> German union leaders organised a social event the following Sunday,<sup>3</sup> union membership fell, but Bernstein argued that the 'road to full political liberty' was via parliament.<sup>4</sup> Bebel and Liebknecht drafted a programme for the SPD, Liebknecht consolidated comments by Bernstein, Kautsky and Engels, and in autumn delegates at the Erfurt Congress accepted it unanimously.<sup>5</sup>

1. Universal, equal, and direct suffrage with secret ballot in all elections, for all citizens of the Reich over the age of twenty, without distinction of sex. Proportional representation, and, until this is introduced, legal redistribution of electoral districts after every census. Two-year legislative periods. Holding of elections on a legal holiday. Compensation for elected representatives. Suspension of every restriction on political rights, except in the case of legal incapacity.
2. Direct legislation by the people through the rights of proposal and rejection. Self-determination and self-government of the people in Reich, state, province, and municipality. Election by the people of magistrates, who are answerable and liable to them. Annual voting of taxes.
3. Education of all to bear arms. Militia in the place of the standing army. Determination by the popular assembly on questions of war and peace. Settlement of all international disputes by arbitration.
4. Abolition of all laws that place women at a disadvantage compared with men in matters of public or private law.
5. Abolition of all laws that limit or suppress the free expression of opinion and restrict or suppress the right of association and assembly. Declaration that religion is a private matter. Abolition of all expenditures from public funds for ecclesiastical and religious purposes. Ecclesiastical and religious communities are to be regarded as private associations that regulate their affairs entirely autonomously.
6. Secularization of schools. Compulsory attendance at the public *Volksschule* [extended elementary school]. Free education, free educational materials, and free meals in the public *Volksschulen*, as well as at higher educational institutions for those boys and girls considered qualified for further education by virtue of their abilities.
7. Free administration of justice and free legal assistance. Administration of the law by judges elected by the people. Appeal in criminal cases. Compensation for individuals unjustly accused, imprisoned, or sentenced. Abolition of capital punishment.
8. Free medical care, including midwifery and medicines. Free burial.
9. Graduated income and property tax for defraying all public expenditures, to the extent that they are to be paid for by taxation. Inheritance tax, graduated according to the size of the inheritance and the degree of kinship. Abolition of all indirect taxes, customs, and other economic measures that sacrifice the interests of the community to those of a privileged few.

The Programm made reformist demands.

1. Effective national and international worker protection laws on the following principles: (a) Fixing of a normal working day not to exceed eight hours. (b) Prohibition of gainful employment for children under the age of fourteen. (c) Prohibition of night work, except in those industries that require night work for inherent technical reasons or for reasons of public welfare. (d) An uninterrupted rest period of at least thirty-six hours every week for every worker. (e) Prohibition of the truck system.
2. Supervision of all industrial establishments, investigation and regulation of working conditions in the cities and the countryside by a Reich labour department, district labour bureaus, and chambers of labour. Rigorous industrial hygiene.
3. Legal equality of agricultural labourers and domestic servants with industrial workers; abolition of the laws governing domestics.
4. Safeguarding of the freedom of association.
5. Takeover by the Reich government of the entire system of workers' insurance, with decisive participation by the workers in its administration.<sup>6</sup>

The Programm assumed that big capital would force out small capital and accentuate class struggle,<sup>7</sup> and proclaimed that social democracy was 'the merger of socialism and the worker movement'.<sup>8</sup> Bebel argued that

'bourgeois society is working so forcefully towards its own downfall that we only have to wait for the moment to pick up the power that drops from its hands';<sup>9</sup> and most Congress delegates would live to see socialism.<sup>10</sup>

Subsequently the Reichstag banned Sunday working and employing children under 13. Women could not work over 11 hours a day and youths under 16 over ten. Civil servants would fix working hours in factories with difficult conditions, and arbitration courts would involve both employers and workers.<sup>11</sup> Reformism seemed to be working; but the Russian government's industrial relations policy was very different, above all in St. Petersburg.

## (ii) Spare no bullets

By 1891 St. Petersburg textile mills employed over 22,000 workers and metalworking plants over 19,000.<sup>12</sup> Early that year the TRK activist Petr Evgrafov told others at the Baltic Shipyard that New Admiralty Shipyard workers were restive, and after the admiral announced a pay cut and new fines for 400 workers there were disturbances. Next day the entire workforce went on strike, demanding their former pay and conditions.<sup>13</sup> Evgrafov told the SD intelligent Leonid Krasin, who wrote a leaflet linking the strikers' grievances to the autocracy,<sup>14</sup> but warned that striking without organisation was fruitless.<sup>15</sup> He hectographed 50 copies,<sup>16</sup> and other intelligently handwrote leaflets,<sup>17</sup> from Vremennyy rabochy komitet (The Provisional Workers' Committee).<sup>18</sup> The police noted that the leaflets were 'inciting' workers to 'support one another' and 'force the authorities to make the concessions'.<sup>19</sup>

Thornton Wool Works weavers earned seven rubles a month, at best,<sup>20</sup> and when managers announced a pay cut, the workforce went on strike, and TRK members at the nearby Vargunin textile mill asked Golubev to draft a leaflet. He recalled that the SD intelligently 'did not consider it possible to start strikes', but 'if a strike broke out then we considered it necessary' to 'explain to workers the significance of strikes and also help to conduct them'. Workers distributed leaflets and pasted them on factory walls, and intelligently sent a leaflet calling for 'financial and moral support for the suffering workers' to liberal newspapers. They raised 600 rubles, the TRK added 300 and kruzki collected more. The New Admiralty strikers got five to ten rubles each, but only one TRK member collected for the Thornton strikers, who went back after a week, and the police deported over 30 'instigators'.

In spring Klimanov persuaded the TRK to send an address to the radical writer Nikolai Shelgunov, who had suffered years of exile and was dying. Most intelligently feared this would provoke the police, but Golubev drafted a letter and the TRK approved it. Golubev, Klimanov, Bartenev and three other workers took it to Shelgunov, who soon died, and Klimanov persuaded the TRK to attend his funeral.<sup>21</sup> Students joined them.

The government paid an average of 23 rubles per student to finance scholarships, or just over one-third of the amount a decade earlier, but only 16.5 percent of students received fee waivers.<sup>22</sup> There were many Technological Institute students among the 700 people who accompanied Shelgunov's coffin, and thousands of people lined the route to the cemetery,<sup>23</sup> including many workers who risked fines for being absent. Between 70 and 150 TRK kruzki members brought a wreath with red ribbons inscribed 'To our Guide who showed us the way to Freedom and Brotherhood from the Petersburg Workers', and the organisers let them lead the procession.<sup>24</sup> The police wanted them to put the coffin in a hearse, follow a prescribed route and not sing, but students carried banners, marched where they wanted and sang.<sup>25</sup> Afanasev made a graveside speech,<sup>26</sup> as did other workers; but policemen took photographs,<sup>27</sup> and 40 or so names. Mefodiev, other workers and students were deported for three years.<sup>28</sup> Golubev was arrested,<sup>29</sup> and the Institute expelled him permanently.<sup>30</sup> Other educational institutions expelled hundreds,<sup>31</sup> but the first major demonstration for years had a 'huge effect' on intelligently.<sup>32</sup>

Leonid Krasin wanted to celebrate May Day, so he gave speech topics to handpicked workers and wrote leaflets urging others to attend.<sup>33</sup> Most SD intelligently did not want a demonstration, but discussed the drafts, and Brusnev later claimed that he edited them 'in a programmatic sense',<sup>34</sup> to develop 'Russian Bebels'. On May Day around 100 workers and students met in woods outside the city. One worker praised students for having 'planted the seed' of 'human intelligence', and he hailed the SPD's electoral success.<sup>35</sup> Bogdanov looked forward to building an 'organised force whose demands the government would be unable to reject', and Afanasev declared that 'labour is the motor of all human progress' and wanted to emulate German workers.

We need only arm ourselves with a powerful weapon ... of the historical laws of the development of mankind ... and we shall defeat the enemy everywhere. None of his acts of oppression - sending us back to our birthplaces, imprisoning us or even exiling us to Siberia - will take this weapon away from us. We shall find the field of victory everywhere, we shall transmit our knowledge in all directions: in our birthplaces to our peasants, in prison to the men detained there we shall explain that they too are human beings and are entitled to all human rights, so that they will ... transmit their knowledge to others and organise them into groups.



That evening Klimanov invited 70 or so male and female workers to his flat. He argued that Shelgunov's funeral had drawn the attention of 'society' - the privileged elite - to 'the workers' question', and Ivan Egorov called on workers to organise independently of intelligenty.<sup>36</sup> The Krasins had helped to organise the demonstration, but Leonid had not attended, yet he and German were barred from higher educational institutions and deported.<sup>37</sup>

In Poland 65,000 Łódź workers had gone on strike on May Day.<sup>38</sup> They freed imprisoned workmates: factory owners fled; the police could not cope; and the governor told troops to 'spare no bullets'.<sup>39</sup> There was a riot, but strikers fought police and troops for four days. Reportedly 80 strikers were killed, 300 wounded,<sup>40</sup> and 350 arrested,<sup>41</sup> but 50 soldiers were killed or wounded,<sup>42</sup> and the strikers won a ten-hour day.<sup>43</sup> Over 25,500 Polish workers joined 30 other strikes,<sup>44</sup> and the news reached St. Petersburg.

St. Petersburg's Semyannikov Shipyard was now called the Nevsky Shipbuilding and Engineering Works, but the old name stuck, and the 3,000 workers' annual output was worth one million rubles. There were 1,500 workers at the Obukhov steelworks, 1,800 at the Franco-Russian metalworks, 2,200 at the Baltic Shipyard and 3,500 at the Putilov metalworks, where the 'basic mass' were 'cadre Putilovsky-metallisty'. 'From generation to generation whole families of fitters, lathe-operators, and rolling mill hands' had worked there, and descendants of enserfed workers at state factories and Tula *kustari* (peasant artisans who obtained orders and materials from a merchant or industrialist) were 'native inhabitants', and many were not 'connected to the countryside',<sup>45</sup> where the poor living conditions of many peasants were about to get considerably worse.

In 30 years peasants had paid 143 million rubles in tax and redemption payments, and most of the 410 million rubles of customs and excise duties on alcohol. Grain formed almost half the value of exports,<sup>46</sup> and in autumn the harvest was enough to feed the population, but railways had been built to facilitate exports and could not move one region's surplus to another, so hoarders and speculators took advantage.<sup>47</sup> The harvest had failed across the Volga region, so up to 34 million people had insufficient food to survive eight winter months.

The government ordered newspapers not to publish the fact that peasants ate acorns, grass and straw bread,<sup>48</sup> or straw, hemp dust and clay with potatoes, and took straw from their cottage roof to feed cattle. An official toured seven famine-stricken provinces and the bread he brought back to St. Petersburg horrified people.<sup>49</sup> One newspaper printed a Kazan priest's report that many of his congregation were starving.<sup>50</sup> In 16 provinces, from the Urals to Ukraine,<sup>51</sup> 12.5 million needed urgent help,<sup>52</sup> and around 14 million faced cholera and typhus.<sup>53</sup> The government doled out 1,150 calories a day, which was starvation level, then raised it to 1,700 calories, which was below the level required for normal life.<sup>54</sup> Tolstoy noted that 'amidst all this suffering' the 'grand old life of the squires, with its jolly hunts and balls, its banquets and concerts, carried on as usual'. He and his daughters opened hundreds of canteens, but the Orthodox Church stopped peasants using them and excommunicated Tolstoy. Late that year the tsar asked volunteers to help.<sup>55</sup> Soldiers had suppressed eight of the many peasant 'disorders'.<sup>56</sup>

The railway network covered 30,700km, and over five percent of Russians had internal passports.<sup>57</sup> Since 1887 the annual trade surplus had averaged 311 million paper rubles, and the government had invested 255 million gold rubles in railways.<sup>58</sup> The import tariffs of up to 33 percent on raw materials and semi-finished goods were the highest in the world, and raised the cost of agricultural machinery.

Around 1,432,000 people, or 1.2 percent of the population, worked in industry, mines and on the railways. Annual coal production was 6.2 million tonnes, pig-iron one million, steel 400,000 and oil 4.6 million. The Russian and French governments had signed an *entente*, but the Russian finance minister had failed to negotiate another loan in Paris;<sup>59</sup> and while the government's revenue income was 900 million rubles,<sup>60</sup> it owed 1.1 billion.<sup>61</sup>

By 1892 the Nobles' Lank Bank had loaned 340 million rubles to gentry,<sup>62</sup> but cholera swept through Volga peasant villages.<sup>63</sup> Terrified peasants killed doctors, paramedics and vets,<sup>64</sup> and demolished hospitals,<sup>65</sup> and while many officials dithered, some had every tenth male peasant flogged, and some died.<sup>66</sup> Peasants' buying power had fallen while food prices had risen, and peasants 'ready to sell their "working hands" at any price' looked for waged work.<sup>67</sup> Famine relief had cost the government 150 million rubles,<sup>68</sup> yet the finance minister was adamant: 'We will be underfed, but we will export'.<sup>69</sup> Reportedly, 400,000 peasants died,<sup>70</sup> including ten percent of the adults, and 30 percent of children who walked to Siberia. Most survivors settled in the western provinces since it took two years to reach the Far East on foot.<sup>71</sup>

In autumn the finance minister did not collect taxes after harvest,<sup>72</sup> but European Russian landowners complained about the rise in labourers' wages, so the government banned migration to Siberia without official permission. Peasants usually sold their possessions before migrating, so those who returned without permission would have insufficient cash to pay to sleep in convict barracks.<sup>73</sup>

The European Russian rail network was complete, and the government hoped the construction of the Trans-Siberian railway would stimulate the metallurgical and coal industries and light industry, but after the German government began a tariff war,<sup>74</sup> the tsar signed a treaty of economic and commercial cooperation with France,<sup>75</sup>

and they agreed to consult each other if their security was threatened.<sup>76</sup> The Russian government restricted city дума electorates to landlords,<sup>77</sup> but students influenced by Marx and Engels were organising in St. Petersburg.

### (iii) An independent movement of the immense majority

Bernhard Struve was born into the family of a University professor of German origin in Tartu, Estonia, in 1827. After he graduated from the elite Tsarskoe Selo Lyceum near St. Petersburg the governor of eastern Siberia invited him to implement reforms. By the early 1850s, when Struve ran Irkutsk province, he married Anna Rosen, a Baltic German. He became governor of Astrakhan province in 1855, and resigned in 1861, but was governor of Perm province by 1865, and Petr was born there in 1870. By 1879 the family lived in Stuttgart, but they moved to St. Petersburg in 1882. Petr entered the best gymnasium, read serious journals and his brother's University notes, and attended University debates. He was a monarchist and hated terror, but he left home in 1885.

Alexandra Kalmykova (as she became) was born in Katerynoslav around 1849. In the later 1860s she taught in a secondary school and married A.D. Kalmykov, a judge whose ancestors had been serfs; and in the early 1880s they moved to Kharkiv, where Kalmykova met radicals and published educational pamphlets for mass distribution. In 1885 Kalmykov became a senator and the couple moved to St. Petersburg. Petr Struve joined their household, stayed on after Kalmykov died and entered the University. Kalmykova used her state pension to publish 'progressive' pamphlets for a mass audience, distributed booklists and supplied provincial libraries. In 1890 Struve visited Berlin, and the SPD's electoral success impressed him, so he went to Switzerland and smuggled back Marx's *Das Kapital*, *Das Elend der Philosophie* and *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte* (*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*) and Engels' critique of Dühring,<sup>78</sup> and showed his student friends.

Alexandr Voden was born in 1870, and brought up in Klinty in Briansk province.<sup>79</sup> In 1890, at St. Petersburg University, he became interested in Marxism, but was unable to get GOT publications. In spring he met Struve, who loaned him works by Marx and Engels. In autumn the Technological Institute SDs loaned him their copy of Engels' *Der Ursprung der Familie*. He debated with them, and joined Struve's kruzhek,<sup>80</sup> but he also joined the Technological Institute SDs.

Robert Klasson was born into a family of German heritage in Kyiv in 1867. In 1890, at St. Petersburg Technological Institute,<sup>81</sup> he spoke about *Der Ursprung der Familie*, loaned it to Struve's kruzhek,<sup>82</sup> and formed a kruzhek with Voden, Golubev, Stranden,<sup>83</sup> Bartenev,<sup>84</sup> Vasily Starkov from an office worker's family in a Saratov province village,<sup>85</sup> and Alexandr Potresov, a wealthy University student from a major-general's family, who contacted SRs.<sup>86</sup> Others propagandised workers, but after Bartenev explained Marx to a spy he was arrested.

In 1891, after attending Nikolai Shelgunov's funeral, Voden discussed politics with Struve, who convinced him that there was 'not a scrap of ethics in Marxism',<sup>87</sup> and Marx's dialectics were 'metaphysics', yet he thought it possible to be a 'Marxist' but not a socialist. For him the transition to socialism would be gradual and peaceful, since the state would remain in place, but the peasant commune was an anachronism. He later acknowledged that the famine 'made much more of a Marxist' of him than reading Marx, and in autumn he left the University and became a librarian at the Finance Ministry; but the Technological Institute SD kruzhek recruited.

Stepan Radchenko was born into a lumber dealer's family,<sup>88</sup> in Konotop, Chernihiv province, in 1869.<sup>89</sup> He attended schools in Rostov-na-Donu and Kyiv, and entered St. Petersburg Technological Institute in 1887.<sup>90</sup> He joined Brusnev's SD kruzhek, led workers' kruzki by 1890 and a student kruzhek by 1891.<sup>91</sup>

Gleb Krzhizhanovsky was born into a family of Polish heritage in Samara in 1872. He graduated from a realschule and entered St. Petersburg Technological Institute in 1889.<sup>92</sup> In 1890 he joined a student kruzhek, read works by Narodnaya volya and the GOT,<sup>93</sup> and joined the SDs in 1891.<sup>94</sup> They had some illegal literature, but no direct contact with leading émigré SDs.

In Switzerland Plekhanov had written that '*without workers who are conscious of their class interests there can be no socialism*', and while a sect 'can be satisfied with propaganda in the narrow sense of the word: a political party never'. A propagandist 'conveys *many* ideas to a single person or to a few people', while an agitator conveys *only one or a few ideas* to 'a whole mass of people', and agitation was the 'necessary link between the "heroes" and the "crowd"'.<sup>95</sup> The GOT had no mandate for the Second International Congress,<sup>96</sup> but Plekhanov and Zasulich arrived in Brussels and announced that they had 'the duty of covering the whole of Russia with a network of workers' societies'. Meanwhile 'we shall abstain from participating in your meetings', since 'any representation of Russian social democracy would be fictitious'; but it was 'very possible that at the next international congress you will see amongst you true representatives of the Russian workers'. They acknowledged that Russian SDs had never opposed 'terrorist' struggle on principle, but mass agitation was vital.<sup>97</sup> The GOT had few contacts in Russia, but late that year they received the St. Petersburg workers' May Day speeches,<sup>98</sup> and sent Symon Raichin, a

'prepared' metalworker,<sup>99</sup> to contact Brusnev via a Warszawa kruzok.<sup>100</sup> Early in 1892 Plekhanov exhorted the Russian proletariat to prepare to defend its interests, and if there was a democratically-elected parliament, 'the people' could 'purge' it with a 'revolutionary sweep of the hand' under SD leadership.<sup>101</sup> Former members of Narodnaya volya and Engels did not agree.

Nikolai Rusanov was born into an Orel merchant's family in 1859. He later studied at St. Petersburg Medical Academy and joined Narodnaya volya. In 1882 he lived in Paris, but wrote for *Narodnaya volya*, and helped to organize the Gruppya Starykh Narodovoltsev (The Group of Veterans of the People's Will) in 1891.<sup>102</sup> He associated with Lavrov, but had 'calmed down' from his 'militant anti-Marxist' days, and wrote for the SPD's *Vorwärts* under a pseudonym. In spring 1892 he visited Engels in London who told him that the 'cogwheels of capitalism' had 'cut deep' into the Russian economy, praised the 'genuine socialist activity of Plekhanov and his friends' and asked Rusanov why he did not support them. Rusanov had read the 'most important' SD works, but the GOT spoke about his group in 'very unfriendly terms' to 'Marxists in the west', and 'inspired them with great mistrust for us, as if we were utopian and conspirators'. Engels insisted that SRs and SDs should fight together, and advised him not to quote Marx on agrarian issues, but to apply his economic theory to Russia, since there were 'prospects of substantially new results'. He added that Plekhanov's conception of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' risked splitting émigré Russian SDs and turning those in Russia into a sect.<sup>103</sup>

Engels later acknowledged that the 'self-conscious' 'proletarian movement' in western Europe was an 'independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority',<sup>104</sup> and believed the SPD's rising number of votes meant that German bourgeois society was collapsing.<sup>105</sup> The Russian tsar had failed to borrow half a billion francs and the famine had undermined foreign investors' confidence. Simbirsk province peasants had been flogged to death, while many in the south could not sow winter wheat because of the drought; so he predicted 'more distress next year' when peasants slaughtered livestock to stave off starvation. The 'emergent proletariat' was 'too weak for revolution', but the peasantry was 'doomed' to be 'a proletariat, industrial or agricultural'.<sup>106</sup> In Switzerland the GOT published a Russian translation of Engels' *Ludwig Feuerbach, Marx's Thesen über Feuerbach (Theses on Feuerbach)* and part of their *Die Heilige Familie (The Holy Family)*.<sup>107</sup>

In London the former terrorist Kravchinsky argued that the path to freedom in Russia was via a constitutional monarchy, since neither the peasantry nor the working class could play 'an independent, let alone a leading role'.<sup>108</sup> He favoured a liberal-socialist alliance against the autocracy. 'Hitherto we socialists have regarded the word "constitution" as somehow unclean', but if free speech and a free press were 'guaranteed by an inviolable law', they would be key 'weapons in the socialist struggle for the future'.<sup>109</sup> 'We utterly disbelieve in the possibility of reconstructing economic relationships by means of a burst of revolutionary inspiration'. He visited the USA to raise funds for Kennan to publish *Free Russia* in New York,<sup>110</sup> but SD ideas were catching on in Russia.

#### (iv) Krupskaya

Konstantin Krupsky was born in Kazan province in 1838. His parents died in 1847, and officials sent him to St. Petersburg Cadet Corps School. He graduated in 1858, helped to crush the Polish uprising in 1863-1864, then entered St. Petersburg Military-Juridical Academy, and married in 1867.

Vasily Tistrov had been born into a family of landless gentry. He later became an army officer, and then a mining engineer in Siberia, where he married. Elizaveta was born in 1841, but her mother died in 1844, and Tistrov took his nine children to St. Petersburg. By 1848 Elizaveta was a governess, but her father died in 1850, and in 1867 she married Krupsky,<sup>111</sup> but they 'sometimes borrowed a few kopecks to buy food'. Nadezhda was born in 1869.<sup>112</sup> In 1870 Krupsky entered the Warszawa civil service, opened a hospital, opposed the persecution of Jews and regulated the hiring of labourers; but in 1874 he was sacked for having 'exceeded his authority', failing to illuminate his office on the tsar's birthday and attend church, speaking Polish and dancing the mazurka.

The family returned to Russia. Elizaveta worked as a tutor and educated Nadezhda at home, though she briefly attended a school in Kyiv. In 1875 Krupsky became a factory inspector, but was soon sacked, and the family went to Pskov province. Nadezhda's tutor told her about landowners who exploited peasants; but gendarmes raided her room and found 'forbidden literature', and a defaced portrait of the tsar, and imprisoned her for two years without trial.<sup>113</sup> In 1880 the authorities dropped the case against Krupsky for lack of evidence,<sup>114</sup> and the family moved to St. Petersburg, where Nadezhda entered a gymnasium in 1881.<sup>115</sup> She saw the tsar's assassins pass by for execution, and several of the family's 'revolutionary friends' were 'seized'.<sup>116</sup> After her father died in 1883 she spent a few unhappy months at different gymnasia, but later did well at a private girls' gymnasium.<sup>117</sup> She and her mother lived 'rather poorly' by copying and 'letting out rooms',<sup>118</sup> but they had a cook who slept in the kitchen. One of Nadezhda's classmates had a brother who had joined Narodnaya volya and been exiled to Siberia, and

Nadezhda read illegal literature. In the summer holidays she went to the countryside, washed peasant children, worked in kitchen gardens and cut hay. In 1887 she proofread a translation of Alexandre Dumas's *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo* for Tolstoy, but heard no more about it. In 1889, after she graduated with the gold medal, she became a part-time teacher and enrolled on the Bestuzhev courses.<sup>119</sup> Around 13 percent of the students were the daughters of gentry, 22 percent of *raznochintsy*, 23 percent of merchant or clergy and 42 percent of senior civil servants, and the Okhrana was increasingly concerned about them.

[I]n the last five years there has not been a single more or less large revolutionary organisation that did not have Bestuzhev students in considerable numbers among them. Starting from the society 'Land and Liberty' and finishing with the latest attempts to organise and unite the circles in St. Petersburg, the Bestuzhev female students took part in every revolutionary action; you meet them in the case of the Polish social-revolutionary groups; and later in the 'Proletariat'; in the Red Cross of 'People's Will' ...

In the last five years around 140 had 'belonged to various revolutionary circles'.<sup>120</sup> The mathematics courses remained open,<sup>121</sup> but Krupskaya felt that they had 'little in common with life' and soon dropped out.<sup>122</sup>

Early in 1890 Olga Grigoreva put her in touch with Yakob Korobko, a Technological Institute student who ran an 'ethics' kruzhek, who gave her a book by Lavrov.<sup>123</sup> She had not heard of Marx, but borrowed *Kapital*, read it 'diligently', and recalled that when she came to 'The knell of capitalist property sounds' and 'The expropriators are expropriated', her heart went 'thumpety-thump'. Most SDs obtained *Kapital* 'with great difficulties', and they had not read *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii*, while 'matters were extremely bad with regard to other works by Marx';<sup>124</sup> but Krupskaya got illegal literature at Petr Lesgaft's biology lectures,<sup>125</sup> she joined Klasson's Technological Institute kruzhek. She read Plekhanov's 1889 speech at the Second International Congress and a handwritten extract of Engels' *Der Ursprung der Familie*, and found a German edition of Engels' critique of Dühring in a public library. She joined Brusnev's kruzhek, but all they asked her to do was to teach an unwilling worker's wife to be literate and attend Shelgunov's funeral.<sup>126</sup> There were more people wishing to lead a workers' kruzhek than there were kruzheki, so 'a quiet, shy young woman who had only just begun to understand Marxism, could hardly hope to get one'.<sup>127</sup> Student 'ties' with workers were weak and the government 'sought to separate them by a stone wall', but she wanted 'to work, to be useful'.

The Committee for Literacy's Sunday school taught 600 workers in a Nevsky Gate factory.<sup>128</sup> It was known as the Kornilov School, after the factory owners. A woman ran it,<sup>129</sup> and there were 'advanced' courses for women.<sup>130</sup> By summer 1891 Krupskaya taught all-male classes on Sundays and two weekday evenings, going from basic literacy to arithmetic, history and literature.<sup>131</sup> She was 'surprised how easy it was to explain the most difficult things to workers when one spoke from the Marxist viewpoint', and she 'could say anything so long as one did not use terrible words' like 'tsarism', 'strike' or 'revolution'; but an inspector could close a course studying fractions, and a worker who told a manager about 'labour intensification' risked deportation.

In autumn her pupils recruited peasant workmates. At first one who would 'stop his ears' in the 'geography' and 'grammar' lessons, but by spring 1892 he would 'rush after school' to a kruzhek. A Putilov worker brought a friend and told her that it was 'too far for him to come here regularly every evening, but he can come on Sundays, for the "geography" lesson'. Another worker advised her: 'Do not distribute books today'. 'There's a newcomer here, a former monk, who knows what he's about'. An elderly worker warned her: 'Do not say anything while that dark fellow is around'. 'He's connected with the secret police'. Yet a worker had only to tell her that 'handicrafts cannot compete with large-scale production', or ask about the difference between an Archangelsk peasant and an Ivanovo worker, for her to 'know that he was a member of a Marxist circle'.<sup>132</sup> When 'conscious' workers saw a teacher as 'one of us', they 'related all that was doing on the high-ways and by-ways', so they could tell the 'Organisation', and she also learned from a male colleague.<sup>133</sup>

Nikolai Meshcheriakov, the son of an agronomist, was born in Zaraisk, Moscow province, in 1865. He entered St. Petersburg Technological Institute in 1885, joined *Narodnaya volya*, and later taught at the Kornilov School.<sup>134</sup> Krupskaya recalled that he 'was the first to initiate me into illegal work', teach her 'the rules of conspiracy', lend her GOT literature and help her to become an SD.<sup>135</sup> SR ideas were still influential, but so were Marx's ideas.

#### (v) Moscow Central Workers' Circle

Domna Maximova, a 15-year-old a Riazan province peasant, worked in a Moscow factory by 1881. In 1887 she married a peasant who worked at a plant some way away, but they could not afford public transport, so they lived apart until Easter, then went to his village to spend time together.<sup>136</sup> Other peasants were radicalised.

E.I. Nemchikov, a 16-year-old peasant, had left his village to be an apprentice metalworker in Moscow in 1881. He worked from 6.00am to 8.00pm, or later, with two hours for breaks, and was too tired to notice the lice and bugs when he got into bed. By 1887 he had a job in a railway workshop, where socialist workers had won concessions and joined their kruzhek. The police caught him collecting money for arrested workers, but he claimed it was for the Church and they let him go.<sup>137</sup>

By 1888 the city had 667 inspected factories, but while SR intelligentsy had little contact with workers,<sup>138</sup> SD intelligentsy loaned 'good' books to literate metalworkers who had a 'noticeable thirst for knowledge'. They used public libraries, attended lectures and read a legal paper's 'excellent articles' on western European labour movements.<sup>139</sup> Some textile workers went on strike, but Cossacks forced them back.<sup>140</sup> That year almost half the officially-recorded strikes in Russia were in Moscow province,<sup>141</sup> and the Okhrana recruited former SRs.

Vasily Zubatov had been an army officer,<sup>142</sup> but later became an apartment manager in Moscow,<sup>143</sup> and married. Sergey was born in 1864. He entered the fifth form of a gymnasium in 1880, and in 1881 he organised a kruzhek and a library,<sup>144</sup> which specialised in political economy. After he contacted Narodnaya volya his father removed him from the gymnasium, but students got him a job running a bookshop which sold cheap illegal literature,<sup>145</sup> and had a lending library. Alexandra Mikhina and her sister owned it, and Alexandra married Zubatov in 1883. After he joined a kruzhek linked to Narodnaya volya, everyone except him was arrested.<sup>146</sup> In 1885 he betrayed more SRs,<sup>147</sup> and in 1886 he contacted SRs at the Agricultural Academy,<sup>148</sup> who were all arrested and lost their press,<sup>149</sup> but gendarmes investigated Zubatov to maintain his cover. He got a post office job, and was sacked in 1888, but the governor-general ordered his reinstatement. By 1889 he worked for the Okhrana full-time,<sup>150</sup> as did Leonid Menshchikov. He had joined Narodnaya volya,<sup>151</sup> via a Moscow student kruzhek, in the early 1880s, but was arrested in 1888, and agreed to work for the Okhrana,<sup>152</sup> to tackle SRs, though some SDs were active.

Sergey Mickiewicz was born in Vyatka province in 1869,<sup>153</sup> into a Polish army officer's family. They later moved to Kazan, but by 1890 Sergey studied medicine at Moscow University,<sup>154</sup> and considered himself an SR.<sup>155</sup> A dead friend had given SR literature to a workers' kruzhek, and the friend's sister introduced Mickiewicz to two Technical Society School graduates, Sergey Prokovev, a machinist's assistant at the Moscow-Brest Railway workshops, and K.F. Boie, who owned books and looked like an intelligent. Mickiewicz 'interpreted primary accumulation' and 'expounded' *Kapital* with 'illustrations from Russian life', while Sponti sent him works by Engels, Kautsky and Liebknecht from Vilnius,<sup>156</sup> and another SD intelligent propagandised.

Martyn Mandelshtam was born into a Moscow merchant's family in 1872.<sup>157</sup> He later entered Mitava gymnasium in Latvia, and in 1889 his brother Grigory studied in Paris and attended the Second International Congress. In 1890 F.I. Poliakov, a Moscow weaver who liked drink and fighting, took Martyn to a factory barracks and told him to talk openly, since they were 'all good lads', and he risked returning several times.<sup>158</sup>

The region around Moscow was the largest concentration of heavy industry in the empire,<sup>159</sup> and half a million workers produced goods worth 600 million rubles a year,<sup>160</sup> or almost 29 percent of the national total.<sup>161</sup> Moscow province's population was around 1.8 million,<sup>162</sup> and almost 60 percent of female workers were single,<sup>163</sup> but 20 percent of peasants had passports.<sup>164</sup> Moscow's population had ballooned to 900,000,<sup>165</sup> and over two-thirds were migrants,<sup>166</sup> but for every 34 women working for wages there were 100 men.<sup>167</sup> That year Moscow workers produced goods worth 134 million rubles, including five million from the 1,230 at Prokhorov Mill.<sup>168</sup>

By 1891 SR ideas influenced the Moscow University student Petr Kashinsky, but he went to St. Petersburg to learn how to build an SD organisation and then to Nizhni-Novgorod to meet Leonid Krasin. The St. Petersburg worker Afanasev left for Moscow, got a job at the Prokhorov Mill and organised kruzhek, which Kashinsky linked to student kruzhek. After Brusnev graduated in St. Petersburg he visited Nizhni-Novgorod, Tula and Kyiv, but settled in Moscow, where he built kruzhek in the Moscow-Brest Railway workshops, and Lyubov Milovidova took his letters to Krasin in Nizhni-Novgorod,<sup>169</sup> where he was waging a 'bitter struggle' against abstract propaganda, and believed that workers needed to study the 'chief German writings'.<sup>170</sup> Some of them were available in Moscow.

Mikhail Egupov had entered Pulawy Agricultural Institute in Poland in 1887 and joined an SR-oriented kruzhek; but reading Engels' *Die Entwicklung des Sozialismus von der Utopie* made him doubt that a party could seize power without a social revolution. He borrowed works by Marx from Warszawa SDs in 1888, and did his military service at Kronstadt,<sup>171</sup> but by 1891 he led workers' kruzhek in Tula. Late that year he went to Moscow, met Brusnev, Kashinsky and Klimanov, and discussed a merger of Tula workers and Moscow, Riga, Warszawa and St. Petersburg SDs.<sup>172</sup> Egupov got illegal literature and cash from SD students at Riga Polytechnical Institute, who had a press, and a spy in Egupov's kruzhek, reported that it and an SR kruzhek both had a 'completely satisfactory library'. The deported St. Petersburg workers Mefodiev and N.N. Rudelev gave Egupov 'something on the order of an examination' in Moscow before acknowledging their affiliation to the TRK.<sup>173</sup> The intelligentsy Grigory Mandelshtam and G.M. Krukovsky translated works by Marx and explained them to a student kruzhek,<sup>174</sup> but Mandelshtam was arrested.<sup>175</sup> The kruzhek broke up early in 1892,<sup>176</sup> though the smuggling continued.

Egupov visited Warszawa, where he made contacts via a fellow Pulawy Institute graduate and was fascinated by the agitation carried out by Polish trade unionists. On his way back in Riga an SD student gave him the *Sotsial-demokrat* with Zasulich's article criticising SR intelligenty,<sup>177</sup> and in Moscow it convinced Brusnev that 'prepared' workers had to propagandise and agitate, because 'the emancipation of the workers is a matter for the workers themselves', and 'only the workers will be able to produce the genuine future revolutionary activist'. SD intelligenty should train 'fully developed and conscious' workers to 'replace intelligenty propagandists',<sup>178</sup> and have 'roots sunk deep into all classes in society, but mainly among the workers of industrial centres'. He wanted to link Moscow SDs to the 60 St Petersburg, and those in Tula, Kharkiv, Pulawy, Warszawa and Riga. Raichin brought GOT and Proletariat literature to Moscow, and Brusnev gave him 200 rubles for the exclusive right to distribute it. He promised more money if the GOT printed reports and a paper, and wrote for Russian intelligenty who wanted Polish propagandists in factories.

When Raichin returned to Warszawa he found that hundreds of organised trade unionists had been arrested; but Egupov had been under surveillance for a year and he and Raichin were arrested too. Egupov betrayed 138 others, including Brusnev, and in spring a police raid on the Krasins' flat found SD literature. They were arrested, but German was subsequently let go.<sup>179</sup> Leonid had written in Brusnev's notebook and the police charged him with going to Moscow illegally, since he was a deportee. Kashinsky escaped to Kyiv, but was arrested, though Klimanov got safely to St. Petersburg. Reportedly 28 SDs went on trial in Moscow. Leonid Krasin was sentenced to four years in prison, and ten in northern Siberia, and he spent the first ten months learning German in a solitary cell in Moscow. Brusnev was found guilty of contacting the tsar's would-be assassins five years earlier,<sup>180</sup> and sentenced to four years in prison followed by exile,<sup>181</sup> but SD intelligenty in the Pale remained at large.

Most of the 13 SD intelligenty in Vilnius had attended Russian schools or universities, though Kremer, Srednicki, Kopelzon, Shloyme and Nokhem Levinson had been expelled for illegal activity, while Aizenshtadt had been imprisoned for radical activity at Yaroslavl Juridical Academy.<sup>182</sup> Since 1891 they had smuggled in GOT and other illegal literature, and Russian SDs visited to pick some up.<sup>183</sup> The Vilnius SDs led 60-70 other Jewish intelligenty in kruzki of ten to 15, and taught about 150 artisans using Russian. Shmul Gozhansky, who was 25 and from a well-to-do Hrodna family, had graduated from Vilnius Teachers' Institute,<sup>184</sup> then taught in Kaunas and Białystok; but he worked at a state school in Vilnius. He was fluent in Yiddish,<sup>185</sup> but had to punish pupils who spoke Yiddish instead of Russian.<sup>186</sup> He suggested that the SDs should agitate artisans on the basis of a 1785 law that stipulated a maximum 12-hour day, and persuade them to build kassy and go on strike.<sup>187</sup>

On May Day 1892 some Vilnius SD intelligenty and around 100 artisans met in nearby woods.<sup>188</sup> One artisan spoke Yiddish, but three, including the clothing worker Fania Reznik, spoke Russian. She argued that since they worked up to 17-hours a day, 'Everybody must do all he can to set up and spread kassy', which 'provide our only means of support' in a strike. They risked getting the sack,<sup>189</sup> but they had to 'overcome fragmentations' and 'fight against our closest enemies', the employers.<sup>190</sup> Another speaker believed the solution to Jews' economic problems 'would not come by supernatural miracles' but through socialism.<sup>191</sup> The boot-maker Reuven Gershovski argued that 'We cannot sit with folded arms and wait for help from above' and 'can gain freedom and salvation only from ourselves'.<sup>192</sup> The engraver Avrom Gordon argued that 'Only when the masses become more enlightened will it be possible to strike out against the old traditions, against fanaticism, privileges and oppression'.<sup>193</sup> Intelligenty could help workers become 'conscious and independent', but the 'liberation of the worker is the independent and conscious business of the worker alone';<sup>194</sup> but a Russian Vilnius SD intelligent visited Moscow and met SDs.

Alexandr Vinokurov had become a revolutionary in 1890, aged 20,<sup>195</sup> and by 1892 he and A. Rianazov led kruzki of former SR students in Moscow. Mickiewicz helped them to contact Prokovev, who was now an assistant engine driver on the Moscow-Brest Railway and I.A. Semyonov in the workshops.<sup>196</sup> By late that year Martyn Mandelshtam had joined an intelligenty kruzhek that included Prokovev, Mickiewicz, Vinokurov and his wife, the midwife N. Vinokurova, and Sponti.<sup>197</sup> Sponti reported that Vilnius SDs secretly 'distributed agitational literature' which even a semi-literate worker could understand. The SDs discussed co-opting workers, but most preferred 'fully tested people', and were unwilling to 'surrender the conspiratorial part of the enterprise' to 'insufficiently prepared' workers, since it 'might lead to the complete liquidation of the whole organisation'.<sup>198</sup> Sponti persuaded them to produce propagandist and agitational leaflets and to train workers to move from factory to factory to consolidate contacts and make new ones. They agreed that workers' kruzki should function independently, but only the intelligenty would be able co-opt promising individuals.<sup>199</sup>

The leaders of 11 workers' kruzki formed Tsentralnyi rabochy kruzhek (The Central Workers' Circle), and seven others affiliated. The TRK met twice weekly in Boie's flat, discussed draft leaflets and organised to build a fund. They recruited in factories,<sup>200</sup> 'amassed information' on wages, conditions, abuses and workers' 'vital and immediate needs', then invited '15 to 25 friends who had read only one or two pamphlets, or had never read

anything', to a worker's flat. One intelligent and 'one or two of the more politically conscious workers' led 'lively' discussions that 'were not strictly regimented and dealt with everything, including the conditions of the workers' life, politics, and religion', and the intelligent selected workers for 'further systematic' study. Vinokurov wrote leaflets about how capitalists came into being and how peasants and artisans became factory workers, and Mandelshtam wrote a leaflet about women workers. Other leaflets drew on the *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii*, Engel's *Der Ursprung der Familie*, Bebel's *Die Frau und Sozialismus (Women and Socialism)* and the Erfurter Programm. Workers copied the leaflets by hand or typewriter, and bought small quantities of paper from different shops and hectograph ink from licensed suppliers. Hectographing took a long time, so they were 'exceedingly happy' to find a 'pocket press of several dozens of gutta-percha letters' which enabled them to print two or three lines at a time. Every line 'came out crooked', but the leaflets raised the TRK's prestige;<sup>201</sup> at a time when workers in the central industrial region faced fines for climbing walls, or 'assembling several persons in one group', and complaining to inspectors often led to the sack.

Nationally, in spite of the famine, the rural population had increased by 16 percent in a decade;<sup>202</sup> but power loom weavers produced 20 times as much as handloom weavers. Around 30,000 factories and mines employed 1.58 million workers who produced 1.73 billion rubles' worth of goods a year,<sup>203</sup> including a million tonnes of iron castings, more than all industrialised countries, and almost a million tonnes of steel. Over 70 percent of inspected workers stayed at work all year, including 83 percent of textile workers, and 88 percent of metalworkers,<sup>204</sup> many of whom were in St. Petersburg.

#### **(vi) The second St. Petersburg Central Workers' Circle**

Mikhail Olminsky was born in 1863. He became an SR in St. Petersburg in 1883, and was deported in 1885, but had returned by 1890.<sup>205</sup> SRs had the only illegal press in the city, and late in 1891 the TRK asked Olminsky to advise them. Zasulich's article criticising SRs in *Sotsial-Demokrat* convinced some SD students to 'devote all their efforts to creating Russian Bebels', and early in 1892 Klimanov insisted that the TRK attended an 'advanced' kruzhok to study Engels, Marx, Plekhanov and revolutionary movements in Russia and western Europe, led by Cywinski, who accepted some SD ideas, but believed that SR intelligenty would be the ones to seize power.<sup>206</sup>

The 'advanced' textile workers Boldyreva and Karelina lived in an artel,<sup>207</sup> in the Nevsky Gate district, with 20 or so other women who propagandised workmates and formed part of a network of mainly female kruzhki.<sup>208</sup> Women from the New Cotton Mills and All-Russian Rubber Works chose female propagandists, including E.G. Bartevna, an SD who was in contact with the Second International. The Kartochnyi factory kruzhok met in the women's artel, as did the TRK, and Bogdanov introduced them to Sophia Olminkaya. They studied Marx, the western European movement, Russian radicals and revolutionary struggles, focussing on women's activity. Male activists' wives were 'almost always illiterate and feared for their families', but Karelina and Boldyreva reassured them and taught them to be literate, and the TRK co-opted them to represent two districts.<sup>209</sup> A seamstress asked Klimanov for literature and an intelligent for her kruzhok, and the Forestry Institute student Nikolai Sivokhin volunteered. Cywinski liaised with Fomin's Baltic Shipyard kruzhok. Some of its members had worked in Poland and 22-year-old Vladimir Sviatlovsky got literature from Warszawa. Alexandr Yakovlev led a kruzhok of 60 at the Franco-Russian metalworks and wanted literature and help with theory, so Cywinski volunteered. SD intelligenty published an open letter to Polish workers, and Petr Raskolnikov and Petr Lopatin's Franco-Russian kruzhok and Evgrafov's New Admiralty Shipyard kruzhok distributed copies. It advocated 'struggle against the common enemy: the tsar, the barons, the factory owners, the priests',<sup>210</sup> expressed solidarity with Łódź strikers and called for revolution, so Russian and Polish workers could 'bask in the sun of the socialist order'.<sup>211</sup>

In spring an anonymous May Day pamphlet in Polish appeared in Berlin,<sup>212</sup> and the TRK's Fyodor Pashin met a worker from Łódź in St. Petersburg.<sup>213</sup> Pashin and Evgrafov persuaded the TRK to celebrate May Day, and Cywinski 'polished' the draft speeches, but did not alter their tone or content.<sup>214</sup> On the day about 100 workers met,<sup>215</sup> and Boldyreva spoke,<sup>216</sup> but the police dispersed them.<sup>217</sup> They reconvened five days later, but the landowner scattered them and the police briefly detained Klimanov. Four days later around 60 workers met in Volkov woods and women brought a large red flag. The police permitted eight speeches, and Boldyreva expressed solidarity with Polish workers. Klimanov argued that 'salvation' was in their own hands, but they needed 'a united and disciplined' organisation' which could 'pull down force only by the use of force'.<sup>218</sup> Petr Evgrafov agreed.

Let us throw over and crush these parasites! There are hundreds of them and millions of us, but we are weak because we are uneducated and unorganised. Let us ... unite in closed ranks, like the western workers! Let us study so we can everywhere instruct and organise to the last drop of blood our uneducated brothers, so that we ourselves can teach

kruzhki instead of the intellectuals who are fewer and fewer all the time, so that the liberation of labour will be achieved by labour itself.<sup>219</sup>

In the early hours of next day Fomin's kruzhok and Cywinski were arrested, as were Grigory Lunegov,<sup>220</sup> a machinist at the government paper mill,<sup>221</sup> and Ivan Egorov and Proshin, who defiantly told the police that they used translated Polish literature, including Dikshtein's pamphlet, and focussed on the 'unequal division of wealth, exploitation by factory owners' and 'the necessity for workers to unite in defence of their interests'.<sup>222</sup>

In summer Vasily Shelgunov believed that students attracted spies to workers' kruzhki, and talked scathingly of 'the revolution scattered to the dachas,<sup>223</sup> while Fischer, a lathe operator at the Siemens & Galske plant, saw textile workers as 'almost another race'.<sup>224</sup> He admired the SPD, and considered himself an SD, but favoured the village commune, though his kruzhok resented intelligenty who pushed SR ideas.<sup>225</sup>

We realised in general that we were separated from the intelligentsia by many conditions, the way of life, education, and so on. We conceded that we could work together but not under their direction. We could in no way conceive that the intelligentsia should tell us at every given instant to do this and that. We would not have tolerated this sort of thing. We also felt that we were incapable of telling the intelligentsia what not to do.<sup>226</sup>

Only a mass organisation of 'conscious' workers could lead a revolution, and his and Keizer's 'sacred dream' was to be *rabochy intelligenty* (worker-intellectuals), so they insisted that workers should control the kruzhok curriculum.<sup>227</sup>

Days later 700 Mitrofanevsky cotton spinners went on strike,<sup>228</sup> after a cut in piece-rates. The TRK put a leaflet into factories and Cywinski collected money from students. Nineteen 'instigators' were deported,<sup>229</sup> for a year, but workmates raised 100 rubles for their families.<sup>230</sup> Klimanov was briefly detained, but Norinsky got him a job at the Baltic Shipyard and he 'began to establish links between individual comrades scattered across different areas of the capital'. He 'pulled us up by the braces', and when he was spotted he moved to another plant; but in autumn, after he was deported to Narva in Estonia, he kept in touch with Fischer in St. Petersburg. Pashin led a kruzhok at Siemens & Galske, and Norinsky and Konstantin Kuprianov, both veterans of Timofeev's kruzhok, rebuilt the Port kruzhok. Sviatlovsky attended the women's kruzhok at the rubber works and he knew that intelligenty worked in the district, but he did not know their names.

Klimanov, Proshin, Bogdanov, Ivan Keizer and other TRK survivors recruited youngsters like Petr Karamyshev, and experienced activists like Fedosia Norinskaya, plus Alexandr Ilin and Nikita Merkulov,<sup>231</sup> who had led kruzhki and worked with Shelgunov.<sup>232</sup> Cywinski, Sviatlovsky and about 100 workers met in woods outside the city, and Fomin, Ivan Egorov and Anna Egorova (formerly Boldyreva) spoke. Klimanov had written Lunegov's speech: 'Only force can answer force' and 'our salvation is in ourselves' in unity with 'all those who strive for justice' including radical writers, school pupils and zemstvo professionals.<sup>233</sup> Karelina, Boldyreva, Petr Evgrafov, Lunegov, Proshin, Pashin and others were arrested.<sup>234</sup> (Evgrafov and Lunegov would spend a year in jail, followed by three months' deportation,<sup>235</sup> while Grigoreva, Egoreva,<sup>236</sup> and Karelina would be deported after six months' in solitary.<sup>237</sup>) After the police raided Fischer's room the TRK survivors 'temporarily suspended' activity. They suspected they were under surveillance, but resolved to 'develop a cadre' of rabochy intelligenty who would receive a 'final polishing' as individuals or in small groups with selected intelligenty, though Norinsky worried that SRs focussed on 'the history of the political struggle' 'to the detriment of knowledge' of a 'theoretical character'.

Shelgunov, Fischer, Norinsky, Keizer and Sergey Funtikov from the Baltic Shipyard reformed the TRK. In case of arrest, they each briefed a deputy, who would take no part in illegal activity, and Boldyreva managed to contact with Vyborg district women activists before she was deported to Kharkiv. The rubber works kruzhok was the only survivor in the Narva Gate district, thanks to Norinskaya, and the Putilov worker Nikolai Ivanov attended, but after Shelgunov got a job at the Putilov works he and Ivanov revived the kruzhok. Shelgunov contacted Proshin in prison and he smuggled out information about the survivors of Brusnev's SD intelligenty kruzhok, and Stepan Radchenko and Cywinski's intelligenty kruzhki merged. When Klimanov left prison he and the once-deported Putilov worker Nikolai Poletaev joined the TRK and cooperated with Polish SD intelligenty. The student Stranden kept SD literature in his lodgings, and there was more in the homes of 25 workers. They were aged 19 to 30, most were single and literate, and half were peasants, but eight were metalworkers, and they were all arrested.

Weeks later Bogdanov was arrested when he was carrying three handwritten leaflets. One was about how factory employers exploited workers, and compared their conditions with those in western Europe. Another advocated striking and building a party capable of 'establishing a socialist order in which there will be neither poverty nor wealth and everyone will enjoy happiness and satisfaction to an equal measure'. Bogdanov also had a Plekhanov pamphlet on Lassalle, with handwritten notes from Lassalle's works, including references to Albert



Schäffle's 1874 *Die Quintessenz des Sozialismus* (*The Quintessence of Socialism*) and Edward Bellamy's 1888 utopian US novel, *Looking Backward*; but Obukhov steel workers and other Nevsky Gate plants told the police that Bogdanov and Filimonov's leaflets linked economics and politics.

It is time for Russian workers to develop, organise, arrange strikes, gain broader rights, shorter working hours, increases in pay and through strikes also attempt to gain political rights – the establishment of a constitution based on general electoral laws so that every worker can elect deputies from their own numbers to the governing body and so that these deputies will be able to represent the interests of their electors when laws are passed.

(The agitators were to spend three months in solitary and eight in ordinary cells, followed by deportation.)

Shelgunov and Fischer transferred to the Baltic Shipyard, and they, Keizer and Norinsky led the TRK. Keizer wrote a leaflet aimed at 'comrades' which stressed that it was written by a worker. It criticised the tsar and his supporters 'who do nothing and contribute nothing' but 'live in clover', and condemned them for the famine. western European workers had won struggles in spite of state intervention, and Russians should stop 'licking the feet of their oppressors' and believing that intelligentsy were 'Godless rebels'. SR intelligentsy did not agree with all of it, but printed it, and it was widely distributed. Fischer and Shelgunov moved from factory to factory in the Narva and Nevsky Gate districts, rebuilding kruzhki and forming new ones. Knyazev formed a kruzhok in Petersburg district, which Fischer sometimes led, while Ivan and his brother Petr led another. Fischer met Petr Morozov at the Semyannikov Shipyard, and he knew textile workers. Fischer moved to Siemens & Galske and he and Ivan Keizer built a kruzhok, then Keizer revived those at the New Admiralty Shipyard.<sup>238</sup> Knyazev and others organised 'democratic universities' of no more than five members, and gymnasium pupils helped them, while Knyazev organised kruzhki in the Petersburg, Vyborg and Vasilevsky Island districts, and out at Kolpino.<sup>239</sup>

The Krasin brothers aimed to link St. Petersburg SD intelligentsy to those in other cities,<sup>240</sup> and Pavel Skvortsov, a former member of an SR kruzhok in Kazan,<sup>241</sup> now accepted Marx's ideas,<sup>242</sup> and led a workers' kruzhok in Nizhni Novgorod. One member recalled 'long conversations': 'gradually the number of workers studying Marx will increase; they will draw still more members into kruzhki studying Marx; with time all Russia will be covered' with kruzhki and 'we will form a workers' socialist party'. 'What tasks this party was to perform' and how it should struggle 'remained unclear'.<sup>243</sup>

In autumn German Krasin returned to St. Petersburg, rejoined the SD Technological Institute kruzhok and led workers' kruzhki. Krzhizhanovsky led one outside the Narva Gate, and Starkov led one in Glazovaya ulitsa and another in the suburban industrial 'village' of Tentelevka.<sup>244</sup> SR intelligentsy led some TRK kruzhki, but Shelgunov told one of them to 'communicate more knowledge and agitate less' and not 'insist too much on revolution'. 'I have the feeling that somehow you want to get us mad. We want you to give us the facts, and when we know everything and the time comes to get mad we will get mad ourselves'.

Konstantin Takhtarev, a 21-year-old son of a general and a Military Academy student, thought Shelgunov was 'the most outstanding worker he had ever met', because he 'gave himself wholeheartedly' to the work, 'did not miss the smallest detail of factory life' and attended the defence of any interesting dissertation at the University or the Bestuzhev courses. Shelgunov chose Leonid Krasin and Krzhizhanovsky as tutors,<sup>245</sup> but Radchenko believed that student kruzhki were vulnerable to spies. He wanted each intelligent to lead only one kruzhok and be accountable to a secret 'centre' run by an intelligent without teaching responsibilities and dangerous contacts who could carry on after arrests. Radchenko formed a 'small highly conspiratorial party' inside the Institute SD kruzhok,<sup>246</sup> and Petr Zaporozhets, a student from a Ukrainian peasant family,<sup>247</sup> joined him;<sup>248</sup> but there appeared to be no attempt to build a broad socialist party, unlike in Poland.

### **(vii) The Polish Socialist Party**

Eliasz Luksenburg was born in Zamość, near the Polish border with Russia. He later became a student at Warszawa Rabbinical School, which had been established by assimilationists in 1826, and most classes were taught in Polish. He returned to Zamość, which was the cradle of the Haskalah, and became closely associated with it. He met Lina Löwenstein, who read poetry by the recently dead German Friedrich Schiller and the long-dead Pole Adam Mickiewicz, and whose brother was a preacher in a non-Orthodox congregation in Lviv.<sup>249</sup> After Eliasz inherited his father's timber business he married Lina, and Rozalia, their fifth child, was born in 1870. In 1873 the family moved to Warszawa, but lived away from poor orthodox Jews, and though they observed Jewish holidays, they spoke Polish at home. In 1875 Rozalia was misdiagnosed and spent a year in bed with one leg in a cast, which became shorter than the other,<sup>250</sup> but she taught the servants to be literate.<sup>251</sup> Jewish girls could not

attend the best gymnasium, so in 1880 she entered the second-best; but from Christmas Day 1881 police stood by as mobs attacked 2,000 Jewish homes for three days and nights, wounding and killing many. In 1886 Rozalia contacted socially aware students.<sup>252</sup> She won the gold medal at the gymnasium, but did not receive it because of her 'rebellious attitude towards the authorities',<sup>253</sup> and in 1887 she joined a kruzhek using the Proletariat programme.

In 1889 she went to Zurich, registered as 'Luxemburg' at the University, and lodged with Karl Lübeck, a former editor of the SPD's *Demokratische Zeitung* (*The Democratic Paper*), and his Polish wife, Olympia, who had contacts with Związku Młodzieży Polskiej (The Union of Polish Youth). In 1890 the former Vilnius SD Jogiches deserted from his penal battalion,<sup>254</sup> and arrived in Zurich to print and smuggle literature to Russia via Poland and Lithuania with the help of Jewish SDs.<sup>255</sup> He met Luxemburg, who began studying political economy, modern and socialist philosophy, and statistics,<sup>256</sup> and they contacted trade unionists in the Polish ZRP,<sup>257</sup> which had branches in Żyrardów, Łódź, Zgierz, Dąbrowa, Górnica, Sosnowiec and in the Russian provinces of the Pale.<sup>258</sup>

Several SD parties, including the SPD, were close to Russian Poland. Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs (The Social Democratic Party of Austria) was founded in 1889, and by 1890 it claimed 15,500 members. Czech SDs functioned as an autonomous part of the SDPO, as did Polska Partia Socjalno-Demokratyczna Galicji (The Polish Social Democratic Party of Galicia). Magyarországi Általános Munkáspárt (The General Workers' Party of Hungary) had adopted a programme anticipating the Erfurter Programm in 1880, and in 1890, with the help of the SDPO, it became Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt (The Hungarian Social Democratic Party).<sup>259</sup>

During 1890 around 150,000 Poles, including 60,000 textile workers, produced an average of 1,600 rubles' worth of goods.<sup>260</sup> Poland was home to 7.3 percent of the empire's population, but produced almost 20 percent of its cotton textiles, 25 percent of its steel, 40 percent of its coal and 42 percent of its linen. That year seven strikes had involved 10,400 inspected workers.<sup>261</sup>

In 1891 Jogiches took 15,000 rubles to Geneva and found Plekhanov addressing envelopes to make ends meet, while Pavel and Lyubov Axelrod sold buttermilk. The GOT eventually invited Jogiches to join them, but declined to alter their way of voting, disseminating literature and disbursing funds;<sup>262</sup> so Jogiches set up a press and printed SD literature in Russian,<sup>263</sup> including the Łódź and Warszawa workers' May Day speeches, with an introduction by Luxemburg.<sup>264</sup> That year 30 strikes in Poland involved 25,540 workers,<sup>265</sup> but neither Luxemburg nor Jogiches appears to have had any contact with the Proletariat survivors.

After the former head of the Russian police was assassinated by a Polish socialist in Paris, late in 1890, the police detained the Proletariat leader Mendelson for four weeks, then deported him and his wife to London,<sup>266</sup> where they regularly attended Engels' Sunday evening parties.<sup>267</sup> In summer 1891, at the Second International Congress in Brussels, Mendelson co-wrote a successful resolution which supported assimilation: 'We resolve that Yiddish-speaking workers have no other means of liberation than to fuse with the proletarian ranks of a given country.' Mendelson condemned the use of antisemitism in Poland as a cover for antidemocratic politics, and warned Jews about the dangers of separatism. The only solution, he argued, was to create a democratic socialist republic.<sup>268</sup>

In 1892 Mendelson led Proletariat's 'centre', and late that year he was one of eight leading members, plus four from the nationalist Zjednoczenie Pracowników (Workers' Unification), three from the Paris-based Gmina Narodowo-Socjalistyczna (The National Socialist Commune), one trade unionist from the ZRP and two with no affiliation who met in a Paris suburb. Most were over 20 and at least 12 had been born in Poland, and the fathers of six had suffered in the 1863-1864 uprising, but only two still lived there. A majority founded Polska Partia Socjalistyczna (The Polish Socialist Party) as 'the political organisation of the Polish labour class, struggling for liberation from the yoke of capitalism' to 'obtain power for the proletariat' in '*an independent Democratic Republic*', and they adopted Mendelson's programme.

1. Direct and equal suffrage by secret ballot;
2. Complete equality of the nationalities entering into the composition of the republic on the basis of a voluntary federation;
3. Community and provincial autonomy and the right to elect Administrative officers;
4. Equality of all citizens regardless of sex, race, nationality or religion;
5. Complete freedom of speech, press, and assembly;
6. Free court procedure, election of judges, and responsibility of officials before the court;
7. Free, obligatory, and universal education, with the state supplying student stipends.

The PPS wanted an eight-hour day for workers, a minimum wage, equal pay for equal work for men and women, the banning of child labour, freedom to strike and the gradual nationalisation of land and other means of production and communications. They claimed to represent all workers in Polish territories, but called for a

'unified political force' which included Lithuanians and Ukrainians. They established Związek Polskich Socjalistów za Granicą (The Union of Polish Socialists Abroad), adopted the émigré periodical *Razsvet* (*Dawn*) as their organ and asked its editors to send agents to Poland to build the party. The PPS would cooperate with Russian revolutionaries, given 'complete independence and equality', but expose the 'Russifying activities' of Jewish SD intelligenty in the Russian Pale. That year 12 strikes in Poland had involved 70,000 workers;<sup>269</sup> and Mendelson set off to try to recruit Jewish SDs in Vilnius.

## 5. On Agitation

### (i) Vilnius

Early in 1893 Mendelson recruited Józef Piłsudski to the PPS in Vilnius, and went on to Warszawa, where he met former Proletariat leaders and the representatives of the two main workers' organisations. In spring the PPS called its Vilnius members its 'Lithuanian Section', and Mendelson and Piłsudski tried to recruit Kremer and Kopelzon. They opposed Polish independence,<sup>1</sup> and recruited two Lithuanian intelligenty.

Alfonas Domasevicius was born in 1865 and Alfonsas Moravskis in 1868. Both came from Lithuanian gentry families, but spoke little Lithuanian,<sup>2</sup> and preferred Polish. In 1889 they met Kopelzon and veered away from SR politics. Moravskis studied at the universities of Kharkiv, Kazan and Kyiv, and in 1892 he went to Vilnius, contacted artisans, wrote socialist pamphlets and planned a political party. In 1893 the SD Sponti let him and Domasevicius lead artisan kruzki, but they failed to keep them together. Leonas Mikalauskas and Bronislavas Urbonavicius, students in their early twenties, used Polish socialist literature to teach Christian artisans, and stressed the struggle for civil rights and the need for kassy. Christians and Jews celebrated May Day and became aware of each other's existence for the first time, but the student propagandists were arrested.<sup>3</sup> When tailors asked for a 12-hour day, their employer fired the 'rebels', and when they called a strike, there were more arrests; but Kremer recalled that for him and other SDs 'the struggle for a "legal" workday opened our eyes'.<sup>4</sup>

There were 10,000 Yiddish-speakers in Vilnius,<sup>5</sup> and 300 artisans were in kassy.<sup>6</sup> Some intelligenty used Yiddish, and basic kruzok graduates attended 'upper kruzki'. They could not join the intelligenty kruzok, but one intelligent told the artisan Avrom Gordon that their programme was 'based on a few brochures' in Yiddish and was 'destroying all the culture in the movement!'

For several months now the highest workers' kruzki have been refusing to allow this. In order to put an end to this situation, the intelligenty last Saturday prepared in advance to get it through three upper kruzki. Alexandr [Kremer] was at two himself and the workers – against their will – had to vote for it. At the third was Liuba [Levinson] ... [who] did not get it through. It has been postponed ... till Alexandr ... will arrive with his sharp tongue and beat everybody down and all will give way. Then everything will collapse.

Gordon and his supporters spoke in workshops, distributed leaflets and forced the intelligenty to debate, but then often walked out. A 'small handful' of artisans supported the intelligenty, but they lacked Yiddish literature.

In Jassy, the capital of the Moldavian region of Romania, the Lumina group published a Yiddish paper, *Der Veker (The Awakener)*, while the Warszawa *Di arbeter shtime (The Workers' Voice)* argued that Polish, Ruthenian and Jewish organisations in Galicia should send delegates to decide when they should act together, and young SDs hectographed a Yiddish May Day manifesto. Piłsudski visited Vilnius and offered to supply western European socialist literature to the 'Jewish Socialist Comrades in the Occupied Polish provinces',<sup>7</sup> and when they agreed, Galician SDs sent *Der Arbeter (The Worker)* and let them use their press. Yiddish publications arrived in Vilnius from New York and London,<sup>8</sup> and the intelligenty built a Yiddish library,<sup>9</sup> including a translated Polish leaflet.

The worker gets home from work between ten and 11 p.m. or even later; he is tired, completely shattered, hardly able to hold his head up. It is cold and miserable where he lives and his exhausted children sleep like the dead. His wife, who has been slaving away all day just as much as he has, has also gone to sleep. He is left to lie down on his rough bed so that tomorrow he can set out once more.

The leaflet argued that winning a shorter day for the same pay would make bosses hire more workers and cut competition from the unemployed, so workers should petition the governor for a 12-hour day, and strike if necessary. 'To ensure that the workers can stop working immediately', 'hold firm and not be deflected from their demands', they had to 'recognise their common interests', 'develop mutual trust', 'form a union' and build kassy.<sup>10</sup> The SDs aimed to send propagandists to Russia, and a Jewish SD arrived from St. Petersburg.

### (ii) Tsederbaum

Alexandr Zederbaum was born into a watchmaker's family in Zamość, Poland,<sup>11</sup> in 1816.<sup>12</sup> His family was poor, but he was later apprenticed to a tailor, studied Hebrew literature and learned Polish, Russian and German. In 1835,

in Lublin,<sup>13</sup> he married Sima Tzederbaum,<sup>14</sup> who was 15,<sup>15</sup> and Joseph was born in 1839.<sup>16</sup> In 1840 the family moved to Odesa, and Alexandr worked as a bookkeeper, then ran a tailor's shop and helped to open a school for adults.<sup>17</sup> In 1860 he won official permission to publish in Hebrew,<sup>18</sup> and co-founded the weekly *Ha-Melits* (*The Advocate*), the first Hebrew periodical in Russia. In 1862 he published the weekly *Kol Mevasser* (*The Heralding Voice*), Russia's first Yiddish paper,<sup>19</sup> and in 1863 publishing in those languages became legal. *Ha-Melits* had fewer than 2,000 subscribers in 1865,<sup>20</sup> and though it later became a daily,<sup>21</sup> the government closed it in 1868.<sup>22</sup> In 1870 the Zederbaums moved to St. Petersburg, where Alexandr published the Russian weekly *Vestnik russkikh evreev* (*The Herald of Russian Jews*), but he ran out of money and it closed in 1871.<sup>23</sup>

Joseph had become secretary-general of the Russian Steamship Company in Constantinople, and had changed his forename to the Russian 'Osip'. He married a Sephardi Jewess,<sup>24</sup> Revekka Rosental, who had been born in Greece,<sup>25</sup> and Iuly was born in 1873. The children did not attend synagogue, and when the family moved to Odesa in 1878 they lived away from the Jewish community. In 1881, after the riot following the tsar's assassination, the family moved to St. Petersburg, and in 1887, after the failed assassination attempt on the tsar, they moved out to Tsarskoe Selo. Iuly attended the elite gymnasium, joined a democratic pupils' kruzhok, and sat in on discussions at home,<sup>26</sup> where his father spoke of 'martyrs of the Russian Revolution'.<sup>27</sup>

In 1889 Alexandr found a way around the residence restrictions so that Osip's family could move into St. Petersburg. Iuly read socialist works, and in 1890 a friend brought the *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii* and addresses of student revolutionaries from Switzerland. In spring 1891 Tzederbaum bought a wreath and organised pupils to attend Nikolai Shelgunov's funeral. He graduated that summer, read everything he could find about socialism and revolution in the public library, and his grandfather persuaded his Education Ministry contacts to ignore the University's Jewish quota.

In autumn Tzederbaum joined a student kruzhok and read illegal literature. Other students warned him about a spy who carried *Kapital* as bait, and told him that Struve was trying to link SRs and SDs.<sup>28</sup> Early in 1892 Stranden encouraged him to study Narodnaya volya literature, works by 1880s SDs and 1870s and 1860s radicals, and literature on the development of the empire's economy, particularly about the famine in the central black earth provinces and the migration of peasants to Siberia. Stranden was arrested in summer and the education minister barred Tzederbaum from the University, and from all others. Potresov told him he was going to Geneva, and S.A. Hoffman's father agreed to meet him on the German border near Königsberg and get him through customs.

Thanks to M.V. Vassilieva, Tzederbaum spent the summer in Kresty prison, where there were 150 'politicals', most of whom had been sentenced to two years. Krasny Krest was struggling to combat tuberculosis and suicides by finding fictitious fiancées to visit new prisoners, corresponding with their parents, keeping up morale, and trying to get those who could not cope with the harsh prison regime into hospital. Tzederbaum supplied books to the prison library, raised money, helped with preparations for trials, and discovered that the Poles were mainly workers who had joined Proletariat. After Tzederbaum read the French translation of *Das Kapital*, which had not been banned, his idea that famine would automatically bring about a revolution disappeared, and he acknowledged that his ideas were inferior to those of Marx.

In autumn Potresov and Hoffman returned with all the GOT's publications, German pamphlets, reports on SPD congresses and French and Belgian workers' literature, including works by Jules Guesde (the pseudonym of Mathieu Basile), Paul Lafargue, and Gabriel Deville, plus two books by Kravchinsky. Tzederbaum's home was beset by spies, but he, Hoffman, Vassilieva and two other students proclaimed themselves the St. Petersburg Gruppya osvobozhdenie truda (The Emancipation of Labour Group),<sup>29</sup> which aimed to 'strengthen the cadres of social democracy' by influencing SR intelligenty.<sup>30</sup> Potresov joined Tzederbaum's kruzhok, and he also joined Struve's kruzhok,<sup>31</sup> while Tzederbaum contacted a female SD.

Lyubov Baranskaya was born into a teachers' family around 1871, joined SR kruzhki in the 1880s and arrived in St. Petersburg in 1890 to study midwifery. She distributed illegal literature, spent time in prison in 1891 and led workers' kruzhki in 1893.<sup>32</sup> Tzederbaum's kruzhok got in touch, shared literature with her student kruzhok, learned that they led workers' kruzhki, and offered to help. Tzederbaum's kruzhok aimed to publish pamphlets and contact kruzhki in other cities, so they got a lithographic stone, a mimeograph and one of the scarce new typewriters. They decided to translate Guesde's *Le collectivisme* (*Collectivism*), Bebel's pamphlet on militarism and socialism, and Plekhanov's on the famine. At the beginning of December they approved Tzederbaum's preface to Guesde's pamphlet, which argued that SDs had to organise kruzhki, build a workers' party and bring about political liberty through revolution; but Tzederbaum was in prison when the pamphlet appeared.<sup>33</sup> In May the University expelled him, and he was barred from all higher educational institutions, and sentenced to two years' deportation without trial, so he decided to go to the 'Jerusalem of Lithuania'.<sup>34</sup>

Tzederbaum arrived in Vilnius in June.<sup>35</sup> Kremer was active, Liuba Levinson was popular with workers and Kopelzon liaised with intelligenty in Kaunas and elsewhere, but Gozhansky was under surveillance.<sup>36</sup> They did not

use real names, acknowledge each other in public, carry packages, go straight to a meeting, speak loudly indoors, ask unnecessary questions,<sup>37</sup> or write uncoded letters;<sup>38</sup> but they were 'convinced that once drawn into the social struggle' by 'everyday craft interests', the 'masses' would be ready for 'broader socio-political aspirations' and build an SD workers' 'movement'.<sup>39</sup>

The SDs asked Tsederbaum to lead a garment workers' kruzhek,<sup>40</sup> and he soon led four. He taught political economy, history and SD theory,<sup>41</sup> but while intelligenty saw artisans 'as men who had to move the whole working class' and were 'a tool in the hands of the revolutionary organisation', the artisans 'considered themselves as individuals who had overgrown the masses and created a new cultural milieu'; but they suffered from 'abstract utopianism', and 'class struggle was absolutely alien'. The 'unbridgeable abyss' between them and intelligenty frustrated Tsederbaum,<sup>42</sup> and 'real life kept interfering'. A worker would raise an 'event that had occurred in their factory', or 'someone from another workshop would appear, and we would have to spend the time discussing conditions there'.<sup>43</sup> Many artisans believed self-education was 'the alpha and omega of the socialist movement', and the idea that they 'ought to pick persons with agitational talents and equip them with that minimum of knowledge necessary to influence the masses' was 'unbearable'. SR biographies and novels influenced them more than GOT pamphlets,<sup>44</sup> and seamstresses could not relate their workplace experiences to the *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii*.<sup>45</sup> The 'average worker' was 'limited to a local and shop view', and many left the class 'whose collective self-consciousness they were supposed to express'.<sup>46</sup> Some tried to enter university by taking external examinations, but most of those in kassy, 'especially the women, avidly followed' Gordon's 'indictments' of the intelligenty,<sup>47</sup> and when they suggested agitation and kassy, workers accused them of wanting to keep them in 'intellectual subjection' and use them as 'cannon fodder'. Many learned Russian to compete for Russian customers, and some hired out relations and used sweated labour; but artisans who had been ruined by large workshops had three kassy.<sup>48</sup> Ten or a dozen 'agitators' in each of three secret 'boards' elected a committee by secret ballot, and Kremer linked them to the intelligenty, literature, funds and SDs in other cities.<sup>49</sup> Bialystok workers petitioned the governor for a 12-hour day, and a Gomel kruzhek went on strike.<sup>50</sup> Minsk workshop masters gave in to artisans' demands for a 12-hour day, rather than face a strike.<sup>51</sup> Many of the 400 revolutionaries known to the police were Poles and Jews,<sup>52</sup> and though the Vilnius SD kruzhek co-opted Tsederbaum,<sup>53</sup> they may have been unaware of developments in St. Petersburg.

### (iii) Babushkin

In the early 1870s the Vologda province peasant Vasily Babushkin held little land, so he worked in terrible conditions at a salt works to make ends meet. Ivan was born in 1873, but his father died in 1878, and his widow sent five-year-old Ivan out to beg, and by 1880 he worked in a relatives' shop and felt exploited. His mother took two younger children to St. Petersburg, and Ivan joined them in 1883. He worked in a dairy, but suffered inflamed eyes and beatings;<sup>54</sup> but in 1887 he became an apprentice at Kronstadt Torpedo Works, earning 20 kopeks a day for a six-day 72-hour week. 'Everything was discussed' in the toilets, where 'sensible workers' argued that terrorists defended workers' interests; and Ivan's socialist flatmate hated 'capitalists and minor parasites'.

In 1891 Babushkin completed his apprenticeship and got a job at Semyannikov Shipyard, where a workmate recalled others reading Narodnaya volya leaflets in 'out-of-the-way corners'. Early in 1893, just before knocking-off time one Saturday, the machinist Konstantin Langeld asked Babushkin if he was working on Sunday, and if he had any books. He had about a dozen, but did not understand them. On Sunday he visited Langeld and met his brother and a workmate. Langeld had become an SR after reading a Narodnaya volya leaflet that a stranger had thrust into his hands at the shipyard gate. He had been deeply religious, but now saw theology as 'socialism distorted by the modern priesthood', and had a printed leaflet that 'hurled abuse at the priests, the Tsar and the government'. It was 'a hammer blow' to Babushkin to hear 'there was no heavenly kingdom', but he was 'convinced it was necessary to do what the leaflet asked', even though he would probably 'end up on the gallows'; so they discussed 'ways and means of getting leaflets and books' to 'expand our knowledge'. Babushkin found nothing in the market, and asked a workmate, 'F.', what to read, but he wanted to know what he would do afterwards. 'Forbidden books, mostly from Narodnaya volya, began to appear', and young workers 'read them thoroughly, taking care, of course, that they did not fall into the wrong hands'. 'F.' got the treasurer of a workers' organisation to answer their questions, so they 'became connected with kruzhki of all kinds' and received more literature. When they asked 'F.' for his opinion of a Narodnaya volya leaflet, he smiled at the idea of assassinating the tsar, and encouraged Babushkin to read systematically. His squad was on piecework and sometimes worked 48 hours non-stop. Once they did 'a rush job' for 60 hours, 'stopping only to eat', and when Babushkin got home he read, but often fell asleep with his lamp still on, but he later woke and blew it out in case a policeman noticed.

On Sundays Babushkin joined a kruzhek near Nevsky Gate, and the intelligent 'P.I.' talked about the history of culture and class struggle. 'F.' kept the kruzhek library at his flat, but spies were watching him, so Petr Morozov, 'one of the best educated workers', packed 'about 15 books at a time round his body, walked past the spies quite safely' and hid them,<sup>55</sup> then left to meet the organised Polish trade unionists in Łódź.<sup>56</sup>

The six workers in Babushkin's kruzhek 'did not feel ready for independent work' until someone arrived who 'had much experience and was wholly devoted to the cause'. They knew that Vasily Shelgunov organised workers from the Pal, Maxwell and Thornton mills and Luhansk Railway workshop, and 'visitors' began arriving regularly. After 'F.' was arrested, Babushkin and Langeld 'had to think out questions for ourselves', and after Morozov returned, he was arrested too. Babushkin took the library to his flat, and though Langeld got legal second-hand books, they read little. A TRK contact at the Nikolaevsky Railway workshops joined the kruzhek, which was 'very informal', but Babushkin and 15 workmates knew that 'sheep could be separated from the goats' at the Kornilov School.<sup>57</sup> It taught 1,000 workers, but turned almost many away,<sup>58</sup> and several teachers were revolutionaries.

Praskovia Kudelli was born into a doctor's family in Ekaterinodar, but was raised by her stepfather, a colonel. She joined Narodnaya volya in 1879, and by 1893 the 44-year-old was a Bestuzhev student and taught at the Kornilov School.<sup>59</sup> Lidia Knipovich was born into a doctor's family in a Finnish village. She became an SR in the late 1870s, but was active in St. Petersburg by 1889, and by 1893 the 47-year-old considered herself an SD and taught at the Kornilov School.<sup>60</sup> One evening Babushkin wrote on the board that 'There will soon be a strike in our factory', but Knipovich told him that 'If you want to be a revolutionist you must not make yourself conspicuous'.<sup>61</sup> Kalmykova taught at the Obukhov steelworks school, where 'geography' lessons discussed factory workers' lives and exploitation.<sup>62</sup> She raised money for radicals, and her bookshop provided meeting rooms and sold illegal works;<sup>63</sup> but recent émigré publications were hard to come by.

The SD Voden had graduated from St. Petersburg University and by summer 1892 he had settled in Switzerland and befriended Plekhanov and Pavel and Lyubov Axelrod,<sup>64</sup> who was 24.<sup>65</sup> By spring 1893 Voden had earned enough by teaching mathematics in Lausanne to visit London. Plekhanov gave him letters for Engels, Kravchinsky and Bernstein, and asked him to copy 'extensive excerpts' from Marx's *Die Heilige Familie* in the British Museum to use in his polemics against SRs. Plekhanov insisted that 'when "we" come to power, of course, "we" would allow freedom to none but "ourselves"'. When Voden asked who 'we' were, Plekhanov replied 'the working class headed by comrades who correctly understood Marx's teachings', and the 'objective criteria for a correct understanding' was 'laid out "clearly enough"' in his own works. In London Engels asked Voden to explain the differences between SDs and SRs, and stressed the importance of working on Russia's agrarian problems from a Marxist perspective, rather than picking quotations from Marx or Plekhanov.<sup>66</sup>

The SD Klasson had graduated from St. Petersburg University in summer 1892 and visited the GOT in Switzerland. He returned to St. Petersburg, and Struve, Potresov and Krupskaya joined his SD 'salon' in 1893.<sup>67</sup> So did Anatoly Vaneev, a 21-year-old son of a Nizhni Novgorod civil servant, who was a Technological Institute student.<sup>68</sup> He led kruzhek at the Putilov and All-Russian Rubber Works, and Mikhail Silvin, an 18-year-old University student from Nizhni-Novgorod, led a New Admiralty Shipyard kruzhek.<sup>69</sup> Klasson recruited others.

Mikhail Tugan-Baranovsky was born into the family of a Lithuanian Tatar and a Ukrainian woman in a village near Kharkiv in 1865. He attended secondary schools in Kyiv and Kharkiv, then entered Kharkiv University. He became a revolutionary, and briefly met Alexandr Ulyanov at the commemoration of Dobrolyubov's death in St. Petersburg, late in 1886, but was deported. He graduated in 1888, but stayed on to study political economy, and married Lidia Davydova, the daughter of the leader of the Conservatory in 1889. He graduated in 1890, and studied in London's British Museum in 1891; but had joined Klasson's St. Petersburg kruzhek by 1893.<sup>70</sup>

About 90 percent of workers remained in the city all year, compared to the national average of 72 percent.<sup>71</sup> Most socialist workers kept their distance from intelligenty, and when Knyazev and Ilin begged Silvin for more intelligenty propagandists, none arrived.<sup>72</sup>

#### **(iv) The brother of the well-known revolutionary**

In summer 1887 17-year-old Vladimir Ulyanov got 'excellent' marks in every subject at Simbirsk gymnasium except logic, which was 'good'.<sup>73</sup> He had previously found Chernyshevsky's *Chto delat?* 'absolutely worthless and superficial',<sup>74</sup> but it had been Alexandr's favourite; so he re-read it, was 'deeply ploughed over',<sup>75</sup> and broke with religion.<sup>76</sup> The authorities criticised the school for giving a gold medal to the brother of a 'base criminal';<sup>77</sup> but after the headmaster, Fyodor Kerensky, praised Vladimir's 'unusual carefulness and industry', 'systematic thought' and the 'conciseness, clarity and simplicity of his exposition',<sup>78</sup> he was allowed to apply to Kazan University.<sup>79</sup> His father had left his mother 2,000 rubles and a house, and she had an annual pension of 1,200 gold

rubles and the rent from the Kokushkino estate, whose land was worth 3,000 rubles.<sup>80</sup> When Vladimir's application was successful she sold the house,<sup>81</sup> and moved the family to Kokushkino, 40km east of Kazan.<sup>82</sup>

Ulyanov read law and political economy, but he also joined the illegal Samara-Simbirsk zemliachestvo and contacted a kruzhok linked to Narodnaya volya.<sup>83</sup> Late that year news arrived that a Moscow University student had slapped the inspector's face and had been sent to a penal battalion for three years.<sup>84</sup> Other students had caused a disturbance, but two were killed, and the University was closed. In Kazan Veterinary Institute students demanded the right to meet and criticised the higher fees. The inspector and rektor promised that the police would leave them alone, but arrests began that night. A spy at the University reported that Ulyanov talked to the 'most suspicious students',<sup>85</sup> including Bogoraz, the 'notorious revolutionary',<sup>86</sup> and Ulyanov was one of the 99 students who returned their matriculation tickets.<sup>87</sup> He was arrested on 4 December.<sup>88</sup> His residence permit was withdrawn, and he was one of the three first year students among the 39 sent home,<sup>89</sup> three days later.<sup>90</sup> The local educational board subsequently received a report about Ulyanov.

He attracted attention by his secretiveness, inattentiveness and indeed rudeness. Two days before the riotous assembly he gave grounds for suspecting that he was meditating some improper behaviour: he spent much time in the common room, talking to the less desirable students, he went home and came back again with some object which the others had asked for, and in general behaved very strangely. And on December 4<sup>th</sup> he burst into the assembly hall among the leaders, and he and Polyansky were the first to rush shouting into the corridor of the second floor, waving their arms as though to encourage others ... In view of the exceptional circumstances of the Ulyanov family, such behaviour ... gave reason to believe him fully capable of unlawful and criminal demonstrations of all kinds.<sup>91</sup>

The regional education board acknowledged his 'outstanding abilities', but suggested that he 'cannot at present be considered a reliable person either morally or politically', and the Education Department in St. Petersburg confirmed that he could not return to Kazan University 'under any circumstances'.<sup>92</sup>

The Kazan police chief checked up on Ulyanov at Kokushkino,<sup>93</sup> where he read the SR economists Vorontsov and Danielson, Uspensky's poetry and radical journals.<sup>94</sup> He also re-read *Chto delat?*,<sup>95</sup> and Chernyshevsky's articles, and recalled that they 'completely transformed' his 'outlook'. They introduced him to 'philosophical materialism' and Hegel's 'role in the development of philosophical thought', while the 'dialectical method' and the attack on bourgeois economics made understanding Marx 'much easier' later on. He came to believe that Chernyshevsky was the 'most talented representative of socialism before Marx', since no other Russian revolutionary 'understood and condemned the cowardly, base, and perfidious nature of every kind of liberalism with such thoroughness, acumen, and force', and he showed that 'every right-thinking and really honest man must be a revolutionary' and the 'methods he should use'.<sup>96</sup> He wrote to Chernyshevsky, and was very disappointed not to get a reply;<sup>97</sup> but other educated young people in Kazan were on a similar path.

Nikolai Fedoseev was born into a senior civil servant's family in Nolinsk, Vyatka province, in 1871. He later attended Kazan gymnasium,<sup>98</sup> contacted Narodnaya volya students in 1885, formed a pupils' kruzhok and joined an intelligenty kruzhok led by Vasily Golubev, the deported St. Petersburg SD intelligent, in 1886. In 1887 Fedoseev took his final examinations and aimed to study the 'factory question',<sup>99</sup> but was expelled.<sup>100</sup> Censors banned references to 'Russian Marxists' in all publications, and writers had to refer to Chernyshevsky by way of 'Essays on Russian literature in the time of Gogol'; but the intelligent Pavel Skvortsov, who had named Marx in a legal journal,<sup>101</sup> helped Fedoseev to build a kruzhok in 1888.<sup>102</sup> He rejected terror, favoured a worker-peasant alliance, collected cuttings about Marx and SD ideas, and distributed synopses, reviews and his own bibliography of SD works.

Early in 1889 Kazan police noted that Ulyanov met 'politically unreliable' people,<sup>103</sup> including Maria Chetvergova, a Narodnaya volya veteran,<sup>104</sup> and Petr Maslov, an 'extreme terrorist'.<sup>105</sup> Members of Kazan kruzhki sometimes did not know of each other's existence, but Fedoseev's library included illegal works and his kruzhok published local items and illegal books.<sup>106</sup> Ulyanov found Fedoseev's bibliography 'the best reference book anyone had yet put together'.<sup>107</sup> He reportedly paid 15 rubles for *Kapital* Volume I,<sup>108</sup> and studied Darwin and British economists.<sup>109</sup> His mother bought an 80-hectare farm 350km away at Alakaevka,<sup>110</sup> for 7,500 rubles,<sup>111</sup> and hoped that Vladimir would become a farmer.<sup>112</sup> The family arrived in May. In summer Olga played *The Internationale* on the piano and Vladimir sang it with her;<sup>113</sup> but most peasants were illiterate and held two hectares, and five had none,<sup>114</sup> and his relations with them became 'abnormal'.<sup>115</sup>

In Kazan Fedoseev's kruzhok was translating Kautsky's *Karl Marx ökonomische Lehren* (*The Economic Teaching of Karl Marx*) and aimed to translate works by Marx and Engels.<sup>116</sup> Their programme argued for an alliance between peasants, workers and soldiers, and included theory, propaganda and methods of combat.<sup>117</sup> In summer Fedoseev was arrested,<sup>118</sup> along with 24 students and graduates. Six of the 20 who were aged 17 to 24 came from



clergy families, three were from the gentry, while three were Jews and two were dissident Old Believers.<sup>119</sup> Government ministers denied that they opened letters, but the Okhrana employed 49 post office clerks,<sup>120</sup> in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Warszawa, Kyiv, Kharkiv, Vilnius and Tbilisi, and they opened a 'black office' in Kazan.<sup>121</sup> Ulyanov was refused a foreign passport,<sup>122</sup> and in autumn the family moved to Samara,<sup>123</sup> where he met former Siberian exiles and deported SRs under police surveillance.

Alexey Sklyarenko was born in 1870, and attended Samara gymnasium in the 1880s. He was expelled,<sup>124</sup> but managed to become a civil servant,<sup>125</sup> but spent time in St. Petersburg's Kresty Prison, then returned to Samara. He worked as a clerk for a judge with 'advanced principles', befriended Mark and Pavel Elizarov, and led a kruzhok of young women students, seminarians and trainee medical assistants, and supplied 'semi-legal' literature, including Chernyshevsky.<sup>126</sup> In 1889 Sklyarenko and Ulyanov analysed Russian economic history and reportedly fly-posted revolutionary propaganda at night. Ulyanov also met Mikhail Sabunayev, who knew Kazan terrorists,<sup>127</sup> and the SRs A.I. Livanov and Nikolai Dolgov taught him 'conspiratorial' methods.<sup>128</sup> He set up a 'partly clandestine' library for his young contacts,<sup>129</sup> and was 'slightly infected with Marxist ideas'.<sup>130</sup> For decades police had taken statements from many people who had become revolutionaries 'after reading Chernyshevsky',<sup>131</sup> who had been allowed to live in Saratov,<sup>132</sup> but he died of malaria in autumn.<sup>133</sup>

In spring 1890 Ulyanov took law examinations at St. Petersburg University, and bought Engels' *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England* and his critique of Dühring, plus *Das Elend der Philosophie*, and *Die Neue Zeit*,<sup>134</sup> but went 'searching for a Marxist' in vain.<sup>135</sup> He and Sklyarenko toured the Volga region and visited the former home of the terrorist Nechaev.<sup>136</sup> Ulyanov translated the *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, but his sister Maria loaned it to a man under surveillance in Syzran, and his mother burned it when a raid seemed imminent.<sup>137</sup> In summer Ulyanov took more examinations in St. Petersburg University.<sup>138</sup>

His sister Olga had wanted to study medicine, but the government had closed the St. Petersburg Women's Medical Institute,<sup>139</sup> so she entered Kazan music school, but read *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England*, *Das Elend der Philosophie* and *Kapital*. In autumn she went to St. Petersburg to enrol on the Bestuzhev courses, and met Kornilov School teachers.<sup>140</sup> Zinaida Nevzorova was from a Nizhni-Novgorod teacher's family, and was 20,<sup>141</sup> as was Apollinaria Yakubova,<sup>142</sup> who was from a priest's family,<sup>143</sup> and had recently become a revolutionary.<sup>144</sup> In spring 1891 Olga died of typhoid in a second-rate hospital that Vladimir had chosen,<sup>145</sup> and he became 'grimly restrained, strict, closed up', but 'highly focussed'.<sup>146</sup> He got hold of GOT publications,<sup>147</sup> and met an SR.

Maria Yasneva was born into a poor civil servant's family in Kostroma province in 1861. In 1878 she worked with SRs, and by 1881 she was a schoolteacher and joined an SR kruzhok.<sup>148</sup> The police deported her to Samara in 1891,<sup>149</sup> but she had Dolgov's address,<sup>150</sup> and Ulyanov heard her talk about the 'seizure of power'.<sup>151</sup> She thought he was an 'extraordinary democrat', since he wore a peasant shirt of red cotton twill, with a belt, and was interested in her 'Jacobin-Blanquist' activities,<sup>152</sup> as starving peasants walked through the streets. Ulyanov completed his four-year law course in less than a year,<sup>153</sup> and received a first-class diploma late that year. In January 1892 Ulyanov received permission to work under surveillance as a junior barrister,<sup>154</sup> for Andrey Khardin, a Samara barrister of 'doubtful reliability' who was also under surveillance.<sup>155</sup>

Vasily Vodovozov, the son of a famous woman writer, had recently returned from exile in Archangelsk, and was politically unaligned,<sup>156</sup> but he had been a friend of Alexandr Ulyanov. When he visited Samara he found that Vladimir was the 'undisputed leader' of a kruzhok, though his 'Marxism was not a conviction, but a religion'.<sup>157</sup> Anna had married Mark Elizarov,<sup>158</sup> a minor local official, and Ulyanov befriended him and contacted Fedoseev.

Fedoseev had spent two and a half years in Samara prison, but was transferred to St. Petersburg,<sup>159</sup> and then to Nizhni-Novgorod, where he was released under surveillance but managed to build a student kruzhok. One member recalled that he 'attracted us like a magnet' and 'revolutionised our world outlook' to 'embrace Marxism'.<sup>160</sup> Fedoseev was sent to Vladimir,<sup>161</sup> under surveillance, but found revolutionary literature in the public library and continued translating Kautsky's book on Marx.<sup>162</sup> He argued that a 'Union with the workers of the West' was 'absolutely necessary', and Russians would 'learn a great deal'. Intelligently 'leaders of the working class' should not encourage strikes, but if workers went on strike they should point out the 'most important demands' and 'the necessity for a *lasting* union'. He quoted *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii*, and stressed that the 'economic emancipation of the working class may be achieved only by way of force, through the seizure of political power (state) and all the instruments and the means of production (capital) from the hands of owner-capitalists'.<sup>163</sup> Yakov Popkov, an Orekhovo factory foreman who was an SD and owned a copy of the *Manifest*, brought eight literate young workmates to meet Fedoseev, and he helped them to write a leaflet blaming the capitalists for the famine and the tsar for the cholera; but in autumn a student dropout asked Fedoseev to read his programme to Popkov's kruzhok and they were all arrested;<sup>164</sup> but another SD arrived in Samara.

Isaak Lalayants was born in 1870 and had been a member of Fedoseev's Kazan kruzhok from 1888 to 1889;<sup>165</sup> but on New Year's Eve 1892 an Austrian student betrayed Lalayants' kruzhok, and gendarmes rounded up 50 or

so. Early in 1893 most were freed under surveillance, pending trial, but Lalayants was deported to Samara.<sup>166</sup> Skvortsov's SD kruzhok included Ulyanov,<sup>167</sup> but the police confiscated a hectographed translation of the Erfurter Programm and *Die Neue Zeit*.<sup>168</sup> The kruzhok focussed on propaganda and agitation, and Ulyanov told Lalayants about their struggle with SRs, and complained about the lack of illegal literature, though they had summaries of Reichstag debates, more GOT publications than Lalayants had ever seen and several 'semi-legal' books and periodicals.<sup>169</sup> When the SR terrorist Apollon Shukht returned from Siberia, he influenced Ulyanov,<sup>170</sup> and caused friction with Sklyarenko and Lalayants.<sup>171</sup> In spring Ulyanov went to Nizhni-Novgorod and met the Moscow SD intelligent Sergey Mickiewicz, then went on to Vladimir,<sup>172</sup> where Fedoseev was in prison, but smuggled out an analysis of why the tsar emancipated peasants, and it passed from hand to hand back in Samara.<sup>173</sup>

Across Russia peasants had paid only 28 percent of their taxes the previous year,<sup>174</sup> and Skvortsov had shown that the peasantry had differentiated into 'poor-peasant-proletarians', 'middle peasants' and 'well-to-do peasants',<sup>175</sup> while the SR economist, Vladimir Postnikov,<sup>176</sup> argued that 40 percent of peasants in south Russia were poor, 40 percent were comfortably off and 20 percent were affluent. Ulyanov believed the world market was the 'fundamental cause' of peasants' problems, but an SR-inclined journal declined to publish his review of Postnikov's book.<sup>177</sup> Ulyanov had appeared as a barrister in 12 cases in Samara, and secured acquittals for two 13-year-old boys, but he had been unable to save a tailor from a year in jail since he had blasphemed and cursed 'the Emperor and his heir-apparent'.<sup>178</sup> In summer Ulyanov stopped working as junior barrister.<sup>179</sup>

His sister Elizarova worked as a teacher in Samara, wrote pamphlets, raised funds, and passed messages to and from her brother,<sup>180</sup> to and from SDs in St. Petersburg and elsewhere,<sup>181</sup> but she knew that Samara's *avant-garde* considered him too sure of himself and too keen on violence.<sup>182</sup> When Elizarova's deportation ended in 1893 the police barred her from St. Petersburg, Nizhni-Novgorod and Tver, so she and Elizarov went to Moscow, where she earned money by translating, but continued revolutionary work, and he became a manager for the Moscow-Kursk Railway.<sup>183</sup> Her mother sold the farm,<sup>184</sup> and when her son Dmitry entered Moscow University in autumn she settled there,<sup>185</sup> and Maria junior entered a gymnasium.<sup>186</sup> Ulyanov joined them briefly, then left for St. Petersburg.

Ulyanov worked for the liberal barrister, Mikhail Volkenshtein,<sup>187</sup> and Maria Golubeva (formerly Yasneva) introduced him to SRs.<sup>188</sup> He gave Skvortsov's letters of introduction to Silvin and Vaneev, who put him in touch with German Krasin, and the Technological Institute SD kruzhok interviewed 'the brother of the well-known revolutionary'.<sup>189</sup> He derided SR 'utopianism', since Russia was following the pattern outlined by Marx, and capitalism was ruining the peasants who capitalists hoped would become a home market;<sup>190</sup> but according to Starkov, he believed 'each method of struggle (including terror) could be good or bad, depending on whether it aided in the given circumstance in achieving the goal'.<sup>191</sup> The Institute kruzhok led 24 workers' kruzhki,<sup>192</sup> but did not invite him to join,<sup>193</sup> though Baranskaya led workers' kruzhki,<sup>194</sup> and Ulyanov met some Kornilov School teachers.

Sofia Nevzorova was 25.<sup>195</sup> She had arrived from a remote province where radical literature was unavailable, and there was nobody to guide her studies, so in autumn 1893 she had arrived in St. Petersburg to study on the Bestuzhev courses. Her sister Zinaida took her to her apartment on Vasilievsky Island, which she shared with Yakubova, and they told her about the Kornilov School. Late that year Zinaida told Sofia about a meeting involving Krzhizhanovsky, Starkov, Zaporozhets, Vaneev, Krasin, Silvin and Ulyanov, who had criticised an article by Krasin, and had suggested that they should debate theoretical issues. Silvin spoke first in the apartment of Lyubov Radchenko (formerly Baranskaya) and her husband Stepan, and Ulyanov insisted that they should focus on capitalist economics. At a later meeting in Zinaida Nevzorova's room he spoke about world markets, and convinced Krzhizhanovsky that someone who had not read *Kapital* three times could do no good. Reportedly few intelligently had read Marx, but while many got SD ideas from newspaper reports on SPD Reichstag speeches, the Okhrana thought that Ds would not become a serious problem for 50 years.<sup>196</sup>

By winter Olminsky and three more of the five SR intelligently at the Institute were wavering, and the SD kruzhok worked with the TRK. Fischer saw SD intelligently as 'the hand producing the match' and believed that they 'must have a complete worldview, a precise understanding of the workers' question', and be 'prepared to answer any question'; while the SR intelligently 'agitators' were the 'match that can ignite a powder keg' and 'must operate on the basis of instinct', but be 'able to incite the masses to action and if necessary lead them'. Fischer and Keizer studied *Kapital* with Starkov and Olminsky, Shelgunov with Krzhizhanovsky, and Krasin and Norinsky with Silvin and Vaneev. Silvin led Petr Keizer's New Admiralty Shipyard kruzhok, which met on Sundays in a room that 'conveyed the impression of the cultured, orderly way of life' of intelligently. They discussed workplace issues and the 'origins of things', and wanted to understand Marx and Engels 'in their entirety'. Yet the SD intelligently's ultra-conspiratorial methods limited their contacts, and the SR intelligently had the only illegal press in the city,<sup>197</sup> but they printed SD propaganda. Krupskaya recruited her Kornilov School colleagues

Yakubova, Lyubov Radchenko, Zinaida Nevzorova,<sup>198</sup> and Sofia Nevzorova.<sup>199</sup> Krzhizhanovsky recalled that they 'tormented' workers with *Kapital*, and could not get through Chapter 1,<sup>200</sup> but two legal periodicals were open to SD intelligently.

The government had allowed the SR Nikolai Mikhailovsky to return to St. Petersburg. He and other intelligently took over *Russkoe bogatstvo* (*Russian Wealth*) and employed the SRs Danielson and Vorontsov, while the SR Viktor Ostrogorsky founded *Mir bozhy* (*God's World*) and hired SRs and the SD Tugan-Baranovsky.<sup>201</sup> The failure of peasants to revolt during the famine had convinced many SRs that they were not the key revolutionary agency, and Mikhailovsky announced that he was no longer an SR.<sup>202</sup> Danielson believed bank credit and railways had helped St. Petersburg merchants control the grain market, while most peasants worked to the point of exhaustion and had to sell the grain they needed to eat over winter and use as seed-corn in spring to pay taxes in autumn. Yet all the landless and underemployed peasants could not become factory workers because undercapitalised industry could not penetrate foreign markets. All this caused the famine;<sup>203</sup> so the government should support cottage industry and the village commune to create a home market.<sup>204</sup> Struve argued that '*the development of capitalism*' was '*the first condition of the improvement of the lot of the Russian population*', while the 'social division of labour' would lead to 'an economically strong peasantry adapted to the money economy', and the 'proletarianisation of a significant part' of the peasantry would make Russia an 'agrarian-manufacturing state'.<sup>205</sup>

Vasily Shelgunov met Ulyanov late in 1893,<sup>206</sup> and in January 1894 Ulyanov visited his family in Moscow.<sup>207</sup> Golubeva took him to a students' soir e, but he did not realise the speaker was Vorontsov.<sup>208</sup> Ulyanov argued that the 'disintegration' of 'peasants and handicraftsmen' was the 'principal fact explaining our urban and large-scale capitalism, dispelling the myth that the peasant economy represents some special structure', while workers were 'the outer layers of the vast mass of peasants who derive their livelihood more from the sale of their labour power than from their own husbandry'.<sup>209</sup> A spy reported that 'a certain Ulyanov (almost certainly the brother of the Ulyanov who was hanged)' had 'made a spirited attack' on Vorontsov.<sup>210</sup> Mickiewicz, who considered himself an SD and knew Skvortsov and M. Grigoriev, a former member of Fedoseev's kruzhek, recalled that Ulyanov created an 'enormous' impression and people spoke about him as 'a new star on the horizon'. Ulyanov went on to Nizhni-Novgorod, and met Mickiewicz, who was spending his holidays tackling cholera in the suburb of Sormovo. Ulyanov gave him Elizarova's Moscow address, then visited Fedoseev, who was free under caution in Vladimir.<sup>211</sup>

In St. Petersburg Kalmykova now taught at the Kornilov School,<sup>212</sup> where 'geography' lessons discussed government, unions and revolution,<sup>213</sup> and 'history' was about revolutionary movements.<sup>214</sup> One of Krupskaya's pupils had been deported for telling a manager that by 'changing over from two mules to three the "intensity of labour" would increase'.<sup>215</sup> The police had noted Krupskaya's 'doubtful reliability';<sup>216</sup> yet when Zinaida Nevzorova and Yakubova invited her to a 'pancake party' at Klasson's flat, Ulyanov mocked the 'Committee of Illiteracy'.<sup>217</sup>

The TRK's Fischer had studied the first nine chapters of *Kapital* with Starkov,<sup>218</sup> but was dissatisfied, and Keizer had stopped attending his kruzhek because it was a waste of time.<sup>219</sup> The lathe-operators Shelgunov and Yakovlev led kruzhek at Obukhov steelworks and the New Admiralty Shipyard,<sup>220</sup> and the machinist Timofeev at the Baltic Shipyard was building a library, and I.V. Krutov, a 'well read' SR lathe-operator with 'not inconsiderable agitational talents', led debates in the 'worker's club', the toilets. He would 'unravel' Darwin's ideas, 'causing consternation', but usually, 'after attacking some weak point', his audience would 'scatter'. Fischer, Shelgunov, Keizer and Norinsky met SR and SD intelligently. The SRs Sushchinsky and Fedulov argued for agitation on economic and political issues and intervening in strikes, while the SDs Starkov and Krasin favoured propagandising on issues relevant to workers' lives. Norinsky felt that the SRs carried more conviction,<sup>221</sup> but Shelgunov recalled that the workers 'felt like "wildlife" hunted from two sides',<sup>222</sup> and they endorsed neither.

By spring Ulyanov had written a critique of SR economics and politics. Silvin and Vaneev printed and collated the sheets and sewed them up as pamphlets, and Vaneev took 50 copies for the Institute SD kruzhek. Ulyanov subsequently wrote a second notebook,<sup>223</sup> and reportedly a village priest near Vladimir hectographed it, but no copy has survived.<sup>224</sup> Ulyanov joined Radchenko's kruzhek,<sup>225</sup> but the police followed him.<sup>226</sup>

SR intelligently stopped the SD Takhtarev from leading a workers' kruzhek, and soon after around 20 TRK leaders, including Afanasev, who had returned from Narva illegally, invited SR and SD intelligently to Fischer and Keizer's room.<sup>227</sup> The SDs Krasin, Starkov, Stepan Radchenko and Nikolai Mikhailov, the 22-year-old dentist and son of a priest, argued that intensive education was the safest policy, but Takhtarev opposed agitation and favoured workers' self-education and trade unions.<sup>228</sup> SRs argued that 'the workers' cause must be a cause for the workers themselves', and intelligently had 'to devote all our efforts towards the creation of the cadres of the future workers' party'. Most TRK members wanted to be rabochy intelligently, and favoured the SDs, but agreed to let SRs lead kruzhek under TRK supervision.

The SR reinstated Takhtarev, but while SD intelligently were virtually unscathed,<sup>229</sup> most SR intelligently and 26 workers were arrested, but their press survived, and SD intelligently led surviving kruzhek.<sup>230</sup> When Klimanov left

prison he returned to the Putilov works, where he and Ivanov built *kruzhki* and agitated against wage-cuts. Though Klimanov was briefly detained. In summer managers announced a ten percent cut in rolling mill pay. The agitators used meal breaks to encourage the most angry and vocal to strike, and the managers capitulated, but Klimanov was briefly detained once again.<sup>231</sup>

Ulyanov offered Bruno Schönlonk's book about syndicates, cartels and trusts to Shelgunov, but he could not read German, so Ulyanov translated it for three hours. He asked how many workers like Shelgunov there were in the city, and he invited Ulyanov to a meeting. The entrance to Knyazev's room in the Petersburg district prevented his landlord from seeing his visitors, so the TRK met there, and someone told Knyazev that one of the best *kruzhki* leaders would arrive. On the day he opened the door and 'saw a man of around 30 with a little red goatee beard, a round face, a piercing look, with his cap pulled down over his eyes', and 'the collar of his autumn overcoat pulled up, even though it was summer'. 'Nikolai Petrovich' explained that he was late because he had come by an indirect route, then asked if everyone was present, greeted them and took off his coat. Knyazev told him where to sit and explained their plan of work. The man spoke 'seriously, precisely, thoughtfully, and did not permit any response'. He was easy to listen to, explained things they did not understand, and was unlike other intelligently, so they listened attentively for two hours. He responded to their questions, asked about their factories and the workers' political level and opinions, what they cared about, whether they understood socialist ideas and what they read. After they fixed the date of their next meeting, he left. He returned each week and visited other *kruzhki*, including one on Vasilevsky Island and another led by the worker P. Dmitryev.<sup>232</sup>

Fischer had studied Danielson's account of the post-1861 countryside with Ulyanov, but was arrested, as were Keizer and Norinsky. Fischer gave the Russian version of his forename, Genrikh, but the balance sheet of a workers' mutual aid fund was in his handwriting and he was challenged and possibly tortured. He explained 'everything that relates to my dealings' with SR intelligently, but also gave some information about SDs. (After eight months he was released, pending sentence, and returned to live with his mother.)<sup>233</sup>

Silvin and Vaneev had produced 50 more copies of Ulyanov's first notebook, and Ulyanov wrote a third.<sup>234</sup> He had visited Skvortsov and other SDs in Nizhni-Novgorod, then joined his family just outside Moscow.<sup>235</sup> He translated the Erfurter Programm,<sup>236</sup> and believed that Russian SDs 'must duplicate the miracle of the SPD'.<sup>237</sup> In autumn Vaneev reprinted Ulyanov's first notebook and Silvin printed the third as 'Edited by a group of provincial Social-Democrats'.<sup>238</sup> It argued that if people were to 'Scratch the "friends of the people"', at best they would find 'petty-bourgeois socialist ideas', whereas SDs 'unreservedly associate themselves with the demand for the complete restoration of the peasants' civil rights, the complete abolition of the privileges of the nobility, the abolition of bureaucratic tutelage over the peasants, and the peasants' right to manage their own affairs'. It was 'the direct duty of the working class to fight side by side with the radical democracy against absolutism and the reactionary social estates and institutions'. Winning 'general democratic demands' would 'clear the road to victory', and though 'political liberty will primarily serve the interests of the bourgeoisie', it would ease the 'conditions for the struggle' against them. Building a socialist workers party' required spreading Marx's ideas among workers, and SD intelligently had 'to make special leaders from among the intelligentsia unnecessary'.<sup>239</sup>

When Ulyanov read *Chto takoe 'Druzya naroda' i kak oni voyuyut protiv sotsial-demokratov* (*What the 'Friends of the People Are' and How they Fight the Social-Democrats*) to SD intelligently, Krupskaya recalled that 'Many of us knew nothing of Marx's works' except for *Kapital*, and worried about 'mechanicalness',<sup>240</sup> so they 'scrambled' for the 'Little Yellow Books' with their quotations from *Ein Beitrag zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*), *Das Elend der Philosophie*, *Die deutsche Ideologie* (*The German Ideology*), Engels' critique of Dühring and *Der Ursprung der Familie*;<sup>241</sup> but Vilnius SDs had a positive programme.

## **(v) Ob agitatsi**

Early in 1893 Proletariat's former leader Warszawski was released on bail from Warszawa Citadel and left for Paris,<sup>242</sup> while Marchlewski was deported and studied for a doctorate at Zurich University.<sup>243</sup> In summer Warszawski represented Warszawa socialists at the Second International Congress, and Plekhanov called the PPS the sole representative of Polish workers.<sup>244</sup> It had 200 members,<sup>245</sup> and its delegates smeared Luxemburg.<sup>246</sup> The Congress rejected her mandate,<sup>247</sup> and refused to recognise her group of 200 or so members.<sup>248</sup>

The PPS subsequently printed a programme in Switzerland,<sup>249</sup> and Axelrod argued that Russian workers should form a 'strong revolutionary nucleus', distribute socialist literature and link workers who were currently 'unaware of one another's existence'.<sup>250</sup> Warszawski, Luxemburg and Jogiches studied at Zurich University,<sup>251</sup> and formed Socjaldemocracja Królestwa Polskiego (The Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland) with Marchlewski. They would cooperate with Russian SDs,<sup>252</sup> but were wary of Vilnius SDs, and supported Avrom Gordon's criticisms in a

pamphlet that included the workers' May Day speeches.<sup>253</sup> The SDKP's *Sprawa robotnicza* (*The Workers' Cause*) reached Vilnius, but the SDKP leaders in Łódź were arrested,<sup>254</sup> and Marchlewski went to Germany and joined the left wing of the SPD.<sup>255</sup> Its candidates had won 1,786,700 votes, or 23 percent of those cast in the Reichstag elections, but 44, or 11 percent of the seats,<sup>256</sup> and trade union membership had fallen to 223,000.<sup>257</sup>

The PPS' Mendelson had returned to Poland, where he formed local sections, and shaped the movement's general position on the Jewish question, but he left the party late that year over ideological issues.<sup>258</sup> During 1893 the PPS had smuggled 167 pamphlets into Russia;<sup>259</sup> but after a Moscow representative of striking Vilnius tailors asked Warszawa SDs to lend them 30 rubles, they donated it, and asked for regular contact.<sup>260</sup>

By 1894 most Vilnius SD intelligenty and poluintelligenty led artisan kruzki using Yiddish,<sup>261</sup> but Tsederbaum used *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii* and focussed on the working class and the concentration of capital.<sup>262</sup> In spring Kremer wrote *Ob agitatsi* (*On Agitation*) in Russian, and Tsederbaum's preface argued that SD intelligenty had to relate to 'advanced workers' differently. 'The achievement of political power is the principal task of the struggling proletariat', but it 'can only be confronted with this task when the economic struggle demonstrates to it the clear impossibility of achieving an improvement in its lot'. The SD 'party' was responsible for 'political education and organisation' and 'determining when economic struggle became 'ripe' for political struggle with the 'minimum loss of resources', but workers must not wait for the bourgeoisie to win political freedom.

Kremer explained that agitation 'finds a class, organised by life itself', with 'a consciousness of the community of interests of all workers and their opposition to the interests of all others'. If SDs conducted 'constant agitation' on 'petty needs and demands', an 'alteration of the political system' was 'a question of time'.

The struggle aroused by such agitation will train the workers to defend their own interests, increase their courage, give them confidence in their strength, a consciousness of the need for unity, and ultimately it will place before them the more important questions ... The class struggle in this more conscious form establishes the basis for political agitation, the aim of which will be to alter existing political conditions in favour of the working class ...

We must choose the right moment to begin the struggle, we must know what methods of struggle are most appropriate to the particular conditions. Information of this kind requires constant contacts with the mass of workers on the part of the agitator, requires that he constantly interests himself in a particular branch of industry and follows its progress ... to ascertain the most keenly felt grievance in the life of the workers, to ascertain the moment when a particular grievance should be advanced, to know in advance all the possible ramifications. ... Knowledge of this kind can only be given by life: theory can and must only illuminate it for him.

SD intelligenty should not create a 'worker socialist intelligentsia, alienated from the mass', but 'tear' workers from 'abstract scientific positions' and convince them to 'immerse' themselves 'constantly in the mass, to listen, to pick on the appropriate point, to take the pulse of the crowd' and 'throw light on its struggle' and on 'conflicting class interests'. This would 'promote' individuals who were 'capable of becoming an object' of 'rational propaganda', and since capitalism forced workers to move, an 'organised workers' army' could agitate other workers and teach them 'to oppose exploitation with the strength of organisation'. Intelligenty should focus on 'uniting propaganda and agitation', and 'theory with practice', through 'agitational literature, suited to specific workplace conditions, and 'oral agitation' that would 'speak to the worker of his needs'.

Gozhansky's *A briv tsu agitatorn* (*A Letter to Agitators*) argued that intelligenty and rabochy intelligenty had to raise the political consciousness of the Jewish proletariat until it was 'prepared to attain its rights and defend them'.<sup>263</sup> The struggle would 'be conducted mainly by the city population'; but Jews faced racial oppression, so it was also a 'national' question, and the 'next logical step' was the 'colonisation' of Jewish groups elsewhere.<sup>264</sup> Gordon argued that the intelligenty were deserting 'advanced' workers,<sup>265</sup> but Shloyme arrived with SD literature and contacts.<sup>266</sup> In summer the SDs concluded that they had to 'increasingly stress all forms of national oppression' and 'the next logical step' was 'closer cooperation with Jewish workers' organisations in other cities'.<sup>267</sup> Gozhansky and the workers Abraham Baskin, Albert Zalkind and Shaine Segal went to Białystok, Pavel Berman to Minsk, and Shloyme, Lev Goldman and the worker Tsive Gurevich to Warszawa,<sup>268</sup> with Kopelzon. Aizenshtat and P.O. Gordon, a graduate of Vilnius Teachers' Institute, went to Odesa to revive a kruzok broken by arrests. Mikhl Frankfurt went to the Volga, and the bookbinder Moische Dushkan left to lead tailors and locksmiths in Katerynoslav.<sup>269</sup> Yakov Liakhovsky went to Kyiv, and Aaron Lure and others to Kharkiv University.<sup>270</sup> Kremer and 26-year-old Avram Mutnik stayed in Vilnius,<sup>271</sup> where they made manuscript copies of *Ob agitatsi*,<sup>272</sup> and sent them to SDs in Ivanovo and Tula, Silvin in St. Petersburg, Sponti in Moscow, Skvortsov in Nizhni-Novgorod, Nikolai Vigdorichik at Kyiv University and students in Odesa and Warszawa.<sup>273</sup>

Luxemburg, who edited the SDKP's *Sprawa Robotnicza*,<sup>274</sup> described the Vilnius SDs' policy as 'hundred percent separatism', and on a par with the PPS. Jewish socialists should not use Yiddish or form separate workers' organisations, but use 'the language of the population around them' and blend with the Christian working class.

'Every other road would only lead into a nationalistic swamp'.<sup>275</sup> She and 28-year-old Boris Krichevsky published a Polish translation of the Erfurter Programm, which reached Galicia,<sup>276</sup> and the SPD subsidised the publication of the PPS's *Gazeta robotnicza* (*The Workers' Paper*) in eastern Prussia. Luxemburg moved to Paris and borrowed 18 francs from SDKP funds to survive a few days, and needed 125 francs to print the next edition of the paper, but she knew nothing about Jogiches' transport network and could not decipher coded messages.<sup>277</sup> She and Jogiches met Shloyme and criticised the Vilnius SDs' 'PPS-ism in the Jewish street'.<sup>278</sup>

In Vilnius the former Proletariat intelligent Trusiewicz contacted trade unionists. He, Moravskis and Domasevicius distributed PPS literature, and Moravskis's kruzhek studied political economy from the labour theory of value to the Erfurter Programm, and merged with other kruzhek. Domasevicius recruited secondary pupils, and persuaded the Lithuanian paper, *Varpas* (*The Bell*), to publish SD literature, and the editors and SDKP intelligently called for a federation of Lithuania, Poland and other subject nations.<sup>279</sup> Moravskis and Domasevicius consulted about 20 of around 200 artisans in their kruzhek, which discussed workplace issues and SD theory, and they and Trusiewicz met Kopelzon and Gozhansky, but Moravskis and Domasevicius favoured cooperating with liberals. By autumn the SDKP had about 400 members,<sup>280</sup> but Związek Polskich Socjalistów za Granicą (The Union of Polish Socialists Abroad) supported the PPS. Most SDKP congress delegates were arrested and there were arrests in Żyrardów and Warszawa.<sup>281</sup> The PPS' Piłsudski did not distinguish between socialism and nationalism,<sup>282</sup> but smuggled a press to Poland and a mimeograph and Hebrew type to Vilnius. The PPS published *Robotnik* (*The Worker*), and though three CC members were arrested, Piłsudski escaped. That year the PPS had smuggled 738 illegal Yiddish pamphlets and 50 copies of *Der arbeyter* (*The Worker*) to Vilnius,<sup>283</sup> but the PPS and SDKP may have known nothing about the reception of the Vilnius SD programme in St. Petersburg.

Tsederbaum had visited St. Petersburg with *Ob agitatsi*, and it convinced the Technological Institute student SD Illarion Chernyshev.<sup>284</sup> Takhtarev was probably the only SD intelligent in the Nevsky Gate district, and TRK members usually operated alone, but over 20 kruzhek leaders met in Yakovlev's and Shelgunov's room to discuss a 'winter campaign'. They elected district leaders - Shelgunov for Nevsky Gate, Yakovlev, who worked at Siemens & Galske for Vasilievsky Island, Knyazev for the Vyborg district and Ivanov for the Narva Gate district. They discussed *Ob agitatsi*, but Stepan Radchenko refused to send propagandists, or waste time on 'struggles for boiling water' for tea, and Krasin argued that agitation was premature;<sup>285</sup> so Shelgunov asked Babushkin to host a meeting so that Nevsky Gate activists could begin 'systematic studies'. Babushkin recalled that the 'lecturer' began with *Kapital* and 'explained this science to us verbally, without notes, stopping often to ask for objections or start an argument' and 'encouraging us to justify our point of view'. Their discussions were 'very lively and interesting and accustomed us to speaking in public', and they were 'constantly amazed at the wisdom of our lecturer'. They 'joked that he had such a large brain that it had pushed his hair out',<sup>286</sup> but 'Baldie', as they called him,<sup>287</sup> irritated Yakovlev by reading aloud - 'I could read myself'.<sup>288</sup> The intelligent subsequently tutored Yakovlev,<sup>289</sup> and formed kruzhek of six workers. Only he knew their names, but he had appointed Krupskaya as his 'successor' in case of arrest.<sup>290</sup> She recalled that most intelligently lectured using Engels' *Der Ursprung der Familie*, but this one tried to 'grasp the life of the worker as a whole', link it to the 'structure of society' and make 'revolutionary propaganda' about how 'the existing order could be transformed'.<sup>291</sup>

The intelligent had given the workers 'lists of previously prepared questions' to 'make a closer study and observation of factory and mill life', so Babushkin 'found excuses to go into another shop to collect material, either by personal observation or, where possible, in conversation with workers', and he wrote 'data on hours and wages' until his toolbox was 'full of notes'. He had kept in touch with the intelligent 'P.I.' and one Sunday Kornilov School teachers invited him, Langeld and three or four other workers to their room. Later they showed them pictures of famine-stricken areas, and reading 'Cannan' (Kennan) made a 'profound impression'. There was 'intense activity in the sense of mental development; every minute was precious, every hour we were not at work was defined and allocated beforehand; our whole week was strictly apportioned'.

After Langeld was arrested, Shelgunov 'told' Babushkin 'to attend a general meeting' in a worker's home. He and two other Nevsky Gate activists joined a dozen 'leading workers' and one or two intelligently, and used numbers, not names. Nobody had elected Babushkin, and he did not speak, but they all agreed to form a 'Central Worker' fund and elected a treasurer and two 'responsible officials'. Back at work, when Babushkin refused overtime, workmates who suspected he had illegal literature asked him to 'tell them something interesting'.<sup>292</sup>

By late that year Babushkin and survivors of Funtikov's kruzhek had built at least ten kruzhek in the Nevsky Gate district, including one at Obukhov steelworks.<sup>293</sup> When Knyazev needed legal advice, TRK comrades sent him to a junior barrister, who turned out to be the lecturer. He told Knyazev that kruzhek leaders had to know about the situation in factories more than others, and read more, and he asked Knyazev how he would conduct himself if he was arrested. Soon after rudimentary leaflets circulated in large factories, but all five members of Knyazev's

Vasilievsky Island kruzhok were arrested, and he was subsequently deported to Vyatka province,<sup>294</sup> but *Ob agitatsi* reached Moscow.

#### **(vi) Moscow Workers' Union**

By 1894 the SD intelligenty Mickiewicz had returned to Moscow. Martyn Mandelshtam, Elizarova and the four other members of the SD intelligenty kruzhok gave him valuable contacts, including a railway worker who had contacts with others, and the address of Sponti in Vilnius, and when Ulyanov visited Moscow Vinokurov told him that the intelligenty kruzhok intended encouraging workers' kruzhki to propagandise and agitate.<sup>295</sup>

Alexey Ganchin was 24. He had graduated from St. Petersburg Technological Institute, joined an SD kruzhok, moved to Moscow, worked with the TRK and produced illegal literature.<sup>296</sup> In spring Moscow's Maslennikov brothers joined the St. Petersburg Institute SD kruzhok and told Ganchin that they would publish Ulyanov's first notebook against SRs in Moscow, but the typographer retrieved the type because he feared the sack.<sup>297</sup> Mickiewicz brought a copy of *Ob agitatsi*,<sup>298</sup> and Sponti wrote a leaflet in which two employers discussed workers' gullibility, but worried about the influence of foreign workers' demands. In another leaflet a worker overheard a factory inspector telling an employer to pay more on Sundays and reduce the weekday rate, but the worker fought back, and Mandelshtam's leaflet for a machine-building works called for a union, a fund and a strike.<sup>299</sup>

After a successful May Day campaign several kruzhki formed Moskovsky rabochy soyuz (The Moscow Workers' Union).<sup>300</sup> SD intelligenty contacted factory workers in the city and surrounding district, put in agitational leaflets and there were strikes. Ulyanov visited Moscow and met Ganchin and the Maslennikovs, and gave Mickiewicz a copy of his first notebook. Ganchin contacted a typographer in Iuriev-Polski, Vladimir province, but he feared that stolen would be missed and refused to print it. By summer Ganchin had a lithographic stone, and V. Maslennikov procured a typewriter, black ink, a roller, paper and other items. They failed to duplicate the notebook in Ganchin's father's house in Vladimir, so one of the Maslennikovs returned to Moscow, bought a hectograph and made 100 copies, then they went to Ganchin's father's house in Moscow and produced more with blue ink.<sup>301</sup>

Moscow SDs sent copies of *Ob agitatsi* to Ivanovo and Nizhni-Novgorod,<sup>302</sup> with agitational leaflets, and while some Nizhni-Novgorod intelligenty 'disagreed sharply' about demoting political struggle, most gave the leaflets to workers who read them to workmates.<sup>303</sup> One listed factory inspectors' abuses and advocated a strike.<sup>304</sup> Ulyanov's third notebook appeared,<sup>305</sup> and a man called Moguiliansky produced 20-25 copies of it in Chernihiv province.<sup>306</sup> The Okhrana opened a 'black office' in Nizhni-Novgorod,<sup>307</sup> and spies were active in Moscow, St. Petersburg, the Baltic provinces, Ukraine and Siberia,<sup>308</sup> but those in Moscow needed further training.

Evstraty Mednikov was born into a peasant family, but became a junior cavalry officer and then joined the Okhrana in Tambov. In 1894 he was transferred to Moscow,<sup>309</sup> and began training 30 men to spy on intelligenty and workers' kruzhki.<sup>310</sup> He divided those who passed tests of physical endurance, memory, sight and smell into groups of seven or eight, and told them to send daily reports to the surveillance section at the St. Petersburg headquarters, which annotated them and passed them to the Identity Section.<sup>311</sup> Zubatov rejoiced when Eugenie Gurovich 'cracked'. 'She complains that on reading Bernstein, the opponent of Marx, her head began to swim and she felt her whole mental outlook splitting at the seams'.<sup>312</sup>

At some point that year male strikers at Moscow's Tsindel Mill locked female strike-breakers in the barracks,<sup>313</sup> but had been defeated.<sup>314</sup> Late that year Mickiewicz and Sponti used a small manual press to print a leaflet that advocated struggle against capitalism and the tsar.<sup>315</sup> The police knew SD propaganda was 'finding a favourable ground' among workers and 'almost exceeds the propaganda of all the remaining revolutionary factions'. When workers planned a strike in solidarity with St. Petersburg workers,<sup>316</sup> the police closed Mickiewicz's kruzhki and A.I. Smirnova's women's kruzhok,<sup>317</sup> and arrested Vinokurova,<sup>318</sup> and Vinokurov, who was now an SD.<sup>319</sup> Sponti and Mandelshtam recruited other SD intelligenty,<sup>320</sup> and produced a leaflet describing successful struggles in the region.<sup>321</sup> The worker Prokovev's kruzhok was 'without leaders', and 'groaned and sat around as at a funeral', but others survived, so they decided to 'hold out and continue the work ourselves'.<sup>322</sup> Vinokurov was later deported:<sup>323</sup> Ganchin was deported to Vyatka for three years, and Mickiewicz was to spend three years in prison and three more in exile in Yakutsk.<sup>324</sup>

#### **(viii) Nikolai the Last**

During the 1880s gentry in 45 European provinces had sold over nine million hectares, and peasants leased up to 54 million more. In 1893 the government's annual revenue income was 1.06 billion rubles, and it invested 55

million in railways.<sup>325</sup> It had borrowed 3.39 billion French francs since 1889,<sup>326</sup> but in spring 1894 the Reichstag approved a commercial treaty with Russia,<sup>327</sup> including a ten-year tariff arrangement,<sup>328</sup> and reduced the import tariff on Russian grain from 50 to 30 percent. For years the Reichstag had agreed large increases in the German army and navy, and reduced the length of service and agreed to debate army strength every five years, rather than every seven; the Russian and French governments agreed a military convention.<sup>329</sup>

Most of the Russian government's major financial transactions took place in Berlin, and the finance minister converted domestic loans into foreign ones and released a billion rubles for investment.<sup>330</sup> That year the government's revenue income was 1.17 billion rubles, and it invested 60 million in railways,<sup>331</sup> but Russian rails cost three times as much as those from Finland,<sup>332</sup> and the government had paid about ten million rubles extra.<sup>333</sup> It owned 53 percent of the 32,000km network,<sup>334</sup> and had introduced incentives for long hauls and a lower tariffs for agricultural exports, and 15 percent of grain went abroad.<sup>335</sup> In five years the government had financed over 4,500km of railways,<sup>336</sup> cut passenger fares, let factory workers have a five-year passport, in spite of tax or redemption arrears, if the commune agreed, and freed peasants from needing a passport to work up to 50km away.<sup>337</sup> A two-thirds majority, not unanimity, was now required for the repartition of commune land,<sup>338</sup> but there were almost 2.5 million waged agricultural labourers.<sup>339</sup> World prices for grain plummeted,<sup>340</sup> and gentry sold more land.<sup>341</sup> Around 1.3 million peasants from Nizhni-Novgorod, Kaluga, Yaroslavl, Vladimir and Kostroma provinces, or 14 percent of the rural population, worked away from their villages for wages,<sup>342</sup> and 16 percent of the empire's population now lived in towns and cities.<sup>343</sup>

St. Petersburg's 36,000 metalworkers and 27,000 textile workers formed 6.4 percent of the inspected proletariat, but they produced 11 percent of national output in 1894.<sup>344</sup> Some equipment at the Putilov and Obukhov works was 50 years old, but many Russian plants were newer than those in western Europe,<sup>345</sup> including four major ironworks in the south; and that year pig-iron and steel production accounted for 90 percent of domestic demand.<sup>346</sup> Foreigners owned around a quarter of Russian industrial capital, and in five years annual production had averaged 1.09 million tonnes of pig-iron and over 700 million tonnes of coal. In 1894 textile mills consumed 164,000 tonnes of raw cotton, and almost three quarters of weavers working in mills employing over 100 were in workforces of 1,000 or more.<sup>347</sup> Tariffs accounted for 33 percent of the value of imports,<sup>348</sup> but the finance minister had raised the tariff on imported cotton to protect growers in Turkestan.<sup>349</sup>

The 9,243 gendarmes included 693 officers.<sup>350</sup> Officially the Justice Ministry had prosecuted 919 and sentenced 679 without trial that year,<sup>351</sup> gendarmes dealt with 559 and courts martial with three. Between them they exiled 21 to Siberia, deported 34 and expelled five foreigners, while 244 were under surveillance, 29 in detention and 156 in prison,<sup>352</sup> and 56 state criminals had been sentenced by imperial decree. There were over 100,000 exiles, but there were clandestine political networks across Siberia. The playwright Anton Chekhov had visited Siberia and published articles in the liberal Moscow monthly *Russkaya mysl* (*Russian Thought*), and public opinion was turning against the exile system, and convicts on Sakhalin Island who completed their sentences were allowed to return to the mainland, and 200 did so.<sup>353</sup> The tsar let exiled Poles leave Siberia and live in European Russia, and he amnestied those guilty of minor offences; but while the interior minister could present exiles' petitions, he did not have to do so.

The education minister could close lectures, libraries and reading rooms, and censors had banned 250 works.<sup>354</sup> In 1893 65,500 girls had enrolled at gymnasia, but in 1894 62,900 boys did so - 2,900 fewer than in 1881 - and 56.4 percent were from noble families,<sup>355</sup> though Jewish schools in the Pale had over 95,000 pupils.<sup>356</sup> Twenty percent of university students received 35 rubles a month from their parents, or barely enough to get by, while 25 percent received less than 25 rubles, and 25 percent got nothing; but a St. Petersburg charity provided free meals.<sup>357</sup>

SR journals had rejected Struve's articles, but he spent 19 days in jail because he was suspected of belonging to a revolutionary organisation.<sup>358</sup> He financed *Kriticheskiye zametki k voprosy ob ekonomicheskoy razviti Rossii* (*Critical Remarks on the Question of Russia's Economic Development*),<sup>359</sup> and 1,200 copies sold in weeks.<sup>360</sup> Reportedly radicals fought for it and every minister had a copy on his desk. Struve accepted 'certain propositions' of Marx,<sup>361</sup> but denied that the impoverishment of the working class and the collapse of capitalism were inevitable,<sup>362</sup> and criticised the 'one-sidedness' of 'historic-economic materialism'.<sup>363</sup> 'Technical backwardness, not capitalism', was 'taking away the peasant's daily bread', so the government should support the 'strong peasant' and large-scale industry.<sup>364</sup> 'Let us confess our cultural backwardness' and 'learn from capitalism'.<sup>365</sup>

Earlier in 1894, after anarchist demonstrations in Paris, the French government had expelled Zasulich and Plekhanov, and they moved to London, though she spoke no English.<sup>366</sup> Late that year Potresov took them a copy of Struve's book, and found that Plekhanov had written a critique of SR politics,<sup>367</sup> which insisted that Russia had a capitalist future. He agreed to let Potresov publish it in Russia,<sup>368</sup> under the pseudonym of 'Beltov'.<sup>369</sup> *K voprosu o razvityi monisticheskogo vzgliada na istoriyu* (*On the Development of the Monistic Conception of History*) was on



sale in St. Petersburg by New Year's Eve, and the 3,000 copies sold out in three weeks, but censors banned a reprint.<sup>370</sup> Engels had published Marx's *Das Kapital* Volume 3 in Germany, which noted that 'the economic basis of Asiatic production quite untouched' in Russia, and Engels believed the book by 'Beltov' was 'to the purpose'.<sup>371</sup>

Late in 1894 the tsar died of liver disease caused by alcoholism.<sup>372</sup> During his reign 5,851 people had been convicted for being connected to Narodnaya volya: 5,482 were sentenced without trial to short periods of deportation or exile, under police surveillance, while 342 were given prison sentences or sentenced to katorga, and 27 were executed.<sup>373</sup> Soon after his son spoke to an assembly of 600 noblemen.

[I]n some zemstvo assemblies, the voices of persons who have been carried away by senseless dreams of the participation of zemstvo representatives in the affairs of internal administration, have been heard. Let it be known to all that, while devoting all my energies to the good of the people, I shall maintain the principle of autocracy just as firmly and unflinchingly as did my unforgettable father.<sup>374</sup>

After delegates boycotted a ceremony next day, the tsar barred liberal Tver gentry from court.<sup>375</sup>

Boris Goldman, the son of a Vilnius clerk,<sup>376</sup> recalled that Struve's book helped him to popularise Marx's ideas with St. Petersburg students, and the book by 'Beltov' enabled him to convert 'a rather large group' to an SD perspective.<sup>377</sup> Ulyanov and Struve first met in Klasson's flat to discuss it. Struve wrote most of an anonymous 'open letter' to the tsar, and Potresov and others hectographed and distributed it. It argued that if an 'ignorant and inexperienced' autocrat 'depends on completely silencing the public' and 'a permanent enforcement of the supposedly Temporary Emergency Defence Act', the autocracy would be 'digging its own grave'.<sup>378</sup> The new tsar became known as Nikolai Posledniy (Nikolai the Last).<sup>379</sup>

## 6. Unions

### (i) Ukraine

Iuvenaly Melnikov was born into a minor civil servant's family in a Chernihiv province village in 1868.<sup>1</sup> In the 1880s one of his sisters was expelled from the St. Petersburg Bestuzhev courses, and another was exiled to Siberia. Iuvenaly became a metalworker and an SR, but the police spotted him, so he went to Kharkiv in 1887. He got a job in the railway workshops, joined a kruzhok and by 1889 he had read *Kapital* and opposed terror, but was one of the kruzhok's 'most active and sophisticated' members, so he was sent to build a kruzhok in Rostov-na-Donu railway workshops. An intelligent betrayed him, but he met the SD intelligent Brusnev in a St. Petersburg prison, and he persuaded Melnikov to go to Kyiv after he was released.<sup>2</sup>

By 1891 most Polish students at Kyiv University were SDs or members of the PPS, and some of the 25 kruzhki included Poles deported from Warszawa.<sup>3</sup> Two doctors led SD kruzhki,<sup>4</sup> while Yakov Liakhovsky, the son of Vilnius artisan,<sup>5</sup> and Boris Eidelman, who was also from Vilnius, led a university SD kruzhok.<sup>6</sup> The authorities had granted licences to Jewish shopkeepers, but then 1,000 police confiscated their stock, fined them 1,300 rubles apiece and their assistants 600 rubles, and ordered their families to leave in 32 hours.<sup>7</sup> At Passover Moscow authorities expelled two-thirds of the city's Jews,<sup>8</sup> and Cossacks escorted 30,000 to the Pale,<sup>9</sup> but no Jews could settle within 50km of the German border, allegedly to prevent smuggling.<sup>10</sup>

There were around 2,500 railway workers in Kyiv,<sup>11</sup> and in the winter of 1892-1893, when Melnikov was freed, he went there. He taught artisans and workers to be metalworkers and they found jobs and recruited workmates. SR and SD intelligentsy argued about propaganda, agitation and organisation, and discussed legal papers and distributed books, but few wrote in a way that workers could understand. Early in 1894 a Kyiv SD translated the Erfurter Programm and wanted to form a workers' party to overthrow the autocracy. He was ready to 'assist all honest and sound attempts to combat the existing political system, no matter what party makes them', in the 'purely workers' cause of the economic struggle against capital'. SD intelligentsy should 'renounce' propaganda and 'political conspiracies', which 'weakened the working class and demoralised it' by turning the 'more outstanding personalities' into 'intellectuals'. The police knew of 100 'organised worker revolutionaries', but only 20 attended the first May Day meeting. A railway workers' kruzhok linked to the PPS merged with Melnikov's, and built funds for propaganda and agitation. When they threatened to strike, managers conceded.<sup>12</sup> Many of Ukraine's 700,000 Jews spoke Russian,<sup>13</sup> and Eidelman helped Melnikov lead workers' kruzhki. SD intelligentsy taught theory and the Pole Edward Pletar published agitational leaflets.<sup>14</sup> Most members of Melnikov's school and Rossyskaya gruppа sotsial-demokratov (The Russian Group of Social Democrats), were Russians, Poles and Jews, and few were Ukrainians. Thirty years earlier there were 1,200 higher education students in Ukraine, but by 1895 around half of the 5,000 at Kharkiv, Kyiv and Odesa universities were sons of townspeople, clerics and professionals.<sup>15</sup> Kharkiv SDs had contacts in most Kyiv factories and large workshops. The student Vigdorichik, the 'main pen', brought in typesetter Albert Polyak;<sup>16</sup> and the GOT had contacts in Kyiv and Odesa.<sup>17</sup>

David Goldendakh, the son of a Jewish father and a Russian mother, was born in Odesa in 1870. In 1885 he became an SR at secondary school, but was expelled for 'hopeless inability' in 1886.<sup>18</sup> By 1887 40 percent of the city's factories belonged to foreigners, 25 percent to Russians, and 35 percent to Jews, which produced 57 percent of the value of the city's annual output and dealt with half of all exports, including 70 percent of the grain.<sup>19</sup> By 1889 Goldendakh had read widely in world history, political economy, philosophy, sociology and the history of socialism and revolutionary movements.<sup>20</sup> He went abroad, met Russian SDs,<sup>21</sup> and considered himself an SD when he returned to Odesa.<sup>22</sup> In 1890 Khaim Ginzburg and Mikhail Morozov returned from St. Petersburg University and led kruzhki of Jewish and non-Jewish intelligentsy; but the city authorities noted that Marx's ideas were receiving 'special attention' and the police made arrests.<sup>23</sup> Goldendakh faced five years in prison,<sup>24</sup> but escaped in 1891,<sup>25</sup> and went to work with the GOT in Switzerland, then on to Paris. He returned to Odesa with SD literature and found young Jewish intelligentsy leading weekly kruzhki of around 20 workers focussed on their own and peasants' oppression and the 'harmfulness' of state institutions.<sup>26</sup> Border gendarmes arrested Goldendakh that autumn,<sup>27</sup> but his library survived and the students Iury Nakhamkes and Grigory Tsyperovich led workers' kruzhki.<sup>28</sup> By 1892 Odesa's population was over 340,000, but 55 percent had been born elsewhere,<sup>29</sup> including 62 percent of the 140,000 Jews. The famine drove peasants into the city's factories, which employed 10,000 by 1893,<sup>30</sup> and late that year some SD intelligentsy considered agitating for strikes.<sup>31</sup> Early in 1894, though Nakhamkes, Tsyperovich and dozens of workers were arrested,<sup>32</sup> tobacco workers and dockworkers went on strike.<sup>33</sup> Boris Okolsky and Anton Boreisha, who were from gentry families, and Ivan Iukhotsky, a railway guard,

had been SRs, after they read Marx and Plekhanov they organised 200 workers. Early in 1895 Nakhamkes and Tsyperovich left prison, contacted Jewish secondary pupils and Goldendakh's former kruzhek, and led kruzhki machinists, sailors, stokers, builders, and factory and railway workers. Nakhamkes was Jewish, but he and Tsyperovich feared that Jews might alienate non-Jews and that women might violate the rules of conspiracy, so they barred both from Yuzhnorussky profsoyuz rabochikh (The South Russian Workers' Union), which argued that the 'struggle for economic interests' was 'impossible without political freedom'. After more Jewish SDs arrived from Vilnius, the men agitated 1,000 building workers to petition the governor to limit the working day to 12 hours, and the women agitated Jewish seamstresses to build kassy, and Moise Vinokur's kruzhek used Russian, Yiddish and Polish literature. On May Day a building worker organised a strike against oppressive subcontractors and another spoke about international class solidarity and the struggle for political freedom. Vinokur was arrested, but metalworkers and artisans built kassy and intelligently linked kruzhki and contacted other SDs.<sup>34</sup> The city Prefect believed the city was 'the main hotbed of sedition' in Russia,<sup>35</sup> and there was unrest in the Donbass.

luzovka's population had grown from 15,000 to 20,000 in the three years to 1892,<sup>36</sup> and that summer, after officials tried to persuade a Russian woman to enter a cholera barracks for treatment, a drunken Russian worker claimed that Jewish doctors from Rostov-na-Donu were going to poison workers. Around 30 or so people heard him, the crowd grew to around 200, and some attacked Jews' shops, but that evening the provincial vice-governor arrived with troops and took 100 prisoners. Next morning some Russians agitated and attacked the ironworks' offices, but workers and Cossacks drove them away. Other workers attacked the jail, trying to release prisoners, and 15,000 people, including miners, attacked Jews' property. The police chief had 16 constables,<sup>37</sup> but rioters ravaged 180 shops, 12 taverns, seven residential buildings and a synagogue, causing around 1.5 million rubles' worth of damage,<sup>38</sup> and killing almost 100 Jews. The interior minister sent coded telegrams to officials. 'In the event of disorders, recommend on-the-spot flogging' and 'punishment of the leaders in jail'. The provincial vice-governor ordered 497 floggings, but a Kharkiv official objected, since luzovka people lived in 'stifling, filthy, crowded sheds, stables, and cellars, from which cholera victims had been evacuated'. In the event 176 men and 14 women were flogged,<sup>39</sup> and four of the 66 rioters faced execution, but the authorities commuted that to life in prison.<sup>40</sup> Subsequently half the New Russia Company's miners left the region, and no coal was shipped for months,<sup>41</sup> until 1,200 workers, including 1,000 'Tatars' (Azerbaijani Turks) arrived from Kazan. Each day 100 wagonloads of dry garbage and 25,000 litres of excrement and liquid waste were removed from luzovka's streets, and a new garbage dump and reservoir were built. That year 1,141 Donbass workers had had cholera and 234 of the 524 metalworkers died. By 1893 there fewer than 5,000 of the former 6,750 metal workers and 13,000 of the 22,000 miners,<sup>42</sup> yet the chief of gendarmes noted that 'disorders' were 'repeated annually to a greater or lesser extent'.<sup>43</sup> In 1894 Belgian and French investors bought the Makeevka mine, which produced 326,000 tonnes that year. The region now had 32,500 miners,<sup>44</sup> and railways carried away over 1.1 million tonnes of coal,<sup>45</sup> out of a national total of 4.9 million tonnes, while the 540,000 tonnes of pig-iron outpaced the Urals ironworks.<sup>46</sup> By 1895 only the Putilov metalworks in St. Petersburg had a larger workforce than luzovka's ironworks,<sup>47</sup> and 2,000 miners at the Verovka mine, which cost its Belgian owners three million rubles, dug 32,000 tonnes a month.<sup>48</sup> Cossacks ended a Nikitovka miners' strike with flogging and deportations,<sup>49</sup> but SDs agitated in Katerynoslav.

In 1893 V.I. Teitelbaum had returned to Katerynoslav from Bern with GOT literature, and an artisan in 19-year-old Gavril Leitensen's kruzhek recalled that 'Every night we got together at Teitelbaum's place and read till dawn'. By 1894 Leitensen had recruited a young Briansk metalworker and he recruited others, but the 12 workers in A. Smirnov's kruzhek struggled to unite the 'wretched, ignorant, oppressed people who were destroying their health in factories and taverns'. One young worker borrowed an illegal book and 'did not understand at all the seriousness of the proposition', but it 'tickled my vanity that I would be the kind of guy who knew socialists!'<sup>50</sup> After the St. Petersburg TRK's Norinsky was deported to Katerynoslav,<sup>51</sup> the kruzhki merged and met most evenings at Mikhail Efimov's place. The Moscow SDs Vinokurov and the Mandelshtam brothers were deported and joined the kruzhek, and after six months studying *Capital*, Engels, Plekhanov and Bebel, and hearing workplace reports, they agitated Briansk metalworkers with leaflets advocating the overthrow of the tsar, the abolition of private property, the capitalists' 'unfair attitude' and the 'incomparably better situation of the workers abroad thanks to a different state system'. Early in 1895 one kruzhek established a strike fund.<sup>52</sup> Some were students, young professionals and Jewish artisans, but most were workers, and on May Day over 100 workers heard political speeches and sang socialist songs in a nearby forest.<sup>53</sup> Intelligently hectographed leaflets for Briansk workers, Smirnov's kruzhek distributed them 'before the factory hoot' and workers discussed them. The number of kruzhki grew, including one comprised of women, but the police knew about a kruzhek of 11 artisans and arrested Vinokurov and Grigory Mandelshtam. A Briansk worker betrayed 50 kruzhek members, and 43 were charged with telling others that the government was 'at one with factory owners', so they should form 'an organisation cemented by a single will and a single desire to overthrow' it and replace it with one in their

'interest'.<sup>54</sup> Most workers were deported for three years, and many survivors got drunk and went to church; but most intelligently escaped and agitated the 'conscious' minority.<sup>55</sup>

## (ii) St. Petersburg Elders and Youngsters

By Christmas Day 1894 Semyannikov Shipyard workers in St. Petersburg had not been paid, and some of them beat up administrative staff, demolished the office, set it on fire and attacked the shop and gates. The wages arrived, but so did Cossacks, and many workers were later sentenced 'unmercifully'.<sup>56</sup> SD intelligently Zaporozhets and Ulyanov led *kruzhki* of Semyannikov workers, but they were reluctant to circulate leaflets,<sup>57</sup> so Ulyanov asked Krupskaya to invite a Kornilov School pupil to meet him.<sup>58</sup> Babushkin had refused to join the Semyannikov 'rabble',<sup>59</sup> and had drafted an agitational leaflet.<sup>60</sup> It stressed that 'everybody knows that the factory owners, the police and the whole authority of the state are all one', so they were 'glad that we started the fisticuffs', because they could send 'men who have more than their fists to rely on'. It was 'the duty of every knowledgeable worker' to strike peacefully and see which 'comrades could be relied upon' and which 'betrayed'.

Early in 1895,<sup>61</sup> as Babushkin recalled, he put 'some' leaflets in the toilets at work, 'a few' in each workshop and 'pushed some through broken windows into the shops, or left them in doors', near boilers, engine cabins, toolboxes and behind rollers. They caused no 'excitement', but a foreman 'began to upbraid an old worker who had long since abandoned such ideas'.<sup>62</sup> According to Krupskaya, Ulyanov had written four copies 'in capital letters', 'janitors picked up two' and workers 'passed around' the other two. Nevertheless this was 'a major achievement';<sup>63</sup> but some former SD intelligently were being pulled by reformism.

Students had recently thronged the Economic Society to hear Struve argue against the village commune, and Potresov was editing *Materialy dlia kharakteristiki nashego ekon omicheskogo razvitia* (*Materials for the Characterisation of our Economic Development*). He invited Ulyanov to critique Struve's recent book,<sup>64</sup> and 'K. Tulin' attacked SRs and denied that 'Mr Struve' was an SD.<sup>65</sup> Censors impounded most of the 2,000 copies,<sup>66</sup> but 100 or so reached SDs in St. Petersburg, other cities and the GOT. A year later censors noted the 'harmful doctrine' of 'so-called Russian Marxists' like 'Tulin', and had the rest of the copies destroyed;<sup>67</sup> but SD ideas seriously challenged some SR intelligently.

Panteleimon Lepeshinsky was born into a priest's family in the Bielaruś province village of Studenets in 1868. In 1886 he studied medicine at St. Petersburg University and joined *Narodnaya volya*,<sup>68</sup> but workers' *kruzhki* rejected SR ideas and many SR medical students were becoming SDs.<sup>69</sup> In 1890 the University expelled Lepeshinsky and he was deported. In 1892 he was active in Sevastopol,<sup>70</sup> but was disappointed with the SR intelligently's lack of a clear policy.<sup>71</sup> By 1895 he was a civil servant in St. Petersburg, where around 77 percent of the 36,000 workers in 148 metalworking plants were in workforces of over 500. There were 35 Technical Society Schools, mostly at large factories, and 36 Sunday and evening schools. Lepeshinsky taught at Glasovskaya Sunday school,<sup>72</sup> where SR and SD teachers 'fed' on the pupils, but the police paid 'little attention'. The TRK activist Ivanov denounced terrorism, and Vera Sibeleva encouraged workers to imitate the strikes in the Pale.<sup>73</sup>

Over winter Ulyanov had been 'examining' a New Admiralty Shipyard activist, who would 'wipe the sweat from his brow' and say 'smilingly: "I find it easier to work overtime than to answer your questions"';<sup>74</sup> but Ulyanov wrote him a leaflet. In February the admiral announced that the working day would start half an hour earlier, and next day 100 workers arrived at the usual time to find the gates locked, so they broke them down, persuaded workmates to strike and presented their demands. The police arrived, and called them 'rebels', but one man listed their grievances in a dignified manner, and when the police tried to arrest him, strikers surrounded him and he escaped. Ulyanov wrote a leaflet which was typed and copied, and a senior skilled worker and others circulated them. Reportedly Krupskaya dressed as a countrywoman and sold fruit and nuts wrapped in leaflets at the gates,<sup>75</sup> then she and two other Kornilov School teachers went inside and put leaflets on benches and in the toilets.<sup>76</sup> Days later the admiral caved in.<sup>77</sup>

The Baltic Shipyard managers allowed workers to elect deputies, and when there was a strike at the Port, typed leaflets demanded a ten-hour day and the 'right to elect permanent deputies in every workshop'. It argued that they must be 'intelligent and honest', 'stand up for everyone', 'put the common demands openly and skilfully', explain how bosses broke agreements and 'punish' workers who went against a 'common decision' to strike;<sup>78</sup> but the impetus for a higher level of union organisation came from the Pale.

Vilnius's 27 trade unions had 962 members, or around 30 percent of the city's workforce,<sup>79</sup> and SD intelligently had contacts in Kyiv, Odesa, Katerynoslav, Minsk, Kaunas and elsewhere in the Pale and beyond. Kremer and Kopelzon visited St. Petersburg discussed disseminating agitational literature in Russian with SD intelligently,<sup>80</sup> Sponti from Moscow and a Kyiv SD, who proposed an All-Russian SD party-building congress. Ulyanov and

Krzhizhanovsky agreed to agitate, but 'keep to the economic ground mostly, until the masses mature sufficiently to understand political slogans';<sup>81</sup> but younger SDs thought otherwise

Radchenko's 'Elders' were in their mid-20s, while Chernyshev's 'Youngsters' were 20 at most.<sup>82</sup> Chernyshev and half a dozen other Technological Institute student SDs thought that Radchenko was too cautious,<sup>83</sup> and aimed to form a central kruzhok to 'formulate and motivate the presentation of demands', including 'legal or economic improvement', and build a workers' party via 'agitational' kruzhki and 'spontaneous fermentations'. Krzhizhanovsky and Starkov considered cooperating, but Ulyanov criticised what he saw as the 'laboratory technique of the development of class consciousness'.<sup>84</sup> Older workers left SD kruzhki, but young ones agitated.<sup>85</sup> The Kornilov School teachers Yakubova and Zinaida Nevzorova rolled leaflets 'into little tubes', 'arranged them in their aprons' and went to the Laferme cigarette factory, and when the hooter sounded they 'walked briskly towards the women who were pouring out in throngs' and, 'passing by almost at a trot, scattered the leaflets right into the hands of the perplexed workers'.<sup>86</sup>

Ulyanov gave a questionnaire to SD intelligenty to give to their kruzhki, but many workers were fascinated with the data and forgot to propagandise. Radchenko, Krzhizhanovsky, Krupskaya, Ulyanov, Krasin, Zaporozhets and Yakubova met Babushkin, Shelgunov and other workers in Silvin and Vaneev's room. Some intelligenty thought agitation was premature, since they had few contacts, but Ulyanov argued that if one was arrested there would be dozens of new ones. Krasin and Radchenko refused to produce propaganda leaflets and agitate, and Krasin left the Institute SD kruzhok in protest;<sup>87</sup> but Youngsters were enthusiastic.

Boris Zinoviev was 21. He had been born into a skilled Putilov metal worker's family, graduated from the factory school in 1892 and became an apprentice lathe operator.<sup>88</sup> Reading Plekhanov's *Russky rabochy v revoliutsionnom dvizhenie* (*Russian workers and the revolutionary movement*) inspired Zinoviev to spread revolutionary ideas among 'the largest possible number of workers'. Ivanov recruited him to a TRK kruzhok in 1895,<sup>89</sup> and he and Karamyshev soon led two. The SD intelligent Takhtarev estimated about 1,000 workers were in kruzhki; but the police knew about some of them, including the one at the Port, and they also knew about three members of the 'central workers' group'. The TRK's Klimanov had been released and got involved in a strike at the Franco-Russian machine-building works, and was deported to Vologda for five years; but TRK survivors met in Norinskaya's room to plan a visit by their deported secretary Bogdanov.<sup>90</sup>

Ulyanov led one of the four kruzhki which Zinoviev had organised in the Narva Gate district, and Zinoviev was elected as a TRK organiser. He was briefly detained,<sup>91</sup> but his and Karamyshev's flat became TRK headquarters. Bogdanov visited illegally, and the TRK adopted Ivanov's draft rules for a central fund. A network of kruzhki was forming across the city, to coordinate an uprising, and the TRK asked workers to recruit. When Ivanov left the city Zinoviev became the TRK treasurer, and looked for issues to agitate about at work. Fewer than 1,000 of the 7,000 Putilov workers had a say in the management-sponsored society that ran the factory shop, which sold poor goods at high prices, so the kruzhki agitated, while other TRK members agitated in other factories, barracks, workers' rooms and taverns. The interior minister had become concerned about SD propaganda at Sunday schools, and ordered the removal of 'politically unreliable' teachers.<sup>92</sup>

Ulyanov had changed his address, but contracted pneumonia, and read *Das Kapital* Volume 3 in German while he recovered. Krzhizhanovsky found surveillance disconcerting.

You left your home, taking care to cover your tracks, according to all the rules of conspiracy. But next, quite suddenly, towards the end of your journey, as if from out of the ground, there loomed, the silhouette of an informer who was following you. Thereafter, obviously, such incidents led us to proceed more cleverly: we changed passports and fields of activity. But at that time we were still novices.

When Ulyanov recovered he went to Tsarskoe Selo to explain his plans,<sup>93</sup> and SD intelligenty boarded the train. He taught them how to code,<sup>94</sup> use invisible ink, the 'dot method' of underlining letters in books and how to 'mark secret signs' and invent aliases. He 'knew all the through courtyards' in St. Petersburg and was 'a skilled hand at giving police-spies the slip', and his methods were those of the late Alexandr Mikhailov of Narodnaya volya.<sup>95</sup>

After a month in Kresty Prison 'state criminals' could meet a visitor face to face for half an hour, once a week, with a guard present, or via a grille for an hour with a guard at a distance. They could receive food parcels three times a week, and warders confiscated little, but referred to them by the number sewn on their sleeves, not their names. They were in solitary cells next to ordinary criminals, and were kept apart in the exercise yard, and if they made a gesture or noise, or looked behind, they had to unravel old rope. Every day, from 7.00am to 6.00pm, with an hour and a half for their midday meal, they had to weave or sew, or make a daily quota of wooden cigar boxes. Reportedly they received 40 percent of the value of all their work, but could spend only half of it, and got the rest after release. Each month they were allowed a book with uncut pages, a letter, and a visit from a close relative.

The SD intelligent Lalayants had been sentenced to ten months in Kresty Prison in summer 1894, to be followed by three years deportation under surveillance; but early in 1895 Ulyanov persuaded Olga Tchatchina, a Bestuzhev course student, to pose as Lalayant's 'fiancée'. She brought him Plekhanov's recent book, which acted like a 'bomb' on his politics, but he convinced the assistant governor that it was about ancient philosophy. When he was released in spring he visited Tchatchina and met Ulyanov, who took him to Moscow, told him about a previous SD organisation in Katerynoslav and gave him the names of Vinokurov and others and a letter for a railway official.<sup>96</sup> Then Ulyanov went abroad.<sup>97</sup>

When the TRK's Ivan Keizer left a St. Petersburg prison, he and 40 other activists were unhappy that the Elders refused to agitate, so they and representatives from various districts and plants met SR intelligently in Petersburg district woods. Takhtarev recalled a growing 'disenchantment' among 'conscious workers' who wanted to 'relate to the needs and demands of the masses' and the 'daily violations of their human rights'. He believed they should 'discuss the general and the specific position of the workers' cause', 'distribute literature in as large a quantity as possible', and use *kruzhki* for 'preparing conscious and educated agitators'.

In summer, after Zinoviev and Karamyshev agitated about a wage-cut in the Putilov rolling mill, there was a strike, and the managers caved in. The 'troublemakers' were detained, but Zinoviev was released for lack of evidence.<sup>98</sup> Babushkin, Zinoviev, Karamyshev, Shelgunov and Ivan Yakovlev from Obukhov steelworks, Merkulov from the Nevsky Gate district, and six other workers met in the woods to revive the TRK.<sup>99</sup> They agreed that *kruzhki* should build a fund to support strikers, arrested members and their families, and gather information about working conditions and grievances so the intelligenty could write leaflets.<sup>100</sup> Some criticised *kruzhki* which created 'intellectual epicureans' - 'the devil take the *kruzhki*!' 'We have to follow the example of the Poles and distribute literature directly in the shops'.<sup>101</sup> The TRK met the Youngsters, and one *kruzhok* invited Lepeshinsky to join them. The worker Vasily Antushevsky was 'responsible for the organisational side', 'designating the times and venues for meetings and ensuring that the members of the group assembled taking due care'. He was 22, 'dressed with a certain panache, often in shirt with collar and cuffs', and looked like an intelligent;<sup>102</sup> but the legal newspapers reported that reformism and syndicalism were gaining ground in western Europe.

The Belgische Werkliedenpartij/Parti Ouvrier Belge (Belgian Workers' Party) had been founded by trade unions, cooperatives and friendly societies in 1885. In 1893 at least 200,000 workers supported its call for a general strike, and men aged 25 or older were subsequently enfranchised.<sup>103</sup> The strike persuaded the SPD's Bernstein that strikes were political weapons,<sup>104</sup> and in 1894 the SPD rejected an electoral pact with liberals,<sup>105</sup> and recommended that unions which could strike on May Day without damaging workers' interests should do so.<sup>106</sup> By 1895 there were four million agricultural and forestry workers in Germany, but while 60 percent of industrial enterprises employed six or more workers, only five percent had over 1,000.<sup>107</sup> *Vorwärts* had over 50,000 subscribers, but Liebknecht argued that 'The time of conspiracies, of putsches, of street battles is over', and SPD Bavarian Landtag deputies supported the budget,<sup>108</sup> for minor concessions to workers and peasants.<sup>109</sup>

In London Engels argued that the 'economic revolution' in western Europe had produced 'a genuine bourgeoisie and a genuine large-scale industrial proletariat', and there was now a 'single great international army of socialists'. He was impressed that more German workers than ever had supported SPD Reichstag candidates, and believed the SPD was 'thriving far better on legal methods', so barricades were 'obsolete', though 'street fighting' might have to be 'undertaken with greater force'. Kautsky left this qualification out in *Die Neue Zeit*, and *Vorwärts* published a few selected sentences to make it seem that Engels favoured reformism;<sup>110</sup> yet when he died that summer,<sup>111</sup> Bernstein and Bebel were his literary executors.<sup>112</sup>

In St. Petersburg Babushkin recalled that when Engels died the TRK did not send a wreath, because they represented a tiny minority of workers, and when Fyodor Afanasev visited illegally Babushkin 'accepted his advice'. He recalled no 'sharp differences' between the SR and SD intelligenty who led *kruzhki*. He fought suspension at work, got his pay reimbursed and his foreman disciplined, but changed his lodgings. On Sundays half a dozen workers discussed events at work and read, but TRK activists who met behind the Thornton Wool Works worried about 'the lull in the movement' and wanted 'to lift it to a higher level'. Zinoviev and Karamyshev 'attacked all and sundry, condemning everything and reproaching workers for being indifferent to new ideas'. The TRK organised new *kruzhki* and were 'taking note of likely people to enrol', but while their 'fairly satisfactory library of legal books' was a 'sheet-anchor' for isolated workers, 'there was never any mention of an outlay on illegal literature'.<sup>113</sup> Krupskaya worked in a railway accounts office, met contacts, copied documents and was the TRK's librarian,<sup>114</sup> and the TRK 'censured' other intelligenty for 'abandoning' them in summer.<sup>115</sup> Ivan Keizer was active out at Kolpino, and the Youngsters offered to 'bankroll' *kruzhki* if they could lead them,<sup>116</sup> so the TRK let them lead basic *kruzhki* under supervision. Most of the city's 27,000 textile workers were illiterate, but some had rebelled at arbitrary fines, so the TRK discussed agitating recently-arrived peasants,<sup>117</sup> and textile workers were restive elsewhere.

### (iii) The Moscow region

By 1895, nationally, there were 20,000 handloom weavers, but 242,000 in mechanised mills,<sup>118</sup> where wages averaged seven rubles a month. They paid high prices at mill shops and could leave the barracks only on holidays and had to return by 11.00pm.<sup>119</sup> Managers and supervisors harassed young women and used the familiar form of address, while workers had to use the polite form. They faced fines of up to half a day's pay for what supervisors considered disobedience, insolence, swearing, immoral behaviour, drunkenness, bad character, truancy, absence without a doctor's note, feeding nursing infants, attending births, weddings and funerals, caring for family members without permission, and not creating perfect products from shoddy material in impossible timescales.<sup>120</sup>

Olga Varentsova was born into the family of a former serf who owned a small textile mill in Ivanovo, Vladimir province, in 1862. She joined an SR kruzhok at secondary school,<sup>121</sup> and attended the Moscow Higher Women's Courses in the 1880s.<sup>122</sup> In 1891 Ivanovo and neighbouring Voznesensk became one city and a 'flood of proletarians' and landless peasants came to work in the textile mills of the 'Russian Manchester'.<sup>123</sup> By 1892 Varentsova led a workers' kruzhok,<sup>124</sup> and F.A. Kondratev, a former Brusnev kruzhok member, led five textile workers, a security guard and an unskilled railway worker. They paid two percent of their wages into a fund, read social and political literature,<sup>125</sup> and aimed to contact other kruzhki, locally and nationally. Other local kruzhki lacked illegal literature and intelligently, and when 10,000 textile workers went on strike, one of their few supporters was Mikhail Bagaev,<sup>126</sup> a 20-year-old metalworker.<sup>127</sup> By 1893 Varentsova considered herself an SD and led kruzhki of women workers.<sup>128</sup> In 1894 Ulyanov asked S.P. Shesternin, an Ivanovo judge, to liaise with St. Petersburg and Moscow SDs, and Elizarova sent him books on credit from Moscow publishers. An Ivanovo kruzhok member ran a bookshop which activists used as a cover for illegal meetings, and workers clubbed together to buy books, while Shesternin 'constantly received papers with mysterious dots' and 'information about the revolutionary life of other organisations chemically inscribed' from Mickiewicz in Moscow.

On May Day in 1895 30 Ivanovo SD intelligently formed Profsoyuz rabotnikov Ivanovo (The Ivanovo Workers' Union). They demanded the right to meet, form unions and strike, an eight-hour day, control of 'factory operations', freedom of speech and the press, due process and political rights. They aimed to convert 'accumulated labour' into 'social property',<sup>129</sup> by propagandising 'more cultured workers of both sexes',<sup>130</sup> and tried to teach Marx's ideas to workers with a primary education at best.<sup>131</sup> Days later, during a strike of 5,000 workers at a large plant near Ivanovo, an English overseer, pointed a revolver at strikers and was 'literally torn to pieces. Cossacks and infantry arrived, but the owner conceded the strikers' demands.<sup>132</sup> In Yaroslavl, 115km north of Ivanov, women weavers influenced a 'Rebellion' of male workmates,<sup>133</sup> but troops shot at 8,000 peaceful strikers, killed three and wounded 18.<sup>134</sup> The tsar praised his 'brave lads',<sup>135</sup> but the PRI inspired Moscow SDs.

Early that year, in Moscow, Sponti, other SD intelligently, Prokovev, Boie and another rabochy intelligent hectographed agitational leaflets linking economics and politics. One compared workers' pay with western Europe and stressed that 'the government of Russian factory owners is more hideous and shameless than anywhere else'. Another leaflet focussed on the appalling sanitary conditions in factories, and both called on workers to fight the capitalists, while another described the class basis of the autocracy's policy,<sup>136</sup> and by spring the interior minister was concerned about the Prokhorov Mill Sunday school.<sup>137</sup> Sponti went to Switzerland and met Axelrod, who saw him as a 'social democratic SR', but took his 400 rubles,<sup>138</sup> and the GOT produced agitational literature,<sup>139</sup> which reached Moscow via Vilnius.<sup>140</sup> Most of Moscow's railway workshops and large machine-building plants worked a ten-hour day,<sup>141</sup> and after SD intelligently issued an agitational leaflet urging unity in the struggle to reduce it,<sup>142</sup> Kazan Railway workshop strikers won some demands.<sup>143</sup> The intelligently planned a meeting of 2,000 workers and a general strike on May Day.<sup>144</sup> Prokovev's kruzhok feared arrest, since 'our forces are too small for open action', so they celebrated the day 'inconspicuously';<sup>145</sup> but 300 workers, reportedly representing over 1,000 members of 35 kruzhki, met intelligently in woods outside the city,<sup>146</sup> and rejuvenated the Soyuz.<sup>147</sup> A leaflet argued that 'Where 150 men worked previously the owner makes do with 100 working harder', so 50 'are forced to agree to work for the very lowest pay' and 'depress our earnings'. 'Only when the workers of every factory' began to 'apply themselves jointly to the workers' cause' could they 'be sure of success', and that was why 'workers who understand the need to fight together' had joined the organisation.<sup>148</sup> Warehouse workers went on strike, and striking cotton spinners clashed with police and Cossacks,<sup>149</sup> but a leaflet criticised violence against employers and machinery during strikes.<sup>150</sup>

In summer Moscow police arrested several SD intelligently,<sup>151</sup> yet in autumn the factory inspectors complained about 'unrest' inspired by 'criminal' leaflets.<sup>152</sup> The police confiscated the Soyuz press, but they managed to publish a leaflet about why kassy were needed and how to build them. Prokovev's kruzhok distributed copies, students were arrested.<sup>153</sup> Workers met in cemeteries and appealed to 400 'advanced' workers to join them, but those sticking leaflets on fences were arrested. Prokhorov weavers struck for better pay and conditions, and an

end to fraud, but Cossacks arrived,<sup>154</sup> and 54 strikers were arrested. All but four of the 18 born in Moscow province had come from one town and one village,<sup>155</sup> and the Soyuz had contacts in Kyiv, Saratov, Katerynoslav and elsewhere.<sup>156</sup> Elizarova recalled that young Moscow people circulated Ulyanov's critique of SRs, which went 'through so many hands' they ended 'in tatters';<sup>157</sup> and there was activity in the Pale.

In Vilnius 400 artisans had celebrated May Day,<sup>158</sup> but Tsederbaum argued that Jewish SD intelligenty had 'inherited a feeling of mistrust towards our masses' from the bourgeoisie, while the proletariat 'passively accepts its inferior national status', and this prevented the 'awakening' of a sense of nationhood and a separate Jewish workers' organisation.<sup>159</sup> An intelligent had to be 'the leader and the educator of the Jewish proletariat in the struggle for economic, civil, and political freedom', give propaganda 'a more Jewish character' and develop workers into 'conscious Social Democrats'.<sup>160</sup> Next day he told 40 or so worker-agitators that they 'tended to scorn the realities' of workers' lives, used Russian and not Yiddish in *kruzhki* and 'tied all our hopes to the general Russian movement', yet they had 'raised the Jewish movement to a height not yet attained' there. They should not target the worker who is 'divorced from his environment by his mental abilities', but 'the average worker of the masses with his average needs, average morality' and 'average level of development'.<sup>161</sup> Subsequently legal Yiddish literature arrived from Warszawa,<sup>162</sup> and the Yiddish Committee published scientific books and fiction.<sup>163</sup> Talmudic students commissioned legal and illegal literature,<sup>164</sup> and workers built libraries across the Pale.<sup>165</sup> Bristle makers' delegates in Vilnius issued a pamphlet arguing for solidarity, and workers at the largest cigarette factory went on strike. Gozhansky helped Bialystok workers build *kassy*, and after they 'brought the city to its knees', he asked for Yiddish translations of Kautsky's works.<sup>166</sup> Others went further afield.

Yekusiel Portnoi was born into a shopkeeper's family near Vilnius in 1872. He attended a Jewish school and then a state school, where he learned Russian,<sup>167</sup> and he was propagandising in Hrodna by 1895. Aizenshtadt was unenthusiastic about a Jewish national orientation and went to Odesa that autumn. Shloyme went to Warszawa and agitated Lithuanian migrants, while A.M. Ginzburg, Frankfurt and Ilia Vilensky settled in Katerynoslav.<sup>168</sup>

Tsederbaum found that most Kyiv and Kharkiv SD intelligenty who visited Vilnius believed that agitation 'only touched the surface of proletarian consciousness' and feared that an 'infraction' of 'strict conspiracy' might jeopardise their aim to train a 'class-conscious workers' vanguard' of 'well-rounded, educated, worker-Marxists'. A raid on Kyiv and Vilnius apartments found illegal leaflets,<sup>169</sup> and late in June 22 workers at a Katerynoslav metalworks were arrested and charged with preparing a strike.<sup>170</sup> There were reportedly branches of the St. Petersburg TRK in around ten towns.<sup>171</sup>

In October, after pay-cuts of 20-25 percent, 2,000 Ivanovo textile workers went on strike,<sup>172</sup> and women and men negotiated with management.<sup>173</sup> Kondratev and the intelligent A.A. Yevdokimov had felt the Profsoyuz was 'weak and insufficiently prepared',<sup>174</sup> but the workers Bagaev and N.I. Makhov had helped to organise the strike. The strikers demanded a rise and the sacking of a manager; but the provincial governor brought 1,000 infantry and Cossacks. They smashed the strike after 15 days, but the strikers sent a report to St. Petersburg.<sup>175</sup>

## **(v) St. Petersburg Group of Social-Democrats**

When Ulyanov left St. Petersburg in spring 1895 the Okhrana headquarters sent a message to the Paris Agentura.

Ulyanov occupies himself with Social Democratic propaganda among Petersburg workers. The objective of his trip is to find a way of bringing into the empire revolutionary literature as well as to establish contacts between revolutionary *kruzhki* and emigrants living abroad. I am informing you about this with the request to establish surveillance of activities and contacts and to report about them.

Okhrana spies in Berlin reported that Ulyanov met the Bundist Aizenshtat,<sup>176</sup> and a Russian SD.

Wilhelm Bucholtz was born in Orenburg, Siberia, in 1867. He attended Kazan University in the mid-1880s, but was deported to Samara in 1887,<sup>177</sup> and met Ulyanov there in 1889.<sup>178</sup> In 1891 Bucholtz was deported again,<sup>179</sup> and studied in Zurich and Bern, but early in 1895 he became the Russian correspondent of *Vorwärts* in Berlin.<sup>180</sup> In summer he met Ulyanov, who went on to the Rhone valley to meet Potresov and Plekhanov, and then Ulyanov and Potresov went on to the Alps,<sup>181</sup> where Axelrod convinced them to win 'hegemony' over all the forces that aimed to overthrow the tsar.<sup>182</sup> The GOT agreed to write for a paper aimed at Russian workers, and Potresov and Ulyanov would distribute it,<sup>183</sup> so they joined the Soyuz russkikh sotsial-demokratov za granitsey (The Union of Russian Social Democrats Abroad),<sup>184</sup> which the GOT had founded the previous year.<sup>185</sup>

Ulyanov went to Paris to meet Lafargue, and then returned to Germany. Plekhanov had told Liebknecht that Ulyanov was 'one of our best Russian friends',<sup>186</sup> and Ulyanov heard Kautsky and other SPD leaders speak,<sup>187</sup> but



he argued with one who spoke against an agrarian programme.<sup>188</sup> The SPD agreed to arrange for illegal literature to be glued together as covers of legal books, and to help to smuggle them to Russia.<sup>189</sup>

Ulyanov left Germany that autumn with a false-bottomed suitcase 'crammed full of illegal literature'.<sup>190</sup> He stayed overnight with Srednicki in Vilnius, gave her some literature,<sup>191</sup> and won her support for the new paper. He went on to Moscow, and found no Soyuz leaders,<sup>192</sup> but impressed a young SD intelligent.

Nikolai Semashko, Plekhanov's nephew, was born into a teacher's family in the Orel province village of Livenskoe in 1874. He graduated from Yelets gymnasium in 1891 and studied medicine at Moscow University.<sup>193</sup> The 43 zemliachestva had 1,700 members by 1892, and each sent a delegate to the *soyuzni sovet* (united council).<sup>194</sup> Semashko joined an SD kruzhok in 1893,<sup>195</sup> and led student and workers' kruzhki.<sup>196</sup> In autumn 1895 he was invited to a debate between SRs and a 'remarkable Marxist' from St. Petersburg. Taking the 'usual precautions', he arrived at a luxurious apartment, where the Marxist did not debate, but talked to individuals.<sup>197</sup>

Ulyanov went on to Orekhovo, then to St. Petersburg, where the Okhrana noted that he had brought 'foreign revolutionary publications' and his kruzhok had become livelier.<sup>198</sup> According to Krzhizhanovsky, Ulyanov wanted to change 'exaggeratedly thorough studies' in kruzhki to 'action at the heart of the proletarian masses' and go from 'propaganda to agitation'.<sup>199</sup> Ulyanov's obituary of Engels was an annotated reading list,<sup>200</sup> but he rejected Plekhanov using 'economic materialism' to describe Marx and Engels' work, and his patronising name of 'Narodniks' (Populists) for SRs.<sup>201</sup> Starkov had graduated,<sup>202</sup> and he, Ulyanov and Krzhizhanovsky raised money;<sup>203</sup> but there was now an intelligently kruzhok with links to the western border.<sup>204</sup>

Fyodor Gurvich was born in St. Petersburg in 1871. He studied medicine at Iuriev University in the early 1890s,<sup>205</sup> and Fischer and Ivan Keizers studied Marx and other socialists with him in St. Petersburg in summer 1893, and carried on after he left.<sup>206</sup> Gurvich became an SD in 1894,<sup>207</sup> graduated in 1895, returned to St. Petersburg and joined Tserderbaum's kruzhok.<sup>208</sup> So did the Kyiv University graduate Liakhovsky, the St. Petersburg University student, Boris Goldman,<sup>209</sup> who owned a mimeograph,<sup>210</sup> the students Yakov Ponomaryov and V.M. Treniukhin,<sup>211</sup> and S.A. Gofman, who had joined the mourners at Nikolai Shelgunov's funeral in 1892. Tserderbaum insisted that a merger with the Elders was conditional on their willingness to agitate.<sup>212</sup>

The police were finding large numbers of pamphlets by Dikshtein, Bakh and others, which were printed by SR students who were 'Marxist sympathisers',<sup>213</sup> and who ran a press on an unsectarian, commercial basis at Lahti in Finland. Tserderbaum negotiated with them then met Ulyanov, Krzhizhanovsky and Starkov. He criticised them for ignoring spontaneous strikes, and the kruzhki merged at a second meeting. The 'directing' centre included Tserderbaum, Krzhizhanovsky, Ulyanov, Radchenko, Silvin, Starkov, Vaneev, Zaporozhets and the 24-year-old Technological Institute student Alexandr Malchenko,, plus the Kornilov School teachers Krupskaya, Yakubova, Zinaida Nevzorova and Lyubov Radchenko; and the candidate members, who would take over in case of arrests, were Gurvich, Goldman, Aaron Lure, Inna Smidovich and V.K. Serezhinov, members of Tserderbaum's kruzhok. There would be strict secrecy, and candidates would undergo a trial period. Krzhizhanovsky, Starkov, Vaneev, Ulyanov and Tserderbaum would oversee three district bureaux, collect information about factory conditions and write and distribute agitational literature. The city centre district included Petersburg Metallurgical Works, the New Arsenal, the Baltic Shipyard and textile mills, and the bureau included Vaneev, Silvin, Nevzorova, Treniukhin and Gofman. The Nevsky Gate district included the Semyannikov Shipyard, Obukhov steelworks and large textile mills, and the bureau included Krzhizhanovsky, Liakhovsky, Malchenko and Krupskaya, who ran the legal library. The Moscow and Narva district included the Putilov metalworks, and the bureau included Starkov, Zaporozhets, Yakubova, Tserderbaum and Ponomaryov. The Radchenkos would raise and dispense funds and develop 'diplomatic' relations with workers and other SD intelligently, and the Kornilov teachers would recruit workers, but Tserderbaum lost the vote to recruit any to the centre. Ulyanov would edit the literature when he left prison, but the printers could refuse it if they had principled disagreements.<sup>214</sup>

Zinoviev led the TRK in the Narva district and Yakovlev the TRK on Vasilievsky Island. Ulyanov, Krzhizhanovsky, Starkov, Takhtarev and Tserderbaum met Zinoviev, Yakovlev, Shelgunov, Keizer, Babushkin and five other TRK members in Zinoviev's room. The intelligently argued that the TRK kruzhki were vulnerable to arrests, but they refused to hand over their funds.<sup>215</sup> Shelgunov recalled that they worked 'entirely independently' of 'mere enlighteners',<sup>216</sup> but Ulyanov persuaded him to go underground and live in the home of a Semyannikov Shipyard worker, and Ulyanov, Liakhovsky, Takhtarev, Starkov and other intelligently visited the TRK every fortnight.<sup>217</sup>

Babushkin recalled that one worker in each factory 'knew how many leaflets were needed, to whom they should be given, and the day on which the leaflets would be distributed'. The TRK hosted 'studies and meetings', and the movement 'took on a new lease of life'. If the TRK disliked a draft leaflet, Ulyanov accepted their suggestions,<sup>218</sup> but they accepted one which explained the law on fines, and hinted that workers should emulate the Morozov mill strikers of a decade earlier and tackle the employers' allies in the state.<sup>219</sup> The intelligently produced four or five mimeographed leaflets, but Ulyanov insisted that those printed by the Lahti press were

signed by the Gruppa sotsial-demokratov (The Group of Social-Democrats).<sup>220</sup> He noted: '10-16 persons (committee). 20-30 workers' kruzhenki. Maximum, 100-150 ties. "Readings." *Self-education* – the crux'.<sup>221</sup>

Ulyanov wrote to Axelrod in Switzerland, using the 'same key' (code), and told him about the strikes and the Lahti press. In spite of the 'havoc' in Moscow, 'work did not cease', but after the 'smash-up' in Orekhovo 'few of our people are left and all of them so closely watched', yet 'the workers' frame of mind is rather oppositional'. It was difficult to get literature out of book bindings, so he enclosed a better formula for glue. He needed more literature, and 'interesting cuttings' from *Vorwärts*, and asked Axelrod to use 'the *thinnest paper possible*' and 'Chinese ink' with 'a small crystal of *potassium dichromate*' so 'it won't wash off'. He enclosed a St. Petersburg Technological Institute student's address, asked for a German address, and hoped that the GOT's praktiki could establish direct links to St. Petersburg.<sup>222</sup>

Ulyanov acknowledged to his sister Elizarova that workers who feared leaflets about economics would probably refuse those which attacked the tsar, but "'politics" permeates everything in everyday life'. The 'rudeness and petty tyranny of constables, police officers and gendarmes, and their interference whenever there is disagreement with the factory owners', showed 'which side they are on'; so it was 'necessary to point this out in leaflets' to 'prevent the illusion that one can gain something by combating factory owners alone', and workers' ideas, 'gradually guided in this direction', would 'go even further'.<sup>223</sup>

Elizarova joined Mickiewicz's Moscow kruzhenki, gave 'material assistance' and 'a number of contacts', and studied Marx and Kautsky. She raised funds, arranged secret signals for meetings, found 'clean' addresses to store literature, corresponded with SDs in Kyiv, Saratov and Katerynoslav, and helped to produce propaganda, including a translation of Gerhart Hauptmann's play *Die Weber (The Weavers)*, about the Silesian uprising 50 years earlier. *Tkachi* was a 'great success' and her apartment was the 'central attraction' of the 'revolutionary underground'.<sup>224</sup>

In St. Petersburg Thornton Wool Works weavers had joined Petr Morozov's kruzhenki, and Shelgunov and Babushkin organised readings of *Tkachi* in the room shared by the weavers Merkulov and Afanasev. Soon after Thornton managers announced another cut in piece-rates, and the kruzhenki distributed a leaflet,<sup>225</sup> but it did not use the words 'Socialist' or 'Social-Democrat', so as not to frighten the 'most ignorant workers'.<sup>226</sup> The TRK discussed the situation with Merkulov, and 400 of the 430 Thornton weavers walked out next day.<sup>227</sup> In the early hours of the following day the police arrested 13 strikers, but Ulyanov and Starkov gave Merkulov 40 rubles to help their families,<sup>228</sup> and the managers withdrew the pay cut and agreed to try to free the prisoners.<sup>229</sup> Shelgunov organised a meeting of the TRK, GSD and Thornton strike leaders, who refused to provide material for a leaflet,<sup>230</sup> and wanted a petition.<sup>231</sup> The wool-sorter Krolikov, Krupskaya's former pupil, had returned from deportation,<sup>232</sup> and helped her and Yakubova inspect the appalling Thornton barracks.<sup>233</sup> Krolikov borrowed a 'fine fur coat' and brought 'a whole exercise-book full of information' to Krupskaya's flat. Ulyanov 'pounced on it',<sup>234</sup> and he and Krolikov composed a leaflet focussing on economic issues, and used 'we' and 'comrades' to suggest that strikers had written it.<sup>235</sup> They mimeographed copies,<sup>236</sup> and Merkulov, Shelgunov and the kruzhenki veteran Volynkin distributed them next day. The manager reprimanded his spies for not keeping him informed and demanded to know who was responsible. When they told him it was '*Sunday Schoolists*' he ordered the 'students' to be marched to his office and called them 'scum' and 'rebels' who 'want to incite a rising in the factory'. 'I'll show you dirty people; you'll rot in prison, rounded up to be sent to Siberia'. Several workers stopped attending the Sunday school,<sup>237</sup> after the strike was defeated,<sup>238</sup> but more intelligently agitated.

Lidia Tserba, Lida's 17-year-old sister, was a Bestuzhev course student. She had read *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* and *Die Neue Zeit*, and considered herself an SD, but a 'girl could attend only women's kruzhenki' and 'had to wait until they asked' her to lead one, or risk being labelled 'not serious', which was 'worse than a death sentence'. Late that year Zinaida Nevzorova asked Lidia to lead a kruzhenki of women from the Laferme cigarette factory on Saturday evenings, since they 'did not have to get up early on Sunday'. Most were literate, but they were not interested in western Europe, so Lidia talked about 'Russian realities'. They hated the predatory foremen's 'arbitrariness', but many were prostitutes to make ends meet.<sup>239</sup> Soon after, when managers told 40 women to operate new machines for less pay, so they could sack half of the 2,500 others, 1,300 announced that 'the cigarette girls of all the city's factories would not tolerate the new machines' or go 'without bread', and went on strike.<sup>240</sup> Their grievances included pay-cuts, arbitrary rejection of products, fines and rough treatment. Ulyanov and Silvin wrote a leaflet,<sup>241</sup> which demanded the release of those arrested, higher piece-rates, hot water and free storage for work clothes, and Zinaida Nevzorova and Yakubova dressed like workers and distributed copies outside the factory.<sup>242</sup> Strikers smashed windows and machinery,<sup>243</sup> and threw thousands of cigarettes onto the street.<sup>244</sup> It took two fire brigades and 100 armed police quelled them,<sup>245</sup> but the police deported 30 'ringleaders'.<sup>246</sup>

Next day, after an increase in fines and arbitrary rejection of products at the Skorokhod shoe factory in the Narva district, there was a strike. The GSD had no contacts, so Zaporozhets got information from Putilov workers

and wrote a leaflet,<sup>247</sup> which noted that 'the government is hand-in-glove with the bosses'.<sup>248</sup> After the strikers won, the Finance Ministry banned arbitrary rejection of products and ordered all fines to go to needy workers.<sup>249</sup>

Putilov activists heard about unrest at König Mill, and invited some workers and Luly Tsederbaum to Zinoviev's room. They talked about their grievances and demanded a leaflet, but were afraid to distribute it,<sup>250</sup> so Tsederbaum dressed as a worker,<sup>251</sup> as did Zaporozhets, and they pasted leaflets on the barrack walls. The police removed them, but at the end of the day Karamyshev created a disturbance to distract the guards, and Zinoviev scattered leaflets among the departing workers.<sup>252</sup>

The jobs of workers at state-owned plants were fairly secure. They had libraries, reading rooms and Sunday and evening classes, and according to Tsederbaum, were so 'Europeanised' that one 'could scarcely be distinguished in his general bearing from a student'; and they 'notable for their dandyism', 'their attraction to the ladies' and their fondness for 'amateur theatricals'. Most were 'conscious', and a 'certain milieu' was 'under the direct or indirect influence' of kruzhki, so 'our people did not feel themselves to be some sort of alien element'. There were 'no revolutionary traditions', but a few 'strained to get beyond the narrow limits' of the kruzhki and 'address the gray mass directly'. Silvin recalled that the workers knew leaflets about 'an abuse, a violation of law' or 'lowering of pay without notification' came from 'a certain, well-known group of comrades', but they would never tell managers or the police.<sup>253</sup>

The factory inspector instituted an enquiry, the police investigated. It was an event in the factory's monotonous routine, which provoked comment and raised interest. One awaited the uproar caused by the leaflet with impatience. The simple fact of publicising an abuse or an arbitrary act, which appeared to be an internal matter, provoked agitation.

Ah, well sent! says someone in the crowd, after reading a new leaflet he had just picked up.

Then someone makes a speech in a loud voice, in public, and, most often, the speakers were the workers who supplied the information and distributed the leaflets.

While speaking in a circle, the speaker did not seek out the most developed workers, the intellectuals, capable of understanding the theory of surplus value. He sought the awakened, active comrades, capable of agitating, of seizing the spirit of the occasion, of raising the important facts.<sup>254</sup>

When Putilov locomotive shop managers cut pay, Zinoviev gave Tsederbaum and Starkov a draft leaflet and demanded copies next day.<sup>255</sup> The mimeographed leaflet threatened a strike,<sup>256</sup> and linked the demands to former struggles. Locomotive and copper-plating shop workers went on strike,<sup>257</sup> and they won that same day.<sup>258</sup>

Semyannikov Shipyard's annual production was worth four million rubles.<sup>259</sup> Babushkin got a copy of the Putilov leaflet and someone (probably him) went into a toilet, waited until it emptied, 'poured some gum on his hand, plastered it on the wall, stuck on the leaflet and went out quickly'. After 15 minutes he returned to find one of 15 workers 'trying to read it aloud, but he was not doing so well', so 'Our comrade pushed his way to the front and in a loud staccato voice read the leaflet to the men, who were all pleased with it'. The 'reading never stopped', and 'everyone who read it went out and invited others to go in'. A manager told a guard to remove it, but he and 'other unfriendly elements' were afraid, and in two hours 'practically everyone' had read it. Babushkin recalled that it was 'a period of energetic agitational work', but he delegated circulating illegal literature to a worker, and another worker gave it to his sister, who told their father, and he told the police.<sup>260</sup>

Ulyanov had changed his address eight times in two years,<sup>261</sup> and when the GSD met in the Radchenkos' flat, he accepted articles by Krzhizhanovsky, Silvin, Tsederbaum and Vaneev, but announced that he would edit them 'autocratically'.<sup>262</sup> One of his articles was about Sunday schools,<sup>263</sup> another called for an independent workers' party, and he had also edited letters about provincial strikes. Two days later the editors met in Krupskaya's flat to finalise the paper's content,<sup>264</sup> and Ulyanov gave hand-written copies to Krupskaya, Vaneev and Zaporozhets, who rewrote his to prevent Ulyanov's handwriting being recognised if the police found it.<sup>265</sup> Vaneev took the copy for the printers, but that night police raided his room, seized the copy and worked out its connection to Ulyanov's workers' kruzhek outside the Nevsky Gate.<sup>266</sup> Ulyanov, Krzhizhanovsky, Starkov and Vaneev were arrested in the small hours of next day,<sup>267</sup> as were Takhtarev,<sup>268</sup> and Lepeshinsky.<sup>269</sup> Krzhizhanovsky, Starkov and Zaporozhets had visited Zinoviev's apartment, and he was arrested,<sup>270</sup> but he defiantly announced that 'we, the most intelligent workers would stand at the head of the movement'. Shelgunov, Karamyshev, Merkulov, Yakovlev and Keizer were arrested,<sup>271</sup> and charged with conducting 'Social Democratic propaganda among the workers'.<sup>272</sup> After hearing that Zinoviev had been mistreated, members of his Putilov kruzhek terrorised officials and police, and Nikolai Panin and Oscar Engberg killed a policeman. (They were subsequently exiled to Siberia.)<sup>273</sup>

Radchenko, Silvin, Krupskaya, Tsederbaum and Liakhovsky remained free, but did not want to use 'social democrat' or 'socialist' in the new name for the GSD.<sup>274</sup> They produced a leaflet which claimed responsibility for the Thornton, Laferme and Putilov leaflets, described the strikes and the role of troops, and stressed that the 'organisation' was 'intact and will continue its activity' in spite of the authorities' boast that 'leaflets will

disappear'. Arrest, deportation and exile would not defeat the workers' movement and the 'struggle will not cease until the complete emancipation of the working class from the yoke of capitalism'. There was talk of possible struggles at the Laferme factory and two textile mills. The leaflet was signed by Soyuz borby za osvobozhdenie rabocheho klassa (The League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class),<sup>275</sup> and the Soyuz asked the imprisoned Ulyanov to draft a programme for an All-Russian SD workers' party.<sup>276</sup>

Ulyanov recalled a children's game of writing in milk between the lines of books, which could be read by heating the pages; but one day, when guards got too close, he had to swallow six bread 'inkwells'.<sup>277</sup> Elizarova left Moscow, visited Fedoseev and other imprisoned SDs, then settled in St. Petersburg,<sup>278</sup> and distributed her brother's programme. It was based on the Erfurter Programm and demanded freedom of assembly, organisation, press and religion, the end of police control of personal documents, equality before the law and a national assembly based on universal suffrage. Workers should have the right to strike, an eight-hour day, mutuality in the labour process, employer-funded schools and medical facilities, statutory national holidays, health and safety laws, independent factory inspectors, industrial courts with equal numbers of employers and workers, a limit on fines, abolition of night and shift work and employment of children under 15 and the truck system. Peasants should have their cultivated plots and redemption payments returned, and they should pay equal taxes.<sup>279</sup> The programme was evidently not published.<sup>280</sup>

#### **(vi) We have no labour problem**

In 1891-1895 Russia's foreign trade surplus had averaged 161 million rubles for five years; but 24 percent of exports went to Germany, which had provided 25 percent of Russian imports in 1892. Imports of iron and machinery had slumped by 1894, but French capitalists invested heavily in 1895.<sup>281</sup> Foreigners owned 26 percent of joint-stock capital,<sup>282</sup> and had invested around 244 million rubles. Their annual dividends averaged 8.9 percent, but one Belgian-owned factory paid 40 percent,<sup>283</sup> and in 1895 over 537,000 of the 1.4 million tonnes of iron was produced in the south.<sup>284</sup> Foreigners also owned 30 percent of the national debt of almost 5.8 billion rubles,<sup>285</sup> but ten silver rubles were worth around £1,<sup>286</sup> and ten paper rubles a third less.<sup>287</sup> In five years the government had given two billion rubles to inefficient gentry landowners, while 70 percent of peasants lacked food.<sup>288</sup> For many four days' work a week went to repay kulak loans, and 90 percent of those in famine-stricken provinces had no horse. Peasants formed 90 percent of the population, supplied 90 percent of soldiers and paid 75 percent of all taxes, but had no political representation. By 1895 tax arrears were almost 11 million rubles in Samara province,<sup>289</sup> and averaged 45 percent.<sup>290</sup> The government had a vodka monopoly in four provinces,<sup>291</sup> but overall grain production had risen by nine percent. In five years almost 1,300km of new railways had opened, and in 1895 the government invested 109 million of its 1.27 billion ruble revenue,<sup>292</sup> and owned 60 percent of the network.<sup>293</sup>

During 1895 factory inspectors had collected data about three million workers,<sup>294</sup> and reported that 68 strikes had involved over 31,000,<sup>295</sup> for a total of 157,000 days. Forty-one percent ended in victory for the workers, 43 percent in compromise and 16 percent in defeat.<sup>296</sup> One strike in St. Petersburg had ended with compromise, five with defeats for the strikers and nine with workers' victories.<sup>297</sup> Plants with over 1,000 workers accounted for 31 percent of the strikes listed by the inspectors, compared to 13 percent in similar plants in Germany;<sup>298</sup> but reportedly at least 350 strikes and protests had involved 80,000 workers,<sup>299</sup> who were increasingly literate.

Zemstva ran 13,000 of the 54,000 rural primary schools,<sup>300</sup> and around 6.3 percent of pupils went on to secondary education, and 0.6 percent to higher education. Only 2.3 percent of the population were pupils or students, but 59 percent of Moscow University students were not of noble origin.<sup>301</sup> The interior minister was alarmed about 'intelligent young people of both sexes, very often still pursuing their studies, who penetrate into the midst of the people' and 'raise the level of popular education' by 'lectures, libraries, reading rooms for, and free distribution of, scientific, moral and literary publications among the factory and rural population'.<sup>302</sup> The education minister subjected the Committees of Popular Literacy to 'moral control',<sup>303</sup> and banned the Moscow Committee, because the Okhrana deemed about half of its 203 members politically unreliable.<sup>304</sup> That year 8,699 books and pamphlets were published,<sup>305</sup> but libraries and reading rooms could not buy 97 percent of the books and 83 percent of the periodicals which censors had passed.<sup>306</sup> Censors banned *Kapital* Volumes 1 and 2, but people of high status could read all three volumes in German,<sup>307</sup> and censors passed a translation of Kautsky's *Die Entstehung der Ehe und Familie (The Origins of Marriage and the Family)*.<sup>308</sup>

In 1888 the War Ministry had planned to re-equip the army with modern rifles in three years, and in 1890 the army comprised 878,000 officers and men. Between 1890 and 1894 the army's annual budget rose from 261 million rubles to 302 million, and the navy's from 47 to 71 million, but the proportion of the government budget

allocated to the armed forces had fallen from 28 to 24 percent. By 1895 the army comprised over one million officers and men,<sup>309</sup> and over the years up to three million peasant soldiers had become literate.<sup>310</sup>

There were about 50 illegal groups in 25 provinces, and well over half of SDs were workers.<sup>311</sup> The Vladimir province governor reported that 'workers of one factory know very well what occurs in another', so a 'disorder' 'not punished with the necessary strictness' was 'extremely infectious';<sup>312</sup> yet the finance minister insisted that 'Fortunately Russia does not possess a working-class in the same sense as the west does', and 'we have no labour problem'.<sup>313</sup>

In 12 years 2,664 political suspects had been deported or exiled from the Moscow region and 43,849 from the St. Petersburg region.<sup>314</sup> In 1895 the 9,243 gendarmes included 4,387 at railway stations.<sup>315</sup> Officially there were 219 suspects under surveillance, 20 in detention and 104 in prison. The Justice Ministry prosecuted 944, gendarmes dealt with 623 and courts martial with two. Between them they exiled 42 to Siberia, deported 66 and expelled one foreigner;<sup>316</sup> yet reportedly at least 1,030 had been sentenced without trial.<sup>317</sup> Suspects could be held in St. Petersburg's Kresty Prison for ten years, but it was full, so the government reopened Kharkiv prison, the 'House of Terror';<sup>318</sup> and the Okhrana was increasingly effective abroad.

### **(vii) The Okhrana's Foreign Agentura**

Vladimir Burtsev was born in Fort Alexandrovsky on the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea in 1862. His father was a Cossack officer and his mother was the daughter of a Collegiate Assessor, but one of Vladimir's grandfathers had been involved with the Decembrists. In 1870 Vladimir's father died, and his widow moved her family to Birsik in Ufa province. After two years at the district school Vladimir entered Ufa gymnasium, and was top of the class from the third year onwards. He was deeply religious, and considered becoming a monk; but in 1874 he read Pisarev's article on Turgenev, and a translation of John Draper's *History Of The Conflict Between Religion And Science*. Back at school he read Nekrasov and Plekhanov. He began to lose his faith, and in 1880 he moved to Kazan gymnasium. In 1882 he entered St. Petersburg University. His elder brother, a graduate of St. Petersburg Technological Institute, was under surveillance for communicating with another former student, the Jewish SD Yakov Bombro; and in November Vladimir was one of 91 students arrested for attending a meeting to support an excluded student. He spent a few weeks in a police station cellar, met revolutionaries,<sup>319</sup> became close to Narodnaya volya,<sup>320</sup> and early in 1883, when he was allowed to continue his studies, he rarely attended lectures. He read about political trials in the public library, and joined a kruzhok with 17 members, most of whom were students who wanted to propagandise workers. Burtsev gave a list of his friends and acquaintances to the Narodnaya volya EC member Lopatin, and the head of the Okhrana was assassinated in December. In autumn 1884, after Burtsev entered Kazan University, he eventually heard about Lopatin's arrest. Late that year he wrote in chemical ink to a woman in St. Petersburg, and gave her details about revolutionary propaganda in Kazan. The police intercepted the letter and sent it to Kazan Okhrana, who arrested Burtsev. A gendarme colonel reportedly exclaimed that 'No mercy should be shown to the likes of Burtsev – they should drown him like a pup!' St. Petersburg Okhrana arrested the woman Burtsev had written to, and she claimed that Lopatin had previously sent Burtsev on 'assignments of a revolutionary nature' to various parts of the empire. The Okhrana suspected him of being involved in their leader's assassination, framed him, and sent him to the Fortress, where he was minutely examined, but they found no 'seditious material'. 'They dressed me in a convict's gown and slammed my cell door shut';<sup>321</sup> but one of his former recruits remained at large.

Abraham Hackelman was born into a Jewish family who had a small grocery shop in Pinsk, Biełaruś, in 1861. He became a police spy at secondary school and they paid his fees at St. Petersburg Mining Institute in 1879. Burtsev recruited him to a kruzhok linked to Narodnaya volya, and invited him to join its leaders, but he betrayed them. He went to Rīga Polytechnical Institute, but revolutionary students learned about his contacts with the police and sentenced him to death, so in 1884 he escaped to Zurich and entered the Polytechnic under a pseudonym. The Okhrana's Rachkovsky had recruited him by 1885.<sup>322</sup> Rachkovsky was 'endeavouring to demoralise the radical émigré politically' in Paris, 'inject discord among revolutionary forces', 'weaken them, and at the same time suppress every revolutionary act in its origin', and Hackelman met Tikhomirov and other leading émigré SRs.

Burtsev had been sentenced to four years' exile in Siberia, without trial, in 1885. He was later transferred to a Moscow prison and set off to the village of Malyshevskoe in Irkutsk province in spring 1887, but in summer 1888 he dressed like a gymnasium student and escaped. On his way through Russia he met the leading SR Olga Figner, and promised to take over the publication of the journal, *Samoupravlenie (Self-Government)* in Switzerland. In Odesa he met the revolutionary Yury Rappaport, and they reached Geneva that autumn. Burtsev published *Samoupravlenie* in February 1889, and met Hackelman again. The March *Samoupravlenie* included an article

about the massacre of political convicts in Siberia, and the April issue contained contributions from Zasulich, Plekhanov, Axelrod, Kravchinsky and Kennan. In May Burtsev and two colleagues published *Svobodnaia Rossiia* (*Free Russia*), and late that year *The Times* of London published report of the Kara outrage, and an article about the Yakutsk massacre.<sup>323</sup>

Most émigré Russian SRs lived in Paris, so Hackelman settled there in spring 1890. The tsar was about to visit, so Hackelman persuaded 25 SRs to make bombs, gave them a note about their roles and tipped off the police, who arrested them all. Hackelman hid for two months and then went to Belgium. He received a generous salary from the Okhrana, went to Berlin and had himself baptized into the Orthodox Church as 'Baron Arkady Harting'.<sup>324</sup> Burtsev settled in Paris in summer, and Hackelman was sentenced to five years' in prison in absentia.

The Okhrana's Bucharest Agentura was responsible for Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Austro-Hungary. In December the Okhrana knew that Burtsev and the Georgian anarchist V.N. Cherkezov were on a steamship sailing down the Danube on their way to England. They landed in London in January 1891, and the veteran SR Volkovsky took Burtsev to his home in the north of the city. In spring Rachkovsky visited London to examine how British 'special surveillance' worked, discovered where Burtsev lived, reported to St. Petersburg about a revolutionary kruzhok and asked for funds. Three agents in London Agentura cost 2,250 French francs a month, and a Frenchman received 1,200, but Rachkovsky received 2,000 francs to hire three more. By autumn the Paris Agentura was functioning, and Rachkovsky reported that all the émigrés and their contacts were 'under our complete control'. In London Burtsev studied in the British Museum, but late that year he made brief visits to Paris, and the Okhrana understood that he exhorted revolutionaries to unite against the autocracy. Rachkovsky tipped off the French police, but Burtsev escaped before they could arrest him.

Early in 1892 Burtsev briefly visited Paris again. The London Agentura had information about him, Kropotkin and Kravchinsky, and in spring Rachkovsky complained to the prime minister about the increasing numbers and activity of Russian anarchists in London. A former Polish bomber settled in the East End, and gave the names of 72 revolutionary émigrés to the Agentura, which received an additional 14,000 francs, and recruited a Russian student who regularly attended the British Museum and fraternised with revolutionaries.

Burtsev had fallen in love with a woman in Paris, but she worked for the Okhrana for 300 francs a month and secretly betrayed him. In April 1893 she tried to lure him into Austria, where the police could arrest him on behalf of the Okhrana, but he refused, and returned to London in May, but then went to live with his lover in Paris. She lured him to Marseilles, and he boarded a vessel that the Paris Agentura had leased to entrap him, but he escaped and went to Zurich. By early 1894 Burtsev had organised an émigré kruzhok, but in April St. Petersburg police intercepted his letter to an imprisoned student. It explained that a constitution was the goal of those who were trying to revive Narodnaya volya, but political terror was 'one of the most important weapons at our disposal'. Burtsev enclosed what he thought was a safe address in Zurich and returned to London in summer. Rachkovsky received 10,000 another francs. In November Kravchinsky published *Nihilism as it is* in London, with an introduction by the liberal Tyneside solicitor Robert Spence Watson. On Christmas Eve 1895 Kravchinsky inexplicably fell under a train at a level-crossing in London,<sup>325</sup> and Bernstein spoke on behalf of the SPD at his funeral.<sup>326</sup>

In Russia the Narodnaya prisoners in Shlisselburg Fortress were allowed to receive books and periodicals, and two letters a year from close relatives.<sup>327</sup> The Okhrana employed 40-50 inspectors to coordinate their work with the regular police in St. Petersburg and Moscow,<sup>328</sup> but they could not arrest syndicalist or revolutionary ideas.

# 7. Strikes

## (i) Self-directing organisation and special roving agitators

By the beginning of 1896 about 60 activists associated with St. Petersburg's Soyuz borby remained active, and Ponomaryov supervised technical matters. Ivan Gubkin, who maintained the mimeographs,<sup>1</sup> had been born into a poor peasant family the Vladimir province village of Pozdniakovo, near Belgorod, in 1871. He spent three years at the village primary school, went on to the zemstvo secondary school and the teacher-training Seminary in Kirjatch, with a small government grant, and qualified. In 1895 he went to St. Petersburg, entered the Pedagogical Institute,<sup>2</sup> and had joined the Soyuz by 1896.<sup>3</sup> He recalled that he was 'often awakened in the middle of the night and dragged off to some obscure hole in the St. Petersburg Side' to 'put in order and run the apparatus'.<sup>4</sup>

Around 450 Lebedev Mill weavers had been on strike for several days before they contacted the Soyuz,<sup>5</sup> and Liakhovsky wrote a leaflet,<sup>6</sup> which appeared on 1 January. It acknowledged that the 'bosses' ruthless opposition' had 'not yet finally beaten you into submission', even after he 'set the police dogs' on them, and they 'illegally' detained a large number of weavers as a warning to others'; but 'you did not create among yourselves a *comradely union* to keep money collected in times of peace for use during strikes'. Another leaflet, allegedly written by strikers, listed demands, including the release of 'comrades', the restoration of basic pay and piecework rates, and pay books, since 'We cannot live on 40 kopeks a day'.<sup>7</sup>

The police had arrested three leaders of the TRK in the Nevsky Gate district, and Babushkin feared they had left him at large to find others. Kruzhki with no intelligent closed, and nobody distributed illegal literature, but his comrades went 'all out to break' his opposition to agitation. They had put 'fairly large quantities' of leaflets into a foundry, Pal Mill and Spassk & Petrov Mill (formerly Maxwell) Mill. They caused 'a sensation', and one foreman blamed the Kornilov School. Soon 'there was not a single large mill or factory which was not covered', and workers complained if they got too few,<sup>8</sup> Babushkin was unhappy about their content, and was well-respected. 'If an intelligent showed up at a meeting with a stiff collar and tie, his comrades could not restrain their laughter', but if Babushkin was 'thus attired', 'nobody laughed';<sup>9</sup> and he challenged Iuly Tsederbaum.

If it is necessary to continue with leaflets then it is impossible to limit them to issues concerning fines, foremen/bosses and wage reduction. Given the arrests, everywhere around the factories they are now talking continuously about the 'sitsilisti'. It is essential to take advantage of this and to put out a popular leaflet on socialism and the struggle for freedom.

Babushkin insisted that the Soyuz print his *Chto takoe sotsialist i politichesky prestupnik? (What Is a Socialist and a Political Criminal?)*. They thought it was 'too political',<sup>10</sup> but it appeared around the beginning of January.

*Brothers, comrades,* how hard it is to see that we stand so far behind in our development. Most of us do not even understand what 'Socialist' means. We are ready to betray people who are called 'Socialists' and 'political offenders' by denouncing them, to ridicule and even to destroy them, because we think of them as our enemies. Is it true, comrades, that these people are our enemies? Let us look more closely at them and we shall probably see that on the whole they are not as terrible as they seem. These people, whom we abuse and betray into the hands of our enemies to gain a gratitude that we expect from them but do not get, sacrifice their lives on our behalf. You yourselves, comrades, know that the owner is robbing us – the *factory owner* or *plant owner*, whose side is taken by the government. The Socialists are those people who strive for the emancipation of the oppressed working people from the yoke of capitalist owners. They are called political or state offenders because they oppose the aims of our barbaric government, which defends the interests of the factory and plant owners and wants to squeeze the poor peasant and worker in his hands so as to deprive him peacefully of the last drops of his blood to satisfy the splendour and bestial whims of the bureaucrats. Think, comrades, and you will understand clearly how said it is that people in their ignorance are ready to betray their defenders into the hands of their enemies. We shall not, brothers and comrades, submit to the deceptive talk of those who hold us in the darkness of ignorance, we shall try to find out the truth for ourselves so that we shall move towards emancipation from our present condition of slavery.

Our strength is great, nothing will stand in our way if we all march together arm in arm.

Babushkin signed it 'Your comrade worker'. There was a successful strike at Voronin Mill, and Soyuz leaflets caused unrest at the Port.<sup>11</sup>

The Youngsters had contacts at the Alexandrov, Pal, Volinkovsky, Putilov, Bert, Shpalernaya, Skorokhod Machine-Made Shoe and All-Russian Rubber plants, Warszawa Railway workshop and the Semyannikov, Baltic

and New Admiralty Shipyards. They proposed a merger to the surviving Elders, but they thought their leaflets were 'weak' and insisted on controlling the press; but the Youngsters refused.<sup>12</sup> Stepan Radchenko and Silvin co-opted Krupskaya, Gofman and Gurchich into the Soyuz.<sup>13</sup> The Youngsters produced a leaflet for Semën Sheplev's kruzhok, based on a draft that Zinoviev had smuggled out of prison; but Tserderbaum contacted Sheplev, who distributed leaflets at the Putilov works, and on 3 January workers took leaflets to 20 plants. Tserderbaum and Silvin gave Timofei Samokhin's Baltic Shipyard kruzhok leaflets announcing the Soyuz's existence, and copies of Babushkin's leaflet.<sup>14</sup> Tserderbaum wrote to *Vorwärts* about the agitation,<sup>15</sup> but next day he, Liakhovsky, Ponomaryov and 17 other intelligenty were arrested.<sup>16</sup> Babushkin was arrested on the 5<sup>th</sup>,<sup>17</sup> even though the police found nothing incriminating at his lodgings.<sup>18</sup> The New Admiralty Shipyard worker Ivan Fyodorov had hosted workmates, TRK survivors, Putilov workers, Sheplev, Samokhin and the dentist Mikhailov in December, and most of the workers were arrested in early January.<sup>19</sup>

Eizarova sent books to her imprisoned brother Ulyanov on Wednesdays and Saturdays.<sup>20</sup> She got them from the University, the Academy of Sciences and elsewhere. Krupskaya showed her a small table made to Ulyanov's design, with a large hollow single leg, and Eizarova copied his smuggled manuscripts, hid them in the table leg and destroyed the originals.<sup>21</sup> The editors of Ulyanov's collected works later claimed that some of his notes in a book about sanitary supervision in the countryside were 'illegible',<sup>22</sup> but they included the statement that 'news spread among the workers of the Shlisselburg Highway' that the arrests had been 'facilitated by an *agent-provocateur*', Mikhailov, and so 'they decided to kill him'.<sup>23</sup>

Late in January 88 people associated with the Soyuz went on trial. They included three doctors, five teachers, six engineers, six whose occupation is unclear, 15 students and 53 workers. Around 64 were aged 18-25, and most were literate, since they had attended primary, vocational or Sunday schools, or had educated themselves, and some had 'libraries'. Several workers were weavers or spinners, and over half were metalworkers.<sup>24</sup>

On 1 March the Soyuz produced a leaflet in support of dock workers, and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> it published an 'Address of the Petersburg Workers to the French Workers on the Occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Commune'. At the end of March skilled dockworkers went on strike in protest against excessive fines.<sup>25</sup> Lidia Tserderbaum's women's kruzhok distributed typed leaflets with slogans including 'Down with autocracy'.<sup>26</sup> On 12 April a Soyuz leaflet supported the striking port workers, and next day a leaflet was addressed to 'Comrade Workers at the Alexandrov Iron Foundry'. Before May Day the Lahti press printed 2,000 leaflets which claimed that workers had 'set up' the Soyuz and 'the time will not be far off when we too, closing our forces into orderly ranks, will be able to join openly in the general struggle of workers in all countries, without distinction of race or creed, against the capitalists of the whole world'.<sup>27</sup> Copies went into over 40 plants,<sup>28</sup> including the Thornton, Voronin, Lebedev and König mills and the New Cotton-Spinning Works; and a worker told Takhtarev.

We used to work and work and never see daylight. You could see with your own eyes how they swindled us, but what could you do about it? But now! Now comes the factory inspector, the military, and stick their noses in everywhere – the management has to stay on its toes. Marvellous! It used to be you'd see an abuse or a gyp [fiddle], but you wouldn't even pay attention to it. But now we have our boys who notice everything, everywhere and take it down. Tell it to the *soyuz*, you hear, we have to let them know about this.

'God grant good health to those people' – the students - then he 'fervently crossed himself'.<sup>29</sup> On 19 April the Soyuz published 'The Workers' Holiday of 1 May', and more leaflets appeared later in April.<sup>30</sup>

In May 100 Russian Spinnery workers demanded two days' pay for the enforced holiday for the tsar's coronation, and back pay for the extra 20 minutes a day they had been made to work for years. Managers conceded the back pay for a year, but refused it to 100 others, so all 700 came out and visited other plants. Young workers at Ekaterinhof Mill came out and demanded pay for the enforced holiday and a shorter working day, while 60 Mitrofanevsky Mill spinners led a walkout of 675 workers. Triumphal Mill spinners, Cheshire Mill weavers and Alexandr-Nevesky and Rozhdestvensk district workers followed suit. Russian Spinnery and Ekaterinhof Mill strikers returned after a week, but almost 5,000 Spassk & Petrov Mill, Pal Mill and Narva district workers stayed out.

A cotton worker convened a meeting near the Putilov works and 100 turned up.<sup>31</sup> Soyuz intelligenty helped them to formulate demands of a 7.00am to 7.00pm day from Monday to Friday, with 90 minutes for meals, a 2.00pm Saturday finish, an end to managers starting machines during breaks, pay for the enforced holiday, a rise,<sup>32</sup> and regular payment of wages.<sup>33</sup> Boris Goldman found two Soyuz intelligentka dancing round their room.<sup>34</sup>

It was a pleasant surprise for us to find that the workers possessed already at the beginning of the strike, quite independently of our union, some sort of a self-directing organisation as well as a rudimentary combatant strike fund, and that the strike itself spread so rapidly and in so organised a fashion throughout St. Petersburg due to special roving



agitators sent in by the workers from factory to factory. We were also delighted by the consciousness which the workers displayed: that they put forth as their main demand a reduction of the working day to ten and a half hours, and displayed a healthy organisational instinct which kept them from yielding to police provocations and induced them to conduct themselves in an orderly fashion, to keep away from drink, and to spend much time at home.<sup>35</sup>

Spassk & Petrov Mill and Pal Mill kruzhenki distributed a Soyuz leaflet listing their demands. Next day an SD Warszawa Railway metalworker called a meeting and 300 turned up near the Putilov works, where 100 locomotive machine shop workers struck for an eight-hour day. There were strikes in Vyborg and Petersburg districts, and Alexandrov machine-builders struck for back pay for the enforced holiday. The police chief ensured they got it, and managers sacked three obnoxious foremen and ended Saturday shifts at 2.00pm.<sup>36</sup> The Soyuz collected money from sympathisers, and Gurvich gave 400 copies of a translation of the Polish leaflet about the working day to leading workers, while he and others (including two SRs) read it and other illegal literature to the illiterate. A literate worker recalled that five of the 'more well-read of us got together frequently' in an 'unobtrusive spot' to read Bakh's pamphlet and other literature. When an inspector waved a telegram which called for a return to work, one striker shouted: 'We do not believe that written stuff! We have our own, and printed at that!'<sup>37</sup>

On 27 May the Ekaterinhof Mill workforce came out for full pay for the enforced holiday, and next the König, Mitrofanov and workers from other mills came out, so 17 workforces were on strike. A Soyuz leaflet threatened the owner of Voronin Mill, who refused to pay the workers for the enforced holiday. Cotton strikers' delegates met in Ekaterinhof Park and Soyuz intelligently helped them to formulate a 'manifesto' which they distributed 'in immense numbers all over' on 1 June. It noted that other workers were 'making every effort to come to our assistance', including taking collections, and argued for a 12-hour day with 90 minutes' breaks, no loss of pay, pay for the enforced holiday and the end of 'repressive measures'. Two days later a Soyuz leaflet appeared in all the main factories and included a long list of demands and an exhortation to support the 'difficult struggle with the robber-owners'. Workers should 'arrange collections' and 'not forget that similar hard times could befall us', and the weavers 'would certainly remember our present support'. There were strikes at the König mill and Mitrofanovsky mill, and reportedly 40,000 workers from 21 mills were out. On 3 June a Soyuz leaflet addressed 'To All Petersburg Workers' included a long list of demands including back pay for the enforced holiday, higher wages, and regular payments, and it also called for solidarity.

Workers of St. Petersburg! Let us support our comrades – let us like brothers extend the hand of assistance in their difficult struggle with the robber-owners; let us start to arrange collections among ourselves for the strikers and let us not forget that similar hard times could befall us, and then the weavers would certainly remember our present support.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> another was addressed 'To the Workers in the India Rubber Works'.<sup>38</sup>

Gurvich recalled that over 30 Soyuz leaflets included strike demands, information on 'the struggle in various enterprises, organisational instructions and exposures of the authorities'. The 'most ignorant workers' read leaflets that would have 'frightened them until recently' and were 'infected' with 'an altogether novel interest in political questions'. An 'answer to the announcements of the government' and 'explanations of the significance of the events taking place' were aimed at the general public, as were appeals for financial support for a 'conscious movement', 'unprecedented in its scope and nature'. Mill managers had given half-pay to scabs, and some promised to pay wages and overtime regularly and sack foremen who took bribes, but the strikes 'brought all working-class Petersburg to its feet and welded it together'.

The finance minister forbade factory owners from conceding workers' demands, and defrayed their expenses from government funds.<sup>39</sup> In mid-June the governor threatened to deport strikers, but promised to review their 'complaints' if they went back, while the finance minister claimed that workers were 'as precious to the government' as factory-owners, and a commission would consider a shorter working day.<sup>40</sup> The police briefly arrested Gurvich, Silvin, Zinaida Nevzorova and some workers,<sup>41</sup> and textile strikers began going back.<sup>42</sup>

The interior minister told governors about 'fighting squads' of workers 'whose mood is particularly revolutionary and who by means of intimidation and violence force the less resolute workers to join the strikers or prevent from working those who are willing to work'. He claimed they used 'every kind of violence, including murder, against those workmen who influence their comrades against striking or who are suspected of informing the police or the factory management of the identity of the principal strikers'.<sup>43</sup> Yet the government commission later noted that the strikers had shown a 'firmness, steadfastness, discipline, and decency so far unknown', and 'clarity in formulating their demand for a shorter working day'; and they concluded that 'Only the removal of basic causes for industrial unrest can pacify the masses', but the strikers must be severely punished.<sup>44</sup>

In prison Ulyanov wrote that workers needed to 'struggle against the capitalist and factory-owner class', and 'influence affairs of state', while intelligently should be 'indicating the aims and objects of the struggle'. The strikes had shown how to 'understand *the political situation and the political needs of the working class*'.<sup>45</sup> Knipovich took the manuscript to Lahti,<sup>46</sup> and got 3,000 copies 'Permitted by the Censor' and 'printed in Kherson';<sup>47</sup> but Mikhail Gurovich, a former revolutionary,<sup>48</sup> betrayed the press.<sup>49</sup> Police found Ulyanov's manuscript,<sup>50</sup> arrested Knipovich, confiscated 12 baskets of leaflets from her contacts,<sup>51</sup> and arrested the printers.<sup>52</sup>

The Soyuz had sent Krupskaya to Kyiv and Poltava to discuss an SD party-founding congress, but late in June she returned to St. Petersburg, and she and a student midwife went to Knipovich's dacha in nearby Valdaika. They bribed the servants, burned leaflets, walked past spies and buried type and manuscripts in the woods.<sup>53</sup> Krupskaya recalled that the Youngsters had 'less theoretical training' than the Elders, and 'no time for study', since 'Everything went in agitation'.<sup>54</sup>

By July around 16,000 workers were still on strike and Takhtarev recalled 'a real revolution in the minds of even the least conscious workers' and a changed attitude of 'broad layers' to socialists, agitators and illegal literature.<sup>55</sup> Takhtarev and Chernyshev joined the Soyuz, and wanted workers to control their funds,<sup>56</sup> while others demanded 'democratisation'.<sup>57</sup> They were unsuccessful, but the Soyuz attracted another intelligent.

Fridrikh Lengnik was born into a teacher's family in Grobina, near Liepāja in Latvia, in 1873. He graduated from St. Petersburg Technological Institute in summer 1896,<sup>58</sup> and joined the Soyuz.<sup>59</sup> Around 30 representatives of workers' *kruzhki* met Lengnik and Silvin in a suburban wood. The workers wanted more leaflets for particular workplaces, and others about general political issues, and they also wanted a workers' paper. They voted for Plekhanov to be their delegate to the Second International Congress,<sup>60</sup> and Stepan Radchenko, who was responsible for Soyuz contacts abroad,<sup>61</sup> paid their fares.<sup>62</sup> Potresov, who had helped to found the Soyuz, became a delegate,<sup>63</sup> and did Struve, who had reportedly performed 'all kinds of services' for the Soyuz;<sup>64</sup> but while SDs were organised in a few major centres, large parts of the empire which had lagged well behind, began to catch up.

## (ii) The Caucasus

In the 1870s there was no university in Georgia, and Tbilisi Seminary was almost the sole institution from which a Georgian student could matriculate in order to enter a Russian university; but Russian replaced Georgian as the language of instruction in 1872, and the priests stopped teaching Georgian history in 1875.<sup>65</sup>

Isidor Ramishvili and Silibistro Jibladze were both born in 1859, and later attended Ozurgeti Junior Seminary, then Tbilisi Seminary, where they formed a *kruzhok* with Misha Tskhakaya,<sup>66</sup> who was 16 and from the town of Martvili.<sup>67</sup> In 1879 two princes, Ilya Chavchavadze and Akaki Tsereteli, founded a society to spread literacy in Tbilisi, but the authorities prohibited the publication of Georgia's Russian name.<sup>68</sup>

By 1881 Tbilisi's population was around 78,000, and while Russian censors banned radical articles in Russian language papers, Georgian and Armenian papers sometimes escaped; but in 1882 the tsar appointed generals to control the region, banned Georgians from official posts, put Russian police in charge of districts and ordered them to persecute political dissenters. The Georgian language was ousted from the school curriculum and replaced with Russian, except in some parish schools.<sup>69</sup> The Okhrana established a 'black office' in Tbilisi,<sup>70</sup> and the government appointed a new censor,<sup>71</sup> but Giorgi Mayashvili explained Marx's ideas without using words like 'socialism', 'communism', 'equality' and 'solidarity' in the paper *ივერია* (*iveria*, the Greek name of an ancient kingdom in the southern Caucasus). Jibladze recalled that intellectually-developed seminarians, recent graduates and graduate teachers wanted 'to spread literacy among the uneducated, introduce to them the clear and reasoned views of scholars' and 'rapidly follow the direction of events in the world'.<sup>72</sup> Jibladze, Tskhakaya and Filipp Makharadze, who had been born in the Guria district of Kutaisi province in 1868, knew no Marxist theory, but the SR Gola Chitadze influenced them, and they became 'revolutionaries and socialists' intent on 'the destruction of the state and service to the people'. They opened a beer house to propagandise workers, and though the authorities closed it in 1884, some secondary pupils studied socialist and Georgian nationalist ideas.

Noe Zhordania was born into a family of minor gentry in a small Gurian village in 1869. His mother came from Samegrelo and was illiterate, but his literate father was a part-time advocate in the magistrates' court. The family were poor and ate meat once a month, but Noe attended Ozurgeti Junior Seminary and his father sold land to send him to Tbilisi Seminary in 1884. He and Makharadze knew of several *kruzhki* and got books from Zakaria Chichinadze, a socialist sympathiser who published *iveria* and *კვალი* (*kvali*), and whose bookshop was a meeting-place for radical seminarians.<sup>73</sup> Jibladze slapped the Russian Seminary rektor for calling Georgian a 'dog's

language',<sup>74</sup> and he was found to have a copy of Chernyshevsky's *Chto delat?* He received a 'wolf's ticket', which barred him from all prestigious universities,<sup>75</sup> and was sent to a punishment battalion for two years.<sup>76</sup>

In 1885 the Russian authorities banned the Armenian language in Georgian schools from the third year, but Armenian pupils organised illegal kruzki. By 1886 there were factories in Tbilisi, but industrial legislation was not enforced and many eight and nine-year-old children worked up to 13 hours a day in 'most unhygienic conditions'.<sup>77</sup> The city's population had reached 234,000, and Mayashvili favourably reviewed *Kapital* Volume 2.

The Russian Seminary rektor had expelled Ioseb Laghiashvili for publishing illegal leaflets in 1884, and he had been sent to a punishment battalion for two years. In 1886 he returned to Tbilisi and stabbed the Seminary rektor with a Georgian sword.<sup>78</sup> He was not yet 20, and was not hanged, but he was sentenced to 20 years' katorga on Sakhalin Island.<sup>79</sup> The rektor expelled 60 other students,<sup>80</sup> for 'untrustworthiness',<sup>81</sup> then closed the Seminary;<sup>82</sup>

The region was connected with the rest of the empire by rail. The line from Tbilisi to the Caspian port of Baki had opened in 1883,<sup>83</sup> and the Nobel Company owned 55 percent of the empire's oil exports. In 1884 Tbilisi was linked the Black Sea port of Batumi,<sup>84</sup> and in 1885 it exported 1.9 million tonnes of oil.<sup>85</sup> In 1887 workers at Tbilisi's Transcaucasian Railway workshops protested against a wage cut, and Chichinadze published a Georgian translation of *Das Kapital* Volume I.<sup>86</sup> In 1888 Fyodor Guzenko and Petr Shafranov arrived from Rostov-na-Donu and got illegal literature from a student and the deported SR worker Nikolai Ermolaev. They and Vasily Gerasimov, the deported St. Petersburg metalworker, began to 'prepare' workers for an 'open protest' against the government. When Guzenko and Shafranov left to organise in Batumi, the lathe-turner Ivan Chepurno led the kruzok, and gendarmes thought it 'more serious' than Tochisky's St. Petersburg organisation, so they closed it in 1889.<sup>87</sup> Yet workers' papers appeared,<sup>88</sup> and railway workshop employees went on strike, while trade school apprentices tried to form a union, and Chichinadze helped them to produce a handwritten paper, *musha* (*The Itinerant Worker*). The Seminary reopened, but two inspectors conducted 'unremitting supervision' of pupils.<sup>89</sup> In 1890 Russian was required in Orthodox schools and seminaries,<sup>90</sup> and Makharadze and Zhordania led a strike at Tbilisi Seminary.<sup>91</sup> It began over the monotonous diet of beans,<sup>92</sup> but went on to demand teaching in Georgian, Georgian history and better treatment. Both leaders received 'wolf's tickets',<sup>93</sup> but other radicals arrived.

Egnate Ingoroqva was born into a Gurian peasant family in 1859. He entered Ozurgeti Junior Seminary, and was expelled, but became a village teacher, then a railway worker and printer in Tbilisi. He went to France, but poverty drove him back to Georgia,<sup>94</sup> and by 1886 he wrote short stories for *kvali* and *iveria*, under a pseudonym. He became a labourer at a Batumi oil drum factory,<sup>95</sup> where conditions were appalling, and concluded that Marx, Engels and Plekhanov were right about the working class being 'the wheel of history'. In 1890 the world market price of oil fell, and so did refinery wages, and 500 Batumi workers went on strike;<sup>96</sup> but a railway tunnel connected Batumi to Baki, and branch lines ran to new coal and manganese seams.<sup>97</sup> Ingoroqva became a clerk in a Chiatura works processing manganese for the iron and steel industry, and began spreading radical ideas.

In 1891 Chichinadze helped Tbilisi apprentices produce *gantiadi* (*Dawn*) and *skhivi* (*Ray*), which aimed to 'free our generation, raised and educated in Georgian institutions, to love its homeland, give it the means to learn its own language; awake in it an appreciation for public activity; draw Georgian students close together; plant brotherhood and unity, and with united force, bring our generation into the country's arena'.

Makharadze and Zhordania were studying at Warszawa Veterinary Institute, and Zhordania was shocked when a Russian gendarme upbraided a train guard for speaking Polish to a passenger and when shopkeepers refused to speak Polish; but he encountered a 'real' working class. A University kruzok of Georgian students coordinated other Georgian kruzki across the empire, but Makharadze and Zhordania joined a kruzok of Polish and Russian students. They read Marx, Plekhanov and Kautsky, discussed the Second International, studied the SPD and sent SD literature to Tbilisi.<sup>98</sup> The Łódź strike convinced Zhordania that Georgia would continue to industrialise,<sup>99</sup> and he returned to Tbilisi in summer 1892.<sup>100</sup> Delegates from Georgian student groups in Baki, Warszawa, Moscow and St. Petersburg met secretly in Kutaisi, and established საქართველოს თავისუფლებისთვის ლიგა (The League for the Freedom of Georgia);<sup>101</sup> and Tbilisi's radical intelligentsy had a Russian contact.

Sergey Alliluyev was born into a peasant family in Ramonye, Voronezh province, in 1866.<sup>102</sup> He never knew his father, and his mother died when he was young, so her brother raised him.<sup>103</sup> Sergey left when he was 11, and by 1881 he was a labourer in a railway yard. He worked in factories across Russia, but settled in Tbilisi and married.

His future mother-in-law, Magdalena Eichholz, had been born into a family of Protestant German settlers, and subsequently married the Georgian Evgeny Fedorenko. Olga was born in 1872 and was raised as a Protestant. Her mother ran a tavern, and the family lived fairly comfortably in Tbilisi, Batumi and then Baki. After four years of schooling Olga spoke German and Georgian, and in 1886 the 13-year-old eloped with 20-year-old Alliluyev. By 1890 Alliluyev worked in the Transcaucasian Railway's workshops in Tbilisi,<sup>104</sup> and joined Stanislav Reninger's Kommuna krasnoy gory (Red Mountain Commune). It included a student land-surveyor and Pedia Afanasev, a mechanic at the Singer sewing-machine factory.<sup>105</sup> They were critical of SRs and Georgian nationalists,<sup>106</sup> but in

1892 Alliluyev hit a police informer at work, refused to pay a fine and left the workshops. He printed illegal 'manifestoes' on a 'copy-machine', and the police came looking for it in 1893;<sup>107</sup> but another young radical entered the Seminary.

Lado Ketskhoveli was born into a priest's family in the Kutaisi province village of Tqviavi around 1876.<sup>108</sup> He entered Gori Junior Seminary in the 1880s, and his father abused him for getting poor marks, but he entered Tbilisi Seminary.<sup>109</sup> Early in 1893 he led a strike over harsh discipline, searches for illegal books and the teachers' condescending attitude to Georgian culture,<sup>110</sup> but was expelled for 'Georgian nationalism',<sup>111</sup> and deported to Kyiv. In summer he reported to *iveria* about the peasants' burdens in Gori. Late that year, after Tbilisi seminarians demanded better food, an end to brutal surveillance, a department of Georgian language and the right to sing hymns in Georgian, the rektor expelled 87 students and closed the Seminary,<sup>112</sup> but more young radicals arrived.

Nikoloz Chkheidze was born into a poor noble family in Kutaisi province in 1864. He attended Odesa University in 1887 and Kharkiv Veterinary Institute in 1888. He joined student kruzhki, but was expelled, so he returned to Georgia and worked in a government commission fighting the wine parasite, phylloxera.<sup>113</sup> Ramishvili had studied law at Iuriev University in Estonia, but took part in student disturbances and was deported to Georgia;<sup>114</sup> and in December 1892 Ingoroqva invited Chkheidze, Ramishvili, Jibladze, Tskhakaya, Zhordania and seven other young radicals to Qvirili. They considered themselves socialists, supported Russian and western European workers and agreed that legal and illegal methods of political work were equally permissible. Zhordania brought a copy of *Kapital* Volume I and they wrote a programme 'in the spirit of Marxism'. They sent it to Makharadze in Warszawa, but his kruzhok regarded it as 'national democratic', and discussed building a party like the SPD, which included workers. Ingoroqva's kruzhok published in the legal journal, მესამე ჯგუფი (*The Third Group*),<sup>115</sup> and early in 1893 they met in Tskhakaya's apartment and read Zhordania's revised programme, which reportedly concluded that only capitalism and class differentiation could end Georgia's backwardness and ensure its economic and cultural survival.<sup>116</sup> Zhordania favoured a 'national-democratic' party and called his programme *Chto delat? (What Is To Be Done?)*. The kruzhok adopted it, published legal literature and propagandised workers.<sup>117</sup> In May Zhordania escaped to Geneva, met émigré Russian SDs and leading French and German SDs, and sent articles to Georgia. He went on to Berlin and Munich, where he attended University lectures, and sent more articles, before visiting the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and the British Museum in London.

In summer 1894 the Tbilisi მისამბე (*Bulletin*) published Zhordania's programme, and late that year Vaso Tsabadze, a member of Ingoroqva's kruzhok, helped Alliluyev to form one at the railway workshops, and its members refused to take the oath to the new tsar. By 1895 Tsabadze and Zakaria Chordishvili led two kruzhki, and though most members were Georgian, they spoke Russian. Makharadze was released after eight months in Warszawa Citadel and returned to Tbilisi, where he taught arithmetic and Georgian grammar to workers' kruzhki, but Tsabadze recalled that the workers 'looked very sceptically at the intelligentsia' and were 'sure that the workers' business had to be done by the workers themselves'.<sup>118</sup> Three-quarters of the railway workshops employees had been there less than five years, and over half were Russians, including most skilled men, and many others were Poles; and while SD intelligenty ran *kvali*,<sup>119</sup> railwaymen 'devoured' the radical newspaper, *Samarsky vestnik (The Samara Messenger)*, and contacted the St. Petersburg Soyuz and Baki SDs.<sup>120</sup>

Baki oilfield's annual production had averaged 4.6 million tonnes in 1890-1895, and it went by sea to Astrakhan, up the Volga and across Russia.<sup>121</sup> Kutaisi province produced a quarter of Russia's maize exports, but competition from the USA cut the market price by more than half, so exports almost halved and outward migration began. A railway linked Kutaisi to Guria, and a branch line went to the manganese mines at Chiatura, but work there was seasonal, so Gurian peasants with small plots of land often worked in urban factories. In 1896 Reninger returned, and Tsabade and Jibladze formed a railway workshop kruzhok, but Tbilisi police deported Afanasev.<sup>122</sup> The Georgian SDs did not send a delegate to the Second International Congress in London.

### **(iii) Why is it that the workers lead such a poor life?**

In 1896 Vilnius artisans demonstrated on May Day, but it was an intelligent who carried a red flag with the slogan 'We fight for a ten-hour working day, for higher wages, for better treatment!'<sup>123</sup> Some SDKP members had joined the PPS,<sup>124</sup> and in May 13 delegates founded Socialdemokratų partija Lietuvas (The Lithuanian Social-Democratic Party) in Vilnius.<sup>125</sup> Most members were impoverished Polish landowners and Lithuanian peasants,<sup>126</sup> but they spoke Polish.<sup>127</sup> Their programme announced that 'Fighting together with the workers throughout Russia we shall gain the constitution we need which will mark a stage on the road to socialism'.<sup>128</sup> They wanted an 'independent democratic republic' based on a 'loose federation' of Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Biełaruś and Ukraine, but excluding Russia. Moravskis, Domasevicius and Trusiewicz were responsible for LSDP kruzhki in the Vilnius region,

which included kruzhski of small farmers and labourers on three estates near the city, but not for those led by Jewish intelligenty. Most of the 400 or so LSDP worker-members lived in the city, where they built kassy and learned about science and economics from secondary school pupils. (Their library eventually held 800 works in Russian, Polish, Yiddish and German.) The most active workers joined the group of agitators, which was accountable to the CC, and Marchlewski and other intelligenty went to Switzerland to publish *Lietuvos darbininkas* (*The Lithuanian Worker*) in Lithuanian, and as *Robotnik litewski* in Polish.<sup>129</sup> Trusiewicz later dissociated himself from the LSDP, because it was too similar to the PPS, and founded Związek robotniczy na Litwie (*The Workers' Union in Lithuania*).<sup>130</sup>

In Minsk, the capital of Biełaruś, 40 percent of locksmiths, 75 percent of bookbinders and 800 bristle workers were in unions. They had kassy, but their libraries of illegal Russian and Yiddish literature could not satisfy demand, so Khatskel Usyckin from Vitebsk took a basket of Vilnius Yiddish Committee's books around nearby shtetls, and 'caught the imagination of the student youth'.<sup>131</sup> Kremer ensured that three workers joined the SD intelligenty kruzhek in Vilnius,<sup>132</sup> and he met SDs from Kyiv and St. Petersburg; but when he and Takhtarev went to Switzerland the GOT did not approve the idea of an All-Russian SD party. Eidelman left Kyiv for Moscow, and met unenthusiastic Vilnius and St. Petersburg SDs, but they agreed to send delegates to Kyiv the following year.<sup>133</sup>

Officially there had been 15 strikes in Kyiv up to 1895.<sup>134</sup> Late that year 25 boot makers lost a strike, but 25 paperhangers and 150 tailors won. Early in 1896 an agitational leaflet focussed on economic issues,<sup>135</sup> because the leading intelligent Melnikov thought it 'better to raise the mass of the people by one inch than one man to the first floor', and 'the more people are involved in agitation the more elusive the central group'. Leaflets published by Kyevsky rabochy komitet (*Kyiv Workers' Committee*) exposed oppression in a steamship company and commented on strikes for a shorter working day. They stressed that the 'happiness of the workers is in their own hands and their might is in their unity', but the police 'are our enemies, just as our employers are'. Kyiv's Polish socialists opposed agitation, and after someone at a May Day meeting read a Russian leaflet that exposed a minister's secret instructions to factory inspectors, a worker betrayed Melnikov, Polyak,<sup>136</sup> and other intelligenty, five tram workers, a locomotive plant worker, a printer and two tailors. Melnikov was deported,<sup>137</sup> and the Komitet collapsed,<sup>138</sup> but PPS members in Vilnius smuggled illegal literature to Kyiv agitators who targeted metalworkers, engineers and railway workers.<sup>139</sup> Russian SD intelligenty published *Vypered* (*Forward*), which answered questions like 'Why is it that the workers lead such a poor life?'. The city authorities banned reports of the St. Petersburg strikes, but *Vypered* published them, and the police found copies in factories and workshops.<sup>140</sup>

Kharkiv SD intelligenty propagandised young artisans and printers, and thought agitation was premature;<sup>141</sup> but Jewish workers who earned two or three rubles for an 84-108 hour week,<sup>142</sup> plus 3,000 textile workers and 9,000 others, went on strike.<sup>143</sup>

A Kyiv SD metalworker escaped to Rostov-na-Donu, but was deported to Katerynoslav,<sup>144</sup> where 150 factories employed 108,000 workers, including 7,100 at the Briansk metal plant. The deported SD Lalayants arrived and a Briansk worker's imprisoned brother gave him contact information, so Lalayants built a railway workers' kruzhek. Experienced comrades distributed St. Petersburg Soyuz leaflets which had 'an invigorating and stimulating effect'.<sup>145</sup> Nationally over 44 percent of over 5,000 young railway workers had attended primary school.<sup>146</sup>

The Vilnius SD intelligent Shloyme convinced a Yiddish-speaking PPS workers' kruzhek in Warszawa to form Algemeyner yidisher arbeter bund in poylin (*The Jewish Labour Union in Poland*), and Yiddish socialist literature arrived from the USA. Nokhem Levinson edited *Der yidisher arbeter* (*The Jewish Worker*) in Vilnius, had it printed in Geneva and argued that the demand for Yiddish literature proved the need for a single Jewish proletarian organisation.<sup>147</sup> He noted that St. Petersburg workers had recently joined the 'great struggle for liberation from the yoke of capitalism' that Poles and Jews were 'already waging',<sup>148</sup> and Jewish SDs in Vilnius, Minsk, Smorgon and Warszawa sent mandates for the Second International Congress to the GOT in Switzerland.<sup>149</sup>

#### **(iv) The advance guard of the great army of labour**

Late in July 1896, at the Second International Congress in London, Plekhanov and Zasulich claimed to speak on behalf of all the SD intelligenty in Russia, and they valued the 'new ties uniting us with the workers of Russia, Poland and Lithuania'. They stressed that Jewish workers knew there were 'two hostile classes', and Jewish SD intelligenty were 'the advance guard of the great army of labour'; but most other intelligenty suffered from 'a lack of unity'.<sup>150</sup> Eight delegates had credentials from Russian workers, who were 'entering into the ranks of the class-conscious Socialists of the world',<sup>151</sup> and the GOT agreed to publish a supplement to their paper on strikes.<sup>152</sup>

St. Petersburg Soyuz had had a report printed in English and German,<sup>153</sup> and Russian delegates claimed that it had organised trade unions and strike funds, had conducted mass agitation in factories with pamphlets and

leaflets that focused on 'some definite abuse on the part of the employers', and had trained worker-agitators. The Soyuz had been 'formulating the demands of the workers, developing a feeling of class solidarity among them, showing the antagonism between their interest and the interests of the capitalists', and proving that the government had 'shown itself and will show itself under all circumstances the zealous servant of the bourgeoisie'.<sup>154</sup> Potresov noted that 'class-consciousness' was 'awakening in the south of Russia just as quickly', and 'no major industrial centre' had escaped 'strikes or other manifestations of the proletariat's discontent for two years',<sup>155</sup> and Struve argued that propagandising peasants was a waste of time, but workers needed political freedom to 'wage a united economic struggle for better working conditions'.<sup>156</sup>

Early that year, after members of the SDKP had been arrested, Jogiches lost contact with the soldiers who wrote, published and smuggled literature, and closed the Swiss press.<sup>157</sup> Luxemburg had no information about the sales of *Sprawa Robotnicza*, but the spring issue contained workers' letters and poetry,<sup>158</sup> and what turned out to be the last edition appeared in Paris in July. She was the SDKP delegate to the Second International Congress in London and argued that the autocracy could only be defeated by abolishing its social basis, including 'the remains of the old peasant economy'. Russia was moving towards a capitalist economy, and the autocracy was 'sawing off the limb on which it sits', but a premature rising would be 'bloodily suppressed'. Congress delegates recognised the right of 'oppressed nationalities' to self-determination, but agreed that 'workers of all such nations' should 'enter the ranks of international socialism'.<sup>159</sup>

## (v) Soyuzy

There had been several workers' kruzhki with safe meeting-places in Ivanovo since January 1896, and members led kruzhki in Shuya and Kokhma; but the police made several arrests.<sup>160</sup> Fyodor Afanasev and Varentsova escaped, and workers met secretly to learn how to lead kruzhki, while 'advanced' workers studied Marx, political economy, western European labour movements and the rules of conspiracy.<sup>161</sup> From February Afanasev linked SD Moscow region organisations in Ivanovo, Shuya, Pavlovo-Posad to Riga,<sup>162</sup> but on 18 April, the day before the Russian May Day, leading SD workers were arrested in Ivanovo and Nizhni Novgorod.<sup>163</sup>

By early 1896 Mikhail Vladimirsky, a 21-year-old SD Moscow University medical student,<sup>164</sup> and his kruzhek of six 'advanced' workers, printed illegal literature. Early in March a leaflet celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Paris Commune, and the kruzhek sent a message signed by 605 workers in 26 factories to French workers. The engineer V. Baturin held open-air propaganda meetings and though he soon died, GOT literature arrived from Switzerland.<sup>165</sup> Gopper metalworks patternmakers led kruzhki of 'conscious' workers, and the police worried about a 'criminal' kruzhek at Bromley machine-building works,<sup>166</sup> which employed over 900.<sup>167</sup> Prokhorov Mill managers used Easter to 'cleanse' the workforce.<sup>168</sup> In May a coronation memento of a tin-glazed cup with the tsar's arms was to be distributed in Moscow,<sup>169</sup> and 300,000 people in Khodynka field hoped to get one,<sup>170</sup> but the authorities failed to organise the distribution. Reportedly 1,389 died and 1,301 were injured in a stampede,<sup>171</sup> but the tsar continued with the celebrations, which undermined his standing among older workers and made younger ones more open to propaganda and agitation.<sup>172</sup> The University student sovet tentatively offered support for demonstrations,<sup>173</sup> and the medical student A.N. Orlov persuaded workers' kruzhki to gather data and issue leaflets calling for funds to support strikes for a shorter working day,<sup>174</sup> in sympathy with St. Petersburg strikers. Over 300 workers met in a forest outside the city and refounded the workers' Soyuz. They agreed to pay two percent of their wages to build a library and a strike fund,<sup>175</sup> and contacted up to 2,000 workers in 55 plants.<sup>176</sup> On 15 June the Soyuz published a leaflet in support of the St. Petersburg strikers, and the SDs called a meeting next day. Early in July Moscow-Kursk Railway workers went on strike for back pay for the enforced coronation holiday and the end to several abuses. There were disturbances at the Moscow-Brest, Moscow-Riazan and Moscow-Yaroslavl railway workshops, and at Bromley Machine-Building Works and Moscow Metalworks; but the police had arrested 60 people, including 50 workers by the 6<sup>th</sup>.<sup>177</sup>

Zubatov had recently become head of the Moscow Okhrana, and 'turned' imprisoned workers, sent them to Sunday and factory schools to spot political activity, and ordered managers to correct abuses.<sup>178</sup> Zubatov promised activists that he would legalise trade unions if they renounced 'politics'. The chemist L.P. Radin ran a Sunday school and mimeographed illegal literature, and he and Orlov printed a leaflet announcing that the Soyuz fund was intact. The police raided a student press, but they found another to print a leaflet exhorting workers to fight. 'Threatened with a strike at a bad moment', the government had 'met some of our demands and promised to meet the rest', but when the strike ended the government reneged. Radin established a Sunday evening school for Moscow-Kazan Railway workers, who studied legal works on history, geography, accounting and economics, but SDs introduced Marxist ideas, the school built a library, and workers made contacts for illegal activities. The

Soyuz had contacted students,<sup>179</sup> and on the six-month anniversary of Khodynka in November, the University soviet called a demonstration. They sent a delegate to St. Petersburg students, who refused their support, but after all 43 members of the Moscow soviet were arrested, St. Petersburg students held stormy meetings.<sup>180</sup> Moscow students organised a procession to Volgov Cemetery, and demanded a public inquiry into Khodynka and the punishment of those responsible; but the police dispersed them,<sup>181</sup> and Cossacks drove 36 into a military riding school. Next day the rektor refused to get the students released, so others demonstrated, and 403 were arrested, 105 deported and the police threatened others who attended meetings or formed delegations in the future. The University expelled 26, and the tsar cut Jews' access to higher education,<sup>182</sup> but a young SD arrived.

Iosef Dubrovinsky was born into a merchant's family in the Orel province village of Pokrovsko-Lipovtsy in 1877. He joined SR kruzhki in 1893, attended a realschule in Kursk and another in Orel in 1895, and later led Kaluga SDs.<sup>183</sup> Late in 1896, Vladimirsky was arrested in Moscow, but Dubrovinsky arrived to work with Elizarova.<sup>184</sup> Soyuz intelligenty were arrested, but workers issued leaflets in its name demanding a shorter working day.<sup>185</sup>

In the second half of July St. Petersburg Soyuz had issued ten leaflets which focussed on the lessons to be learned from the strikes. By then the Soyuz had published 41 leaflets,<sup>186</sup> and Takhtarev wanted a leadership composed 'solely of workers',<sup>187</sup> since intelligenty were 'unsuitable' for 'organisational, agitational, and even propagandistic tasks'. Stepan Radchenko thought this 'undesirable from a conspiratorial point of view', and another intelligent feared workers would take over.<sup>188</sup> Krupskaya was arrested on 12 August,<sup>189</sup> and so was Yakubova.<sup>190</sup> On 15 September a Soyuz leaflet addressed 'To All Petersburg Workers' argued that workers had 'begun to understand better the interests and tasks that are common to us all', and needed 'the right to arrange, without hindrance, strikes, unions, funds and collections'.<sup>191</sup>

Since December 1895 the 216 people tried in connection with the Soyuz included 154 workers and 62 intelligenty. From February to October 1896 the 128 tried included 101 workers, eight students, eight teachers, three engineers, three office workers, two other professionals, and 13 others. Eight had a higher education, five had a secondary education and the rest had either a primary education or had educated themselves. Altogether 1,600 activists were tried after the strikes and 700 were deported without trial. Stepan and Lyubov Radchenko, Takhtarev, Potresov and Yakubova led the Soyuz,<sup>192</sup> and mimeographed Ulyanov's leaflet which noted that 'strikes do not break out because socialist agitators come on the scene', but agitators arrive 'when the workers' struggle breaks out'. The government had taken 'all possible measures to give strikes a political character' and helped workers understand '*the political situation and the political needs of the working class*'.<sup>193</sup> By 25 November the Soyuz had issued a long leaflet addressed 'To the Tsarist Government'.<sup>194</sup> It was one of only 13 leaflets that the Soyuz published between August and the end of December, but Soyuz leaflets had reached many industrial centres months earlier.<sup>195</sup>

## (vi) Letters from Germany

By 1896 the area of cultivated land in European Russia had shrunk by around 4.6 million hectares in 14 years, and the finance minister acknowledged that agriculture was 'moving along the road of capitalist development'.<sup>196</sup> Women formed 17 percent of the 350,000 peasants from 240,000 households who were involved in non-agricultural labour, and around 70 Tver province communes allowed women to hold land on the same basis as men.<sup>197</sup> Around 15 percent of the empire's population of 125.1 million lived in towns,<sup>198</sup> but one male peasant in Tver province who wanted to work in St. Petersburg had a 'lengthy struggle' with his family and was forced to marry 'to leave a worker in the household' before he left.<sup>199</sup>

The Trans-Siberian railway avoided large towns,<sup>200</sup> but there were villages for peasants from overpopulated regions all along the line, and the government gave them money and the use, but not the ownership, of land.<sup>201</sup> Part of the line offered subsidised fares for legal migrants, who were mostly subsistence farmers.<sup>202</sup> In ten years 800,000 people had settled in Siberia,<sup>203</sup> including around 640,000 volunteers. In 1896 the government invested 153 million of its revenue income of 1.43 billion rubles in railways,<sup>204</sup> and it monopolised the sale of alcohol.<sup>205</sup>

Foreign investors had formed 22 companies with a total capital of 80 million rubles.<sup>206</sup> During 1896 coal production was 9.4 million tonnes, oil 7.1 million tonnes, iron 1.6 million tonnes and steel one million tonnes,<sup>207</sup> and luzovka ironworks made ten rubles profit on every tonne.<sup>208</sup> Nationally almost one million workers were in 726 inspected plants employing 500-1,000, and there were 710,000 in 302 workforces of over 1,000.<sup>209</sup> Officially 118 strikes had involved 29,500 inspected workers,<sup>210</sup> or 1.9 percent of the total, for 189,000 days, and 17 percent ended in victory for the workers, five percent in compromise and 78 percent in defeat,<sup>211</sup> yet reportedly at least 364 strikes and protests had involved 64,000 workers.<sup>212</sup>

That year, officially, the Justice Ministry had prosecuted 1,668 political suspects, while gendarmes dealt with 561 and courts martial with three. Between them they exiled 58 to Siberia, deported 42 elsewhere and expelled one foreigner. Officially, 218 suspects were under surveillance, 16 in detention and 105 in prison;<sup>213</sup> yet at least 900 had been sentenced without trial;<sup>214</sup> but two determined intelligently escaped.

Dmitry Bonch-Bruевич was born into a family of Polish descent in Magíloŭ province. He became a land surveyor, married, and Vladimir was born in Moscow in 1873. He attended the elite Institute in 1884,<sup>215</sup> but took part in disturbances and was expelled in 1889. After graduated from Kursk Surveying School he worked for a liberal publisher in Moscow, but engaged in illegal publishing,<sup>216</sup> for the Soyuz, by 1892. From 1895 he was active in SD kruzhki,<sup>217</sup> and found a partner.

Vera Velichkina. She had been born into a doctor or priest's family in Moscow in 1868, later qualified as a doctor in Zurich and returned to Russia as a revolutionary.<sup>218</sup> In 1896, to avoid arrest,<sup>219</sup> the couple went to Zurich University, met Axelrod, and smuggled GOT literature,<sup>220</sup> and presses, into Russia.<sup>221</sup> In Switzerland the GOT's annual financial statement included 120 rubles for 'Help to the Polish workers', 238 for 'Loans', 1,021 for 'Organisation' and 'expenses of delegates to international socialist Congresses', 1,943 for 'Subsidies', 2,223 for 'Propaganda, literature and printing' and 3,203 to support 'Strikes'; but the Russian interior minister was able to send a copy to the tsar.<sup>222</sup>

Around 21 percent of the Russian population was literate,<sup>223</sup> including about 40 percent of army conscripts.<sup>224</sup> Over 87,000 primary schools taught three million boys and 800,000 girls,<sup>225</sup> or around one third of school-age children;<sup>226</sup> but only half of those in St. Petersburg attended.<sup>227</sup> The Education Ministry ran 33,000 schools, the Orthodox Church ran about 34,000 parish schools and the War Ministry ran 10,000 others. Most one-class schools taught Orthodox religion, Church Slavonic, Russian calligraphy, arithmetic and singing, but town, district and two-class schools also offered geography, history, drawing and geometry. The eight-year gymnasium course focussed on classics, and led to an attestatsiya zrelosti (Attestation of Maturity), which enabled pupils to enter a university or the civil service; but many wealthy non-gentry children went to universities abroad and women favoured those in Germany.<sup>228</sup>

Plekhanov's legal pseudonymous books were still available in Russia,<sup>229</sup> and though the national censors banned the translation of *Das Kapital* Volume 3, the St. Petersburg censors passed it, since 'Marx's conclusions now form part of every course of Political Economy'; and a translation of Marx's *Ein Beitrag zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* was also available.<sup>230</sup> Struve supported Bernstein's 'evolutionary socialism' in *Samarsky vestnik*, and believed that Marx needed 'revision',<sup>231</sup> but the editors serialised the Erfurter Programm as 'letters from Germany'.<sup>232</sup>



## 8. Cadre

### (i) The empire's first census

In January 1897 the empire's first census estimated the population at 126.4 million.<sup>1</sup> It found 61.7 million people in European Russia, 22 million in Ukraine, 9.4 million in Poland, 6.9 million in Biełaruś, 5.7 million in Siberia, 4 million in Kazakhstan, 3.1 million in Lithuania, 2.1 million in Georgia, 2 million in Uzbekistan, 1.9 million in Latvia, 1.7 million in Azerbaijan and 1.4 million in Crimea.<sup>2</sup> The census identified 170 ethnic groups, and defined 'nationality' by a person's first language,<sup>3</sup> yet 104 'nationalities' spoke 146 languages.<sup>4</sup> 55 million spoke Russian, 22 million Ukrainian, 13 million Turkic-Tatar, 7.9 million Polish, 5.9 million Biełaruśian, 5 million Yiddish, 3.5 million Finnish, 1.8 million German, 1.4 million Latvian, 1.3 million Kartvelian (including Georgian), 1.2 million Lithuanian, 1.1 million Armenian, 1.1 million Moldavian or Romanian and 1 million Dagestani. Around 69 per cent of the population belonged to the Orthodox Church, 11 per cent were Muslim, 9 per cent Catholic, 4 per cent Jews, 3 per cent Lutheran and 2 per cent Old Believers and other dissenters from Orthodoxy.<sup>5</sup>

The tsar described himself as the 'Master of the Russian land',<sup>6</sup> and owned more than 500,000 peasant households.<sup>7</sup> Over 885,000 of almost 1,222,000 hereditary noble families lived in European Russia, as did 487,000 of the 632,000 members of the personal nobility; and together they formed 1.47 per cent of the population.<sup>8</sup> Hereditary nobles included five per cent of Georgians, four per cent of Poles and less than one per cent of Russians.<sup>9</sup> Around 13 per cent of the 22 million households had servants, including 288,000 with up to 10 and 10,000 with 11 or more.<sup>10</sup> Over 700,000 administrators or professionals included almost 370,000 in the health, education, culture and communications sectors, and 200,000 in private enterprise,<sup>11</sup> and there were 785,000 'state servants'. Over 1.1 million military personnel included 196,000 officers,<sup>12</sup> and there were 104,500 police.<sup>13</sup>

Over 112 million people lived in the countryside.<sup>14</sup> Almost 46 million males and 48 million females depended on the rural economy,<sup>15</sup> and over 90 per cent were in over 500,000 villages with an average of around 200 inhabitants.<sup>16</sup> About 78.6 million of almost 97 million peasants in European Russia formed 77.1 per cent of the population.<sup>17</sup> In 30 years gentry had sold 3.1 million hectares,<sup>18</sup> and farmed 93 per cent of the remaining 7.7 million with old-fashioned methods. Peasants held an average of 3.1 hectares, but 20 per cent held 1.1 or less, and seven per cent had none. A third had no horse, farm equipment was up to 50 years out of date and grain yields were half of those in western Europe.<sup>19</sup> In a decade rents had risen by around 38 per cent, and by more in the central Black Earth and mid-Volga provinces.<sup>20</sup> Twelve million peasants worked outside their home districts,<sup>21</sup> and 3.98 million of the 55.9 million in the Black Earth provinces were migrants, as were 3.34 million of the 37.5 million in the rest of European Russia, and 1.2 million of the 9.4 million in Poland,<sup>22</sup> where 6.75 million were ethnic Poles, but 564,000 Poles lived in Lithuania and Biełaruś, and 161,000 formed ten per cent of Hrodna province's population.<sup>23</sup> There were over 1.8 million waged agricultural labourers,<sup>24</sup> and a third were female,<sup>25</sup> while around 6.6 million peasants had an industrial occupation,<sup>26</sup> and many lived in towns.

Railways covered 52,000km,<sup>27</sup> and over 3.8 million European Russian males and 2.8 million females had left provinces with a low level of natural increase and a high level of literacy. Many were now in St. Petersburg and Moscow provinces. Half the females were domestic servants, while males formed up to half the workers in the southern Russian Pale.<sup>28</sup> The population density of European Russia was one in five hectares, that of Central Asia was one in 45 and in eastern Siberia it was one in 227.<sup>29</sup> In Siberia 3.3 million of the 5.7 million inhabitants were migrants,<sup>30</sup> and 470,000 lived in towns;<sup>31</sup> but the population of Yakutsk, a provincial capital, was 2,000.<sup>32</sup>

In 50 European provinces 12.1 million people lived in towns and cities,<sup>33</sup> including 8.8 million peasants.<sup>34</sup> Over 53 per cent were in 44 settlements, or twice the proportion of 34 years earlier, and over 18 million lived far from their birthplace,<sup>35</sup> including almost half of the 13.4 million townsmen. In 40 years Kharkiv's and Odesa's populations had more than tripled to 174,000 and 404,000 respectively,<sup>36</sup> Kyiv's tripled to 247,000, Riga's quadrupled to 282,000, Katerynoslav's sextupled to 121,000, Baki's octupled to 112,000 and Ivanovo's had risen almost 40-fold to 54,000.<sup>37</sup> Saratov was home to 137,000, Kazan to 130,000, Rostov-na-Donu to 119,000, Tula to 114,000, Astrakhan to almost 113,000, and Chişinău to 108,000, while over 90,000 lived in Helsinki, Luhansk, Minsk, Nizhni-Novgorod and Samara.<sup>38</sup> Over 10,000 peasants lived in Tula and Rostov-na-Donu, 13,000 in Kharkiv and Yaroslavl, almost 21,000 in Ivanovo, 24,000 in Odesa, 144,000 in St. Petersburg and 153,000 in Moscow.<sup>39</sup>

Almost two-fifths of industrial workers lived in Poland, Ukraine, the Caucasus, and in and around Moscow and St. Petersburg.<sup>40</sup> The 9.2 million waged workers included 3.2 million in mining, manufacturing, transport, trade and construction, 2.7 million in agriculture (two thirds of them peasants) and 1.6 million in domestic service, while 1.1 million were day labourers and unskilled workers and 500,000 were 'servants', including white-collar

workers.<sup>41</sup> Around 3.3 million peasants worked in mining, industry, commerce and transport,<sup>42</sup> and 642,000 were textile workers.<sup>43</sup> Women formed around 41 percent of them in and around Moscow and 46 percent in and around St. Petersburg, as did about 15 percent of workers in heavy industry, service industry and transport.<sup>44</sup> Over 26 million men and over six million women, with over 92 million dependents, were 'independent' or had 'a trade or calling'. Around 6.3 million men and 5.4 million women were artisans, or worked in other forms of industry or manufacture, while 1.1 million men and 800,000 women worked in transport.<sup>45</sup> There were 544,000 miners and smelters, 214,000 metalworkers,<sup>46</sup> and 414,000 railway workers.<sup>47</sup> Of the seven million factory workers,<sup>48</sup> 2.1 million were in 39,000 inspected plants,<sup>49</sup> but there were only 267 factory inspectors.<sup>50</sup> The average annual factory wage was about 183 rubles, but textile workers earned between 133 and 155.<sup>51</sup>

Around 30 percent of people over ten were literate,<sup>52</sup> and around 21 percent answered 'yes' to the question, 'Can you read?'<sup>53</sup> They included around 18.3 million men and 8.2 million women;<sup>54</sup> or 31 percent and 13 percent respectively,<sup>55</sup> but 71 to 78 percent in the Baltic provinces, 40 percent in Moscow province and 55 percent in St. Petersburg province, but less than 20 percent in 21 other provinces.<sup>56</sup> Ten percent of peasant women and 25 percent of peasant men were literate,<sup>57</sup> including 24 percent of all those aged 20 to 59, and 37 percent of the males;<sup>58</sup> but there were over twice as many literate males and females in transport, industry and trade.<sup>59</sup> In Siberia 16 percent of people were literate,<sup>60</sup> but only 2.6 percent of Turkic-speakers in Central Asia.<sup>61</sup>

Around 45 percent of urban dwellers were literate,<sup>62</sup> including 54 percent of males,<sup>63</sup> 18 percent of peasants,<sup>64</sup> and 37 percent of those aged 20-59.<sup>65</sup> Almost six million of the 7.5 urban million literate people lived in European Russia, as did 57 percent of literate males and most literate females aged ten to 29.<sup>66</sup> Around 31 percent of miners were literate,<sup>67</sup> and over 57 percent of factory workers,<sup>68</sup> but only 21 percent of the females.<sup>69</sup> Around 28 percent of female and 58 percent of male industrial and commercial workers were literate,<sup>70</sup> including 39 percent of male and 12 percent of female metallurgy workers, almost 54 percent of male and 12 percent of female textile workers, almost 67 percent of male and 32 percent of female metalworkers,<sup>71</sup> 76 percent of sales workers,<sup>72</sup> and 93 percent of the overwhelmingly male printers.<sup>73</sup> A teenage male worker was over twice as likely to be literate as his grandfather, and a teenage female worker was almost four times as likely to be literate as her grandmother,<sup>74</sup> and 136 of the 472 Sunday schools were for females.<sup>75</sup> In general urban young workers, and above all those in plants in the major industrial centres, were increasingly likely to be literate; but there were more literate young men than young women, and especially among male metallurgy workers and printers.

In 23 years 165 of the 387 male and 645 female graduates of St. Petersburg Pedagogical Institute had come from peasant, clerical, artisan or townsmen's families,<sup>76</sup> and women formed 44 percent of primary teachers.<sup>77</sup> Over 1.38 million people, or 1.1 percent of the population, had a secondary education,<sup>78</sup> and almost half were female; but 40 percent of women were from gentry or senior civil servants' families, 34 percent from townsmen's, 20 percent from priests' and six percent from peasants'. Over 104,000 people, or around 0.00825 percent of the population had some higher education, including 6,360 women, but 73 percent were from gentry or senior civil servants' families, 20 percent from townsmen's, five percent from priests' and two percent from peasants'.<sup>79</sup>

The census had ignored Finland,<sup>80</sup> and Bukhara and Khiva in Uzbekistan, and it had undercounted Poles, so it excluded about six million people;<sup>81</sup> but over 70 percent of the well-educated people it included, and 80 percent with a secondary education, lived in towns or cities,<sup>82</sup> and over 16 percent of them in Moscow or St. Petersburg.<sup>83</sup>

## **(ii) The speech of men, not slaves!**

By 1897 St. Petersburg's population had more than doubled to 1.26 million in less than 40 years, and formed one percent of the empire's total,<sup>84</sup> but 70 percent were migrants.<sup>85</sup> There were 826 women to every 1,000 men,<sup>86</sup> and though over 43 percent of male workers were married, only eight percent lived with their families, including five percent of factory workers and 16 percent of metalworkers, but 43 percent of married textile workers lived alone. Around 31 percent of women workers (excluding domestic servants), and 44 percent of textile workers, were married, but around 92 percent of women workers, including around 88 percent of textile workers, lived alone. The city's housing was the most expensive of all major European cities. A 'corner' of a room cost up to two rubles a month, and a room up to 8.5 rubles, or two-thirds of a woman's average wage. A quarter of male and ten percent of female workers lived in *arteli*, and ten percent in factory barracks, where couples might wait a year for a 'family room'.<sup>87</sup> Metalworkers and machine-builders worked 11.5-hours a day,<sup>88</sup> and 63 percent of metalworkers aged 40 to 59, 74 percent aged 20 to 39, and 84 percent aged 10 to 19 were literate.<sup>89</sup>

On 1 January 1897 a Soyuz borby leaflet, allegedly written by a cotton worker, argued for a strike, but insisted that 'we must behave in a calm and resolute manner' and not risk deportation. On the 5<sup>th</sup> the government

announced a legal maximum day of 11.5 hours for cotton workers from April, 10.5 hours for metalworkers,<sup>90</sup> and 10 hours for night work,<sup>91</sup> but Spassk & Petrov Mill workers struck for 11.5 hours immediately,<sup>92</sup> and workers at Ekaterinhof, König, Rossiskaya and Stieglitz mills were out by the 8<sup>th</sup>,<sup>93</sup> and won.<sup>94</sup> The finance minister did not stop factory owners conceding strikers' demands,<sup>95</sup> and Alexandrov Metalworks managers conceded a 2.00pm finish on Saturdays on the 11<sup>th</sup>.<sup>96</sup> Most textile strikers were women, but a young intelligent noted men's 'alert, excited faces, that heightened tone in the conversations of people accustomed to silent labour'.

Everyone speaking loudly, asserting that they would not yield until they won'. And you felt that within the most ordinary, most average member of this crowd had awakened. Amidst the total and age-old silence, you heard a single protesting voice, the voice of the worker. His speech was still incoherent, still primitive, still expressed only immediate needs and 'crude' material interests. But it was the speech of men, not slaves!<sup>97</sup>

Another intelligent did not see 'a dark mass, but an 'organised association determined to defend its interests'.<sup>98</sup> Over 60 strikers were arrested,<sup>99</sup> and 1,000 were deported, but the Soyuz intelligent Gurvich recalled that the strikes 'gave cadres of prepared agitators and organisers to a homogenous movement that began to take in one industrial centre after another',<sup>100</sup> and a horrible incident in St. Petersburg Fortress sparked student unrest.

Maria Vetrova was born in south Russia around 1877.<sup>101</sup> She was the daughter of an unmarried peasant woman and an upper class man,<sup>102</sup> but after they died around 1883, she was sent to an orphanage. The matron helped her to go to primary school and secondary school, where she tutored other pupils. When she graduated in 1888 she became a primary teacher and read Tolstoy's *Semeynoye schastye* (*Family Happiness*), and works by 1860s Russian radicals and western European liberals. By 1893 three of her friends had been deemed 'politically unreliable', and in 1894 Vetrova enrolled on the Bestuzhev courses in St. Petersburg and read illegal literature. She supported strikers in 1896, but was arrested for contacting Narodnaya volya printers,<sup>103</sup> and taken to a solitary cell in the Fortress.<sup>104</sup> In February 1897 a man visited her for four hours, and 'heart-rending shrieks' came from her cell. She died two days later,<sup>105</sup> and was secretly buried. Two weeks later the police chief privately acknowledged that her visitor had been a gendarme, but claimed that she 'hallucinated' about being 'violated', and poured or spilled 'burning kerosene oil from the lamp' over herself.<sup>106</sup> Many believed that the gendarme had birched her friend,<sup>107</sup> raped Vetrova and burned her alive,<sup>108</sup> and thousands of students were enraged.

Konkordia Gromova was born in Irkutsk in 1876,<sup>109</sup> into an Orthodox priest's family. She joined a radical pupils' kruzhek at her gymnasium,<sup>110</sup> and learned about socialism from exiles.<sup>111</sup> She graduated in 1894, and wanted to be a teacher,<sup>112</sup> so she enrolled on the Bestuzhev courses in St. Petersburg in 1896, and read works by Marx, Engels and Plekhanov.<sup>113</sup> During the strikes she met revolutionary students, and early in 1897, after Vetrova's hideous death, Gromova won a vote for a student demonstration.<sup>114</sup> The police refused permission,<sup>115</sup> but the students wrote agitational leaflets in defiance of Soyuz instructions.<sup>116</sup> Early in March thousands assembled outside Kazan Cathedral, laid wreaths and sang a hymn.<sup>117</sup> The police attacked, and one woman was trampled to death,<sup>118</sup> and 1,200 were briefly detained.<sup>119</sup>

By April cotton workers had won a seven percent rise and the Soyuz's May Day leaflet celebrated the 'festival of struggle against the exploiters and oppressors of all sorts and descriptions', which the 'most conscious of our brothers, the Polish, Jewish and Lithuanian workers', had celebrated 'for some years'. It demanded '*political rights*', free speech, a free press and '*the right to organise strikes, meetings and unions*', and called for a general strike. Another leaflet argued that strikers should lead the 'cruel struggle' for a ten-hour day, and listed strikes in Smolensk, Vilnius, Minsk, Kyiv, Odesa, Kostroma, Yaroslavl, Ivanovo and Moscow.<sup>120</sup> Yakubova got the Soyuz to co-opt two workers, but she and her supporters were arrested.<sup>121</sup> The police knew that illegal literature arrived via Königsburg and Vilnius, and got the passwords, but left 1,000 items alone to monitor the network.<sup>122</sup> On 7 June police raided strikers' flats and dragged men and women to the factories.<sup>123</sup> In prison Krupskaya denied knowing about illegal activity, but Zinaida Nevzorova named names. They were released,<sup>124</sup> but surveillants began to 'follow their every step'. Krupskaya got money for the strikers from Tugan-Baranovsky, even though he thought strikes were 'not a sufficiently effective means of combating the owners',<sup>125</sup> yet strikes generalised.

### (iii) Moscow

By 1897 Moscow's population had almost trebled to 1.03 million in less than 40 years,<sup>126</sup> but 74 percent were migrants,<sup>127</sup> 57 percent were from outside the province, and there were three peasant women to every four peasant men. Between half and two-thirds of Muscovites lived apart from their families, and 193,000 men and almost 48,000 women lived in arteli. In nine years 56,000 of the 250,000 births in the city had been illegitimate.<sup>128</sup>

Half of male factory workers were married, but 96 percent lived alone. Almost a third of 50,000 women factory workers were married, including 47 percent of textile workers, but 93 percent lived away from their families.<sup>129</sup>

In Moscow province 30 percent of peasants had been born elsewhere, but while only four percent lived in towns,<sup>130</sup> 27 percent were literate.<sup>131</sup> In the Nerekhta and Shuya districts 36 percent of females and 48 percent of males followed their parents' trade.<sup>132</sup> Two-thirds had worked for the same firm for five years or more, and those with little or no land had been there longest.<sup>133</sup> For almost a century kerosene lamps had encouraged reading,<sup>134</sup> and 77 of those aged ten to 19 were literate.

In much of the central industrial region literacy was below the national average,<sup>135</sup> but 68 percent were literate in Vladimir province.<sup>136</sup> Around 50,000 of the empire's 600,000 textile workers lived in or around Ivanovo, but 90 percent had no land and 37 percent were factory workers' children. After workers heard about the St. Petersburg strikes, 15,000 went on strike for the release of prisoners, a working day ending at 6.00pm and the right for women to stop work a month before a child was due to be born and receive eight rubles from the accumulated fines. Intelligenty distributed hand-written leaflets and illegal literature, but soldiers patrolled the streets, plainclothes police mingled with strikers and marked the backs of about 100 to be arrested, and factory managers evicted strikers from the barracks.<sup>137</sup>

In spring a senior Moscow factory inspector noted that agitation had 'intensified', so 'each minute one may fear the outbreak of extensive strikes, primarily among workers in engineering factories'.<sup>138</sup> Some worked up to 17 hours a day,<sup>139</sup> but many worked 10. Moscow Soyuz intelligenty summarised the law on the 11.5 hour day, and some workers demanded 'a further shortening', a rise and civil rights.<sup>140</sup> Bromley machine-builders won a shorter day, but 21 were arrested.<sup>141</sup> The Soyuz also published pamphlets and a paper, *Volna (Wave)*,<sup>142</sup> and a semi-intelligent 'cadre of translators' ensured that workers could understand them.<sup>143</sup>

On May Day 40 or so Ivanovo intelligenty met workers in the woods, and 12 kruzhski with three to eight members subsequently elected organisers, known only by a number; but the police closed the workers' bookshop, arrested 18 activists, including the organisers, and deported most of them.<sup>144</sup>

In summer the working day in mines and factories was legally limited to 11.5 hours on weekdays, ten on Saturdays, the eve of public holidays,<sup>145</sup> and at night, and there was to be no work on Sunday; but state plants were exempt,<sup>146</sup> and the law applied only to men.<sup>147</sup> The interior minister noted that the Moscow and St. Petersburg Soyuzy led strikes, and ordered governors to punish workers who demanded better conditions,<sup>148</sup> arrest 'instigators' and order the rest to return to work or face deportation,<sup>149</sup> while factory inspectors received orders to report strikers and support strike-breakers.<sup>150</sup>

Moscow Soyuz intelligenty issued a leaflet allegedly written by workers to celebrate the legal 11.5-hour day: 'we alone, through our own efforts, made the government pass it'. It argued for a fight for a shorter day and better pay, and demanded that the government would 'not interfere with our discussing our own labour affairs, fighting capitalists and upholding the interests of the working class'. It wanted a free press and the right to meet and strike, which would make 'exploiter factory owners yield'.<sup>151</sup>

The former Moscow SD rabochy intelligent Fyodor Afanasev visited Riga, then Pavlovsky Posad and Shuya in the central industrial region.<sup>152</sup> He settled in Ivanovo in August,<sup>153</sup> and he and his brother Egor formed a kruzhsok of 20 Burylin factory workers;<sup>154</sup> but SDs in industrial centres in northern, central and eastern provinces trailed behind the SDs in the Russian provinces of the Pale.

#### **(iv) The General Jewish Workers' League**

By 1897 the almost 5.19 million Jews in the Russian empire were the largest community in the world.<sup>155</sup> They formed 4.1 percent of the total population, but 4.87 million formed 11.4 percent of that in the Russian provinces of the Pale. Over 46 percent of adults worked in industry, 39 percent in commerce, 4.5 percent in the civil service and professions and 2.3 percent in agriculture.<sup>156</sup> Around 15.1 million of the 42.3 million people in the region spoke Ukrainian, 6.7 million Polish, 5.6 million Biełaruśian, 3.1 million Russian, 3.1 million Yiddish and 1.3 million Lithuanian. Jews formed almost 64,000 of Vilnius's population of 154,000, 47,000 of Minsk's 90,000, 25,000 of Kaunas's 70,000, 32,000 of Daugavpils's 69,000, 34,000 of Vitebsk's 66,000,<sup>157</sup> 138,000 of Odesa's 403,000,<sup>158</sup> and 52 percent in other towns in Lithuania and Biełaruś.<sup>159</sup> Around 50,000 worked in factories and 250,000 in workshops,<sup>160</sup> but most of the 9,900 artisans worked up to 15 hours a day for eight rubles a month. Employment was seasonal, conditions were poor and child labour was widespread,<sup>161</sup> but 1,500 Vilnius and 1,000 Minsk artisans were in unions.<sup>162</sup> A Daugavpils intelligenty taught young carpenters political economy and Hrodna intelligenty and recently-arrived workers agitated. Vilnius carpenters won a strike,<sup>163</sup> and workers sat silently on park benches or walked in formation to mark May Day.<sup>164</sup>

The population of Russian-controlled Poland was 9.4 million,<sup>165</sup> and the density of one per 1.35 hectares was almost four times that of European Russia.<sup>166</sup> In the 35 towns and cities with over 10,000 inhabitants, 1.3 million Jews formed 88 percent of the 1.75 million population, including 24,000 of Lublin's 50,000, 98,000 of Łódź's 315,000 and 219,000 of Warszawa's 638,000.<sup>167</sup> Almost half of Warszawa's inhabitants had been born in the city, 14 percent in the province, 23 percent in other Polish provinces, 11 percent elsewhere in the empire and two percent in Austria, Hungary or Germany. Around 12 percent were 50 or over, 47 percent 20 to 49 and 41 percent ten to 19, while 36 percent depended on manufacturing.<sup>168</sup> The first language of almost 80 percent of 32,000 metalworkers and 83 percent of railway workers was Polish, and ten percent of Poles had some formal education, but only one percent of the Jews who spoke Yiddish. Almost 76 percent of Jews worked in trade or industry, and formed 44 percent of 27,650 textile workers and 70 percent of tobacco workers.<sup>169</sup>

In the Ukrainian provinces of the Pale 68 percent of the 2.3 million peasants led a hand to mouth existence, and the industrial labour force was around 10.7 million, but 1.1 million worked elsewhere. Two million Jews formed eight percent of the population, and 12.6 percent east of the Dnieper.<sup>170</sup> Around 38 percent of Jewish men, 20 percent of Russians, 18 percent of Poles and eight percent of Ukrainians worked in industry, while 34 percent of Jewish men, five percent of Russians, two percent of Poles and one percent of Ukrainians were traders, and 77 percent of Ukrainians, 52 percent of Russians, three percent of Jews and two percent of Poles worked in agriculture. Most urban workers were Russian,<sup>171</sup> but Jews formed 30 percent of the urban population,<sup>172</sup> and Ukrainians less than a third. One third of the 127,000 people involved in mental work in the region, and 25 percent of schoolteachers were Ukrainian, and around 24,000 people had had some higher education.<sup>173</sup>

There were 2.8 million people in Kyiv province,<sup>174</sup> but only 22 percent of those in the city of Kyiv were Ukrainian.<sup>175</sup> Half of the 246,000 inhabitants were not born there, and most of the 17,000 Poles and 32,000 Jews spoke Russian. A majority of the 13,000 workers were in small workshops, but a sugar refinery employed 1,200, and 26 of the 177 factories were machine-building and metalworking plants.<sup>176</sup> The railway workshops employed 2,500: three other plants between 750 and 1,000,<sup>177</sup> one had 500, and 100 had 100 or more. Around 63 percent of males and 46 percent of females were literate, including 75 percent of males and 60 percent of females aged ten to 29, compared to 24 percent of males and six percent of females in the surrounding countryside.<sup>178</sup>

Kyiv's Polish and Russian SDs met separately, but both elected two representatives and co-opted a fifth to lead the revitalised the Komitet, but SRs refused to join. After hearing about Vetrova's grisly death the SRs proposed a joint demonstration, but a Komitet leaflet aimed at 'class conscious workers' disagreed. 'Let the workers themselves begin to feel and realise that the government hinders their struggle. Then they will become conscious adherents of political warfare. Let them go through the necessary school of economic war, and then call them to the political fight'.<sup>179</sup> A typewritten and mimeographed *Vypered* reported on strikes elsewhere, and concluded that 'If workers throughout Russia acted like those in St. Petersburg' they 'would soon have a better life'. Intelligenty visited St. Petersburg, Moscow, Ivanovo and Vilnius, and Vigdorichik invited St. Petersburg Soyuz, Moscow Soyuz, Ivanovo Profsoyuz, and SDs from Vilnius,<sup>180</sup> and Kharkiv, to a party-founding congress. Kharkiv SDs declined, fearing a 'mechanical unification' and security risks, which was why Luhansk and Odesa SDs were not invited,<sup>181</sup> and the Vilnius and Ivanovo SDs did not reply.

In spring Vigdorichik and Kazimir Petrusovich represented Kyiv Komitet at the congress, but the only other delegate was Boris Goldman from the St. Petersburg Soyuz.<sup>182</sup> He suspected there were spies in Moscow Soyuz, so the organisers had cancelled a student's invitation. The delegates asked other SDs to express solidarity and invited Plekhanov to draft a programme for an All-Russian SD Party.<sup>183</sup> In Kyiv 30 or so Komitet intelligenty scattered 900 printed leaflets in the streets where workers lived, stuck them on fences and telegraph polls,<sup>184</sup> and put them into five factories. 'All workers are brothers. All have the same enemies and oppressors: the factory owners and their defenders'. Managers and police were 'powerless against the railway workers'. 'Let us then prepare ourselves and our less conscious comrades for the May Day holiday'. On May Day 530 railway workers went strike. Later Komitet leaflets explained that the law on factory hours was the result of the St. Petersburg strikes and criticised the government and tsar. SD literature arrived from Rostov-na-Donu and Katerynoslav, and up to 80 Kyiv workers heard speeches about the labour movement at home and abroad.<sup>185</sup>

In summer the Komitet's *Rabochaya gazeta (Workers' Gazette)* quoted the *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii* - 'Working Men of all Countries, Unite!' - and reported about western European workers and SDs in over a dozen major Russian centres. 'Only when they are united into a single powerful party will the Russian workers defeat the factory owners and the government', and the St. Petersburg Soyuz was 'a formidable vanguard'. The Komitet produced about 30 leaflets,<sup>186</sup> and one targeted railway workers and machine-builders. 'Every strike, every workers' meeting, every union will be a weapon in the war not only against the capitalists, but also against the government'. There must be 'economic warfare' and 'political warfare!' After hearing that troops shot Polish strikers, a leaflet predicted the 'downfall of the government'.<sup>187</sup>

In Białystok, in the north of Russian-controlled Poland, 41,000 of 66,000 population were Jews,<sup>188</sup> and artisans went on strike with the battle cry of 'From seven to seven', and soon won a 12-hour day.<sup>189</sup>

A manuscript of *Ob agitatsi* had reached the GOT the previous summer,<sup>190</sup> but they did not publish it until 1897, and Axelrod's 'Afterword' argued that agitating on economic issues marginalized politics.<sup>191</sup> The Vilnius SD Kremer visited the GOT and read *Rabochaya gazeta*.<sup>192</sup> Plekhanov told him about plans for an All-Russian SD party and asked how the GOT could represent Jewish workers,<sup>193</sup> but Kremer believed that émigrés should not interfere in the internal affairs of a Russian party.<sup>194</sup> When he returned to Vilnius the police had banished his wife to Magiloŭ,<sup>195</sup> but he consulted Warszawa SDs, and sent invitations to those in Białystok and Minsk.

In October 13 SDs met in a small attic room in a Jewish artisan's house in the Vilnius suburbs and spoke Russian.<sup>196</sup> Kremer, Mutnik and Nokhem Levinson represented Vilnius intelligenty, and the glove-maker Dovid Kats Vilnius workers.<sup>197</sup> Yidel Abramov from Vitebsk lived in Vilnius, while Berman was now a Minsk worker.<sup>198</sup> Shloyme and Lev Goldman came from Warszawa, as did the workers Yisroel Kaplinsky and Hirsch Soroka from *Di arbeter shtime*,<sup>199</sup> and the weaver Rosa Greenblat. The seamstress Maria Zhaludsky came from Białystok,<sup>200</sup> with the worker Hillel Katz-Blum. Ten of them were Vilnius-trained and nine were intelligenty.<sup>201</sup> Kremer set the agenda. 'A general union of all Jewish socialist groups will have as its goal not only the struggle for general Russian political demands; it will also have the special task of defending the specific interest of the Jewish workers, carry on the struggle for their civic rights, and above all combat the discriminatory anti-Jewish laws.'<sup>202</sup> The 13 agreed to have formal links with organised émigrés, and to enter an All-Russian SD party on the basis that they could decide Jewish-related questions. They elected the Vilnius intelligenty Kremer, Mutnik and Levinson as the Central Committee of אגלגעמיינער יידישער אַרבעטער בונד אין ליטע פוילין און רוסלאַ, (The General Jewish Labour Union of Lithuania, Poland and Russia). *Di arbeter shtime* would be the central organ, but they would also publish *Der yidisher arbiter* (*The Jewish Worker*),<sup>203</sup> and other literature in Yiddish.<sup>204</sup> They would build kruzhki and kassy, collect data 'on the situation of the workers in this or that craft, workshop, or factory', select agitators, identify winnable issues, 'choose the most favourable moment to strike' and 'organise aid to the strikers'.<sup>205</sup>

The Bund, as it became known, worried about Russian SDs' lax security and contacted only the leaders. Tsive Gurevich, an experienced Vilnius worker, disagreed with using Yiddish literature and 'envied those who left for work among the Russian proletariat',<sup>206</sup> but the Bund recruited in Volhynia and Podolia provinces and 'colonisers' went south.<sup>207</sup> Kremer liaised with Kaplinsky in Vilnius and moved the press there for security reasons, and Levinson, Sendor Zeldov, poluintelligenty and workers edited *Di arbeter shtime*. Kremer and Mutnik went to Minsk. Relations with the PPS frayed, but workers, students and smugglers ran the transport network to western Europe,<sup>208</sup> and Kopelzon left to work with Bucholtz in Berlin,<sup>209</sup> where *Vörwärts* welcomed the Bund as 'the first step toward the creation of a union of the All-Russian proletariat, an All-Russian Workers' Party'.<sup>210</sup> Kyiv Komitet leaflets with blank spaces for the publishers' name had reached Kharkiv and Katerynoslav.<sup>211</sup>

#### **(v) Katerynoslav League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class**

Grigory Petrovsky, the son of a poor tailor and a laundrywoman, was born in a village near Kharkiv in 1877. His father left in 1880, and his mother remarried, but her new husband was violent, and by 1889 Grigory had left home to be a part-time locksmith and lathe-operator.<sup>212</sup> He later entered Kharkiv Seminary, became politically active and was expelled, then worked in the locomotive depot. By 1893 he worked in Katerynoslav's Briansk metalworks.<sup>213</sup> In 1895 Leitensen's luzovka kruzhok tried to organise Briansk metalworkers, but the police arrested them.<sup>214</sup> Petrovsky began agitating workmates,<sup>215</sup> who 'almost entirely lacked solidarity' because of their 'animalistic struggle for survival'. Skilled workers felt 'drowned in an uncultured mass' of temporary workers, whose 'mood' had 'a pogromist character', which 'conscious' workers 'failed to control or direct'.<sup>216</sup>

By 1897 there were around 425,000 industrial workers in the Donbass, and almost half were in Katerynoslav province.<sup>217</sup> Around 72 percent of the 46,000 miners and metalworkers had been born elsewhere, and most miners were young, single peasants, with insufficient land in their villages, who arrived after harvest and returned at Easter.<sup>218</sup> Almost 3,000 Jews had left luzovka, but its population had risen by 3,000 in five years to 28,000, including 3,168 Jews, and 44 percent of adults were literate.<sup>219</sup> Katerynoslav's population was 122,000,<sup>220</sup> and most Jewish SDs from Vitebsk propagandised Russian workers, but Dushkan and Ilia Vilensky focussed on artisans and printed Kyiv *Rabochaya gazeta*.<sup>221</sup> Petrovsky now considered himself a revolutionary.<sup>222</sup>

In spring, after the St. Petersburg Soyuz rabochy intelligent Babushkin had spent 13 months in prison, he was deported to Katerynoslav for three years under surveillance. When he arrived, a contact did not turn up as planned, and he could not find a job; but weeks later his landlord, a Jewish hammerman, invited him to meet a tipsy workmate who called him 'comrade', and he introduced Babushkin to two deported St. Petersburg workers.

They talked about the strikes, but one had had a 'very limited education in a village school', so Babushkin loaned him books to develop both his literacy and his politics. Babushkin got a trial at the Briansk works, filing rough edges off castings, but his hands had grown soft and the foreman paid him off the same day. He met another deported St. Petersburg SD worker and then another in a different factory, and they shared a flat.

Petrovsky recruited youngsters and Babushkin gave them an 'all-round education' at evening and Sunday kruzki. 'D.', a deported Kharkiv SD who was 'painstaking in observing the rules of conspiracy', talked about books, socialism and factory problems, and he and Babushkin formed a workers' committee. Most SD intelligently refused to co-opt workers to their committee on security grounds, but Lalayants and another intelligent attended the workers' meetings. Babushkin recalled that 'relations were based on mutual respect', but most intelligently 'lacked firmness,' so 'D.' kept an eye on them. Workers made contacts and collected information, intelligently wrote leaflets 'exposing abuses' and workers distributed them. One was 'amazingly patient and quick-witted'.

[W]orkers made ready to go home. So did he, but instead of going out by the gates he went over to a place where an artesian well was being sunk. He got into the pit, seated himself on a ladder and stayed that way for five solid hours until midnight, when the... electricity was turned off to allow the dynamos to be oiled. The lights were no sooner out than the worker jumped out of the pit, dashed into the shop, quickly threw the leaflets around, risking injury by bumping into something in the dark. Then out again fast; out of that shop into another, or simply throwing the leaflets through broken windows. Then he hurried to a spot he had picked out beforehand ... and was over the fence safe and unmolested.

Within 24 hours the managers had hired another doctor and had promised to build new exits.<sup>223</sup>

A leaflet for Briansk metalworks noted that the 'administration enjoys all the comforts of life', but a 'dog's life is good enough' for workers, who should go on strike.<sup>224</sup> Another was internationalist. 'Every proletarian worker, be he a Jew, a Russian, a Pole, a German or Frenchman, is our brother'. 'Every capitalist, be he a Russian, a German, a Pole or a Jew, is our enemy'.<sup>225</sup> At night workers scattered leaflets arguing against beating foremen and destroying factory offices, and left a chalk mark on a fence or wall to say if distribution was good or bad.

Babushkin's young pupils 'often had wrong notions', and while one 'understood fully what I was talking about', two were close to 'heavy-handed' SRs. One SR had told a young worker: 'Before you read *Spartacus* you should know something about the history of Greece'. SRs focussed on natural science, but their books were 'mostly collections of arithmetical problems, or courses on grammar', and if 'lads asked for more serious books' they were told they were 'in too much of a hurry'.<sup>226</sup> Katerynoslav Soyuz borby was founded in December with the aim of 'conducting broad agitation among workers on the basis of day-to-day material needs and requirements', then 'passing from economic to political agitation';<sup>227</sup> but many St. Petersburg Soyuz intelligently were still in prison.

## **(vi) The Tasks of the Russian Social Democrats**

By 1897, after over a year in a prison, the St. Petersburg Soyuz SD intelligent Zaporozhets suffered from 'persecution mania', Vaneev had tuberculosis and Krzhizhanovsky was seriously troubled, but he kept in touch with comrades by hand-signals to and from the exercise yard, in the library and through visitors, and heard wardens dragging heavy cases of books to Ulyanov's cell.<sup>228</sup> Elizarova brought him 'heaps' of works from 'scientific book repositories',<sup>229</sup> and Struve,<sup>230</sup> so he could study Russian capitalism, focussing on the home market.<sup>231</sup> 'His Majesty's order of January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1897, resulting from his conviction of a crime against the State', informed 'junior barrister' Ulyanov that he was to be exiled to eastern Siberia under surveillance for three years.<sup>232</sup> In all 173 comrades were sentenced,<sup>233</sup> without trial,<sup>234</sup> and most were exiled for three years,<sup>235</sup> though Zaporozhets got five years because the police had found his handwritten copy of *Rabochee delo*.<sup>236</sup>

Ulyanov left prison on 14 February,<sup>237</sup> and Iuly Tserderbaum's mother got permission for some of them to spend three days with their families, and they were photographed in the Radchenkos' apartment.<sup>238</sup> Tserderbaum backed Stepan Radchenko's claim that if the workers' organisation controlled its funds it would 'bind the directing core' and limit activity to 'purely trade-union struggle'. Ulyanov argued that if 'conscious' workers deserved their confidence, 'let them come to the central group', and Takhtarev believed that the former Elders wanted 'unquestioned "leadership"'.<sup>239</sup>

In spring Ulyanov's mother paid for his third class railway ticket to western Siberia,<sup>240</sup> and she and her daughters Maria and Elizarova, and Elizarov, accompanied him to Tula.<sup>241</sup> He left with 1,000 rubles, 100 books,<sup>242</sup> and several newspapers, including *Samarsky vestnik*. When he reached Krasnoyarsk he argued with an exiled Narodnaya volya worker, and sent Elizarova a list of books he needed. Kalmykova had given him a contact who

advised him to ask for a medical examination, and the doctor recommended that he be sent south, where the climate was less cold, living costs were low and the post came twice a week.<sup>243</sup>

Most former Soyuz SDs could not afford a railway ticket, but when they arrived in Krasnoyarsk they slipped away from their guards and spoke with Ulyanov.<sup>244</sup> Tserderbaum was to go to Turukhansk, near the Arctic Circle, which had a population of 200,<sup>245</sup> and the post came nine times a year.<sup>246</sup> He left with Krzhizhanovsky, Zaporozhets, Vaneev, Starkov and Lepeshinsky, but what the others said about the 'Old Man' did not square with what Lepeshinsky heard from Olga Protopopova<sup>247</sup> She had graduated as a medical assistant in St. Petersburg in 1887, aged 16, practised in Siberia, considered herself an SD by 1893,<sup>248</sup> and travelled with Ulyanov in 1897.<sup>249</sup>

The Siberian exiles included intelligently and workers from various parts of the empire. Viktor Kurnatovsky was born into a gentry family,<sup>250</sup> in 1868. He joined SR kruzhki in 1886,<sup>251</sup> in Moscow; but was exiled to Archangelsk for three years in 1889.<sup>252</sup> In 1893 he worked with the GOT in Zurich,<sup>253</sup> and qualified as a surgeon and engineer. In 1897 he was in Georgia, but was exiled to Siberia for three years,<sup>254</sup> and so was a St. Petersburg metalworker.

Alexandr Shapovalov was born into a peasant family in the Poltava province village of Chernaya Sloboda in 1871,<sup>255</sup> and became an apprentice in Poltava's railway workshops in 1884.

I had not been spoiled by fate and had already graduated from a hard school, still, after one day spent under the authority of the coppersmith, Aleksey Ignatievich Sokolov, I wanted to run away. Instead of giving me a chance to learn a trade, I spent the whole day being sent out to fetch vodka ... The birth of a child, a baptism, a funeral, a wedding - all these were marked with boozeups. When a new worker started at the works, he had to buy 'welcoming' drinks for his comrades. When he was discharged, they demanded a 'farewell'. ...

Only a year later ... I was transferred to the locksmith shop.

I heard constantly from the grown-up locksmiths that I should count myself lucky that I was not beaten and was paid 30 kopeks a day... I stopped reading books ... A workday 'with evenings' (overtime) lasted from 7.00 in the morning until 10.30 at night. We also worked on Sundays and all the major holidays, such as Christmas, Easter, and so on ...

The most backward of the railway workers were the foremen and labourers. They lived in barracks, which were filthy. They were peasants torn from the plough, who had come to St Petersburg merely to earn a bit and return to their villages ...

The locksmiths, assistant engine-drivers, and drivers were a sort of aristocracy among the workers ... Recognition of their human worth was rare among the workers. The master was a 'tsar', a 'God' ... When he walked through the workshop, the workers ... would humbly bow, stutteringly remove their hats and say: 'Good Morning, our Lord and Master!'<sup>256</sup>

Shapovalov recalled feeling 'a peculiar duality' when he moved to a workshop in St. Petersburg.

I, a revolutionary and a Marxist, hating the capitalist system, having set as my goal its total destruction, recognised that capital was pressing me and subordinating me to the will of the boss to such an extent that I was lowering my eyes under his severe gaze, that I was stooping over my machinist's lathe more intensely than I had to when he looked at me. Alas, I had to admit that it was as if I were two men were living inside of me: one who for the sake of the struggle for a better future for the workers was not afraid of sitting in the Peter-Paul Fortress and in Siberian exile; and another who had not fully liberated himself from the feeling of dependence and even fear. Nevertheless, catching myself on these slavish feelings, I came to hate capitalism and my boss Olivier even more intensely.<sup>257</sup>

He later worked at Putilov metalworks, and attended Glasovskaya Sunday school, where SD teachers trained agitators, including the Putilov worker Poletaev. SRs influenced Shapovalov: 'Orthodoxy, tsarism, Great Russian chauvinism, Russian poddyovkas [light coats] and sheepskin coats, long beards and bobbed hair - all of this became hateful to me. Everything new and good, I thought, must be taken from the West'. When he fell asleep at his machine a foreman hit him in the stomach. He did not '*smash his head*' with a hammer, because he had to support his mother and siblings, but he distributed agitational leaflets.<sup>258</sup> In 1894 he joined the SRs, but by late 1895 he worked with SD intelligently,<sup>259</sup> and was their contact with the Lahti press. He was exiled for taking part in a textile mill strike in 1896, and in 1897 Lengnik introduced him to Ulyanov in a prison van leaving Krasnoyarsk.

Zinaida Krzhizhanovskaya (formerly Nevzorova), Krzhizhanovsky, Starkov, Antonina Starkova (formerly Krzhizhanovskaya) and the workers Shapovalov, Panin and Wladislaw Kowalevski from Żyrardów in Poland, went to Tessinskoye, where Shapovalov lodged with the family of a young female SD, but other exiles regarded the first SDs to arrive with curiosity and distrust. Kurnatovsky went to Kouraguinskoye, while Vaneev and Lepeshinsky went to Yermakovskoye. They all had to sign a rule that barred them from moving over 15km away and from working in most intellectual capacities or as agricultural labourers. The government gave them eight rubles a month for board, lodging, heating, fuel and tea, but no clothes, and families got 15 to 35 rubles.<sup>260</sup>



Glafira Okulova was born into the family of a peasant who had become a gold dealer,<sup>261</sup> in the village Shoshino, Yenisei province, in 1878. After she graduated at Krasnoyarsk High-School,<sup>262</sup> and later graduated from Moscow Pedagogical Institute.<sup>263</sup> In 1896 she was arrested for involvement in student demonstrations, and was deported to Shushenskoye.<sup>264</sup> By 1897 Minusinsk district was home to around 1,300 of Yenisei province's 40,000 urban inhabitants,<sup>265</sup> and 1,400 lived in 287 dwellings in Shushenskoye.<sup>266</sup> An official asked the town's Apollon Zyrianov to house Ulyanov, and he let him use a room with a wooden bed, a table and four chairs, and made him some shelves.<sup>267</sup> Ulyanov's mother sent him 150 rubles a month,<sup>268</sup> but he told her it was 'impossible to find servants'.<sup>269</sup> He questioned Shapovalov about the Lahti press, and wrote to Krzhizhanovsky and Starkov. Exiled workers got nothing from the government, so Ulyanov, the Starkovs, Krzhizhanovskys, Kurnatovsky, Okulova, the Polish SD Koulik formed a mutual aid fund to help them, along with the workers Shapovalov, Engberg, Panin, Kowalevski and Nikolai Prominsky,<sup>270</sup> an SD Polish hat-maker. Kalmykova gave Ulyanov 15 percent discount on scientific works,<sup>271</sup> and new exiles brought illegal literature; but while Ulyanov wrote in invisible ink or watered milk between the lines of innocent-looking books, or bound papers in book-covers, and posted them to safe addresses,<sup>272</sup> replies took over a month.<sup>273</sup>

By summer Ulyanov had 'almost lost hope' of news from St. Petersburg or 'our people abroad';<sup>274</sup> but eventually 'trunkfuls of books and Russian and Foreign journals' arrived. Ulyanov shared them with exiled comrades by post, and when they met at weddings, Easter and on other occasions. Going to Minusinsk without a permit risked further exile, or being moved to a 'worse and more remote, locality';<sup>275</sup> but after the Krzhizhanovskys and Starkovs got permission to live in the town, Zyrianov hid Ulyanov under straw in his cart and took him there. Once, when they returned, four gendarmes demanded whether Zyrianov's lodger was at home, but Ulyanov passed him a note saying that he would not agree to their entering, and they left.<sup>276</sup>

Felix Kon had rejoined Proletariat in Warszawa, but was exiled to Minusinsk in 1897,<sup>277</sup> and in autumn Ulyanov asked him for contacts in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Ulyanov also met the GOT agent Raichin. (He later escaped without letting comrades know, and the police confiscated their illegal literature.) Kurnatovsky spoke about the St. Petersburg Soyuz,<sup>278</sup> and Ulyanov argued that the 11.5-hour day had been 'won from the police government' by 'united and class-conscious workers', but employers would disregard the law. His analysis circulated among exiles and he debated with Narodnaya volya veterans who looked down on SD intelligence, called SD workers 'rabble' and argued that Russia's capitalist development was too late to enable it compete internationally.

Late that year Ulyanov wrote *Zadachi russkikh sotsialdemokratov* (*The Tasks of the Russian Social Democrats*).

The socialist activities of Russian Social-Democrats consist in spreading *by propaganda* the teachings of scientific socialism, in spreading among the workers a proper understanding of the present social and economic system, its basis and its development, an understanding of the various *classes* in Russian society, of their interrelations, of the struggle between these classes, of the role of the working class in this struggle, of its attitude towards the declining and the developing classes, towards the past and the future of capitalism, an understanding of the historical task of the international Social-Democracy and of the Russian working class. ... Social-Democrats take part in all the spontaneous manifestations of the working-class struggle, in all the conflicts between the workers and the capitalists over the working day, wages, working conditions, etc., etc. Our task is to merge our activities with the practical, everyday questions of working-class life, to help the workers understand these questions, to draw the workers' attention to the most important abuses, to help them formulate their demands to the employers more precisely and practically, to develop among the workers consciousness of their solidarity, consciousness of the common interests and common cause of all the Russian workers as a united working class that is part of the international army of the proletariat. To organise study circles among workers, to establish proper and secret connections between them and the central group of Social-Democrats, to publish and distribute working-class literature, to organise the receipt of correspondence from all centres of the working-class environment, to publish agitational leaflets and manifestos and to distribute them, and to train a body of experienced agitators ...

Émigré SDs should join the group in Switzerland and 'all *socialists*' in Russia should form a '*Social-Democratic Labour Party*' with 'true and consistent *democrats*'. Their work should be 'mainly directed to the factory' and urban workers who were 'most susceptible' to SD ideas, 'most developed intellectually and politically, and most important by virtue of their numbers and concentration in the country's large political centres'.<sup>279</sup>

In Moscow Ulyanov's brother Dmitry worked with the Soyuz, but was betrayed and detained.<sup>280</sup> His sister Elizarova left for Switzerland with Vladimir's analysis to get the GOT's opinion and pick up literature, but when she returned Dubrovinsky was in prison.<sup>281</sup> (A year later he was deported to Vyatka province for four years.<sup>282</sup>)

In Kyiv, late in 1897 a Komitet 'Letter to All Workers' noted that 6,500 leaflets had gone into 25 factories, and listed successful strikes. The 'number of conscious workers' was growing daily and they taught 'less conscious individuals'.<sup>283</sup> Pavel Tuchapsky went to Switzerland to ask the GOT to write for *Rabochaya gazeta*, and the

second issue argued that the movement would 'multiply its strength tenfold' if 'scattered workers' kruzhski and organisations were transformed' into an 'all-embracing party'.<sup>284</sup>

Axelrod wrote to SDs in Russia. He acknowledged that they had 'a theoretical basis' for 'the emancipation movement of the proletariat', but the empire was 'in the clutches of bureaucratic absolutism'. The 'deprived and uncultured masses' were 'fleeing to the towns and further devaluing the already cheap labour of the existing cadres of the urban working class'. Many were 'too deeply immersed' in 'barbarism and ignorance' to 'raise themselves' to 'conscious revolutionary strength', and SD kruzhski that focussed on economic struggle, and especially those with a 'one-sided enthusiasm for strikes', slowed 'political development'. Axelrod doubted that 'Russian life' would develop workers' political consciousness sufficiently to organise them 'into an independent and, in part, a leading revolutionary party', but the 'most advanced strata' could 'follow the bourgeois intelligentsia and fight for their emancipation' through reforms. SD intelligently needed 'the covert goodwill of the broad strata of society', so they should conduct a broader 'range of agitation and propaganda' about 'the interests of both the proletariat and the other classes that are oppressed'. Russia required a 'different formulation' of 'the immediate tasks of its emancipatory movement' from that adopted the West, and SDs should 'preserve' and 'revitalise the positive elements of revolutionary Populism'. SDs with 'roots among the working mass' should be 'leaders in its everyday confrontations with its exploiters', organise 'an independent political party, fighting for emancipation, *partly side by side and in alliance with the bourgeois revolutionary fractions*', and 'attracting into its own ranks' or 'carrying in its wake the most sympathetic and revolutionary elements of the intelligentsia'.<sup>285</sup>

In the printed version of this letter Axelrod later acknowledged that the GOT had 'lived too long outside Russia and too far from the field of struggle to judge with complete certainty the actual state of our movement', so they mainly relied on recently-arrived young and inexperienced comrades,<sup>286</sup> but Russia was changing very fast.

### **(vii) Sticks, staves and pitchforks**

In 1897 the government's revenue income was 1.43 billion,<sup>287</sup> its gold reserves were worth 860 million,<sup>288</sup> and its miners produced gold worth almost 240 million rubles. That and collecting customs duty in gold helped the government to redeem paper currency;<sup>289</sup> but it reduced the gold content of the ruble by a third, so it was worth 2⅔ French francs.<sup>290</sup> Since 1885 its annual borrowing had averaged 49 million rubles,<sup>291</sup> and French capitalists held about 2.7 billion of over 3.5 billion rubles of government debt.<sup>292</sup>

Since 1885 foreign investment had averaged 43 million rubles,<sup>293</sup> and the government guaranteed profits.<sup>294</sup> Five years earlier it had given a Baki oil cartel preferential rates on the railway to Black Sea ports,<sup>295</sup> and the oilfield supplied 95 percent of domestic demand in 1897,<sup>296</sup> or 8.4 million tonnes. Coal production was 45 million tonnes,<sup>297</sup> and 399,000 textile workers produced goods worth 463 million rubles. The output of 391,000 mining and metallurgy workers was worth 156 million rubles, and that of 103,000 metalworkers was 112 million, yet light industry produced goods worth 2.3 times more than heavy industry.<sup>298</sup> Whole metallurgical plants had been imported from the USA,<sup>299</sup> and overall industrial production had risen by 9.7 percent. During 1897 metalworking and machine-building had increased by 15.2 percent and iron and steel production by 16.9 percent.<sup>300</sup> The average annual dividend of Donbass ironworks was six percent,<sup>301</sup> but Iuzovka works produced almost 400,000 tonnes and paid 25 percent.<sup>302</sup> and St. Petersburg's metalworking and machine-building plants (except those making agricultural machinery) produced goods worth 259 million rubles that year.<sup>303</sup> The arms industry employed around 75,000, including 66,000 in state factories, arsenals and shipyards, while 60,000 worked in military construction and engineering projects. The Izhevsk shipyard in the Urals employed around 8,000, and the state ran the Admiralty, Baltic and Obukhov shipyards in or near St. Petersburg. Its Sestroresk armoury employed 1,725 and Tula armoury 7,000, while the privately-owned Putilov works in St. Petersburg employed 12,400 and made armaments, including better artillery.<sup>304</sup>

In the decade to 1897 the value of manufacturing output had more than doubled to 2.8 billion rubles, but the workforce increased by barely half. During 1897, 145 strikes had involved almost 60,000 inspected workers,<sup>305</sup> including 47,000 textile workers and 3,000 metalworkers,<sup>306</sup> for a total of 221,000 days. Around 37 percent of strikes ended in victory for the workers, 21 percent in compromise and 41 percent in defeat.<sup>307</sup> Reportedly 732 strikes and protests had involved at least 152,000 workers,<sup>308</sup> and some had demanded a nine-hour day.<sup>309</sup> In St. Petersburg over 17 percent of cotton workers and 12 percent of metalworkers had gone on strike.<sup>310</sup> There were over four Russians to every Ukrainian in Iuzovka, and the proportion was five to two in Kharkiv, but 40 percent of Ukrainians read Russian.<sup>311</sup> Hectographed leaflets had appeared in runs of up to 3,000 in Iuzovka and there was a handwritten translation of the Erfurter Programm with an introduction by 'Russian Social Democrats'.<sup>312</sup> There

was a two-week strike at the Petrovsky works in Yenakieve, but six brief and uncoordinated strikes achieved little.<sup>313</sup>

Officially the Justice Ministry had prosecuted 1,427 political suspects that year,<sup>314</sup> while gendarmes dealt with 1,474 and courts martial with four. Between them they exiled 117 to Siberia, 79 elsewhere and expelled 11 foreigners, while 767 were under surveillance, 92 in detention and 148 in prison;<sup>315</sup> yet 1,984 had been sentenced without trial.<sup>316</sup> The 22,000 or so Sakhalin Island exiles included around 4,000 women, two-thirds of whom were convicts and one-third were exiles' wives.<sup>317</sup>

The Moscow Prechistinskie courses for adult workers had opened.<sup>318</sup> In Vilnius the SD Portnoi ran an evening school for adult Jews,<sup>319</sup> where over 3,500 workers had been involved in 40 strikes.<sup>320</sup> The Bund had 14 city committees and bases in three other places, and was the largest SD organisation in the empire;<sup>321</sup> but the first Zionist congress took place in Basel and the organisation was beginning to compete with the Bund in the Pale.<sup>322</sup>

The St. Petersburg authorities denied women teachers the right to marry, and sacked those that did,<sup>323</sup> but a private Medical Institute for Women had opened.<sup>324</sup> Kalmykova had bought the legal journal, *Novoe slovo (The New Word)*,<sup>325</sup> and appointed Struve as editor. He published articles by Plekhanov, Zasulich, Tugan-Baranovsky, Luly Tsederbaum and Vladimir Ulyanov,<sup>326</sup> but censors cut out chunks until Struve gave a censor 100 rubles to vet dubious items, and from then on there were only minor cuts.<sup>327</sup> The catalogue of M.O. Volf's bookshop had resulted in a flourishing mail order business,<sup>328</sup> but some workers produced their own literature.

Two St. Petersburg medical students in Takhtarev's kruzhok and a Sunday school teacher had influenced a kruzhok at the state-owned Obukhov steelworks who produced a leaflet advising workmates to 'stop getting drunk and start fighting for improvements'. Some St. Petersburg metalworkers had moved to the navy's metallurgical plant at Kolpino, where two clerks gave them illegal literature, and on May Day hundreds of workers marched through the town, singing revolutionary songs and waving a red flag. The police dispersed them, but made no arrests. Ia.A. Andreev had built kruzhki in Kolpino whose syllabus included Marx. Most of them did not know how to contact SD intelligently, but they wanted a newspaper, so one went to Obukhov steelworks and returned with Vasily Poliakov, a kruzhok leader. Andreev recalled that his 'stubborn group of self-styled bumpkins' had 'incorrigible self-assurance' and 'set about it unsystematically and impulsively, totally ignoring the prevailing SD tendency', and 'without a scrap of scientific evaluation'; yet their articles 'combined revolutionary ardour with an everyday common sense judgment as to how the workers should struggle for a better existence'. The Obukhov kruzhok edited the drafts,<sup>329</sup> Poliakov wrote an editorial,<sup>330</sup> and Takhtarev published *Rabochaya mysl (Workers' Thought)* in St. Petersburg in autumn.<sup>331</sup> It argued that when 'the movement was merely a means of calming the suffering conscience of the repentant intellectual it was alien to the worker', but workers had 'wrested it from the hands of the leaders'. Strikes were the key 'instrument' in 'the struggle against capital on the field of daily basic immediate demands' and 'political chains are broken in passing'.

Let the workers struggle, knowing they are fighting not for some future generations but for themselves and their children; let them keep in mind that every victory, every inch gained from the enemy, means one less rung on the ladder leading to their own well-being; let the strong appeal to the weak to join the struggle and form them into ranks, relying on no one else's help. Victory lies ahead, but the workers will triumph only when they take as their slogan: *Workers for Workers*.<sup>332</sup>

Andreev later acknowledged that the paper was 'hard to read', and many workers 'could scarcely make it out'; but a 16-year-old called Vlasev befriended a 'vagabond' guitarist and read it 'in sing-song fashion', 'interspersing our weighty considerations with his brilliant wit, which the workers readily appreciated'. The pair visited 'populated places' near Kolpino for a fortnight, and the 150 copies sold quickly, including in St. Petersburg.<sup>333</sup>

In 1897 the government had invested 156 million rubles in railways,<sup>334</sup> and abolished the duty on internal passports.<sup>335</sup> Grain accounted for 20 percent of rail freight,<sup>336</sup> and almost half the value of exports,<sup>337</sup> but the world price of wheat had halved in 25 years.<sup>338</sup> The interior minister noted that peasant 'disorders' had resulted in

damage to the landowners' fields and meadows, together with the driving away of cattle under the protection of men armed with sticks, staves and pitchforks, and attacks on the landowners; watchmen and guards or considerable illegally timber-cutting in the landowners' woods, and brawls with the foresters. When the guards seize the peasants' cattle, the peasants, hoping to free it, *often moving by whole villages*, carry out armed attacks on the buildings and farmhouses of the landowners and divide up the working and even the living quarters, attacking and wounding servants and guards.

Most 'disorders' were in the south,<sup>339</sup> but when peasants protested at unfair electoral practices in Ukraine, peasant soldiers bayoneted ten to death and severely wounded 30, while over 800 were arrested.<sup>340</sup> Peasants usually sold up to a third of their crop after harvest,<sup>341</sup> but the 1897 harvest was three-quarters of what was needed,<sup>342</sup> and it had failed in 16 provinces, so a famine was underway.<sup>343</sup>

## 9. The All-Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party

### (i) The All-Russian Social-Democratic Party

The typesetter Polyak had helped to establish SD kruzhki in Odesa, Mykolaiv, Katerynoslav and Kharkiv, and in 1898 he went to Kyiv and joined the Komitet. It invited other SD kruzhki to send one intelligently and one worker to found an All-Russian SD party, but not those in Odesa or Mykolaiv, whose security was lax. Kharkiv SDs thought it premature, Ivanovo SDs, Plekhanov and the émigré SD organisation were unenthusiastic,<sup>1</sup> and the Lithuanian LSDP declined.<sup>2</sup> In St. Petersburg Stepan Radchenko appointed himself as a delegate without telling the Soyuz.<sup>3</sup> Of the seven Moscow Soyuz intelligently only Alexandr and Viktor Vanovsky were experienced,<sup>4</sup> and Viktor went to Kyiv. Katerynoslav SDs had circulated leaflets in seven factories,<sup>5</sup> and co-opted two Jewish intelligently, Petrusevich from Kyiv and Orlov from Poltava; and though artisans accepted Petrusevich as a delegate, he did not tell any workers.<sup>6</sup> The Bund sent Kremer, Mutnik and the worker Samuel Katz,<sup>7</sup> while the Kyiv Komitet sent Tuchapsky, and Eidelman and Vigdorichik came from *Rabochaya gazeta*.<sup>8</sup>

On 1 March the nine delegates met in the home of Petr Rumyantsev,<sup>9</sup> a railway worker,<sup>10</sup> on the edge of Minsk. They pretended to celebrate his wife's name day, but posted pickets and had a stove ready to burn papers in case the police raided. They elected Eidelman as chair and Vigdorichik and Tuchapsky to record the main decisions. They agreed on name of Rossyskaya Sotsial-Demokraticeskaya Partya (The All-Russian Social-Democratic Party),<sup>11</sup> though four had wanted to include the word 'Labour'.<sup>12</sup> They recognised 'the right of every nationality to self-determination', but the Bund would be 'independent only in questions that specifically affect the Jewish proletariat'. The RSDP's 'highest organ' would be a Congress of delegates from local committees, and the Central Committee would implement its decisions, distribute personnel and funds, formulate and pursue 'routine demands', supply literature, organise events with a 'general significance for the whole of Russia', such as May Day, and support strikers. The CC could co-opt, distribute 'voluntary once-for-all donations', make 'periodic deductions' from local committee funds, organise 'special collections' and call 'extraordinary congresses', and it had to do so after a request by two-thirds of the committees. On 'matters that may not be postponed' the CC had to act 'by unanimous decision, and report to the next regular or extraordinary Congress, but for 'matters that may be postponed' it should ask the next Congress for 'instruction'. The CC could 'enter into relations with other revolutionary organisations' if it did not 'interfere with the principles of its programme or its tactical precepts'. Local committees could 'enter into relations with other revolutionary organisations', locally, but only 'with the knowledge and on the instructions' of the CC. Local committees could act 'guided only by the party programme', but could carry out CC decisions 'in the form that they consider most appropriate', and could refuse to do so 'in exceptional cases', but had to give their reasons to the CC. The émigré SD organisation in Geneva would be the RSDP's representative abroad, while *Rabochaya gazeta* would be its 'central organ',<sup>13</sup> and Ulyanov would edit it after his exile ended.<sup>14</sup> Radchenko, Kremer and Eidelman were elected to the CC.<sup>15</sup>

Moscow Okhrana knew there was an illegal press in the south, and that A.A. Ioganson had visited Kyiv, so spies had followed him to Odesa and Katerynoslav.<sup>16</sup> Kyiv police were aware of *Rabochaya gazeta*,<sup>17</sup> so spies had followed Eidelman and Petrusevich to Minsk.<sup>18</sup> Days after the RSDP Congress ended there were police raids in 27 towns.<sup>19</sup> Most delegates and up to 1,000 activists were arrested,<sup>20</sup> including over 50 in Moscow,<sup>21</sup> and Katerynoslav SDs lost their press and the edition of their paper which described the Congress.<sup>22</sup> Kyiv police made 95 raids,<sup>23</sup> and 177 arrests,<sup>24</sup> including at least 77 workers and 65 intelligently. They confiscated 1,794 copies of 214 works by Marx, Engels, Ulyanov, Plekhanov, and other SDs,<sup>25</sup> and two presses,<sup>26</sup> but a third survived.

When Radchenko reached St. Petersburg he told the Soyuz 'practically nothing'.<sup>27</sup> He and Kremer changed the RSDP's name to Rossyskaya Sotsial-Demokraticeskaya Rabochaya Partya (The All-Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party),<sup>28</sup> and asked Struve to draft another manifesto.<sup>29</sup> He included the main Congress decisions,<sup>30</sup> but it was vague about the role of intelligently,<sup>31</sup> and the seizure and wielding of power after a revolution.<sup>32</sup> It acknowledged that the 'further east one goes in Europe, the meaner, more cowardly and politically weak the bourgeoisie becomes', so only the proletariat could 'win the political liberty it needs'. The RSDRP would 'struggle with the bourgeoisie with ever greater energy until the full victory of socialism' by pursuing 'the goal clearly proclaimed by the still glorious activists' of Narodnaya volya, but 'by other ways and means' and with an internationalist perspective.<sup>33</sup> The Bund disliked the manifesto, but printed it and a May Day leaflet in Yiddish and Russian, and when their press in Bobruisk, Biełaruś, could not meet demand, they established another in Minsk;<sup>34</sup> but two rival newspapers focussed on European Russia.

## (ii) *Workers' Banner*

Moisei Lure was born into a poor Jewish family in Vilkomir, near Vilnius. He later became a typesetter and helped the PPS to smuggle illegal literature,<sup>35</sup> but Warszawa police detained him in 1891.<sup>36</sup> He travelled through west and south Russia, propagandising typesetters and stealing type,<sup>37</sup> but in 1893 he was charged with smuggling illegal literature in Kharkiv and propagandising Katerynoslav workers, and by 1898 he had been detained three times in Moscow and Kyiv.<sup>38</sup> He joined the Kyiv Komitet, but the intelligenty called him an anarchist, and a typesetter thought he was a terrorist because he gave him SR literature; yet Lure published a report from the Second International Congress, the interior minister's secret circular to factory inspectors and a translated Polish pamphlet. He kept in touch with two Kharkiv SDs and two St. Petersburg students, and formed *Gruppa rabochikh revolyutsionerov* (The Revolutionary Worker's Group), which published 1,000 copies of a French popularisation of Marx that discussed a workers' party.<sup>39</sup> A polytechnic had recently opened Kyiv,<sup>40</sup> and a student *kruzhok* left the Komitet and called themselves *Rabochee znamia* (Workers' Banner). They contacted Lure's Bialystok *kruzhok* and he contacted a Hrodna *kruzhok*,<sup>41</sup> then he and Ruvim Fridman contacted the workers' 'opposition' to SD intelligenty in Vilnius.<sup>42</sup> Lure argued that intelligenty had 'joined the workers' movement solely to pull its own chestnuts out of the fire and had little concern for the workers' interests; hence, one should keep an extra stone in one's sling - a printing press'. He believed most *kruzhki* were pointless, and focussed on overthrowing the autocracy. He made contacts in Gomel and Minsk, helped the PPS to organise Jews,<sup>43</sup> and printed May Day leaflets,<sup>44</sup> and 1,000 copies of a newspaper called *Rabochee znamia*. Most of his supporters were arrested,<sup>45</sup> and he was sentenced to two years in solitary in St. Petersburg Fortress,<sup>46</sup> but his paper proved influential.

In St. Petersburg (and for years afterwards in other towns and cities) there was a demonstration on the anniversary of Vetrova's death.<sup>47</sup> Some Soyuz intelligenty demanded 'democratic principles of organisation' and used *Rabochee znamia* with 'advanced' workers and *Rabochaya mysl* with their periphery. Leaflets went into the Cheshire and Voronin Mills and a foundry, and Soyuz contacts at Spassk & Petrov Mill, the Putilov works and Obukhov steelworks distributed the émigré SD organisation's May Day leaflet. On the day Port strikers aimed to pull out New Admiralty Shipyard workers. The drawbridge was up, the yard was full of police and gendarmes had locked the gates, but strikers walked along the street singing revolutionary songs and clashing with Cossacks. Around 400 were arrested and 46 were detained, and officials sacked two of them and fined others.

On payday a leaflet about conditions, wages and exploitation at state plants argued that the bourgeoisie depended on 'spies, soldiers and gendarmes' and recommended fighting for the reinstatement of the sacked men, reimbursement of fines and other economic demands. Managers abolished fines and inquired into complaints. Women at Voronin Mill and other textile workers were restive, and a leaflet about economic issues encouraged them to strike. Police and gendarmes appeared, but withdrew after two days. The strikers won a minimum wage and other demands,<sup>48</sup> and Spassk & Petrov Mill workers got holidays restored.<sup>49</sup>

Early in summer Stepan Radchenko showed Struve's RSDRP manifesto to Soyuz survivors,<sup>50</sup> but *Rabochaya mysl* supporters refused to distribute it.<sup>51</sup> After Radchenko denied them the seal to validate their leaflets, arrests decimated the RSDRP Committee,<sup>52</sup> so the survivors had to find replacements.

Dmitry Stasov had graduated from St. Petersburg Law School in 1847, and in 1861, when the government denied student demonstrators their degrees, he organised a petition supporting them and was briefly detained.<sup>53</sup> He married Poliksena Kuznetsova, a campaigner for women's education, and Elena was born in 1873.<sup>54</sup> In 1877 Stasov defended 193 SR propagandists, and the city's lawyers elected their 'conscience' as their president; but in 1880 the tsar remarked that 'One cannot spit without hitting Stasov' and had him deported to Tula.<sup>55</sup> The radical Maria Strakhova was one of Elena's tutors,<sup>56</sup> and she spoke French and German when she entered the fifth form of a private girls' gymnasium in 1886. She won the gold medal,<sup>57</sup> and attended the Bestuzhev courses in 1889,<sup>58</sup> but she wanted to understand political economy and find a 'practical outlet'. She taught women workers at the Kornilov School,<sup>59</sup> smuggled messages to jailed revolutionaries in 1895 and hid illegal pamphlets during the 1896 strikes.<sup>60</sup> She raised money for Krasny Krest by organising lectures 'with an admission fee' at home, and members of the 'humanitarian intelligentsia' attended. She stored illegal literature for Kornilov School teachers,<sup>61</sup> joined the RSDRP in 1898,<sup>62</sup> and after their archivist was arrested, the Committee co-opted her;<sup>63</sup> but some émigré SDs were being influenced by reformist ideas.

## (iii) Revisionism

Ekaterina Kuskova (as she became) was born in 1869. Her mother was an illiterate Tatar and her father was a Russian nobleman who worked as a civil servant,<sup>64</sup> in Ufa, western Siberia.<sup>65</sup> Ekaterina spent her early years in

central Russia, and went to school in Saratov, where she encountered radical ideas; but both her parents died in 1884. In 1885 she married her former gymnasium teacher, Ivan Kuskov, who encouraged her to join radical *kruzhki*, but he died in 1889. Kuskova wrote for the liberal *Saratovskiy dnevnik (Saratov Diary)*, and went to Moscow to train as a midwife around 1891. She joined a student *kruzhok* that was organising a journal along the lines of Herzen's 1850s émigré *Kolokol (The Bell)*, but they were under secret surveillance.<sup>66</sup> In 1892 Kuskova tried stop starving peasants attacking medical personnel, and encouraged them to direct their anger against the authorities. The police saved her from being lynched, but the peasants turned on them and ransacked the governor's house. In 1893 she was detained for a month, put under surveillance for three years,<sup>67</sup> and deported to Nizhni-Novgorod,<sup>68</sup> but joined a Moscow *kruzhok* of a new party, and led workers' *kruzhki*.<sup>69</sup>

In summer 200 had intelligently formed *Partiya narodnoe pravo (The People's Rights Party)* in Saratov. They aimed to fight for political freedom and fulfil the people's 'material needs' by domestic production, as 'the first step to socialism',<sup>70</sup> unite 'oppositional elements', win 'representative government on the basis of universal suffrage', and secure freedom of religious belief and association, individual 'inviolability', independent courts and 'the right of self-determination for all the nationalities'. In spring 1894 most of the 52 members in St. Petersburg, Orel, Kharkiv, Smolensk and Moscow were arrested.<sup>71</sup> By 1895 Kuskova had tuberculosis,<sup>72</sup> but she considered herself an SD,<sup>73</sup> and met a liked-minded intelligent.

Sergey Prokopovich was born into a family of gentry in Tsarskoe Selo in 1871.<sup>74</sup> He later inherited a modest estate in Belorussia,<sup>75</sup> and by 1890 he was active in student politics in Moscow. SR ideas attracted him,<sup>76</sup> but he lost faith in the peasantry's revolutionary potential after seeing migrants from famine-stricken provinces going to Siberia voluntarily in 1891,<sup>77</sup> and he joined the same Moscow *kruzhok* as Kuskova in 1893.<sup>78</sup> That winter he went to Switzerland, met Axelrod and Plekhanov,<sup>79</sup> and he considered himself an SD by 1894. Thanks to Prokopovich, Kuskova was able to travel in western Europe in 1895, and met émigré Russian SDs. She and Prokopovich became common law partners,<sup>80</sup> and he entered Brussels University.<sup>81</sup> In 1896 the couple visited Switzerland and won the Bundist Kopelzon's support. In spring 1897 they went to Zurich and met Axelrod and Zasulich, who invited them to join their émigré organisation. In summer Prokopovich attended the Second International Congress in Zurich, but the GOT believed he intended to turn their Russian Marxism 'upside-down' and refused to publish his report. That winter Prokopovich and Kuskova went to Berlin and met Takhtarev, Bucholtz and other émigré SD intelligently who were critical of the GOT.<sup>82</sup> When Kuskova helped to produce '*Listok Rabotnika (The Worker's Supplement)*' for the GOT, Axelrod criticised her style, and at least three of her articles were not published,<sup>83</sup> but she kept up to date with her reading.

Bernstein had argued in *Die Neue Zeit* that internationalism should not prohibit the 'defence of national interests'. He denied that 'savages' should be 'assisted in their struggles against advancing capitalist civilisation', and Islam was 'the religion of 'barbarians' who were 'alternately violent and indolent'; so the idea that the proletariat had no nation should be 'modified wherever, whenever, and to the extent that he has a voice in the government and legislation of his country as a fully accredited citizen and is able to shape arrangements according to his wishes'. When the SPD made 'palpable advances', it could make 'positive suggestions of reform', and after further 'capitalist development' 'we shall no longer be dealing with the old kind of trade crisis', and will have to 'throw overboard all speculations that such crises will bring about the great social upheaval'. He acknowledged that an SPD Reichstag majority 'could not abolish capitalism by decree', or 'guarantee capitalism the security which it needs'; but he had 'extraordinarily little feeling for, or interest in, what is usually termed "the final goal of socialism"', since 'the movement is everything', both 'the general movement of society, i.e. social progress, and the political and economic agitation and organisation to bring about this progress'. He argued that there was 'more socialism' in good factory laws than in 'the nationalisation of a whole group of factories'.<sup>84</sup>

In spring 1898 Kuskova and Prokopovich returned to Switzerland,<sup>85</sup> and she wrote to Axelrod.

To the workers only two things are known: 1) their own, clearly conscious concrete interests and 2) their position among other classes. Consequently, the role of the superstructure of intelligent Social Democracy, is to understand the interest of the given moment, that active-psychic base which acts as the motive force of the masses in the midst of all the other conditions of the given moment as broadly and as concretely as possible.

The *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii* was not 'gospel', and a revolution was needed inside the working class.<sup>86</sup>

Prokopovich wrote to Axelrod, supporting Bernstein,<sup>87</sup> and argued that it was utopian to expect the imminent overthrow of the Russian autocracy, and irresponsible to seek to convert the infant labour movement into a revolutionary force.<sup>88</sup> Plekhanov had thought Bernstein's first article had been partly correct, but the second concerned him.<sup>89</sup> He insisted that Prokopovich and Kuskova be expelled from the émigré SD organisation, but they resigned, and in summer Kuskova left for Russia with the organisation's contact addresses.<sup>90</sup>

In Germany the constituency boundaries were still rigged against the SPD, and in summer the 100 smallest constituencies returned as many Reichstag deputies as 22 constituencies with over 50,000 voters;<sup>91</sup> but while SPD candidates won 2.1 million votes, or 27 percent of those cast, they won 56, or 14 percent of Reichstag seats.<sup>92</sup>

Plekhanov could not persuade Kautsky to attack Bernstein,<sup>93</sup> but in autumn Plekhanov insisted that Bernstein's ideas 'must be annihilated',<sup>94</sup> though he privately conceded that it was 'impossible to count upon the realisation of the socialist ideal' in Russia 'in the near future'. Axelrod saw it taking 'a thousand years',<sup>95</sup> and had 'a kind of religious feeling' that SDs were 'preparing for the appearance on earth of divine men, possessed of all-powerful reason and will, appealing to consciousness and self-consciousness, capable through wisdom of comprehending and changing the world'. He used Nietzsche's term, 'supermen', for this 'vanguard of humanity'. He thought Bernstein's 'philistine-tortoise' perspective was based on pessimism about 'the progressive movement of humanity', and he damned 'half or four-fifths' of Paris workers as 'degenerate fools and cretins' for not opposing the persecution of Alfred Dreyfus.<sup>96</sup> (Four years earlier Dreyfus, a Jewish member of the French general staff, had been found guilty of a trumped up treason charge and exiled to the penal colony of Cayenne, 'Devil's Island', for life.)<sup>97</sup> Zasulich believed that capitalism was being 'gradually freed of crisis' and 'the "anarchy of production"'.<sup>98</sup>

The GOT learned about the RSDP's founding Congress by decoding dots under letters in a paper,<sup>99</sup> but refused to endorse the RSDP manifesto.<sup>100</sup> Young émigrés wanted them to edit a paper, while they edited a supplement and produced agitational pamphlets.<sup>101</sup> In November Axelrod and Plekhanov left the editorial board of *Listok Rabotnika*,<sup>102</sup> and resigned from the émigré organisation.<sup>103</sup> They advocated the 'hegemony of the proletariat' in the 'bourgeois-democratic' stage of a 'two-stage revolution' in Russia, though its economy had to become fully capitalist before a proletarian revolution was possible.<sup>104</sup> Plekhanov attacked Bernstein in print,<sup>105</sup> but the GOT seriously underestimated the extent and consequences of industrialisation in Russia.

#### (iv) Kanatchikov

Ivan Kanatchikov was born into a peasant family in the village of Gusevo, Moscow province. After the 1861 emancipation his oldest son looked after his land and worked in a factory in winter, while Ivan became a servant in St. Petersburg, where he taught himself to be literate, and returned occasionally. Semën was born in 1879, and entered a primary school in 1888. He recalled 'the ruler, the birch rod, the teacher's belt and the simple slap in the face', but stayed almost five years. He could not enter a secondary school, because of his status, so he worked on his father's land; but his mother died in 1893. Early in 1895 Ivan asked Korovin, a former Gusevo peasant working in Moscow, to find the boy a job. In spring Ivan drove Semën there in a cart,<sup>106</sup> and he became one of 26,000 peasants who arrived in the city that year.<sup>107</sup>

Gustav List's metalworks made steam engines, and employed several hundred workers,<sup>108</sup> who had an 11.5-hour day with 90 minutes for breaks. Semën earned 25 kopeks a day, and worked in the paint shop, where skilled men called him a 'green country bumpkin' and pulled his hair. He lived in an artel of 15 men and boys, and shared a 'tiny, windowless corner room' with Korovin and his son. The boys slept in the same wooden cot, but Semën recalled that 'as soon as I got home from work and ate dinner, I would fall into my filthy, hard, straw-filled sack and sleep like a dead man, despite the myriad bugs and fleas'. After a month he was transferred to the pattern shop, and three months later the German foreman accepted him as an apprentice. The work was 'mentally challenging', and literacy was an 'absolute requirement'. His pay rose to 40 kopeks a day, but overtime was compulsory in winter. Patternmaking was an 'aristocratic' job, though they earned less than turners, and by spring 1896 Semën could draw a pattern 'if it wasn't very complex'.

After the St. Petersburg strikes List managers introduced a ten-hour day. Then Vasily Savinkov, a 27-year-old patternmaker who had worked in Warszawa, the Urals and south Russia, arrived from Moscow's 'really advanced' Gopper metalworks, where workers had experienced surveillance and deportation. He called priests 'parasites' and an icon a 'tool for gaining money', used Darwin's ideas to sow religious doubt and criticised the tsar. Semën recalled that most youngsters suspected 'everything that was new, hard to grasp, or unfamiliar', but they listened with to Savinkov with 'enthusiasm and interest'. One evening he 'cautiously thrust' a 'dishevelled, grease-stained little book' under the bench and whispered, 'Read it, Semën, and do not show it to anyone else'. 'Tormented by curiosity and fear', he 'could barely wait for the bell'. It was *Tkachi*, the play based on *Die Weber*, and he learned the 'song of the weavers' by heart, and recited it to other apprentices. Then an agitational pamphlet 'produced a total transformation' in his ideas. Factories, workshops, land, forests and mines would be 'the common property of the toilers! The organised struggle of the working class against the capitalists, the landowners, and the tsar' was 'the meaning of life and work for every conscious worker'. After reading Plekhanov's pamphlet about St. Petersburg worker-revolutionaries in the 1870s, Semën stopped going to church and shared a room with one of

his 'comrades'. He visited Gusevo occasionally, but argued with his father and refused to get married until after his military service.

Early in May Moscow police began to 'purge' 'unreliable elements' before the tsar's belated coronation, and janitors checked poor tenants' internal passports and registration forms. 'Spies and stool pigeons of all varieties made their way stealthily through working-class quarters', 'listening attentively'. The patternmaker Mikhail Afanasev, who was in his late twenties, arrived from Gopper metalworks. The List workers saw him as a 'student' (revolutionary), and he soon disappeared, but reappeared after spending three days in jail. Managers cut the working day to eight hours, with an hour for lunch, for the three days of the coronation, and Semën went to Khodynka Field for a souvenir, but saw 'cartloads' of corpses being taken away. Legal papers lied; the authorities held nobody responsible, and the tsar continued the celebrations, which undermined older men's loyalty at List's. Sëmen found going back to 11½ hours hard, but Afanasev brought an article about the St. Petersburg strikes, and Savinov collected money, then left for the Urals. Late that year students organised an event on the six month anniversary of Khodynka. Some List workers sympathised with those 'who, unafraid of punishment, "seek after justice"', and one sang a song about the tsar who 'sucks the worker's blood away'. Semën had to be inspected for venereal disease before he got his Christmas pay, and when he returned from Gusevo three days late, the foreman sacked him for not asking for his permission.

By early 1897 Kanatchikov could design complex patterns and soon got a job at Old Bromley machine-building works, which employed 900. His wages doubled to 80 kopeks a day and he rented half a workmate's room. At work he 'preached' his own 'rather shapeless socialist ideas', argued with older workers, 'made fun of religion', 'spoke abusively' about the factory administration and did not visit Gusevo at Easter. At work someone told a foreman about his views, and his contract was not renewed, but he soon got a job at a new railway carriage works, 20km northeast of the city, and doubled his wages to 1.6 rubles a day. He rented rooms in a metal turner's bungalow, half an hour from work, where he met Vasily Klushkin, 'a venerable and fully "conscious"' man who had worked at Gopper metalworks, been on strike and knew 'all the outstanding workers who had suffered for their convictions'. He spoke about the French Revolution and Narodnaya volya, called gentry, priests and the tsar 'bloodsuckers', and maintained that peasants were 'without consciousness' and workers 'must learn to be leaders' and not trust 'outsiders'. His knowledge was 'extremely fragmented and unsystematic', and he got drunk on payday and beat his wife, but he quoted Alexandr Pushkin's poetry and recommended the poet Nikolai Shelgunov. Kanatchikov found a book of his at the Sukharevka market, but the 'abstract language, the long, circuitous sentences, and the foreign words made it impossible for me to comprehend', and it took him a month with a dictionary to work out that its politics were those of the SRs.

Everywhere Kanatchikov had worked he had met 'one or two venerable, respected, conscious workers' who subscribed to a 'progressive' paper, bought books with a 'tendency', followed political developments and were atheists. 'In their youth they had had almost all been actively involved in politics, and some had paid a price.' They distanced themselves from political activity, but had 'frank discussions' with trusted workmates and recalled the revolutionaries of their day with 'great admiration'. Kanatchikov recalled that it 'raised your spirits' knowing someone 'with whom you could share your thoughts, your doubts, your failures', and who was 'ready to share his experience'. Kanatchikov got the sack, but soon got a job at a small machine-building works, where Vanya Maiorov told him that Nekrasov had supported the poor and hated the rich. Kanatchikov found 'an old, tattered volume' at the market, but the banned *Razmyshleniya u paradnovo podezda (Reflections at the Main Entrance)* had been torn out, and Nekrasov's works were banned at the 'People's Library'. The foreman sacked Kanatchikov and Maiorov without giving them the legally-required two weeks' notice, and they got no 'justice' from the factory inspector. They soon found jobs at another small workshop, but the boss fiddled them out of 80 kopeks a day.<sup>109</sup> They evidently did not know about the Soyuz, and may not have known any textile workers.

Moscow's Tsindel Mill employed 2,553,<sup>110</sup> and 1,400 of them had averaged 5.5 years of employment there, but had worked in factories for ten years or more,<sup>111</sup> and 93 percent were under 45. Almost 11 percent had no ties to their village and 12 percent visited briefly in summer.<sup>112</sup> Over half their fathers had been workers,<sup>113</sup> though over half of 780 were from Riazan province. Relatives of 85 percent tended their land, and eight percent hired labourers, but many had no horse, though older workers to head village households. In the province 71 percent of men in their twenties were literate, as were 68 percent in the city, or twice the national average.<sup>114</sup> In summer the police chief enquired about workers' grievances, and ordered surveillance of more factories, workshops and workers' districts.<sup>115</sup>

By autumn Kanatchikov was 'known at many factories', and pictured St. Petersburg as a 'promised land' where most workers were "'conscious" and lived a cordial, comradely life, supporting one another in the struggle against foreman and others'. His late aunt had married a man who had left Gusevo 25 years earlier to work in St. Petersburg, so Kanatchikov went by train, arrived with 20 kopeks in his pocket, took a tram, and alighted near



Spassk & Petrov Mill (which he knew as Maxwell Mill), where workers had 'conducted a bitter struggle for a better future' and a ten-hour day. His uncle Bykov was a patternmaker at the Semyannikov Shipyard, which employed over 5,000, but there were no vacancies, so Kanatchikov got a job at the state-owned cartridge factory in the Vyborg district. If he was a second late the gates 'crashed down right under your nose, leaving you without a half-day's work', and the toilet was 'on a platform, from which anyone who mounted the throne could be surveyed by the foreman'. He rented half a room nearby, and shared a bed with 'a very "gray" unskilled labourer, until Alexey Churakov, a young workmate, invited him to share his room, and Maiorov joined them from Moscow. At work a joiner brought in 'forbidden' books and leaflets and they read them 'greedily'. After a foreman cut the piecework rate, they had a whip-round to cover fines and beat him up, and though they 'managed to produce the most authentic perjurers', they spent ten days in jail and got the sack. Kanatchikov soon got a job at the Siemens & Galske plant on Vasilievsky Island, where conditions were less strict. He earned two rubles a day on piecework, and shared a large room with Christopher Marakasov and Pavel Smirnov, who invited students to tea. Kanatchikov found them 'extraordinary' since they 'gripped all the knowledge in their hands and had ready answers to all questions', though one favoured terror. Kanatchikov borrowed Kravchinsky's book about underground Russia. He found much 'incomprehensible', 'especially the theoretical discussions', but the 'episodes from revolutionary life' made 'a powerful impression'. He felt awkward with the students, and after an embarrassing incident they left him alone; but Marakasov invited Vasily Riabov from the Baltic Shipyard, who knew students, and he encouraged young workers to discuss 'burning issues of the day' and read *Russkoe bogatstvo*, which attacked SDs. Kanatchikov acknowledged his ignorance, and Smirnov introduced him to two women from Cheshire Mill. One of them, Olga Melnitskaya, was 'very intellectually advanced, very well-read', and her brother was a deported writer. Sacked again, Kanatchikov got a job at a tiny machine works on 11-hour days. When he visited Gusevo, his father threatened not to renew his passport, but ten rubles changed his mind.<sup>116</sup>

In St. Petersburg 85 percent of workers' homes in Vyborg district, and more in other districts, had no running water. Women at the Bogdanov tobacco factory started at 7.30am, went home between 10.00am and 11.00am to prepare the family meal, then returned and were on piecework for 25-30 kopeks a day.<sup>117</sup> Late that year women strikers at two factories threw tobacco in policemen's faces, and other women went on strike in solidarity;<sup>118</sup> but the contrast between workers in the capital and those in remote regions was becoming less stark.

## (v) The Caucasus

By 1897 about a third of the 8.5 million people in Georgia were Muslims, and around half were Christians, but only 3.5 million spoke Georgian.<sup>119</sup> Most lived in the countryside, where nobles formed 5.6 percent of the population but owned 42 percent of the land. The urban population had grown four times faster,<sup>120</sup> and 21 percent lived in towns.<sup>121</sup> Akhaltsikhe was home to over 15,000, but Tbilisi's population had doubled to over 159,500 in 11 years. Around 36 percent of the inhabitants were Armenian, 26 percent Georgian and 21 percent Russian, and 54,600 registered peasants included 30,000 Russians, 15,000 Georgians and over 7,000 Turks and Persians. Some skilled workers at the railway workshops were Russians and other Slavs, and the police kept an eye on them, and though the 99 educational institutions taught 10,266 boys and 5,572 girls, the Seminary expelled Ramishvili and Tskhakaya. The first language of over 55 percent of Tbilisi province people was Georgian,<sup>122</sup> and around 20 percent were literate, but only six percent understood Russian. Russians held half the professional posts, and 60 percent of government jobs,<sup>123</sup> yet Tbilisi was a magnet for young Georgians.

Avel Ehlukidze was born in the Kutaisi province village of Tskadisi in 1877. He attended primary school and Mingrelia district school, and in 1893 he entered a secondary technical school in Tbilisi, and he Seminary, after it reopened in autumn 1894. He joined a kruzhek with a 'semi-nationalist, semi-Marxist programme', and read *Samarsky vestnik*, *Mir bozhy*, *Novoe slovo* and illegal literature. In spring 1896 he joined a kruzhek of seminarians and workers, and in 1897, having no money for the fees, he got a job in the railway workshops, where he propagandised, organised kruzhki,<sup>124</sup> and considered himself a revolutionary.<sup>125</sup> There was one printed copy of *Kapital* Volume I in the city, but there were several handwritten copies.<sup>126</sup>

Jibladze's kruzhek had contacts with railway workers, and in autumn, after the amnesty, Zhordania returned from abroad. The kruzhek discussed his theses on the national question, and the idea that 'the improvement of the people's life is only possible by the worker and never by the intelligentsia'; but the absence of a powerful bourgeoisie meant that the working class could come to power only by a broad coalition of progressive forces.<sup>127</sup>

After being deported from Tbilisi Ketskhoveli had enrolled at Kyiv Seminary in 1894,<sup>128</sup> and joined an SD kruzhek.<sup>129</sup> He was expelled for possessing 'criminal' literature in 1896, and deported to Gori under surveillance.<sup>130</sup> but by autumn 1897 he was apprenticed to the Tbilisi printer Kheladze,<sup>131</sup> and met Giorgi Tsereteli,

who was from a noble Kutaisi family and had married Olympiada, the sister of the influential intelligent Nikoladze.<sup>132</sup> By 1897 Tsereteli was a socialist sympathiser and owned the *kvali*.<sup>133</sup> Ketskhoveri wanted to publish an illegal journal, and the *kvali* editors tried to dissuade him, but he insisted that they 'did nothing' for the workers' movement. His articles about Gori peasant life in *kvali* attracted seminarians, and the paper advocated an eight-hour day, but after Ketskhoveri argued that censors made the paper non-revolutionary, and Tsereteli offered to let him run it. He formed a kruzhek with three intelligentsy and four railway workshop employees,<sup>134</sup> and Zhordania and Jibladze invited him to join their kruzhek.<sup>135</sup>

Kutaisi province's population was barely nine percent urban, but that of the city of Kutaisi had risen by 43 percent to almost 32,500 in 11 years. In Guria district the town of Ozurgeti had almost 4,700 inhabitants, and 76 villages were home to almost 100,000 peasants organised in 25 'societies', and the first language of 82 percent of them was Georgian. Batumi's population had almost doubled from 14,800 to 28,500 in 11 years, and by 1897 the Russian deportees, I.I. Luzin and G. Franchesky, had built SD kruzhek, and hectographed 100 copies of a Georgian translation of *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, but they were arrested early in 1898.

In Tbilisi Jibladze and Ramishvili shared an apartment and argued in *kvali* for the use of Georgian in schools, theatres, banks and elections. They discussed events abroad, and local workers' conditions, and argued that workers should be independent of intelligentsy. When the government announced the removal of railway workers' free travel and sickness benefits, 1,000 of them shut down the Georgian network for six days, and though a government commission sacked some of them, it restored the benefits to the rest.

Chkheidze and Ramishvili led workers' kruzhek and a network of Sunday schools in Tbilisi. Zhordania argued that intelligentsy should guide workers, but not lead them, and Jibladze feared that educated workers would leave their class. In spring Tsabadze set off for the founding congress of the RSDP, but was arrested on the way there. In Tbilisi Zhordania wrote a May Day leaflet and 25 workers celebrated outside the city, and in summer the railway workshop kruzhek formed an RSDRP committee.<sup>136</sup>

In Azerbaijan Baki province's population had grown to almost 790,000 in 11 years,<sup>137</sup> and the city of Baki was home to 111,000.<sup>138</sup> Almost 39,000 spoke Turkish and 19,000 Armenian, but 25,000 of the 39,000 peasant oilfield workers spoke Russian, and half of Armenian and Russian men were literate, compared to the province's average of 15 percent.<sup>139</sup> In autumn the railway company transferred Erukidze to Baki,<sup>140</sup> as a locomotive fireman, and deported Moscow workers helped him to build two oil workers' kruzhek.<sup>141</sup> Erukidze went to Tbilisi for money for a press, and Jibladze refused,<sup>142</sup> but there were migrant Georgians across the empire.

## (vi) Peshkov

Vasily Kashirin was probably born around 1820. His mother was a Georgian serf,<sup>143</sup> and a beggar, but she died when he was young.<sup>144</sup> He later worked as a Volga barge-hauler,<sup>145</sup> then became the foreman of a large dye shop in Nizhni-Novgorod, where he registered as a townsman. He married Akulina, the daughter of a serf who had been freed after she was crippled, and they had begged along the Volga.<sup>146</sup> Akulina had her first baby when she was 14,<sup>147</sup> and Varvara arrived in 1842.<sup>148</sup> Kashirin sometimes beat her 'on the first day of Easter week from early mass to sundown – beat me – take a rest – then start all over again. With the horse reins or anything else at hand'. Once he beat her until she was 'half dead' and gave her nothing to eat for five days; yet the dyers' guild elected him as foreman and he became a member of the city дума.<sup>149</sup> By 1858 the 30,000 inhabitants included almost 5,000 merchants, shopkeepers, businesspeople and artisans, and by the early 1860s Kashirin owned four houses. He and his two sons were dyers; but by 1866 factories dominated the trade and their small workshop was one of only five survivors.<sup>150</sup> All but three of the Kashirins' 18 children had died young, but Varvara was courting.

Maxim Peshkov was an army officer who had been exiled to Siberia for mistreating troops, and Maxim junior was born in 1846. After his father died, Maxim's godfather trained him to be a carpenter in Perm, but he ran away to Nizhni-Novgorod, worked on a Volga steamer and completed his apprenticeship with a cabinet-maker in 1866.<sup>151</sup> His workshop was next door to the Kashirins', and he married Varvara against her father's wishes, but he let them live in his attic,<sup>152</sup> and by 1868, when the city had 40,000 inhabitants,<sup>153</sup> Alexey was born. In 1871 Kashirin's sons feared that Maxim would join the firm, so they got drunk, pushed him under the Volga ice and stamped on his fingers, but failed to ensure he was dead. It took weeks for him to recover, then he took his family to Astrakhan where he managed a wharf. Maxim junior was born,<sup>154</sup> but his father died from cholera,<sup>155</sup> and the baby died when Peshkova and Alexey took the steamer to Nizhni-Novgorod. They lived with the Kashirins,<sup>156</sup> and she enrolled Alexey in the painters' guild,<sup>157</sup> but they went out begging, and after Kashirin beat her she 'disappeared'. Kashirin taught Alexey to read the Psalter and Gospels, and praised Napoleon and 'our own Bonapartes', the 18<sup>th</sup> century peasant insurgent leaders, Stenka Razin and Emelian Pugachev, but he sometimes

beat the boy unconscious, and Alexey got into fights with other boys because he could not bear to see them chasing Jews' goats. Once he saw five townsmen 'going at' a peasant 'like a pack of dogs', and the peasant 'pressed his dirty fingers to a torn nostril, coughing and howling while the blood spurted from between his fingers', but Akulina drove off the assailants. When the dye-works burned down, and Kashirin lost his capital through a bad debt, he kicked his wife's head, but Alexey noted that he 'prayed like a Jew'. Varvara remarried, and Alexey lived with her, but his stepfather cheated workers and got the sack. Varvara rented a cellar, taught him the alphabet and sent him to an Orthodox primary school in 1877, but the priest sent him home because he had no Bible. A bishop gave him one, but he left after a month. His mother took him back, and he got a bad conduct mark, but learned to read and write badly,<sup>158</sup> then left in 1878 because his mother could not afford the fees.<sup>159</sup> When she confronted her husband about being unfaithful, he kicked her in the breast, and Alexey attacked him with a bread knife. He and his mother lived with the Kashirins, and scavenged and stole.<sup>160</sup> Kashirin gave his business to his sons, sold his house and moved into two cellar rooms. Varvara fell pregnant, gave the baby away, remarried, and gave birth to a boy, but he died.<sup>161</sup> In 1879 she died of tuberculosis, aged 37,<sup>162</sup> and the day after the funeral Kashirin told 11-year-old Alexey, 'Time you were getting out in the world'.<sup>163</sup> Alexey became an apprentice at L.M. Porkhunov's shoe shop, but had to help with household chores,<sup>164</sup> and was treated badly,<sup>165</sup> so he went to work for his uncle, a draftsman,<sup>166</sup> then became a skivvy in a bakery, where a priest's enquiries about 'forbidden' books intrigued him.<sup>167</sup>

There were almost 7,000 vessels and 200,000 boatmen on the Volga, and over ten million people depended on the river trade,<sup>168</sup> and in spring 1880, when the ice melted,<sup>169</sup> Alexey became a cook's assistant on the steamboat *Dobryi*. Mikhail Smuryi, a retired non-commissioned army officer, loved books,<sup>170</sup> so Alexey read translated English novels and other books to his illiterate crewmates;<sup>171</sup> but there was violence on board,<sup>172</sup> and the head steward sacked Alexey for being honest. He returned to his grandparents,<sup>173</sup> met Kashirin's violence with violence,<sup>174</sup> and went out begging with his grandmother.<sup>175</sup> He knew that Russia was backward, and was intrigued that people called the tsar's would-be assassins 'the readers'. In spring 1881 he was surprised that people were frightened to talk about the tsar's assassination,<sup>176</sup> and saw a leaflet on a wall headed 'Demand a Constitution'.<sup>177</sup> He sympathised with Old Believers, but a workmate insisted there was no god. Most 'preferred fiction to truth', but Alexey saw 'a striking difference' between stories and the 'empty, senseless' lives of real peasants. His books said little about workers, so he began writing.<sup>178</sup>

In 1884 he witnessed an anti-Jewish riot,<sup>179</sup> and that autumn he and the student N. Evreinov went to Kazan. They shared a room in the poor quarter with Gury Pletnev, a 20-year University student who was in contact with SR kruzhki and Fedoseev's SD kruzhok.<sup>180</sup> Alexey hoped to enter the University, but there were few scholarships and the curriculum focussed on Latin and Greek, so he became a docker. One night Pletnev sent him to warn other residents,<sup>181</sup> because the police had arrested two soldiers for trying to steal type for an illegal press.<sup>182</sup> Alexey worked unlimited hours for three rubles a month at Vasily Semonov's bakery, and gendarmes reported its 'highly suspicious aims', since student visitors read 'tendentious literature'.<sup>183</sup> One evening Alexey followed a man across a field,<sup>184</sup> and joined 20 young people who met twice a week to study Chernyshevsky, Lavrov, Vorontsov and Marx.<sup>185</sup> They were secondary school pupils, and their 'big books, full of hard words', were 'about things that were perfectly clear to anyone who laboured that "others" – not he – might live in ease and comfort', so it was 'a great strain' to sit for two or three hours, 'breathing the smell of joiner's glue and watching the woodlice crawl over the dirty walls'. He took books to students in his breadbasket, and heard them argue about illegal literature, and he took books and notes to and from Andrey Derenkov, an SR grocer who had the 'finest library of rare and forbidden literature' in the city. People read them aloud to a select group who copied them by hand until they were almost in 'tatters'. Alexey found John Stuart Mill's ideas 'extremely familiar', since he 'carried their record' on his skin, and he read Dikshtein's pamphlet and *Chto delat?* He understood the student unrest, and had he been told 'You may study; but, for that, you'll be cudgelled on the Nikolayevska Square every Sunday', he 'would most probably have agreed'; yet students would not discuss politics and told him to 'read what you're given' and not 'go poking your nose where it doesn't belong'.

In 1885 a veterinarian took Alexey to a kruzhok where someone read Plekhanov's critique of SRs out loud. The room was 'filled with indignant shouts of 'Renegade' and 'Defiling blood shed by our heroes'. Someone mentioned Vladimir Ulyanov's name and Alexey met Fedoseev,<sup>186</sup> but the police took Pletnev to St. Petersburg. A Kazan policeman invited Alexey to tea, and the policeman's wife suggested that he be a spy, but he declined.<sup>187</sup> He saw students 'as a captive may regard those who promise him freedom'. To them the 'people' were 'the embodiment of wisdom, kindness and spiritual beauty', yet they 'set themselves somewhere below' and felt 'dependent on its will'. Late that year workmates planned to beat students with iron weights,<sup>188</sup> Alexey's grandmother died, and Maria Derenkova rebuffed his advances,<sup>189</sup> so he shot himself where he thought his heart was, punctured a lung,<sup>190</sup> but soon recovered,<sup>191</sup> and when Peshkov was 19 he met an interesting man.

Mikhail Romas was born in 1859. In 1876 he worked at Kyiv railway station, joined a kruzhok and tried to organise peasants, but was arrested and spent 12 years in prison and Siberia.<sup>192</sup> Early in 1888 a man with a shaven head arrived in Kazan from Yakutsk. Only Derenkov knew his real name, and he did not let Peshkov meet his other 'cautious visitors', but the man told him that after the peasants were 'awakened' they would learn, 'little by little, to take the tsar's power', and urged him to read illegal books by Thomas Hobbes and Niccolò Machiavelli. Peshkov knew 'bigbellies' (kulaki) disliked co-operatives, and began to believe that the poor might not always be their own enemies.<sup>193</sup> The man persuaded him to help organise a gardeners' cooperative for peasants,<sup>194</sup> and they went to Krasnovidovo and opened a shop, but the peasants burned it down and the propagandists narrowly escaped with their lives.<sup>195</sup> In autumn Peshkov went south on a Volga freighter.<sup>196</sup> He joined a fishermen's artel on the Caspian coast, then worked on the Griaze-Tsaritsyn railway,<sup>197</sup> as a night watchman. He visited Moscow, and slept in a doss house,<sup>198</sup> then travelled to Tsaritsyn, where railway clerks got him a job. A manager gave him extra work, so he wrote a satirical letter and was sent 13km away, but met deported state criminals and joined a kruzhok of two pessimistic telegraphers, a locksmith and a printer.<sup>199</sup>

In spring 1889 Peshkov wrote to Tolstoy and told him that the kruzhok members earned 30 rubles a month, but would not be able to buy a 'smallholding' for a long time, and would like 'a piece of land' and copies of his banned books. There was no reply.<sup>200</sup> In summer Peshkov returned to Nizhni-Novgorod and met Sergey Somov, who Kazan police had deported for contacting Fedoseev's kruzhok. Somov invited Peshkov to share his lodgings and introduced him to a kruzhok that read works by Lassalle and the *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii*;<sup>201</sup> but the police investigated their links to an illegal press in Kazan, learned that Peshkov had worked in a bakery, had 'subversive intentions' and 'relations with suspect individuals', and 'read tendentious, undesirable books not in keeping with his intellectual level or his education'. They found nothing incriminating in his room, but put him under surveillance.<sup>202</sup> In autumn gendarmes suspected him of distributing revolutionary propaganda and asked Tsaritsyn, Kazan and Saratov gendarmes for information, then briefly detained him, but released him for lack of evidence. He failed to join the army, but a general urged him to 'go on writing', and suggested that he contact the writer Vladimir Korolenko, who thought he had 'some' ability. Peshkov stopped writing, but read *Kapital*, and the 'iron logic' fascinated him. He heard Pavel Skvortsov, 'one of the best exponents of the Marxist theory',<sup>203</sup> but debates with SRs bored Peshkov, and Olga Kaminskaya, a married woman, rejected his advances.<sup>204</sup>

By 1890 Nizhni-Novgorod's 311 factories employed 13,775 workers, and the Sormovo shipyards were increasingly important. In 1891 Peshkov intended to go to France, but ended in Georgia,<sup>205</sup> and he joined Reninger's commune in 1892.<sup>206</sup> The police reported that he met two railway workers and a teacher at night.

They always have the curtains drawn and the doors locked, so that no one can look inside or come in unexpectedly. In view of ... their suspicious conduct, there is good reason to assume that illicit schemes against the authorities are elaborated during their meetings. It may also be assumed that the above-named individuals are in possession of harmful and prohibited books, because they generally see to it that no one outside their group can read them.

Peshkov went west. Near Mykolaiv he tried to stop a peasant flogging his wife, but the man beat him. He reached Crimea as the famine got underway, and saw officials put sick and well cattle in the same enclosure. Peasants drove the officials away, but troops arrived and hanged three of them. Their funeral turned into a demonstration, and the police found a New Testament in Peshkov's bag, suspected him of preaching rebellion and briefly detained him. He returned to Tbilisi, where a former supervisor found him a job on the railway, and introduced him to the deported St. Petersburg SD worker, Fyodor Afanasev. They built a kruzhok of young workers, seminarians, trainee and women teachers and midwives. In summer, when Peshkov was away, a friend took his story, *Makar Chudra*, to the editor of *Kavkaz (Caucasian)*. Peshkov returned, adopted the pen-name of 'Maxim Gorky' ('Maxim the Bitter'),<sup>207</sup> and his story was printed in the viceroy's office.<sup>208</sup> By autumn he was back in Nizhni-Novgorod, working as a clerk for the lawyer, A.I. Lanin,<sup>209</sup> and living with Kaminskaya, who had left her husband; but he was puzzled why 'educated folk dragged out a hard, famished, humiliating existence, wasting valuable energy on the acquisition of a bare living, in the midst of an intellectual desert', and did 'not make more energetic attempts to penetrate into the masses, whose empty lives' struck him as 'utterly useless, in their spiritual poverty, their strange tedium, and, above all, their callous cruelty to one another'.<sup>210</sup>

In 1894 he wrote a story about two men in a large port very like Odesa. Chelkash had been born into a kulak family, but after he completed his military service he became a thief. When his accomplice was injured, he asked Gavrila, an agricultural labourer, to join him. Other 'famine-starved' labourers had accepted lower wages, and Gavrila's little plot of land had been 'sucked dry', so he agreed to steal with Chelkash, even though he did not believe in god. They robbed a ship, but Gavrila wanted all the proceeds, so he tried to kill Chelkash, but he recovered and threw the booty in Gavrila's face.<sup>211</sup> In autumn Peshkov asked Korolenko, who edited *Russkoe*

*bogatstvo*, for 50 rubles for that story and another, in order to repay some debts.<sup>212</sup> *Chelkash* appeared in 1895,<sup>213</sup> and Gorky's *Pesnia sokole (The Song of the Falcon)* became a favourite of revolutionary intelligenty.<sup>214</sup> Korolenko got him a job on the *Samarskaya gazeta (The Samara Paper)*. Gorky did not believe that writing was his 'proper business',<sup>215</sup> but he earned 100 rubles a month.<sup>216</sup> By 1896 he had left Kaminskaya and returned to Nizhni-Novgorod, where he wrote from a broadly SR perspective for *Nizhegorodsky listok (The Nizhni-Novgorod Sheet)* and *Odesskie novosti (Odesa News)*.<sup>217</sup> He had met Ekaterina Volzhina in Samara. She came from a noble family,<sup>218</sup> was a well-educated SR,<sup>219</sup> and proof-read *Nizhegorodsky listok*. They married in summer, but he had tuberculosis,<sup>220</sup> and an SD intelligenty helped him get to Crimea for treatment.

Vladimir Posse was born in St. Petersburg. The University expelled him in 1887, but let him take a degree in 1888. He had been an SR, but became an SD,<sup>221</sup> and in 1896 he got Peshkov a 150-ruble advance,<sup>222</sup> and more from St. Petersburg Literary Fund. Peshkov went to Crimea to recuperate, and in spring 1897 *Konovalov* appeared in *Novoe slovo*.<sup>223</sup>

Tbilisi police had detained Afanasev for distributing SD literature, and found a signed photograph of Peshkov in his room.<sup>224</sup> In spring 1898 policemen took Peshkov to Tbilisi Fortress, but he dissociated himself from Afanasev and denied being an SD. After Posse secured his release, he returned to Nizhni-Novgorod.<sup>225</sup> Two former SRs who had become SDs published his two-volume *Ocherki i rasskazy (Stories and Sketches)* in Moscow, and it sold in tens of thousands.<sup>226</sup> His stories about workers and the poor made Gorky famous, and he adopted the name, but he did not commit himself to supporting working-class revolutionaries.

### **(vii) The working class leadership was intact**

In spring 1898 the SD rabochy-intelligenty Ivan Babushkin complained that Katerynoslav intelligenty acted 'criminally' by not sending a worker to the RSDP's founding congress.<sup>227</sup> The mainly Jewish intelligenty organised transport, safe places, printing and propagandising,<sup>228</sup> and most were arrested, but 'the working class leadership was intact', and their contacts distributed literature daily. They wanted to 'have it out' with a spy, but had no gun, so they decided to use 'cold steel', but he ran away.<sup>229</sup> A carriage works strike led to arrests, but strikers won an eight-hour Saturday shift. Babushkin's St. Petersburg comrade Petr Morozov and the intelligenty Isaak Lalayants arrived,<sup>230</sup> as did Tskhakaya, who had been deported from Georgia.<sup>231</sup> 'D.' was responsible for literature. There was 'not much of it, but it was valuable', though he and Babushkin found it 'a bit frightening to think of leading thousands of workers' and there was no one to 'look after the technical side'. The surviving intelligenty claimed a 'very good' May Day leaflet would be 'sent by the Party', but the workers were determined to produce their own.

Babushkin made a frame at work, under a bemused foreman's nose, and other workers made a roller from two electric battery pots, but it broke. A mould of glue and treacle would not set, so two turners volunteered for a night shift and made a small wooden cylinder with handles and steel axles for rollers. Babushkin and Morozov got the intelligenty's type and ten rubles for three reams of paper, a tin sheet for ink and a mirror for checking the typesetting. They composited two of the three drafts and Babushkin and his landlady set it over three days. Then he 'laid on the ink', and Morozov turned the rollers which were 'wrapped in canvass sacking, over the flat-bed', but 'had to lean his whole weight on it to get any impression'. A third worker put in the paper and lifted out the leaflets; a fourth hung them on threads and a fifth piled up dry ones. By Good Friday they had almost 3,000 leaflets, and took batches of 200, 300 or 400 to contacts to distribute.

Soon after a Briansk steelworker tore a board from a fence and a guard stabbed him. Workers destroyed the guard's belongings and the guardhouse, wrecked the factory office, used a sledgehammer to open a safe, threw money to the crowd and set fire to the office.<sup>232</sup> Reportedly 1,200 were involved,<sup>233</sup> and they did 150,000 rubles' worth of damage. Some went into town, looted a vodka shop, stole 'appetizers' from Jewish-owned shops and, in spite of the skilled workers' protests, they rioted. Troops cordoned off part of the town and the works, and the police deported over 500 rioters to their villages, but 34 would remain in prison for two years.<sup>234</sup>

The Vilnius SD A.M. Ginzburg had joined the RSDRP and moved to Katerynoslav out of 'party considerations'. He agitated Russian workers, since they represented 'incomparably more interest and prospects for success' than Jewish artisans.<sup>235</sup> In May railway managers expected workers to attend church to honour the tsar's coronation, but a member of the workers' committee came to Babushkin's lodgings and made 20 leaflets demanding a strike in the intelligenty's name, while others chalked messages on workshop gates. The response was patchy until after a manager threatened to fine strikers half a day's pay. The entire workforce downed tools, but there were arrests. The workers' committee periphery grew, but the average level of experience declined, and there were 'blunders' and tensions with the intelligenty. One kruzhok leader refused to meet intelligenty, and called Babushkin an

intelligent; but he threatened to stop bringing illegal literature and argued that since the factory was to close, and 'conflicts with the management were taking place practically every day', 'responsible' leaders were needed.<sup>236</sup>

SDs were active in other Ukrainian cities. Luzovka had 23,000 inhabitants and the New Russia Company employed 12,782 workers, mostly at the ironworks, which was the largest producer in Russia.<sup>237</sup> They had an 11.5-hour day, but on 1 January 1898 their new pay books noted the legal maximum 10.5-hour day. It was the first they had heard of it, but boiler shop workers left at 6.00pm, and the entire workforce had followed suit within a fortnight.<sup>238</sup> In summer two army officers agitated a soldier who gave his brother in Luzovka an economics book by Gustav List; but after an iron worker read it to the soldier's brother and blast furnace workers he was arrested.<sup>239</sup> Kharkiv SDs had established a Soyuz borby by late 1897, and had workers' kruzhki, a fund and a library of illegal literature.<sup>240</sup> The cabinetmaker Iosif Ioffe arrived from Vitebsk early in 1898, and the police considered him to be a dangerous agitator.<sup>241</sup> In summer some intelligently were arrested,<sup>242</sup> but the survivors built kruzhki of mainly white-collar railway workers, as did others in Rostov-na-Donu.<sup>243</sup> By autumn Kyiv Komitet had become an RSDRP Committee, and members scattered copies of the manifesto in the streets.<sup>244</sup> Ten intelligently led a kruzhok of propagandists who led the weekly workers' kruzhki, and they elected a workers' committee.<sup>245</sup>

In Katerynoslav the workers' committee at a large factory included two RSDRP members. They negotiated an eight-hour day, to minimise redundancies, but there were 'wholesale dismissals' at unorganised plants. Babushkin wanted to raise workers' political consciousness, but 'Badly hectographed leaflets were less willingly read' and 'everyone was saying we needed a paper'. The intelligently refused to loan their type, but one gave the workers 100 rubles, and they raised ten more to buy a press. One 'got scared', and another 'flew off to London', but 18 distributed legal and illegal literature. Babushkin was sure that more workers would help if the committee was 'less conspiratorial', and he checked a potential recruit's reliability and co-opted him and Grigory Petrovsky. They did little 'systematic study', and the intelligently refused to lead kruzhki, write leaflets or provide money, and when deported intelligently returned they received all the information from the CC. Babushkin demanded kruzhok leaders, but one intelligent said "'Let's get the literature together first'". Intelligently criticised workers' draft leaflets for 'lack of literary style', 'changed and cut' one draft 'out of all recognition' and there was a 'fearful row'. Subsequently a visitor from 'one of the big towns' brought an intelligent. He agreed to lead a kruzhok, but insisted 'in the most demagogical fashion' on 'complete autonomy', yet 'when he saw how independently we worked, that we were accustomed to and knew our business, he felt uneasy and admitted that his knowledge of labour questions left much to be desired'. They 'gave him a youth study group to teach and brought him on to the committee where he appeared several times'. Both the intelligently and workers' committees now included a voting member from the other, who could be changed only by mutual agreement, and both could draft leaflets, but the workers had the final say. By winter the district was 'red-hot' with 'propaganda and agitation' in all the main factories,<sup>246</sup> and had 20-30 contacts.<sup>247</sup> Then two intelligently arrived, but one soon left.

Praskovia Kouliabko was born in 1847. In 1893 she met Lalayants, Ulyanov and Sklyarenko in Samara, and became a revolutionary,<sup>248</sup> but by 1897 neither she nor Lalayants had heard from Ulyanov for over a year. In autumn 1898 she joined Lalayants in Katerynoslav, but they had to flee to Voronezh. Ulyanov wrote to them from Siberia, and at the end of the year they returned to Katerynoslav and supported Babushkin.<sup>249</sup>

Petr Smidovich was born into a family of minor gentry,<sup>250</sup> in Rogachev, Gomel province, in 1874. He graduated from Tula gymnasium in 1892, entered Moscow University, became politically active and was deported in 1895. He went to Paris, studied at the Higher Electrotechnical School, became politically active and graduated in 1897. He went to Liege, worked in a factory, and returned to Russia with a Belgian passport in 1898.<sup>251</sup> Late that year he went to Katerynoslav and got a job at Briansk works for 1.5 rubles a day, which was double the wage of an unskilled worker. He lived with 11 workers in a three-room wooden house, but the windows were always shut, the walls were damp and the mattresses on the floor were dank and mouldy.<sup>252</sup> The workers rescued their mates from the police, and if the works director 'squeezed' them, they beat him and burned the office, but they 'did not know how to formulate their demands and stand behind them'. They found Smidovich's leaflets 'completely incomprehensible', and when they found out that he was an atheist they refused to sit with him at mealtimes.<sup>253</sup> In two weeks Smidovich had a fever, and a doctor advised him to leave, so he went to Mariupol ironworks, where a third of 4,100 workers lived in barracks or company houses.<sup>254</sup>

Some Donbass SDs had established an RSDRP Committee and distributed leaflets calling for a shorter working day and a struggle against the bosses in Mariupol, Mykolaiv, Taganrog and Luzovka. Days later 150 Luzovka blast furnace workers went on strike for more pay, but returned after threats of arrest. Weeks later only 179 of the company's 650 miners turned up for work, and 110 out of 500 arrived for the next shift. Next morning up to 150 threw stones through the ironworks' windows and ran through the town, seeking support. That evening a drunken mining engineer asked the night shift why they were not working, and when one listed their grievances, he told the foreman to sack him. The crowd demanded to be sacked, then headed for the factory, brought work

to a standstill, terrorised people in a poor district of the town and threatened to loot the bazaar; but Cossacks made 24 arrests. Reinforcements arrived and cordoned off the town, and after the ironworks managers threatened to sack anyone who failed to turn up next day, everyone did. That evening the provincial governor brought two battalions of infantry, and threatened to send 400 workers back to their villages, but deported only the 276 who had refused to work for three days. An anonymous letter to the police chief was found in a post box. 'Workers of the factory of the New Russia Co.' wanted him to restore their wages or refer the matter to his 'commanders'.<sup>255</sup> Late that year the provincial governor noted that most artisans were Jews and were a 'source of anxiety' for their 'readiness to take part in strikes, demonstrations and street disorders'.<sup>256</sup> They may have been Bundists, and some were organising successfully elsewhere in the Pale.

### (viii) Tarshis

In 1882 the carpenter Aron Tarshis and his family lived in Vilkomir, 80km north of Vilnius, and his wife bore a son they called Iosif.<sup>257</sup> He recalled that when he was a boy the town's population was about 1,400, and there were 'innumerable artisan shops', 'two or three minor leather works, a few small bristle factories' and a 'large machine shop'. In 1896 he went to Vilnius to be an apprentice tailor, and workmates talked about 'secret meetings' where socialist intelligenty taught artisans to be literate and gave them books; but there were arrests in Vilnius, Kaunas, Warszawa and elsewhere in the Pale. At the end of the year Iosif visited his family and found men and women from the workshop and his two brothers at their parents' home. Some deported intelligenty were from Kaunas, Daugavpils and Warszawa, and they and local 'class-conscious workers' put on plays, 'sang revolutionary songs, gave toasts and delivered speeches' in the suburbs or nearby woods.

In 1897 Iosif worked for a tailor in Panevėžys in northern Lithuania, and found the 'mental darkness' of his 16 male and female workmates 'incredible'. They worked up to 18 hours a day, and when they went home their employer cut cloth on the table where Iosif usually slept. He 'searched for an organisation, for reading circles, for meetings' in vain, and his parents invited him home, but by the end of the year he worked in Kaunas for three rubles a week and lived with his elder brother. 'Comrades' visited and turned Iosif out of the room, but he could hear one read and explain what he had read until past midnight, and then they seemed to quarrel. Iosif met carpenters at the 'labour exchange', or the temperance tearoom, where they organised social evenings with toasts like 'Down with Capitalism' and 'Long live Socialism'. Zundel, who was about 20, 'quickly grasped the gist of a problem' and spoke eloquently, and though he was conscripted, a man who had worked in 'a Party club or a library' in England or the USA spoke about the meetings and books. Kaunas artisans agitated strikers, picketed workshops and factories and 'prevented blacklegs from getting near them', and though some were arrested, 'class-conscious' workers hosted striking bristle workers from near the Prussian border. When Iosif 'became a "rightful" though silent member' of the 'gatherings' at his brother's home and discovered that some were 'between self-education and political kruzki, while others were meetings of the carpenters' union'. Both were illegal and the police raided and made arrests 'on every pretext'; but the carpenters gave Iosif 'conspirative and responsible commissions', so he 'thoroughly mastered the science of how to conduct myself during an arrest', and took illegal literature to Vilnius.

On May Day 1898 people went singly to the woods outside Kaunas. 'As they passed the sentry they had to give the password' and were directed to a meeting. Afterwards they left together and 'marched into town singing revolutionary songs and carrying red flags'. Iosif joined the illegal tailors' union, which struggled for shorter hours and higher pay, using 'individual and group agitational work', strikes and 'intimidation' of those working over 12 hours. If a strike was impossible 'class-conscious' workers broke employers' windows, but they also taught artisans to be literate and led 'self-education' and 'reading circles'. Some had links to a 'sort of a centre' that received literature from St. Petersburg, other towns and abroad, including Yiddish translations of Dikshtein's pamphlet and Lafargue's *Le Droit à paresse (The Right to be Lazy)*.<sup>258</sup> Tarshis was evidently in the Bund's periphery, and may have considered himself a member.

In the northern Pale 60,000 Jewish artisans worked up to 20 hours a day for two to six rubles a week,<sup>259</sup> but 24 percent of those in Vilnius, 25 to 40 percent in Minsk, 40 percent in Gomel and 20 percent in Białystok in northern Poland were in unions that had won 91 percent of 262 strikes in two years. The Bund claimed 5,600 members, including 1,000 in both Minsk and Białystok,<sup>260</sup> and influence over 28,000,<sup>261</sup> including 1,304 in Vilnius kassy. In some cities 60 percent of artisans were in unions and the working day rarely exceeded 13 hours.

In Kaunas the Bershter Bund (Bristle Workers' Union) allied itself to the Bund, and its elected CC published *Der Veker (The Awakener)*, with the help of intelligenty. Avram, a 'worker-agitator' travelled from city to city, not sleeping in the same place twice, distributing copies and inspiring Jewish tanners to organise. Bundists smuggled

literature and revolutionaries across the Prussian border,<sup>262</sup> but in summer the police disrupted the network, confiscated presses,<sup>263</sup> and arrested 55 activists in eight towns and cities,<sup>264</sup> including Arkady Kremer and Nokhem Levinson.<sup>265</sup> The Białystok Bundists 'had to lie low', and 'did not know where to begin', since their press 'had been like a flag to an army in battle'.

In autumn 12 delegates attended the Bund Congress in Kaunas,<sup>266</sup> including Shaine Segal from Łódź, Liza Epstein from Kaunas,<sup>267</sup> and Matla Kremer (formerly Sredniki) from Magilou, where she was organising with other deported intelligenty and workers.<sup>268</sup> Most delegates from Białystok, Vilnius, Minsk, Warszawa, Łódź and the Bershter Bund were young workers and they agreed to print Yiddish translations of *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, the Erfurter Programm, works by Kautsky and other SD literature. They censured *Der yidisher arbeter*,<sup>269</sup> which criticised the PPS,<sup>270</sup> and some wanted to build kruzhki and wage economic struggle, but others favoured political activity.<sup>271</sup> The new CC included the workers Zhaludsky, 24-year-old Gurevich,<sup>272</sup> the glove-maker Dovid Katz, and the intelligenty Sendor Zeldov,<sup>273</sup> Lev Goldman and 25-year-old Pavel Rozental.<sup>274</sup> They abandoned the transport to St. Petersburg,<sup>275</sup> but agreed to propagandise, agitate and cadreise artisans.

Malka Lifschitz was born into a Minsk merchant's family in 1880.<sup>276</sup> She graduated from a gymnasium, became an SD in 1896 and attended the Bestuzhev courses in St. Petersburg,<sup>277</sup> then studied in Berlin and Bern. She later joined the Bund's Łódź Committee,<sup>278</sup> and by 1898 she had married Boris Frumkin, a founder member of the Bund,<sup>279</sup> and led a women's kruzhok.<sup>280</sup> 'Pale, thin, red-eyed, beaten, terribly tired' crate makers and soap and sugar workers met 'late in the evening'.

We would sit until one in the morning in a stuffy room, with only a little gas lamp burning. Often, little children would be sleeping in the same room and the woman of the house would walk around listening for the police. The girls would listen to the leader's talk and ask questions, completely forgetting the dangers ... [W]ith rapt attention they listened to the talks on cultural history, on surplus value, commodity, wages, life in other lands. How many questions they would ask! What joy would light their eyes when the kruzhok leader produced a new number of *Yidisher arbeter*, *Arbeter shtime* or even a brochure! How proud a girl was when she would be given a black book to take home! She would hide it in her bosom, press it to her violently beating heart and fly home as if on wings in order to read it as soon as possible.<sup>281</sup>

Since the presses had been confiscated, the newspapers were printed abroad and smuggled into the Pale.

Between 100 and 200 Russian students enrolled at Bern University each semester; but after the Bund's Yoysef Shloyme escaped to avoid arrest, he studied at Zurich University and was amazed. 'No soldiers. No military or civil uniforms, such as dazzled the eyes in Russia. The spirit of liberty simply floated on the air. In a magic way, the caution, the fear of police and spies ... disappeared.' Late that year he established an émigré organisation,<sup>282</sup> with Kopelson, and called it Komitet fun dem Bund Aoysland (The Committee of the Bund Abroad).<sup>283</sup> They set up a press near Geneva,<sup>284</sup> got type from SPD contacts and transporters who included Jewish trade unionists and smugglers.<sup>285</sup> *Di arbeter shtime* reappeared in December,<sup>286</sup> but the Bund CC in Russia did not recognise the émigré committee for some time.<sup>287</sup> Malka Frumkin attended Berlin University,<sup>288</sup> and the Vilnius Jargon Committee transferred most functions to émigrés there,<sup>289</sup> but 'revisionism' was being challenged in Germany.

### **(ix) The final goal is everything**

Israel Helphand was born into an artisan's family in the shtetl of Berazino, 100km east of Minsk, in 1867. After their house burned down they moved to Odesa, where Israel's father had been born and his relations were dockers. When Israel entered the gymnasium he read Taras Shevchenko's Ukrainian nationalist poetry and Chernyshevsky's *Chto delat?* He served an apprenticeship with a locksmith, then tramped from workshop to workshop. In 1886 he went to Zurich to resolve 'political doubts', but found nothing for workers except the GOT programme, which ignored peasants, and Dikshtein's pamphlet. He returned to Russia to get illegal literature in 1887, but a spy spotted him in 1888, so he escaped to Basel and entered the University. He studied 'problems of labour legislation and state monopoly', applied Marx's methods to concrete data, argued for the 'organisation of the working class and the awakening of class consciousness' and received a doctorate in 1891. He thought Plekhanov was a vain academic, but liked Zasulich, Deutsch and Axelrod who combined theory and practice.

Helphand went to Berlin and Kautsky and Klara Zetkin asked him to write for *Die Neue Zeit* and *Die Gleichheit* (*Equality*), the new SPD paper for women. In 1892, after the Russian famine, the *Vorwärts* editors asked him to write about Russia's future, and he forecast that industry would flourish, but noted the bourgeoisie's lack of revolutionary enthusiasm. In 1893 he was deported, so he returned to Zurich and met Polish SDs. He wanted the SPD to contest elections for agitational purposes, and when the SPD deputies in the Bavarian Landtag backed the



budget in 1894, Helphand, writing as 'Parvus', condemned it 'equivalent to the support of the predominant political order'. In 1895 he edited the SPD's *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (*Leipzig People's Paper*) and criticised reformism, then moved to Dresden and edited the SPD's *Sächsische Arbeiterzeitung* (*Saxon Workers' Paper*). He saw the mass strike as an effective political weapon and argued that the 'near future' belonged to trade unions fighting for an eight-hour day; so he got credit from individuals and trade unions to print his editorials as pamphlets to introduce workers to Marx's ideas.<sup>290</sup> In 1896, when the Russian government won the right to build a railway through Manchuria, he forecast a war with Japan and a revolution in Russia, and believed that all 'national production' was 'losing its independence' in the 'universal market'.<sup>291</sup> The RSDRP intelligent Potresov invited him to join the Russian delegation to the Second International Congress, and early in 1897 Helphand argued that the SPD should 'seize political power and use it to expropriate the capitalists, abolish private ownership in the means of production, and establish a social organisation of production'. He noted that Bernstein had demonstrated the concentration of capital and class polarisation which Marx had predicted, but denounced revisionism as the 'destruction of socialism',<sup>292</sup> though he was not taken seriously in some quarters.

Early in 1898 Rosa Luxemburg argued that Poland and Russia were engaged in 'capitalist fusing', and in spring she received her doctorate from Zurich University, entered a marriage of convenience with Gustav Lübeck to get Prussian citizenship and went to Berlin, but had to ask her parents for a loan. She was aware of surveillance, though her apartment block concierge was not a spy. SPD leaders told her that Helphand was a figure of fun and Polish independence was a 'fantasy', and by summer she regarded the RSDRP as 'comical'. She wrote for Helphand's paper, but when Kautsky arrived she thought him 'a thoroughgoing Bismarck', like the German chancellor. In autumn, after Helphand was deported, she edited the SPD's *Sächsische Arbeiterzeitung* and published her thesis on the industrial development of Poland in Leipzig in German.<sup>293</sup>

The Reichstag had cut 12 million reichsmarks off the navy budget early that year, but in spring it gave 400 million reichsmarks to bring the navy's strength up to 19 battleships, 12 large and 30 small cruisers, eight coastal armoured vessels and supporting vessels.<sup>294</sup> Germany's population was half of Russia's,<sup>295</sup> but its pig-iron production was around eight times as much and its coal production was 25 times higher.<sup>296</sup> Around 36 percent of German workers were involved in agriculture, but industry was booming, trade unions had 300,000 members,<sup>297</sup> and more and more unskilled labourers joined the SPD.<sup>298</sup> The SPD Congress instructed the unions 'to strive for a general stoppage' on May Day,<sup>299</sup> and Luxemburg argued that 'the only violent means that will bring us victory' was the 'socialist emancipation of the working class through day-to-day struggle' and, contrary to Bernstein, 'the final goal is everything',<sup>300</sup> and the Congress criticised *Die Neue Zeit* and *Vorwärts* for not repudiating 'revisionism'.<sup>301</sup> Luxemburg resigned from the *Sächsische Arbeiterzeitung*, returned to Berlin. Her concierge was a comrade, and after she threatened a police official the surveillance stopped.<sup>302</sup> Her analysis of Polish capitalism, and its relation to that of Russia, was more accurate than the GOT's.

## (x) The northern transport route

In the decade to 1898 Russian sugar production had risen by 40 percent, making the empire almost self-sufficient, even though 68 percent was exported.<sup>303</sup> For two years 'alimentary products', chiefly grain, had formed 58 percent of exports. Peasants held about 80 percent of agricultural land, and the finance minister urged the tsar to abolish the village commune and allow peasants to own the land they held.<sup>304</sup> In 17 central provinces many peasants still performed labour service,<sup>305</sup> but some paid over two rubles in taxes, while others paid less than one. The harvest was poor,<sup>306</sup> and the peasants' decreased purchasing power undermined light industry,<sup>307</sup> as a famine got underway.<sup>308</sup> In three years peasant troops had suppressed seven of the 83 serious peasant disturbances.<sup>309</sup>

The government's revenue income was 1.58 billion rubles, and it invested 180 million in railways.<sup>310</sup> It owned 55 percent of the network, but 17 private companies owned most of the other 20,000km.<sup>311</sup> In 13 years the interest rate on the government's huge loans had fallen from 5.08 percent to 3.86 percent,<sup>312</sup> and it freed commercial and industrial entrepreneurs from registering as a merchants,<sup>313</sup> but the international money market was tightening.<sup>314</sup> In the five years to 1898 foreign investment had grown to 130 million rubles,<sup>315</sup> and during 1898 French speculators invested 700 million francs in joint-stock companies, and all foreign investment exceeded the total between 1851 and 1892.<sup>316</sup> Around 19,200 inspected factories employed 1.45 million workers, but only 440 factory schools taught 44,000 pupils. Officially there had been 215 strikes and 43,000 strikers,<sup>317</sup> 17,000 fewer than the previous year,<sup>318</sup> involving 2.9 percent of the workforce for a total of 159,000 days,<sup>319</sup> but at least 815 strikes and protests had involved 165,000 workers.<sup>320</sup> Polytechnical institutes had opened in Kyiv and Warszawa,<sup>321</sup> and 980 periodicals were published across the empire.<sup>322</sup> Around 60 of the 600 daily papers

appeared in Warszawa, 100 in Moscow and 300 in St. Petersburg,<sup>323</sup> and there was now a transport route for illegal literature from western Europe.

Professor Lars Branting and the noblewoman Emma af Georgii had a son in 1860. Hjalmar went to school in Stockholm, and later studied mathematical astronomy at Uppsala University, but did not graduate. He became an assistant at Stockholm Observatory,<sup>324</sup> and in 1878, when he visited an observatory near St. Petersburg, he met socialist students. He read Marx, Liebknecht and Lassalle, and in 1881 he named his boat *Perovska* after the tsar's assassin. In 1882 he intended to visit Russia again, but an anonymous letter quoted his conversations with the Russian students and warned him off, so he went to Paris and on to Switzerland. He met anarchists and socialists, and helped to get Narodnaya volya's Lopatin into Russia in 1883.<sup>325</sup> In 1884 the tsar appointed a Russian minister for Finland, based in St. Petersburg, and a Russian governor-general in Helsinki. Finnish male clergy, nobility, burghers and peasants elected a Diet (legislative assembly) to enact internal legislation,<sup>326</sup> and SD candidates won four percent of the votes and two seats in the Folketing (parliament).<sup>327</sup> From 1886 the Diet dealt with all matters except the Russian fundamental laws, the armed forces and the press.<sup>328</sup> Branting edited the papers *Tiden (Time)* and *Social-Demokraten (Social Democrat)*; but in 1888 he published an article by the radical Axel Danielsson, and was imprisoned for three months. In 1889 Branting was one of the main organizers of Sveriges Socialdemokratistiska Arbeiterparti (The Swedish Social Democratic Workers' Party),<sup>329</sup> which was modelled on Socialdemokratisk Forbund (The Social Democratic Union) in Denmark,<sup>330</sup> which had been founded in 1878,<sup>331</sup> and included trade unionists and workers who had encountered socialist ideas in Germany and Britain.<sup>332</sup> In 1891 Branting gave the name and address of a friend in London to a Swedish journalist who wanted 'clean' addresses for émigré SRs.<sup>333</sup> There was no universal manhood suffrage in Sweden, but the SDAP grew to 10,000 members by 1895, and its candidates won four percent of the vote in the general election.<sup>334</sup> Branting became the first SDAP to win a seat in the second chamber of the Rikstag (senate) in 1896.<sup>335</sup> In 1898 the Russian governor-general proposed to merge the Finnish and Russian armies, but retain the Finns' financial contributions. He abolished Finnish customs organisations and coinage, removed the requirement on Russians to use Finnish, required Russian to be used in the Rikstag, civil service and schools, supervised school textbooks and universities, and established a Russian paper,<sup>336</sup> but a GOT pamphlet circulated widely.<sup>337</sup> The émigrés asked Mikhail Vecheslov, an Uppsala University student, to get literature into Russia,<sup>338</sup> and Branting got him a passport for Finland.<sup>339</sup> The young Swedish worker, Axel Pettersson, organised Swedish, Finnish and Russian socialists to transport literature across Finland to the Russian border, where customs officials made occasional checks, but there were no gendarmes, then over to Beloostrov station, 30km from St. Petersburg.<sup>340</sup>

St. Petersburg police headquarters had an office dealing with conspiratorial activity.<sup>341</sup> Officially the Justice Ministry prosecuted 1,144 political suspects that year, gendarmes dealt with 1,004 and a court martial with one. Between them they exiled 47 to Siberia, deported 119 elsewhere and expelled two foreigners, while the police had 340 under surveillance, 88 in detention and 162 in prison,<sup>342</sup> but Bundists refused to talk.<sup>343</sup> There were 135 illegal groups in 54 places in 37 provinces,<sup>344</sup> and many propagandised troops, 45 percent of whom were literate;<sup>345</sup> and an exiled St. Petersburg SD was analysing the trajectory of Russian capitalism in Siberia.

# 10. The Development of Capitalism in Russia

## (i) 48.5 million proletarians and semi-proletarians

By April 1898, after the SD intelligentka Nadezhda Krupskaya had spent seven months in a solitary cell in a St. Petersburg prison, she was sentenced to three years exile in Ufa in western Siberia, but was allowed to join her 'fiancé' in southern Siberia on condition that they married.<sup>1</sup> She and her mother travelled most of the way by rail, at their own expense,<sup>2</sup> and moved in with Vladimir Ulyanov in Shushenskoye. They hired a 13-year-old peasant,<sup>3</sup> to do 'all the dirty work',<sup>4</sup> gave Pasha Yashchenko 2.5 rubles a month and boots, and taught her to wait at table and read. Krupskaya had agreed to translate Beatrice and Sidney Webb's *History of Trade Unionism* from the German edition,<sup>5</sup> for 400 rubles,<sup>6</sup> and she studied *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* for the first time.<sup>7</sup> She translated it for the St. Petersburg worker Engberg, and helped him understand it before they went on to *Das Kapital*.<sup>8</sup> The Polish hat-maker Prominsky had 'read little and did not know very much', but had a 'remarkably clearly expressed class instinct'. He sang revolutionary songs, and Ulyanov joined in the choruses and taught him Russian songs;<sup>9</sup> but in summer they received some sad and worrying news.

The former Kazan SD intelligent Fedoseev had been exiled to Archangelsk province in 1897,<sup>10</sup> and then to eastern Siberia. He met Ulyanov in Krasnoyarsk, and they later kept in touch by post. A 'court' of SD exiles later cleared Fedoseev of 'counter-revolutionary attitudes', but early in 1898 an exile accused him of stealing money,<sup>11</sup> and he and his woman friend committed suicide in summer.<sup>12</sup> Gendarmes searched Ulyanov and Krupskaya's home in Shushenskoye.<sup>13</sup> They missed the illegal literature and secret letters, but found one about the suicides, though the governor did not extend their exile as they feared,<sup>14</sup> and they married in an Orthodox Church. Soon after a box of books arrived from Vilnius,<sup>15</sup> and Ulyanov read Tolstoy, Pushkin, Nekrasov, Turgenev, Mikhail Lermontov, French naturalists, the philosophers Hegel and Immanuel Kant, and he re-read *Chto delat?* He admired Chernyshevsky's 'intransigence' and 'tenacity', the 'dignified and proud way he bore his unprecedentedly hard fate' and his exposure of the liberals' 'treacherous role';<sup>16</sup> and asked his family to send more realist novels.<sup>17</sup>

By autumn Ulyanov and Krupskaya had not been paid for translating the first volume of the Webbs' book, and their finances were 'at rock bottom', but they grew fruit and vegetables and translated the second volume. Ulyanov taught exiled workers to be literate, and gave them SD literature, and when his sister Elizarova wrote from St. Petersburg about the founding congress of the RSDP he thought it 'of great significance'.<sup>18</sup> Krupskaya was writing a 'popular booklet', and Ulyanov had completed a draft book about 'markets'.<sup>19</sup> He discussed it with her and other exiles,<sup>20</sup> and on New Year's Eve they all agreed to join what had become the RSDRP.<sup>21</sup>

Early in 1899 Ulyanov completed *Razvitie Kapitalizma v Rossy (The Development of Capitalism in Russia)*.<sup>22</sup> He had used over 500 sources,<sup>23</sup> and cited 299 Russian and 38 German, French and English works.<sup>24</sup> He sent the manuscript to Elizarova in St. Petersburg,<sup>25</sup> and she negotiated with the publisher Maria Vodovozova, who agreed to give the author credit at Kalmykova's bookshop,<sup>26</sup> and gave Elizarova 1,500 rubles,<sup>27</sup> for 'Vladimir Ilyin'.<sup>28</sup> A late addition 'got into trouble' with censors,<sup>29</sup> but the book went on sale in spring.<sup>30</sup> It took little account of the world market, foreign investment in Russia or politics, but focused on the post-1861 economy of the central European provinces.

'Ilyin' argued that the 'rapidly increasing' 'differentiation of the peasantry creates a home market for capitalism' and freed labour power for industry. From 1865 to 1890 the number of factory and railway workers and miners had doubled to 1.4 million, and by 1893 fewer than 14 percent of Moscow's 20,000 mechanised textile mill workers and metalworkers returned to their villages in summer. Almost 150,000 of St. Petersburg's 550,000 waged workers were involved in manufacture, and 200,000 in commerce, carting and inns. Its industrial suburbs housed almost 19,000 workers, Mariupol's housed 10,000 Ekaterinburg's 6,000, and those of Nizhni-Novgorod and other cities were home to up to 5,000. Across European Russia five million people lived in settlements whose populations were over 100,000, including 3.25 million in those of over 200,000, and over 60 percent were proletarians. Almost 22 million worked in commerce and industry, and 48.5 million 'proletarians and semi-proletarians' and their dependents were Russia's working class. The 2,400 copies of the book sold quickly to SD intelligentsy, and to a few workers. The exiled SDs began to turn their minds to what to do after they were freed,<sup>31</sup> and Ulyanov, like others, knew he could rely on members of his own family.

Ulyanov's sister Maria had become an SD in Moscow by 1895.<sup>32</sup> In 1896 her brother Dmitry joined SD kruzhenki at the University, represented the Soyuz in the student sovet,<sup>33</sup> and led a Guzhon Metalworks kruzhenka by 1897. A police raid on his home found no incriminating evidence, but they detained him.<sup>34</sup> The University expelled him,<sup>35</sup> and he was detained again in summer 1898.<sup>36</sup> An RSDRP Committee was formed in Moscow that autumn,<sup>37</sup>

Elizarova was elected to it late that year,<sup>38</sup> and it re-established the Soyuz. After Maria graduated from her gymnasium she enrolled on the higher courses for women, led workers' kruzki, smuggled illegal literature, and joined the RSDRP Committee, but then went to Brussels and enrolled at the University.<sup>39</sup> Elizarov worked for the Kursk Railway company in Podolsk, Elizarova's mother joined them, and when Dmitry was deported she got permission for him to join her;<sup>40</sup> but the Okhrana was increasingly effective, and reformism was gaining ground.

## (ii) *The Beginning*

Moscow University had awarded a doctorate to the 'legal Marxist' Tugan-Baranovsky for his history of Russian factories, but St. Petersburg University sacked him for his liberal views.<sup>41</sup> He estimated there were 1.5 million factory workers, and some 'legal Populist' (SR) economists acknowledged that there may be 1.2 million.<sup>42</sup>

In St. Petersburg Kuskova took part in heated debates in Kalmykova's drawing room,<sup>43</sup> and argued that 'almost nowhere' in the world had 'the working class, as a class', won 'democratic institutions', so change in Russia would come through the 'consolidation' of economic organisations and the 'more energetic prosecution of the economic struggle'. The 'workers' movement' was in 'an amoebic state', but workers would become politicised by organising trade unions and coming 'into continual contact with the political regime'. 'Talk of an independent workers' political party' was 'transplanting alien aims and alien achievements on to our soil', and it was 'essential' to change the RSDRP's attitude to 'opposition parties'.

Intolerant Marxism, negative Marxism, primitive Marxism (which holds too schematic a concept of the class division of society) will give way to democratic Marxism, and the social position of the party in the midst of contemporary society will have to change drastically. The party *will recognise* society: its narrow corporative and, in the majority of cases, sectarian tasks will broaden into social tasks and its striving to seize power will be transformed into a desire for ... reform ... along democratic lines.

The 'Russian Marxist' was 'a sad spectacle'.

[H]is theoretical knowledge, insofar as he uses it *not as an instrument for research* but as a pattern for activity, is of no value as far as the execution of even these paltry practical tasks is concerned. Moreover, these patterns, borrowed from abroad, are harmful from the practical point of view ... The slightest attempts to concentrate attention on public manifestations of a liberal political character arouse the protest of orthodox Marxists, who forget that a whole series of historical conditions prevent us from being western Marxists and demand of us a different kind of Marxism that is suited to, and necessary in, Russian conditions.

SD intelligently should focus on 'the economic struggle of the proletariat',<sup>44</sup> and since the labour movement followed 'the path of least resistance', SDs should collaborate with liberals.<sup>45</sup> She told the GOT in Switzerland: 'I deny the existence of an acting political party in Russia. Note: political. Let them write manifestoes'. If Russian SDs try to 'lead the workers' political struggle, I will consider it a provocation'.<sup>46</sup>

When the deported former revolutionary Mikhail Gurovich had returned to St. Petersburg he had become a police spy, but got the respected SD intelligent Vasily Yakovlev to introduce him to other SDs. Gurovich's partner, Anna Voeykova, got permission to publish a monthly journal, and asked Struve to edit it in the spirit of 'economic materialism' (legal Marxism). He recruited Tugan-Baranovsky, Yakovlev, Kalmykova, Maslov and Ulyanov as contributors, but Plekhanov declined.<sup>47</sup> The St. Petersburg governor refused to recognise Voeykova as the responsible editor, but the interior minister reversed that decision, and Struve edited it in Gurovich's flat<sup>48</sup> along with Tugan-Baranovsky, Yakovlev, Kalmykova and Vikenty Veresayev.<sup>49</sup> The first *Nachalo (The Beginning)* appeared in January 1899, and was confiscated, but the interior minister reversed that decision. Tugan-Baranovsky told Potresov in Orlov that he supported revisionism, and Potresov warned Ulyanov in Siberia about Struve's attack on Plekhanov and Marx.<sup>50</sup> In February the second *Nachalo* supported Bernstein's perspective.<sup>51</sup> In March Struve argued in the third issue that 'the flow of foreign capital into our country' was 'certainly desirable',<sup>52</sup> and Marx was wrong about the inevitability of class struggle and social revolution.<sup>53</sup> Reformism appeared to be working in Germany.

During the 1890s SPD membership had risen to around 250,000,<sup>54</sup> and in spring 1899 a book by Bernstein caused a sensation.<sup>55</sup> He rejected 'certain remains of Utopianism which adhere to Marxism', and saw the SPD as 'a party that strives after the socialist transformation of society by the means of democratic and economic reform'.<sup>56</sup> Kautsky acknowledged that 45 percent of Germans lived in rural areas,<sup>57</sup> but believed that the SPD

could neutralise their conservatism.<sup>58</sup> Struve told Bernstein he would be 'proven right in essential matters',<sup>59</sup> since 'socialism' was the 'inevitable outcome' of capitalism,<sup>60</sup> but thousands of Russia students were under pressure.

### **(iii) It is impossible to live this way**

By 1899 over 25,000 of Russia's 57,000 primary school teachers were women,<sup>61</sup> and 130,000 girls attended secondary schools. There were 53 boys' pro-gymnasia, 191 gymnasia and 115 realschulen; and 16,500 male students at eight universities, including 4,000 in Moscow,<sup>62</sup> where 480 were suspended for not paying fees.<sup>63</sup>

All the higher courses for women had been closed, except for those in St. Petersburg, which continued on a restricted basis.<sup>64</sup> Around 35 percent of the University's 3,800 male students were members of 50 or so illegal zemliachestva, and some had over 100 members, but the average was 30.<sup>65</sup> On 4 February the rektor announced in a conservative newspaper that rowdy behaviour would not be tolerated the University's anniversary on the 8<sup>th</sup>,<sup>66</sup> but students demonstrated that day. Some wanted to go to the city centre, but police blocked their way, and two mounted policemen rode into them. When students threw snowballs, police illegally beat them on the head with their deadly nagaika (a short, thick whip, often with a piece of metal at the end); so 3,000 students broke into the University's main lecture theatre and held a meeting. Next day they elected a committee of seven sons of gentry, one son of a civil servant, one son of a merchant and two sons of peasants. They called for a strike, the confirmation of the legally-binding inviolability of the person, an investigation into the beatings and the publication of the rules about police treatment of crowds; but the police had to approve complaints against themselves.<sup>67</sup> The students hectographed a daily bulletin, and a leaflet calling for an independent judiciary and the rule of law, and told the rektor that they did not recognise his authority.

A week later police entered the University buildings and took the occupiers' names. Next day the rektor called in the police again, closed the University and blacklisted five professors. Students sardonically congratulated him on his transfer to the Interior Ministry and clashed with police, and Technological Institute students went on strike in sympathy,<sup>68</sup> but SD intelligently, including supporters of *Rabochaya mysl*, opposed the strike. The police arrested 68 University students, including the committee, but they had previously elected substitutes, and delegates were seeking support in other cities. Moscow University and Technological Institute students went on strike and elected a committee to liaise with other students. After St. Petersburg University students spoke to university students in Kyiv and Kharkiv they went on strike.

A fortnight or so later students at several St. Petersburg higher educational institutions voted to end the strike, and the University strike ended on 1 March. Moscow students voted to return on the 5<sup>th</sup>, but the rektor provoked them. They voted to come out again on the 8<sup>th</sup>, and were told that they would have to petition for readmission. The University refused to accept 778, and expelled 840, while the police deported 199. After Kyiv students criticised the St. Petersburg retreat, around 1,000 St. Petersburg students voted to go on strike on the 16<sup>th</sup>. A meeting next day narrowly reversed that decision, but the University was closed and students had to promise not to participate in illegal groups or meetings if they wanted to return. On the 20<sup>th</sup> the police deported suspected committee members, and then 540 demonstrators on the 31<sup>st</sup>.<sup>69</sup> Almost 346 students were suspended from the Technological Institute, 294 from the Forestry Institute and 225 from the Bestuzhev courses. The police detained 481; but thousands boycotted examinations and shunned non-strikers.

Illegal papers reported these events and the tsar asked a former war minister to lead an inquiry. A St. Petersburg student sentenced to three years' exile subsequently shot himself, and fellow students hectographed an agitational leaflet. 'It is impossible to live this way. Fight, comrades, for a better future for Russia. Give her more light. Destroy the yoke and darkness oppressing all that is alive.'<sup>70</sup>

Philanthropists financed the University dining hall, but students ran it, and its four large rooms had electric lights and subscriptions to over 30 papers and magazines. In spring, after students discussed the police violence, the interior minister told the education minister that 'the state of affairs in the St. Petersburg University dining hall cannot be allowed to continue'; and when Moscow University students called an All-Russian student conference, police arrested delegates from St. Petersburg, Tomsk, Kazan, Odesa, Kharkiv, Tartu and Warszawa universities.<sup>71</sup> Almost 25,000 students from 30 higher educational institutions had been on strike,<sup>72</sup> with no support from SD intelligently, including those in Poland.

### **(iv) Dzierzynski**

Edmund Dzierzynski was born into a Vilnius province family of Polish gentry in 1838. He graduated from St.

Petersburg University in 1863, and though no member of his family was involved in the nationalist uprising, he had to find a teaching post 1,500km away at Taganrog gymnasium. He married Helena Januszewska, the privately-educated daughter of a St. Petersburg University professor, but by 1875 he had tuberculosis; so he retired, used his state pension to buy a house near Minsk and leased the square kilometre of land to peasants.

Felix was born in 1877, but his father died in 1882. In 1887 the boy entered Vilnius gymnasium and joined a pupils' kruzhek that read illegal literature in 1893, and in 1894 Edward Sokolowski's Technical School socialist kruzhek contacted them and the kruzki merged. Some vowed to fight the autocracy and Felix stopped believing in god.<sup>73</sup> He led kruzki of apprentices and artisans, but all they wanted was to become literate and gain 'general knowledge', not be 'meddling with things that did not concern them', so he contacted 'untouched' workers in bars.<sup>74</sup> In 1895 18-year-old Dzierzynski agreed with the PPS that Lithuanian Jews were Polish, and learned Yiddish.<sup>75</sup> After his kruzhek studied Plekhanov they favoured an All-Russian SD party, and Alfonsas Moravskis asked him to attend the joint SDKP-PPS congress in Warszawa, early in 1896. He liked the SDKP's internationalism, and when he returned to Vilnius he hectographed hundreds of agitational leaflets on economic issues overnight. After Moravskis asked him to organise a student congress in Riga, he left the gymnasium, attended the founding of the Lithuanian SDP, and the CC sent him to Kaunas.

Around 35 percent of Kaunas's 73,500 inhabitants were Jews and 22 percent were Poles. One metallurgical plant employed 800 and another two employed 700 between them, but most enterprises were small, and Dzierzynski got a job in a bookbinder's shop.<sup>76</sup> The police had 'netted' the PPS, and there was no LSDP organisation, so he 'infiltrated' groups of Polish 'hardcore factory workers'. He found 'appalling poverty and exploitation, particularly of female labour',<sup>77</sup> so he collected data, especially at the metallurgical plants, and set up a press. In a fortnight his Polish language newspaper, *Kowienski robotnik (Kaunas Worker)*, contrasted local conditions with those won through struggle in western Europe and made economic demands, but argued against terror and for inter-ethnic alliances. He distributed Polish and Russian SD literature, read it aloud to illiterate workers, explained labour law and argued for strike funds, workers' committees and a struggle for better wages and shorter hours. He reported to the LSDP CC in Vilnius, who sent him back to Kaunas with the shoemaker Jozef Olechnowicz, an experienced agitator, to encourage workers to celebrate May Day. They organised a strike of Polish shoemakers, but an apprentice betrayed Dzierzynski, police raided his lodgings, found SD pamphlets and a contact list and arrested him and Olechnowicz. Some workers confirmed that Dzierzynski had distributed illegal literature, and gendarmes believed he would 'be dangerous in the future' and 'capable of any crime', so they detained him,<sup>78</sup> and the LSDP barely survived.

Alexandras Birincikas, a labourer and founder-member of the LSDP, was an excellent speaker and organiser. He and the Proletariat veteran Stanislaw Trusiewicz favoured giving workers a general education and disliked the nationalist and conspiratorial tendency of some intelligentsy, so they wrote and hectographed *Echo zycia robotniczego (The Echo of Workers' Life)*. The police arrested Birincikas, and briefly detained the intelligent Alfonsas Domasevicius, but Moravskis escaped to western Europe and founded Sajunga Lietuvos socialdemokratu uzsienyje (The Union of Lithuanian Social Democrats Abroad).<sup>79</sup>

In 1898 the police deported Dzierzynski to Vyatka province. It took him six weeks to get there, but when he fell ill he was allowed to move further north. He read more Marx, Engels and Plekhanov. and became convinced of 'the necessity of merging the economic with the political struggle'. In 1899, when a doctor told him he was terminally ill, he escaped to Vilnius. The LSDP had almost disappeared;<sup>80</sup> but Vladas Sirutavicius, a St. Petersburg Technological Institute student, had formed a provisional CC,<sup>81</sup> which had merged with that of the PPS. Dzierzynski was 'violently hostile' to the PPS's nationalism, and the CC prevented him from contacting workers and 'pressed' him to leave,<sup>82</sup> so Bundists helped him get to Warszawa.

Two percent of Polish plants employed 55 percent of urban workers, and over a third were in textile mills, but the Russian government taxed Polish textiles highly and insisted that factories import oil from Baki and coke from the Donbass. In Warszawa 41 percent of the population were under 19 and almost half of the 44,500 workers were in metallurgical plants. The SDKP had over 1,000 members in Łódź, Białystok, the Dąbrowa coalfield and Warszawa, and Dzierzynski contacted Jan Rosol of the SDKP, then joined the PPS, which organised over 1,000 workers and artisans and received money and technical support from socialists in Prussia and Galicia. Dzierzynski supported boot-makers' strikes, 'managed to detach' the illegal bakers' union from the PPS, joined the SDKP and formed five kruzki. He reported to the LSDP CC in a Vilnius Bundist's flat, and persuaded them to merge with the SDKP and let him lead Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy (The Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania). He returned to Warszawa, demanded the expulsion of terrorists, and the police arrested Trusiewicz and other nationalists. On May Day 3,000 workers demonstrated, but the police made many arrests. They exiled Dzierzynski to Yakutsk for five years, but he escaped, and Bundists helped him get back to Warszawa. He feared arrest, so he went to Dąbrowa coalfield, but the police arrested him and sent him back to Yakutsk.

Łódź police raided the PPS press and arrested Jósef Piłsudski.<sup>83</sup> The SDKPiL's Łódź and Białystok kruzshki had no intelligenty, so Julian Marchlewski transferred the leadership to the émigré organisation;<sup>84</sup> but though Darbuotojų Lietuvoje Sąjunga (The Union of Workers of Lithuania) left the LSDP,<sup>85</sup> Bundists recruited across the Pale.

By 1899 most of the 12,380 Jewish workers in Poland were in Jewish-owned plants, and there were 119,371 artisans. In the Russian provinces of the Pale there were over 22,000 factory workers and 179,000 artisans in the north, almost 9,600 factory workers and 141,000 artisans in the southwest and 2,000 factory workers and over 61,000 artisans in the south. In spring the Bund's intelligenty leaders Arkady Kremer, Mutnik and Nokhem Levinson left prison and went to Switzerland. They agreed with Shloyme that Jews were a nation; but when their *Der yiddisher arbeyter* reached Warszawa the Bund Committee dissociated itself from its 'nationalist views'.<sup>86</sup>

In Kaunas 16-year-old Tarshis was a well-known 'active member of a trade union, a "nihilist" and "striker"', and no ladies' tailor would employ him. His brother wanted him to study, but he evidently joined the Bund. He went to Vilnius with the names of trade union and political contacts, got a job, joined the ladies tailors' trade union and subsequently became its secretary and treasurer. He attended intelligenty-led kruzshki, and studied political economy and workers' parties abroad. His five rubles a week pay was 'too meagre' to buy books, and the union libraries were poor; but when he got 'good books, legal or illegal', he 'read them in one breath' at night, and one about the Paris Commune and Kravchinsky's *Andrey Kuzhukov* made a 'profound impression'. The 'most active elements' met at the 'labour exchange' most days, in spite of police harassment. In February Tarshis heard that someone wanted to meet him in 'a certain house on the outskirts'. The 'representatives of the unions and one comrade-intellectual' from the Bund announced that May Day would be celebrated openly and appointed 'captains' would be stationed in the side streets with nine other union members, the evening before. Each union was to organise a meeting with an 'intellectual', but when Tarshis organised a meeting, no intelligent turned up; so he argued that strikes had accomplished nothing, and workers had to show the governor they were dissatisfied, and the members agreed unanimously. On the day Tarshis and nine others were just off the main thoroughfare, when it was suddenly filled with men and women workers.

The mounted Cossacks and police scented the presence of unusually large numbers of persons in the streets and they were on the alert. Suddenly a red flag was displayed. The crowd began to sing disjointedly in various places; great confusion ensued. The shops were hastily closed and the promenading public scattered to cover. The Cossacks and police threw themselves upon the demonstrators and lashed out with their whips right and left.

This was Vilnius workers' 'first baptism of fire'.<sup>87</sup>

There were May Day events across the Pale. Subsequently a Minsk worker assassinated a suspected spy, and a Białystok veteran agitated young women cigarette workers in Hrodna and 800 went on strike. After an appeal in the socialist press, workers elsewhere in the Pale, and in Baki, Lyon, Berlin, London and New York, sent over 1,500 rubles to the Bund. The artisan kruzshki in Daugavpils had a library, and though the librarian's name was kept secret, match workers went on strike,<sup>88</sup> and there were political developments in the Caucasus.

## (v) Jughashvili

Besarion Jughashvili was born into the family of a serf who tended vines in Didi-Lido, Georgia, in 1850. The village had around 500 inhabitants, but after Caucasian serfs were liberated in 1864,<sup>89</sup> Besarion left for Tbilisi to be an apprentice in a shoe factory.<sup>90</sup> It processed raw leather and was one of the filthiest plants in the city, and older workers often arrived drunk and tormented youngsters;<sup>91</sup> so Jughashvili left after completing his apprenticeship. By 1870 128,000 Russian troops were stationed in the Caucasus, and in 1871 Gori became a junction on the railway line from Tbilisi to Poti on the Black Sea coast. About half of Gori's 7,000 inhabitants were Armenian, and Jughashvili worked for an Armenian entrepreneur who supplied boots to the garrison,<sup>92</sup> and married.

Ketevan Geladze had been born into a serf family in the village of Gambareuli, near Gori, around 1860.<sup>93</sup> Her father was a bricklayer, but also worked as a gardener for a wealthy Armenian. Her mother saw to it that her daughter became literate, but when she was eight her mother died,<sup>94</sup> and Ketevan was 'hardly able to write her own name'.<sup>95</sup> She was raised by her uncle; and in 1864 the family moved into Gori. In 1874, when Ketevan was 13 or 14, she married Jughashvili, and he rented a small timber and brick house near the garrison. It had one room measuring almost 8.5 square metres, and the furniture consisted of a table and four chairs, a plank bed, a samovar, a trunk, shelves and a kerosene lamp; but Besarion had a workshop in the cellar. Their first son died, aged two months, in 1876, and a second son died aged six months in 1877; but a third son was born in December 1878, and lived.<sup>96</sup> His godfather named him Ioseb,<sup>97</sup> and his nursery was in the cellar.

In the early 1880s Jughashvili employed two apprentices. But he beat Ioseb, and so did Ketevan, and she beat Jughashvili when he was drunk.<sup>98</sup> By 1884 he reportedly employed up to ten workers, but his violence made Ketevan take Ioseb to live with the priest Palavani Egnatashvili, where she worked as a laundress.<sup>99</sup> By 1886 they lived in the upper storey of the home of the priest Kristopore Charkviani, but she still cleaned Egnatashvili's rooms and cleaned and repaired other people's clothes. Jughashvili had gone to work for an Armenian tannery-owner in Tbilisi, but in 1886 he set up a shoe-repairing stall in the Armenian bazaar, but did not visit Gori.<sup>100</sup> In 1887 Ioseb survived smallpox, and in 1888 he entered Gori Junior Seminary,<sup>101</sup> thanks to Charkviani. There were 150 boys,<sup>102</sup> but Ioseb went straight into the second form.<sup>103</sup>

In January 1890 a runaway carriage ran over Ioseb's legs, and when he recovered his father took him to work in the Tbilisi tannery,<sup>104</sup> where he wound thread and ran errands. They lived in small rented room in the Avlabar district, but Jughashvili reportedly beat the boy so often that he permanently injured his left arm. When Ketevan found out she and Egnatashvili petitioned the Exarch, and he asked the police to prosecute Jughashvili. The court sent him to prison and removed his custody rights,<sup>105</sup> and the boy re-entered Gori school in autumn, but his father refused to support his family financially. Ioseb was expelled for being unable to pay the 25 ruble tuition fee, but Egnatashvili cleared the debt.<sup>106</sup> Pupils in the higher classes were taught in Russian, but Ioseb had missed a year through illness,<sup>107</sup> so Charkviani helped him learn the language,<sup>108</sup> and Ketevan cleaned the school for 10 rubles a month. Around this time Ioseb read Alexandr Qabzegi's novel in medieval Georgian, *მამის მკვლელობა (Patricide)*.<sup>109</sup> It was about the struggle against the tsar and had been banned in 1882,<sup>110</sup> and Ioseb adopted the hero's name, Koba, as his nickname. In 1892 he witnessed the public hanging of two peasants found guilty of murder;<sup>111</sup> but he came first in his class. His tuition fee was waived and he received a grant of three rubles a month, then 3.5, and eventually seven; but he was known as the 'gendarme' because the teacher put him in charge of class discipline. In spring 1894 he graduated, but declined a state scholarship at Tbilisi's teacher-training school, and passed the examinations for the Seminary, which reopened in autumn with two first-year classes.

Boys normally entered the Seminary when they were 14, but Ioseb was 15. The course lasted six years,<sup>112</sup> and Jesuit priests taught 600 pupils.<sup>113</sup> The annual tuition fees were 40 rubles and room and board cost 100, so Ioseb petitioned for a scholarship, and received a partial one, free room and board, and some money from Egnatashvili. The priests called Ioseb by the Russian name of 'Iosif', and in summer 1895 he was eighth of 29 in his class,<sup>114</sup> but he begged the rektor for financial assistance. 'Your Reverence knows all about the pitiful circumstances of my mother, who takes care for me. My father has not provided for me for three years. This is his way [of] punishing me for continuing my studies against his wishes'.<sup>115</sup> In summer Ioseb published Georgian verses in *iveria* under a pseudonym. He was fifth in his class in summer 1896, and in autumn, when he lived outside the main dormitory, he joined a kruzhek of ten pupils led by an older seminarian.<sup>116</sup> He met friends from Gori, and Ketskhoveli took him to the bookshop where Chichinadze's hired out radical books for five kopeks, and the group read works by Nekrasov, Chernyshevsky,<sup>117</sup> Tolstoy, Lermontov, Chekhov, Nikolai Gogol and Fyodor Dostoevsky. They borrowed books from Ilya Chavchavadze's literary society, and Jughashvili bought banned works from a society member's bookstall in Gori.<sup>118</sup> When *iveria* published articles attacking the Seminary's 'Jesuitical' methods, it was closed for several months;<sup>119</sup> and Jibladze assigned Jughashvili to lead a railway workers' kruzhek.<sup>120</sup> They used a boot-blackening brush to produce leaflets on economic issues,<sup>121</sup> and their only illegal literature was a Georgian translation of Dikshtein's pamphlet,<sup>122</sup> but Marx's ideas appeared in print.

Alexandre Tsulukidze was born into the family of a prince in Khoni, Kutaisi province, in 1876.<sup>123</sup> He later entered Tbilisi Seminary, joined a radical kruzhek and paid 25 rubles (a worker's monthly pay) for the Russian *Kapital* Volume I. He expounded SD ideas in *iveria* in 1896, and the censor let it pass.<sup>124</sup>

The Seminary's assistant supervisor gave Jughashvili a warning for having a translation of Victor Hugo's *Quatrevingt-treize (Ninety-Three)*, which was about the French Revolution, and late that year the supervisor noted that Jughashvili had a ticket for the 'Cheap Library'. He was reading a translation of Hugo's *Les Travailleurs de la Mer (The Toilers of the Sea)*, which was about the industrial revolution on Guernsey, and he had a 'lengthy stay' in the punishment cell.<sup>125</sup> He received six warnings that year and never scored top marks in any subject.<sup>126</sup>

Jughashvili had read translations of works by Emile Zola, Honoré de Balzac, William Thackeray and books by Georgian authors, but in spring 1897 he was caught with a banned translation of a work by a French Darwinist which contradicted the Seminary's teaching. He denounced the surveillance regime, called the inspector a 'Black Blob' and spent five hours in the solitary 'isolation cell'. Reading a translation of Ernest Renan's 1863 *Vie de Jésus (Life of Jesus)* ended Jughashvili's religious beliefs, and he wanted to be a village scribe or elder;<sup>127</sup> but he joined a 'Young Socialist' kruzhek.<sup>128</sup> He was 16<sup>th</sup> of the 24 in his class that summer,<sup>129</sup> and his name appeared in the conduct book again. 'At 9 p.m. a group of students gathered in the dining-hall' and Jughashvili read 'books not sanctioned by the Seminary authorities'.<sup>130</sup> He was to receive nine warnings that year.<sup>131</sup>



Ketskhoveri had returned to Tbilisi by autumn. He joined an SD kruzhok, worked for a printer to learn typesetting, contacted seminarians,<sup>132</sup> and then led an SD kruzhok. He asked Jughashvili to lead two workers' kruzhki; but Jibladze told Zhordania that Jughashvili agitated less against tsarism than against intelligenty for their 'lack of militancy' and 'betrayal of the proletariat', so they told him to stay away and stop smearing them. Late that year he refused to bow to the Seminary inspector and protested about the searches of students' belongings. His name went into the conduct book once more and he spent five hours in the punishment cell.<sup>133</sup> In spring 1898, when the Seminary kruzhok leader left for Iuriev University, Jughashvili took over, and he was 20<sup>th</sup> of the 23 in his class that summer.<sup>134</sup> Ketskhoveri was deported for organising a tram strike,<sup>135</sup> and Tskhakaya had also been deported,<sup>136</sup> but self-styled RSDRP Committees existed in Batumi, Kutaisi and Chmatur by the end of the year.<sup>137</sup>

In spring 1899 *kvali* supporters in Tbilisi published a May Day leaflet, and 75 workers celebrated outside the city.<sup>138</sup> The Seminary rektor wanted to expel Jughashvili because he was 'politically unreliable',<sup>139</sup> even though his marks were good; but he missed the deadline for paying his tuition fees,<sup>140</sup> and was 'expelled for not taking the examinations: reasons unknown', while 45 others were expelled for circulating illegal leaflets.<sup>141</sup> Jughashvili declined a job in a small church school, and shared a room with his wealthy friend, Mikhail Davitashvili, who paid the bills.<sup>142</sup> Ketskhoveri had returned and got Jughashvili a job as a clerk at the geophysical observatory,<sup>143</sup> with a modest salary.<sup>144</sup>

Tsulukidze had joined Kutaisi SDs in 1897, then went to Moscow and got involved in illegal student activity, but returned to Tbilisi in 1899. He organized strikes there, and in the oil port of Batumi and other towns and cities.<sup>145</sup> There were strikes at the Tqibuli coalmines in Kutaisi province, and since 1890 there had been 12 in Tbilisi.<sup>146</sup>

The government had set aside almost 110,000 hectares of state land in Baki province and required villagers to relinquish another 270,000 for migrant Russians, who had been exempted from paying rent in European Russia. The government wrote off their debts and gave them reduced railway fares to the Caucasus, and some Muslims with just over three hectares per person were soon starving.<sup>147</sup> Baki SDs led three oil workers' kruzhki, and Enukidze contacted factory workers, and the SDs formed an RSDRP Committee with a small underground press.<sup>148</sup> Terrorism remained influential, especially among intelligenty, but SD ideas were making headway across Russia.

## **(vi) Socialist-Revolutionaries**

Grigory Gershuni was born in 1870,<sup>149</sup> into a well-to-do Jewish family in Minsk. He later studied bacteriology, worked in cultural organisations and helped revolutionaries.<sup>150</sup> In 1895 he joined Rabochaya partya politicheskogo osvobodhenyat rossii (The Workers' Party for the Political Liberation of Russia), which had recently been founded in Minsk. It was federalist, and saw terror as the key element in the struggle against the autocracy,<sup>151</sup> but former terrorists returning from exile became active in Penza, Voronezh, Vyatka and Odesa provinces, and called themselves 'socialist-revolutionaries'. A Saratov group contacted others in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Ufa, Nizhni Novgorod and Chernihiv, and formed Severnyy soyuz eserov (The Northern Union of Socialist-Revolutionaries), which acknowledged the significance of the working class, while I. Dyakov in Kyiv wanted to 'put the peasants to one side' and focus entirely on workers.<sup>152</sup>

The veteran terrorist Breshkovskaya had met many young 'Marxists' from Moscow and St. Petersburg in her 18 years in Siberia,<sup>153</sup> and by 1896, when she was freed,<sup>154</sup> she considered herself a socialist.<sup>155</sup> She noticed the 'significantly greater extent of literacy' among the peasantry and 'the desire of the more literate to read serious books in the hope of finding answers to their insoluble problems'. They had 'greater independence', and some youngsters ignored gentry and government officials. There was 'hardly a single teenage girl, not to mention the lads', who had not worked away from home, and some had harvested or worked in sugar refineries in Kyiv.<sup>156</sup> Breshkovskaya joined the S-Rs,<sup>157</sup> and visited many provinces, but never stayed more than a month anywhere.<sup>158</sup> The 'railway compartment was my home. I held meetings on riverboats by night, in city tenement rooms, in peasant huts, and in the forests', and unlike in 'the old times', she was 'constantly protected'. Peasants were more wretched, but 'much more intelligent, and more nearly ripe for revolution'.<sup>159</sup>

Village schools could accommodate ten percent of school-age children, but there was 'a general craving for knowledge' and a few self-educated peasants knew about Darwin's ideas and wanted their children to go to university. S-Rs hectographed and mimeographed leaflets, and some peasants wrote and printed their own, formed committees, organised meetings and forged links with others. Leonid Bulakov led work in Simbirsk, Samara, Penza, Tambov, Voronezh and Kazan provinces, and when police harassed the Seminary graduate Alexandr Panov, he took his library to Nizhni Novgorod and trained youngsters to propagandise peasants.<sup>160</sup> In 1897 an S-R congress in Voronezh attracted delegates from Kyiv, Kharkiv, Poltava and St. Petersburg, who had contacts in Moscow, Odesa, Tambov and Katerynoslav.<sup>161</sup> The northern headquarters was moved to Moscow, and

the manifesto of Yuzhnyy soyuz eserov (The Southern Union of Socialist-Revolutionaries) did not mention terror, but it stressed the political significance of agricultural and industrial workers.<sup>162</sup> Other intelligenty became S-Rs.

Viktor Chernov was born in the large Saratov province town of Kamyshin in 1873.<sup>163</sup> He was the grandson of a peasant,<sup>164</sup> but graduated from a Dorpat secondary school in 1891 and entered Moscow University in 1892. He joined the illegal student sovet, led a *Partya narodnoe pravo kruzhok*, and was imprisoned for nine months in 1894. In 1895 the police sent him home, but he went to Tambov province and contacted A.N. Sletova, who ran a Sunday school. They agitated young workers and artisans, and Chernov organised an artisan cooperative and led a strike. The authorities closed the school, but Chernov, Sletova and others recruited secondary school pupils and seminarians, trainee teachers and medical students. The authorities closed this organisation, but Chernov encouraged students to use the intelligenty's illegal literature to propagandise peasants.<sup>165</sup> By 1896 he believed that peasants would give up their loyalty to the tsar,<sup>166</sup> and late in 1898 he convened a congress of peasant delegates from five Tambov districts, a workers' *kruzhok* and an artisans' *kruzhok*. He tried to persuade the northern and S-Rs to form a national organisation, but had no support from the St. Petersburg, Saratov or southern organisations. He favoured the formation of peasant 'brotherhoods', to act against 'oppressors and exploiters', 'as far as possible by legal means', but in 'extreme cases' by imposing 'stiff penalties'; and in 1899, after his deportation ended, he went to Zurich,<sup>167</sup> and met like-minded émigrés.

Avram Gots was born in 1866,<sup>168</sup> into the family of a Moscow millionaire. He became an terrorist in the 1880s, but was exiled to Yakutsk, and in 1889, a blow from a rifle butt at a demonstration severely injured his spine. In 1899, on his release, he went to Switzerland,<sup>169</sup> where he, Breshkovskaya and Gershuni supported the S-Rs. They returned to Russia, recruited intelligenty and workers in the central provinces, and based themselves in Saratov,<sup>170</sup> but getting hold of illegal literature remained a problem for all revolutionaries.

#### **(vii) The 'gray' and the 'conscious'**

August Kok was born into an Estonian family in a Caucasian community. He later became a skilled machinist, settled in Tbilisi in 1891, joined SR terrorist and SD workers' *kruzhki*, learned about the western European labour movement from liberal newspapers and read works by Marx. In 1896 he contacted the SPD via Bucholtz and went to Berlin, and in 1897 Kuskova put him in touch with the SD Takhtarev,<sup>171</sup> who lived in Brussels.<sup>172</sup> He got the SD Stepan Radchenko and students in St. Petersburg to give Kok their material for a third *Rabochaya mysl* in 1898, and gave Kok a Geneva address,<sup>173</sup> for Vladimir Ivanshin. He was 29,<sup>174</sup> had joined the St. Petersburg Soyuz and sympathised with *Rabochee delo*.<sup>175</sup> Takhtarev went to St. Petersburg, where , who edited them and sent them to Kok in Berlin, where he did the final editing and printing.<sup>176</sup>

*Rabochaya mysl* appeared in St. Petersburg in October,<sup>177</sup> with the slogan that the 'social emancipation of the working class is impossible without its political liberation'.<sup>178</sup> Takhtarev argued that legal 'mutual aid and consumer societies' would become 'widespread', and 'temporary strike organisations' would become permanent. Most intelligenty mistook 'the struggle with the political police for the political struggle with the autocracy', or saw the GOT's programme as 'a simple answer to the question', but the 'most immediate tasks' were encouraging 'councils of the most active workers' representatives' to build permanent strike funds, *kruzhki* of 'advanced workers' and legal and illegal organisations, to enable a 'gradual transition' to workers' control and a 'general representative institution'.<sup>179</sup> The paper would accept 'the services of all who wish us well', but 'interference' was 'out of place', especially by intelligenty who, 'by some sad (or laughable) misunderstanding regard themselves as born revolutionaries', but were 'tomorrow's prosecutors, judges, engineers, factory inspectors' and officials. Kok got a false passport, went to St. Petersburg and distributed the paper, and workers in most districts wrote to him about factory conditions.<sup>180</sup> The third and subsequent issues of *Rabochaya mysl* were published abroad,<sup>181</sup> but border gendarmes found copies in a woman's bulging corset.

Early in 1899 Prokopovich left Switzerland, but gendarmes arrested him at the Finnish border with Russia. Kok returned to Berlin via Warszawa, where students agreed to smuggle the paper via Finland.<sup>182</sup> Late that year some St. Petersburg RSDRP Committee intelligenty disliked the editorial in the fifth *Rabochaya mysl*, and delayed its distribution,<sup>183</sup> but the sixth had no editorial and the Committee adopted the paper.<sup>184</sup> It identified a layer of workers between the 'gray' and the 'conscious', who were 'interested more in questions of political life than in their own immediate economic interests', particularly 'the difference between unlimited and constitutional monarchy and republican form of government', 'the history of the Russian and the western European revolutionary movement', and students;<sup>185</sup> but the police arrested the paper's student supporters at the Technological Institute.<sup>186</sup>

The Okhrana's organisation had spread across European Russia. In addition to the St. Petersburg and Moscow headquarters, Zubatov had established security sections in Vilnius, Kyiv, Odesa, Tbilisi, Nizhni Novgorod, Rostov-na-Donu, Tomsk, Irkutsk, Minsk, Saratov, Poltava, Rīga, Warszawa, Białystok and 'other places of geographical importance', where gendarme and police authorities had previously 'displayed more or less continuous ineptitude or ignorance'.<sup>187</sup> He reported that strikes 'confirm the confidence of the masses in their own power, teach them more practical methods of combat', 'train and give prominence to specially gifted individuals of greater initiative', 'convince the labourer of the possibility and advantage of combination' and 'render him more accessible to Socialist ideas'. Strikes developed a 'consciousness' of 'solidarity of interests with the labouring classes throughout the world' and a belief 'that political agitation in the social democratic sense' was 'indispensable to victory', so they were 'an elementary school for the political education of the working class'. The activity of 'revolutionary agitators' was 'so intense, that a combined action of all authorities affected will be necessary to combat it'.<sup>188</sup> Intelligenty were too weak to beat the government on their own, even with dynamite,<sup>189</sup> and if an intelligent propagandised 'pure socialism', 'one can cope with him by purely repressive measures'. Zubatov wanted to 'tear away the ground from under' agitators who exploit 'petty shortcomings of the existing legal order' by legalising strikes that did not involve criminal or political activity; but the government completely ignored his recommendations.<sup>190</sup>

Since 1895 the police had arrested 164 strikers and put 31 groups on trial, while troops had intervened in 269 disputes,<sup>191</sup> and suppressed 50 strikes,<sup>192</sup> including a six-week strike at Gomel railway workshop.<sup>193</sup> There were 47,866 policemen, or one for every 2,650 people. Only 8,400 were stationed in the countryside,<sup>194</sup> but the government had established factory police.<sup>195</sup> There were over 1,000 detectives, and their numbers varied from six in some districts to 40 in major centres, and between 50 and 100 in St. Petersburg and Moscow. The 200-300 gendarme officers included around 150 special surveillance personnel, who coordinated their activities with those of the regular police; but they worked in pairs, so the 40 or 50 in Moscow could watch no more than 25 suspects at a time.<sup>196</sup> The Okhrana headquarters in St. Petersburg employed people who knew up to eight languages and monitored telegrams from abroad;<sup>197</sup> but while some provinces had only 12 gendarmes,<sup>198</sup> police spies in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Warszawa watched at least 624 suspects.<sup>199</sup>

During 1899 the Justice Ministry prosecuted 1,884 political suspects, gendarmes dealt with 1,325 and courts martial with two. Between them they exiled 49 to Siberia, deported 105 elsewhere and expelled 11 foreigners, while the police had 308 under surveillance, 195 in preliminary detention and 108 in prison,<sup>200</sup> but 1,414 had been sentenced without trial.<sup>201</sup> There had been 300,000 exiles in Siberia in 1898, and 148,000 had had no trial, though 94 percent had been banished by peasant communes. Around 2,000 had completed their sentences on Sakhalin Island and returned to the mainland; but by 1899 5,000 more men and 500 more women had arrived on Sakhalin, and exiles accounted for 25 percent of the populations in parts of Irkutsk province. Tolstoy's novel, *Voskresenie* (*Resurrection*) had included an unflinching portrait of the exile system, and the tsar established a commission to examine ways of limiting or abolishing it.<sup>202</sup> St. Petersburg police had released the worker Zinoviev under surveillance in 1897, and he went to Tver, where he joined SDs, propagandised and built an underground press.<sup>203</sup> He was arrested late in 1899, but suffered serious abuse in prison, and died soon after.<sup>204</sup>

During 1899 Bundists had smuggled three quarters of a tonne of illegal literature,<sup>205</sup> and sold 45,000 papers.<sup>206</sup> The CC had asked Kautsky to write a special forward for the Yiddish translation of *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*,<sup>207</sup> and in December its Kaunas Congress belatedly recognised the émigré committee.<sup>208</sup> Since 1881 over 150,000 Jews had left Russia for the USA,<sup>209</sup> but a group of RSDRP exiles in Siberia produced a critique of 'revisionism'.

### **(viii) A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats**

Egor Baramzin was born into a minor government official's family in Vyatka in 1868. He graduated from Kazan Pedagogical Institute in 1887, taught at a city school, and by 1892 he had helped to form illegal kruzhki. He moved to Nizhni-Novgorod in 1894, but the police put him under surveillance, so he moved to Voronezh, but was arrested in 1897, and exiled him to Yenisei province in 1899,<sup>210</sup> not far from the St. Petersburg SD intelligenty.

In St. Petersburg Kuskova broke from the RSDRP,<sup>211</sup> and gave her speaking notes to Struve;<sup>212</sup> but after the censors closed *Nachalo* in May,<sup>213</sup> he gave them to Elizarova, who sent them to her brother Vladimir in Siberia in code with an uncoded message about what she called the 'Credo'.<sup>214</sup> Ulyanov thought that Kautsky's *Die Agrarfrage* (*The Agrarian Question*) was 'the most important event in present-day economic literature' since *Das Kapital* Volume 3,<sup>215</sup> and he had liked most of the first two issues of *Nachalo*;<sup>216</sup> but the 'emptiness' of Kuskova's notes surprised him,<sup>217</sup> and after reading Kautsky's critique of Bernstein he realised that 'revisionism' was a

serious threat to Marx's analysis.<sup>218</sup> He found Bernstein's *Die Neue Zeit* articles 'unbelievable weak theoretically', and akin to British Fabianism,<sup>219</sup> so he and Krupskaya translated and circulated Kautsky's critique of Bernstein,<sup>220</sup> and Ulyanov drafted an article against the 'menacing deflection' from building an 'independent working-class party'.<sup>221</sup>

In late summer Lepeshinsky and Lepeshinskaya had a daughter in Yermakovskoye, where D. Troukhovskaya and her husband Vaneev, Kurnatovsky, Silvin and the former St. Petersburg worker Panin also lived, and 17 exiles met in Panin's home. Baramzin persuaded Ulyanov to stop calling Kuskova an idealist, and they and the intelligenty Krupskaya, Vaneev, Troukhovskaya, Kurnatovsky, Silvin, Starkov, Krzhizhanovskaya, Krzhizhanovsky and Lengnik, and the workers Panin, Shapovalov and Engberg, signed Ulyanov's *Protest rossyskikh sotsial-demokratov* (*A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats*). The workers Mikhail Efimov, Tchelalsky, Prominsky and Kovalevsky later supported it, as did the workers Mazanov and Goudinov and the intelligent Iuly Tsederbaum in Touroukhansk;<sup>222</sup> but Vaneev died of tuberculosis.<sup>223</sup> Ulyanov proposed a 'triple alliance' to Tsederbaum and to Potresov, and when they returned to Russia,<sup>224</sup> their Literaturnaya Gruppy (Literary Group) would fight 'revisionism',<sup>225</sup> publish a theoretical journal and a paper like *Der Sozialdemokrat*,<sup>226</sup> and rebuild the RSDRP;<sup>227</sup>

Ulyanov admired the SPD, but acknowledged that it was impossible to copy it in Russia.<sup>228</sup> His draft RSDRP programme argued that terror was 'not advisable as a means of struggle *at the present moment*', so the 'Party (*as a party*) must renounce it (until there occurs a change of circumstances that might lead to a change of tactics)', and concentrate *all of its energy* on organisation and the regular delivery of literature'.

We do not regard Marx's theory as something completed and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that it has only laid the foundation stone of the science which socialists *must* develop in all directions if they wish to keep pace with life. We think that an *independent* elaboration of Marx's theory is especially essential for Russian socialists; for his theory provides only general *guiding* principles, which, *in particular*, are applied in England differently from France, in France differently than in Germany, and in Germany differently than in Russia. We shall therefore gladly afford space in our paper for articles on theoretical questions and we invite all comrades openly to discuss controversial points.

He sent the programme to the editors of *Rabochaya gazeta*, but the paper did not appear.

Late that year Ulyanov drafted a party programme. He argued that, in all countries, the 'better situated strata of the working-class respond to ideas of socialism more rapidly and more easily. From among these come, in the main, advanced workers', who 'can win the confidence of the labouring masses, who devote themselves entirely to education and organisation of the proletariat, who accept socialism consciously, and who even elaborate independent socialist theories'. A 'working-class intelligentsia' already existed in Russia, and the RSDRP must 'ensure that its ranks are regularly reinforced' and its 'lofty mental requirements are met', and that leaders came 'from its ranks'.<sup>229</sup> Ulyanov also drafted a pamphlet which argued that the 'only salvation' for women workers was 'participation in the revolutionary movement', since 'the victory of the working class would bring emancipation' to both men and women.<sup>230</sup>

There were RSDRP Committees or 'cells' in Vilnius, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Vladimir, Tula, Kazan, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Odesa, Samara, Saratov and Łódź. Most members were intelligenty,<sup>231</sup> but two thirds were under 24.<sup>232</sup> US supporters had sent the GOT 2,200 francs,<sup>233</sup> and the Siberian exiles' protest was published in Geneva.<sup>234</sup>

## (ix) Bronstein

In 1804 the tsar offered unpopulated land in the south to poor Jews in the western Pale,<sup>235</sup> and 65,000 moved to Poltava province.<sup>236</sup> Most lived in their 'colony', and men became small traders;<sup>237</sup> but Leon Bronstein farmed 100 hectares at Yanovka in Kherson province, 120km or so north of the Black Sea port of Mykolaiv.<sup>238</sup> The family lived in a peasant hut with a straw roof, and five tiny rooms with low ceilings, but the dining room had a wooden floor and the wooden sitting-room floor was painted.<sup>239</sup> David was born around 1840,<sup>240</sup> and he later married Aneta Schpentzer from Odesa. They grew wheat for export and raised livestock. Their fifth child, but only the third to survive,<sup>241</sup> arrived in 1879.

Lev later had a nanny called Mashka, but recalled that it was 23km to the post-office, so a letter was an 'event', and it was over 35km to the railway station, so they never saw newspapers, but his mother borrowed novels from a library in a nearby town. His father was illiterate, yet by 'indefatigable, cruel toil that spared neither himself nor others', he became 'very prosperous'. 'Nothing else mattered, nothing but the price of grain on the world market'. Aneta ran the only corn mill in the district and David bought an engine for it.<sup>242</sup> He rented 4,900 hectares, and drove north to Elizavetgrad and south to Mykolaiv to sell grain and buy equipment.<sup>243</sup> Lev's older

siblings taught him his letters and gave him coloured books, then his parents sent him to live with an aunt in a nearby village. He studied with her children at the primary school,<sup>244</sup> and learned Russian and Hebrew, but not Yiddish, so he had few friends,<sup>245</sup> and often returned home. By 1886 the seven-year-old did the family accounts, but when he protested that one worker did not get enough to live on, his kulak father told him to shut up.<sup>246</sup>

Lev's cousin, Moisei Schpentzer, had attended Odesa gymnasium in the 1870s, but became politically active and was expelled. In 1888 he visited Yanovka, hoping to fight off tuberculosis. He taught Lev arithmetic and grammar to prepare him for the gymnasium, but his books about peasant life and the 'knout' terrified the boy. Lev went as a 'paying guest' to live with his uncle and his wife Fanny, the headmistress of a state school for Jewish girls in Odesa. His uncle stopped him reading illegal papers and works by Tolstoy, but he read them when the couple were out. The boys' gymnasium's Jewish quota was full, and Lev failed the entrance examination for the realschule, so he attended a preparatory school; but in 1889 he entered the realschule and performed brilliantly.<sup>247</sup> In 1890, when a friend failed to get the mark needed to move up to the next class, Lev organised a protest, and in the sixth class, when there was a protest about a teacher who was too lazy to mark their work, one boy was expelled, and Lev got 24 hours in solitary.<sup>248</sup> Pupils who completed a seven-year gymnasium course could apply to enter a university,<sup>249</sup> but there was no seventh class at Lev's school, so boys usually went to an Odesa gymnasium for a seventh year; but Lev decided to go to Mykolaiv, a night's ride away by steamboat.

In autumn 1895 he entered Mykolaiv gymnasium. His landlady's children called themselves socialists, but Vyacheslav Svigotsky, a Czech classmate, called himself a 'Narodnik'. Vyacheslav's older brother Franz, a gardener, loaned books, as did the SR bookseller Galatsky. Lev read Lavrov, Mikhailovsky,<sup>250</sup> *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii* and other SD classics, but was 'carried away' by Chernyshevsky's 'realist aesthetics'.<sup>251</sup> In summer 1896 his father arrived. He wanted Lev to be an engineer and develop the business, but he refused, so his father stopped his allowance.<sup>252</sup> Lev visited Yanovka, but rowed with his father,<sup>253</sup> and returned to Mykolaiv, where he sometimes earned 11 rubles a month by tutoring. When the Svigotskys moved to a large house on the outskirts, Lev and others joined them and formed a 'commune' called Razsadnik (Seedbed).<sup>254</sup> They discussed liberation, and clubbed together to buy publications,<sup>255</sup> but only two defended SD ideas.

Grigory Ziv, a Kyiv University graduate, had read the Seedbed's handwritten copy of *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii*.<sup>256</sup> Alexandra Sokolovskaya was from a poor townsman's family, but her father had given her SR literature. She attended Geneva University and studied midwifery at Odesa University, and students who had contacted the GOT loaned her St. Petersburg SD literature,<sup>257</sup> and *Kapital*. She returned to Mykolaiv in 1896, and insisted that they study Plekhanov's critique of SRs, but they threw it on the floor after reading the attack on Mikhailovsky.

In autumn 17-year-old Bronstein accepted an invitation to live in another uncle's Odesa apartment in order to enrol at the University's mathematics faculty,<sup>258</sup> but the lectures were uninspiring, so he taught in a secondary school, but spent most of his spare time propagandising a kruzhek in his uncle's boiler factory and debating with the leader of another kruzhek. Shatunovsky, a machinist, recalled that he made enemies, but won over some opponents. He often arrived late at the school, and the authorities disliked his style of dress and insisted that he cut his hair. He refused, but feared being arrested for propagandising,<sup>259</sup> so he sailed to Mykolaiv in December.<sup>260</sup> He found that the Seedbed had requested the public library to subscribe to the St. Petersburg journal *Novoe slovo*,<sup>261</sup> but Bronstein called the writers 'Reptiles',<sup>262</sup> and rejected Plekhanov's 'dry, narrow, impractical stuff', so he got everyone except Sokolovskaya to complain to the library committee,<sup>263</sup> organised to take it over at the annual meeting,<sup>264</sup> and cancelled the subscription to *Novoe slovo*.<sup>265</sup>

Early in 1897 students returned to Mykolaiv from St. Petersburg with news of Vetrova's horrible death and the strikes.<sup>266</sup> Most of the Seedbed saw themselves as SRs, wore workers' blue blouses and straw hats and carried black canes; but Grigory Sokolovsky contacted factory workers,<sup>267</sup> and persuaded 20 or so to meet in the woods. Bronstein visited Odesa each week to get illegal literature from the typesetter Polyak, and Mykolaiv workers 'streamed' into kruzhki.<sup>268</sup> Many were well-paid, literate shipyard workers who had won an eight-hour day,<sup>269</sup> but there were 'various types of sectarianism among the older generation'.<sup>270</sup> The Seedbed split kruzhki in two when they had 25 members,<sup>271</sup> but their propaganda had 'an economic rather than a revolutionary character' until Bronstein brought a printed *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii* from Odesa,<sup>272</sup> and became 'fully acquainted' with it by explaining it to workers.<sup>273</sup> Ilya Sokolovsky got addresses from a garden watchman, and a mechanic called Ivan Mukhin joined the Seedbed in a café where the mechanical piano foiled eavesdroppers. They soon occupied all the tables in one wing, so Mukhin fitted up a 'conspirative apartment' with an electric alarm to allow them to leave by the back door if the police raided, and Bronstein drafted a constitution for Profsoyuz rabotnikov yuga rossy (The South Russian Workers' Union).<sup>274</sup>

Bronstein was still a teenager and recalled that nobody in the Seedbed was over 30.

Revolutionists above that age were few in number and seemed old men. The movement was utterly devoid of careerism, lived on its faith in the future and on its spirit of self-sacrifice ... The very words 'committee', 'party' were as yet new, with an aura of vernal freshness, and rang in young ears a disquieting and alluring melody. Whoever joined an organisation knew that prison followed by exile awaited him within the next few months. The measure of ambition was to last as long as possible on the job prior to arrest, to hold oneself steadfast when facing the gendarmes; to ease, as far as possible, the plight of one's comrades; to read, while in prison, as many books as possible; to escape as soon as possible from exile abroad; to acquire wisdom there; and then return to revolutionary activity in Russia.<sup>275</sup>

Bronstein looked for potential leading workers, wrote and hectographed leaflets,<sup>276</sup> for 'mass political agitation', 'spread' them in factories and pasted them on walls. He collected three rubles or so, bought ink and paper, got a mimeograph,<sup>277</sup> and printed *Nashe delo* (*Our Cause*) for 'more cultured workers'.<sup>278</sup> By summer over 200 of around 10,000 workers in the city had joined eight or nine kruzhski,<sup>279</sup> and by late that year there were 250,<sup>280</sup> including some in Odesa and Katerynoslav,<sup>281</sup> but millions of workers in the region were unorganised.

Since 1858 Ukraine's population had increased by 90 percent,<sup>282</sup> to 24 million. Over 94 percent lived in rural areas, and six percent in towns and cities, including over 80 percent of the Jews, who formed 30 percent of the urban population.<sup>283</sup> Odesa's population was 403,800,<sup>284</sup> and 5.6 percent were Ukrainian.<sup>285</sup> Nine percent spoke Ukrainian, but half spoke Russian, and the rest spoke 49 other languages. Belgian capitalists had invested heavily in factories,<sup>286</sup> and the French consul reported that it was necessary to 'make certain types of sacrifices' (bribes) of up to one million rubles, plus commission, to win government contracts.<sup>287</sup> In over 500 factories 22 percent of the workers were female; but according to the SD intelligent Nakhamkes, socialists 'pointed' workers 'along the political path' to Sunday and evening classes and 'threw away the 'chaff' and kept the 'wheat'. Odesa's port handled most of the region's peasants' surplus wheat, and over half of other grains, but most Russians were unskilled workers and 56 percent were migrants. Women earned ten rubles a month, and almost half the men earned less than 20, and competed with peasants who flocked to the docks and building sites after harvest.<sup>288</sup>

In 1899 the Odesa Prefect reported that socialist propaganda had influenced railway and factory workers.<sup>289</sup> Late that year a man called Shrenzel hung around Franz Svigotsky's garden in Mykolaiv, and when Bronstein was returning from Odesa on a steamboat Shrenzel asked him why there was no revolutionary organisation. One day Shrenzel arrived at the garden and asked Bronstein if he knew 'Sophia Mikhailovna'. That was Sokolovskaya's klitchka, but she laughed when Bronstein told her. Soon after Polyak gave Bronstein a message from organised workers in Kyiv about a provocateur called Shrenzel, and Bronstein invited him to tea and ordered him to leave Mykolaiv on pain of death. Shrenzel reported the incident to the authorities,<sup>290</sup> and Franz Svigotsky warned the Seedbed that one of his employees had been seen on the other side of town, dressed as a policeman. Leiken, the Seedbed's poet, tried to recruit a soldier, who told an officer and Leiken was arrested; but Bronstein escaped to Yanovka, where his affluent parents were building a stone mansion.

Late in January 1900 he returned to Mykolaiv to prepare the next *Nashe delo*. The police had ransacked his parents' house, and found nothing incriminating,<sup>291</sup> but the Seedbed had had themselves photographed and the police had got hold of a copy.<sup>292</sup> Next day they arrested over 200,<sup>293</sup> and detained six intelligentsy and 22 workers, including steamfitters, cutters, joiners, boilermakers, blacksmiths, bookbinders, a soldier and a seamstress,<sup>294</sup> mostly no older than their mid-twenties.<sup>295</sup> Sokolovskaya told Bronstein that the police had arrested one of her brothers, and they buried incriminating material in a cabbage patch. Franz Svigotsky dug it up before a detective and gendarmes arrived, but they arrested all but Sokolovskaya, who had left for Katerynoslav. She returned, but was arrested at the station,<sup>296</sup> and the Profsoyuz collapsed.<sup>297</sup>

### **(x) The largest debtor nation in Europe**

In the 25 years to 1899 Russia's rural population had increased by 46 percent.<sup>298</sup> Land prices had risen sharply, but kulaki now leased half of the larger gentry-owned estates.<sup>299</sup> Land tax was seven times higher for peasants than for gentry, kerosene tax had risen by 50 percent, and sugar and match taxes had doubled, so taxes took 20 percent of a poor peasant household's income.<sup>300</sup> Many allotments produced less than half of a bare subsistence,<sup>301</sup> and food consumption was between 20 and 25 percent of that in western Europe.<sup>302</sup> In some districts annual mortality was 50 per 1,000,<sup>303</sup> and almost half of peasant children died before they were five.<sup>304</sup> Redemption payments were short by 16 million rubles and the harvest was barely satisfactory. The finance minister privately acknowledged that poor peasants were paying for industrialisation,<sup>305</sup> but wheat exports brought in hard currency equivalent to £34 million,<sup>306</sup> and since 1881 the government's annual income from excise duty on vodka had risen from 225 million rubles to 310 million, and duties on tobacco, sugar, kerosene and

other common peasant purchases from 16.5 to 139.5 million rubles;<sup>307</sup> During the 1890s peasants' long-term passports for working away from their villages for wages had averaged 184,500 a year,<sup>308</sup> and 108,000 had migrated to Siberia, mostly from provinces with high levels of natural increase and low levels of literacy.<sup>309</sup> In 1899 the finance minister abolished 'soul tax' in Siberia.<sup>310</sup>

During 1899 the government invested 1.7 billion rubles in railways, but borrowed 495 million.<sup>311</sup> It built over 5,000km of new lines,<sup>312</sup> at the cost of 206 million of its annual revenue income of 1.67 billion rubles.<sup>313</sup> Since 1893 railway construction had taken 37 percent of domestically-produced pig-iron,<sup>314</sup> but by 1899 government orders went to seven metal plants, including the Putilov and Briansk metalworks, which built 875 locomotives, and they and others produced 80 percent of rolling stock and over 99 percent of steel rails.<sup>315</sup>

Russian interest rates were higher than in capitalist states and attracted inward investment in industry,<sup>316</sup> and share capital had risen by 1.5 billion during the 1890s.<sup>317</sup> Russians had invested 600 million,<sup>318</sup> and in 1899 they invested almost 112 million, but foreigners invested 405 million,<sup>319</sup> and over 90 percent came from Belgium and France,<sup>320</sup> when one ruble was worth around 2.67 francs.<sup>321</sup>

During the 1890s the number of inspected factories had increased by 38,000, and their 2.37 million workers produced goods worth over 3.4 billion rubles in 1899.<sup>322</sup> Foreign-owned mines produced at least 60 percent of Russia's coal,<sup>323</sup> and production had grown by 269 percent since 1890, though four percent of mines produced 43 percent of the total in 1899. During the 1890s pig-iron production had grown by 314 percent, and in 1895-1899 the annual average was 1.97 million tonnes,<sup>324</sup> but in 1899 it was almost 2.7 million,<sup>325</sup> which accounted for half of domestic consumption,<sup>326</sup> and steel production had risen by 586 percent in a decade. Georgia's annual oil production averaged 7.4 million tonnes, and in 1899 ten percent of firms produced 70 percent of Russia's output.<sup>327</sup> British speculators had invested 147 million rubles in the oilfield,<sup>328</sup> and one company paid the equivalent of £500,000 for 27 acres near Baki.<sup>329</sup> The oilfield produced 75 million barrels in 1899, and since 1895 the average annual consumption of raw cotton had been 228,000 tonnes.<sup>330</sup>

There were ten million industrial workers in European Russia,<sup>331</sup> and over half were 'hereditary proletarians',<sup>332</sup> while 60 percent of inspected workers were in or near Moscow, St. Petersburg and the major Ukrainian and Polish cities. Many factories were larger than their counterparts in western Europe and almost half of metallurgical and textile plants employed over 1,000.<sup>333</sup> Average pay had risen by up to a quarter since the early 1880s, but southern metalworkers' pay had almost doubled.<sup>334</sup> Machine-builders earned an average of 24 rubles a month, and male textile workers up to 17, but females less than seven. The men spent an average of five rubles a month on food, women spent four and couples spent over half their combined wages.<sup>335</sup> Giving birth in a zemstvo maternity home could cost seven rubles, so women often relied on fee waivers; but they had to find up to 16.5 rubles for the christening, so pregnant women worked up to the last minute. Few factories allowed time off for nursing babies, so women had to buy expensive milk, and a child's second year could cost around 40 rubles.<sup>336</sup>

Industry was geographically concentrated, and 72 percent of factory workers in the central industrial region around Moscow were in plants outside towns and cities, and 69 percent of workforces were over 1,000. The average Moscow province peasant held under 2.75 hectares, which could feed a family for five months a year. For 20 years over half of economically active peasants had had a passport, and eight Moscow textile mills employed over 1,000. Around 85 percent of the population were labourers and dependents, and two-thirds lived in the suburbs.<sup>337</sup> A survey of 175,000 people in 1,500 dwellings found that almost 70 percent had less air than was necessary, while many rooms were divided into small sections by boards, and both sexes and all ages lived among noise, filth and foul smells.<sup>338</sup> A bed cost over two rubles a month and a cubicle almost six rubles.<sup>339</sup>

There were around 220 trade unions.<sup>340</sup> Since 1896, officially, there had been 434,000 strikers,<sup>341</sup> more than in Germany since 1890.<sup>342</sup> In 1899 189 officially-recorded strikes,<sup>343</sup> involving 57,000 workers, or 3.8 percent of the inspected workforce, and more metalworkers than textile workers, lasted for a total of 265,000 days. Around 28 percent ended in victory for the workers, 21 percent in compromise and 51 percent in defeat.<sup>344</sup> At least 818 strikes and protests involved 163,000 workers,<sup>345</sup> including many in Poland,<sup>346</sup> but the world market was going into crisis and Russia was not immune.

Two large firms went bust in August, and the St. Petersburg stock market crashed in September.<sup>347</sup> The economic crisis in western Europe reduced the capital and credit available to Russian industry, so interest rates rose, investors sold shares and bankruptcies lowered the demand for domestically-produced goods.<sup>348</sup>

During the 1890s Russia's annual industrial growth had averaged eight percent, the highest of any industrialised nation,<sup>349</sup> and in 1894-1899 it was almost nine percent;<sup>350</sup> but in 1899 the government's balance of payments deficit was almost seven million rubles. Industrialists owed the State Bank 6.3 million in loans and 275 million in short-term credit, gentry owed the Noble's Bank 600 million, peasants owed the Peasants' Bank 900 million,<sup>351</sup> and foreigners held one billion rubles of the government's debt of 3.5 billion.<sup>352</sup> Russia had the largest debt of any European nation, and the autocracy was economically and politically vulnerable.

# 11. Iskra

## (i) Do you have bedbugs too?

From the 1850s to 1900 the size of the average peasant household had fallen from 8.4 people to 6.1,<sup>1</sup> and since 1880 average allotments from around 3.8 to 2.8 hectares.<sup>2</sup> About 75 percent of the village communes' arable land was repartitioned, and while around 17-18 percent of households were probably fairly well-to-do, 68 percent had no horse and 11 percent had no arable land or livestock. After harvest most poor peasants usually sold about a quarter of their grain, mainly to pay taxes. The Agriculture Ministry's budget for 1900 was 40.7 million rubles,<sup>3</sup> but though the industrial cities were like islands in a sea of peasants, registered peasants formed a large proportion of industrial workforces.

By 1900 the population of St. Petersburg had grown by 39 percent in a decade,<sup>4</sup> and it had become the eighth largest city in the world.<sup>5</sup> Almost 29 percent of over 1,439,000 inhabitants had lived there for five years or less,<sup>6</sup> and 78 percent had been born outside the province,<sup>7</sup> including 172,000 from Tver province. Peasants formed 63 percent of the population, but for every two peasant women there were three peasant men. A third of peasant women were married, and 17 percent were aged 16 to 25. There were around 92,000 female domestic servants, but almost 58,000 women worked in industry.<sup>8</sup> Women constituted 16.5 percent of the workforce, but 55 percent of the 30,000 textile workers,<sup>9</sup> and over a quarter of clothing workers were under 15. Around 86 percent of the city's inhabitants were under 40 and 63 percent were under 30,<sup>10</sup> and for every two women waged workers there were five men.<sup>11</sup> Around 92 percent of non-peasant men and over 81 percent of non-peasant women were literate, but so were 74 percent of peasant men and 40 percent of peasant women.<sup>12</sup> Almost 70 percent of peasant men held land in their village, but half sent no money home and 18 percent visited only in summer.<sup>13</sup>

The city's industrial workforce had increased by 60 percent in a decade, and around a third lived in the suburbs. A third of the large plants in the Petersburg and Vasilievsky Island districts had opened in the 1890s, and the population of Vyborg district had grown by almost 70 percent.<sup>14</sup> Almost 85 percent of city dwellings averaged 7.4 tenants per apartment, who paid almost six rubles a month rent.<sup>15</sup> An average of 3.2 occupied one-room flats and 3.4 in cellars,<sup>16</sup> and a 'corner' cost from 1.5 to two rubles and a room up to 8.5 rubles. About 59 percent of dwellings had no water closet,<sup>17</sup> or running water, and a doctor was shocked by the 'primitive outhouses which contaminate the ground and spread stench in backyards and apartments'.<sup>18</sup>

Almost 80,000 of over 251,000 inspected workers were metalworkers and machine-builders, and nine huge metal and textile plants employed 47,000. Thornton Woollen Mill employed 1,000, Pal Cotton Mill 2,000, Mykolaiv Railway workshops and Alexandrov Machine-Building Works 3,000 apiece, Spassk & Petrov Cotton Mill 5,700, Semyannikov Shipyard and Obukhov steelworks 6,000 each,<sup>19</sup> Alexandrov Metalworks 8,000,<sup>20</sup> and Putilov Metalworks 12,400.<sup>21</sup> In most metal plants skilled workers outnumbered day labourers by four to one, and P. Remezov visited a labourer from his plant who lived in an artel of 18 men.

The apartment consisted of one large smoke-blackened room with two windows. At one time, wallpaper had covered the walls, but now it was torn away, revealing the plain board walls underneath. Hordes of cockroaches were crawling along the walls. I couldn't help asking my friend, 'How come you've got so many roaches here?'

There were about twelve people in the room at the time, and they all burst out laughing. One of them replied, 'A cockroach is nothing, he doesn't hurt you. A bedbug – that's different. He bites. But a cockroach, he's like part of the family'.

'Do you have bedbugs too?' I asked.

'Plenty!' my friend replied. 'Fewer than cockroaches, of course, but more than enough for us folks. We've got all kinds of critters in here'.

The walls were lined with wooden bunks, obviously the main haven of the bedbugs. In the centre of the room was a long trestle table and two equally long benches. There was a small kerosene lamp hanging between the windows. Underneath the lamp was a cheap print of the Tsar's family. A holy icon, blackened with age, hung in the corner. The kitchen, which also served as an entrance hall ... contained the cook's bed.

Eleven men were married, but one man's wife had visited recently after four years, and another had not seen his wife for five. They earned around 16 rubles a month, but rent, the cook's wages and basic food took eight. If they failed to send three to five rubles a month to the village, they risked not getting their passports renewed; so that left them three to five rubles a month, but workplace attitudes had changed since the strikes of 1896 and 1897.



Foremen used to punch workers, but now one 'would only have to shake his fist or push a worker for the whole workshop to erupt immediately', and 'the conflict might spread to the rest of the factory'.

First they find a wheelbarrow and a sack. They either smear the sack with oil, soot, and dirt, or else they simply use a coal sack. They will wait until the foreman walks through the workshop, and then one or two workers creep up behind him and throw the sack over his head. At that point, several others come up to help tie the sack around him. It won't help him to cry out or struggle, but it's a different matter if he is apologetic. If he says things like, 'It's not my fault, I have to follow orders too. I never meant to insult anyone', then the workers might let him go. However, they make sure that he cannot tell who was involved ...

If the workers are really angry, then all the foreman's protestations will not help him. After being bundled into the sack, he is dumped into the wheelbarrow like so much cargo and then wheeled around to the accompaniment of hoots and whistles. Usually he is taken to the gates of the shop and left there until some compassionate soul comes to untie him.<sup>22</sup>

Putilov workers engaged in '*wheel-barrowing*' and beat foremen, and sometimes sent coffins to the homes of the 'most hateful',<sup>23</sup> though workers in Poland dumped unpopular foremen into a canal or river.

Remezov joined a workers' kruzhek. They considered themselves 'social democratic, but not because we all knew Marx and shared the SD party program, but simply on the basis of the popularity of the word "social democrat"'. They had 'an oppositional spirit', and did not believe in 'the struggle of one against many', but in 'an organised comradesly struggle. Our student propagandist called himself a social democrat, and could we, his students, have called ourselves any differently?' Remezov did not join the RSDRP,<sup>24</sup> but there were 4,600 students at the University and Technological Institute,<sup>25</sup> and some led workers' kruzhek.

The Semyannikov Shipyard was an important navy contractor and its annual production was worth 5.8 million rubles. Since 1890 it had hired 2,500 workers,<sup>26</sup> including the patternmaker Kanatchikov from Moscow. He recalled that the district was also home to large metalworks, whose employees were 'cultured' and earned higher wages. Most were 'not connected to the village', but 'conscious' workers 'disliked the petty, tedious, day-to-day tasks of organising and educating'. They were often SRs or anarchists, and to 'beat up or even to kill a policeman was considered a great deed, worthy on this earth of "forgiveness for 40 sins"'. Kanatchikov wanted to propagandise, but feared that attacking god and the tsar would throw even his 'solid' workmates 'into a state of panic and rage', yet when he read out a poem that attacked priests and bosses, and called workers who supported them 'stupid', some copied or memorised it and asked questions. Kanatchikov joined a Sunday morning kruzhek of six or seven 'conscious' workers, including Petr Mitrofanov from Pal Mill, and Mikhail Sergeev and H. Dobrovolsky from Spassk & Petrov Mill, who recited Nekrasov's poem that began 'What if the storm broke out?' A married man's wife 'could not understand his spiritual needs, did not share his ideals, feared and hated his friends, and grumbled and railed at him for spending money uselessly on books and for other cultural and revolutionary goals; most of all, she feared losing her breadwinner'. Young men often 'came into conflict' with their parents, who could refuse to renew their passport, but most were single and spent their free time in 'rational and cultured ways'. Up to 20 sometimes attended a social event in a quiet side street, or on the outskirts, where an intelligent would speak and workers 'would split up into little groups and debate', recite Nekrasov's poems and sing revolutionary songs. Most low-paid cotton workers were women who lived in barracks and were 'weakly connected to the village', but retained their 'peasant biases and lack of culture'; yet the women in Kanatchikov's kruzhek read *Rabochaya mysl* and challenged his sexism. A student talked about western European workers' struggles; but when he asked for ideas for the syllabus the kruzhek chose Pugachev and Razin. The student Sergey Lvov made political economy interesting, and the kruzhek invited him to their 'evening entertainments, an honour we granted to very few'. He got them tickets to hear Korolenko speak in a 'highly fashionable apartment', and reassured them: 'We need to take advantage of them now; later they can go to hell'. Kanatchikov's friend, Langeld, was a machinist at the Alexandrov Metalworks, and when he dismissed Pushkin as 'a gentleman's writer', fit only for 'the idlers, parasites and loafers', the kruzhek agreed. They received little pink tickets with 'secret "Masonic" signs' to hear Struve and Tugan-Baranovsky speak, but they failed to turn up, and the 'abstract speech' of the intelligent who stood in for them was hard to understand. 'After leaving these gatherings we would breathe a sigh of relief and laugh at our hosts' lack of understanding of our lives as workers'.

Workmates told Kanatchikov that those who enrolled at the Kornilov School 'inevitably turned into "students"' (revolutionaries) and ended in prison, but he and some friends decided to enrol. He fancied the three-year technical course, but his arithmetic let him down, so he chose courses on arithmetic, chemistry, physics, and Russian language and literature. 'After a hard and long day's work we would rush home, quickly drink some tea and have a bite to eat, and then rush off to the school'. The class began at 8.00pm, and they 'cheerfully sat through the first hour, but during the last hour, despite all our efforts, we'd begin to nod off'. One evening their

literature teacher, Vera Nikolaevna, read a story from *Russkoe bogatstvo*. She preferred the grasping peasant, and the class favoured the generous thief, but agreed that the dockers had 'enslaved' themselves and robbed themselves of their 'humanity'. They had no 'logical basis' for this view, and Kanatchikov produced only 'a page of scribbling', but the class joked about the author's pseudonym, 'Gorky'.

The city's chief of gendarmes told the tsar that in three or four years – since the strikes - 'the good-natured Russian lad has been turned into a peculiar type of semiliterate intelligent, who considers it his duty to deny religion and the family, scorn the law, and disobey and sneer at the authorities'. An 'insignificant handful' was 'dominating the entire remaining inert mass of workers by terrorising them', and a 'majority of the worker-agitators and ringleaders of all kinds of strikes' attended Sunday schools, but were 'a minor part' of the 'cadre of advanced revolutionary workers'.

Kanatchikov knew of 'ten fully organised' kruzhki, but 'as gendarmes and police intensified their vigilance, our failures grew more frequent' and 'arrests of our comrades multiplied'. 'We felt that our turn was soon to come'. 'More and more frequently, at our circle meetings, we began to discuss such questions as how to behave at interrogations by gendarmes, how to uncover provocateurs, how to elude the shadowing of spies, how to conceal literature, and so on. Those comrades who had already been in trouble shared their experiences' and 'recounted the occasions they'd managed to put one over on the gendarmes and spies'. One day Kanatchikov's landlady told him that a fellow countryman had called, but he did not look like a peasant and wore blue trousers, and a neighbour identified him as a gendarme. Mukhin, a draftsman at Obukhov steelworks, visited Kanatchikov on Sundays. Illegal literature 'protruded carelessly from his pocket' and he bragged about his connections with intelligently. Langeld dissuaded the kruzhek from dumping him in the Neva, but by the end of January the police had detained them all.<sup>27</sup>

Half of the 3,000 women workers at the Kornilov School were teenagers, though the 4,000 men reportedly thought that educating women was 'far less important';<sup>28</sup> but police and gendarmes could not arrest, imprison, deport or exile ideas, and literacy levels were even higher in the western provinces.

## (ii) The Baltic region

In 1881 northern Baltic region primary schoolteachers used Latvian and Estonian, but secondary schools and higher institutions used German,<sup>29</sup> and by 1883 over half the region's military conscripts were literate.<sup>30</sup> In 1885 the Education Ministry enforced 'Russification'.<sup>31</sup> Latvians and Estonians with a second language usually knew German, but the Ministry closed German gymnasia in 1886,<sup>32</sup> and required Russian from year three in primary schools in 1887.<sup>33</sup> The governor promoted the Orthodox Church, to marginalize Lutherans, but smugglers brought illegal books across the border from Prussia.<sup>34</sup>

Pēteris Stučka was born into a Latvian landowning family in 1865. He attended an elite German gymnasium in Rīga and then studied law at St. Petersburg University.<sup>35</sup> In 1886 the Rīga artisans' mutual aid society published *Dienas Lapa (Daily Paper)*,<sup>36</sup> and after Stučka graduated in 1888 he worked as a barrister's assistant in Rīga and co-edited the paper, which had become the organ of the democratic intelligentsia.<sup>37</sup>

By 1889 Russian was required in courts above the peasant level, and Russian officials oversaw peasant affairs, including the inspection, leasing and sale of land, appointing magistrates and introducing Russian police; but a railway linked Rīga to St. Petersburg,<sup>38</sup> and the government encouraged metalworking and wagon building. By 1890 Rīga specialised in tramway electrical engineering, and manufacturing building materials, dyes and rubber goods, and 250 workers had mutual aid funds;<sup>39</sup> and by 1891, when the region's rate of industrial development was the second fastest in the empire.<sup>40</sup>

Janis Pliekans, a young Rīga lawyer, edited *Dienas Lapa*,<sup>41</sup> and printed SPD Reichstag deputies' speeches.<sup>42</sup> German shopkeepers sold socialist literature and young Latvians who had attended German schools entered Tartu University.<sup>43</sup> In 1892 Russian was required in all primary school classes, except for religion in Lutheran schools, but over 100 Estonians attended Tartu University,<sup>44</sup> and Latvian students published essays about socialism. In summer 1893 Pliekans attended the Second International Congress in Zurich, and Bebel explained how the SPD smuggled illegal literature and gave him a large amount in a double-bottomed suitcase. By autumn socialist ideas appeared regularly in *Dienas Lapa*, and members of mutual aid funds discussed them. Workers and students spread socialist agitation to Jelgava and Liepāja,<sup>45</sup> and Rīga and Tartu students translated pamphlets by Bebel and other western European SDs.<sup>46</sup> The government closed Tartu University,<sup>47</sup> but the increased house building in Rīga attracted German workers with SD ideas.<sup>48</sup>

By 1895 there had been three illegal conferences.<sup>49</sup> Foreign speculators had financed metalworking and machine-building plants in Rīga. Since the early 1860s, mostly thanks to inward migration, the population of

Estonian cities had almost trebled to 189,500, including 30,000 in and around Narva (which was in St. Petersburg province), 42,000 in Tartu and 64,000 in Tallinn,<sup>50</sup> where the proletariat had grown to 30,000.<sup>51</sup> The number of workers in Estonian plants reached 24,000; but 120,000 Estonians lived elsewhere, including 60,000 in St. Petersburg. In northern Livonia and Estonia over 90 percent of the 958,000 inhabitants were Estonian, and formed almost 68 percent of city dwellers, while 16 percent were German and under 11 percent were Russian. Nearly everyone over ten was literate,<sup>52</sup> as were over 70 percent in the region.<sup>53</sup> The 20 percent who were urban included over 23,000 Lithuanians, and while Germans formed less than 20 percent, they predominated in Tallinn and Iuriev in Latvia, while German barons with large estates dominated provincial assemblies and were influential in St. Petersburg.<sup>54</sup> Courland's population of almost 675,000 included 64,000 in Liepāja.<sup>55</sup>

In 1896 Tartu was renamed Iuriev, and its university was reopened as the Imperial Iuriev University,<sup>56</sup> but most of the students were Russian.<sup>57</sup> The Lettish journal, *Austrums (In the East)*, published SD ideas as 'historical materialism',<sup>58</sup> but May Day events in Rīga and Liepāja were tiny.<sup>59</sup> By 1897 the region's urban population had almost doubled to around 14 million in 28 years.<sup>60</sup> Rīga was home to 282,000,<sup>61</sup> and over 41 percent were Latvian, 25 percent German and 17 percent Russian, but around 112,000 Latvians lived outside the region.<sup>62</sup> There were 32,600 industrial workers,<sup>63</sup> but most were unskilled labourers, servants, semi-skilled artisans, shopkeepers, clerks or petty-bourgeois, and over half of male Jews were artisans and almost one-sixth were traders.<sup>64</sup> The members of workers' kruzhs did not know the name or address of their intelligent; and one of them, Abraham Leisin from New York, thought the struggle between 'poverty-stricken' workers who wanted to be bosses and 'indigent' employers made revolutionary kruzhs 'fairly insignificant'.<sup>65</sup> The May Day celebrations in Rīga and Liepāja were small,<sup>66</sup> and after police searched the homes of 138 Rīga SDs, 87 were arrested and *Dienas Lapa* was closed,<sup>67</sup> but ten SDs escaped abroad.<sup>68</sup>

By 1899 almost a third of two million Latvians lived in towns or cities, and the output of almost one million literate workers was third behind the St. Petersburg and Moscow regions.<sup>69</sup> Liepāja workers demanded more than 'a dog's wage',<sup>70</sup> and a general strike which began on May Day lasted ten days.<sup>71</sup> There were 27 major industrial plants in Rīga,<sup>72</sup> and some socialist agitators used Yiddish.<sup>73</sup> Most new workers were Latvians, and almost all lived in the suburbs, where some attended 'political evenings' with socialists who helped them to formulate demands for better pay and shorter hours.<sup>74</sup> When female jute-workers protested, male factory workers joined them,<sup>75</sup> and over 12,000 workers from 28 factories clashed with police.<sup>76</sup> They failed to disperse the strikers with fire hoses, and they demolished factories,<sup>77</sup> until Russian troops stopped them.<sup>78</sup> A workers' committee leaflet noted that the governor had lied about the 15 dead and 60 wounded during the strike, and the government and employers were their 'common enemy', so '*we therefore summon the factory workers of Rīga to begin a general strike for a pay rise and a shorter day*'.<sup>79</sup> By summer socialist workers had organised kruzhs.<sup>80</sup>

Less than ten percent of nearby peasant farmers were free of debt,<sup>81</sup> and some joined the Lithuanian SDP. When the police arrested Domasevicius, Trusiewicz and most other leaders, peasants replaced them. Rīga police deported Pliekans,<sup>82</sup> sentenced Stučka to three years in prison and five years' deportation in Vitebsk,<sup>83</sup> and sent 40 others to jail or Siberia; but Moravskis escaped.<sup>84</sup> Latvian émigrés in London published *Socialdemokrāts (Social Democrat)* and *Latviešu Strādnieks (Lettish Worker)*,<sup>85</sup> while *Ausma (Dawn)* appeared in Boston in the USA.<sup>86</sup>

By 1900 metalworking and machine-building plants in Estonia, mostly in Tallinn, employed a third of the region's metalworkers, and textile mills employed 41 percent.<sup>87</sup> All but four Iuriev University teachers were Russians, and only the theological faculty used German,<sup>88</sup> but there were 1,400 Polytechnical Institute students in Rīga.<sup>89</sup> Memel, Germany's northernmost port, was 100km from Liepāja, and illegal SPD literature arrived there. Latvian SDs contacted the émigré Sociāldemokrātu savienība (The Latvian Social-Democratic Union), which had been formed in autumn. The SDS split, and the eighth *Latviešu Strādnieks* was the last; yet some Latvian émigrés worked with RSDRP émigrés,<sup>90</sup> and young SDs were increasingly active in the Donbass region of Ukraine.

### (iii) Southern Worker

By 1899 Katerynoslav's population had reached 115,000,<sup>91</sup> and 25,000 were workers.<sup>92</sup> The Soyuz borby became an RSDRP committee;<sup>93</sup> but there were many arrests. Some surviving intelligentsy favoured the Bund's focus on propagandising and agitating artisans, but others wanted to work with factory workers. The intelligentsy also disagreed about whether to organise a mass movement or a clandestine cell structure, but their May Day leaflet included political slogans for the first time.<sup>94</sup> One Friday in June railway workshop managers announced prayers for the tsar at noon next day. Workers asked for the customary holiday, or extra pay, but the managers refused, and the workforce walked out. On Monday gendarmes pushed workers into the workshops, but some stayed away on Tuesday afternoon, a traditional holiday, and when managers fined them a day's pay, the whole

workforce walked out. On Wednesday armed police surrounded them and arrested 40 of the most outspoken.<sup>95</sup>

That summer the son of the Luzovka ironworks engineer, the student Sutulov, visited his father. After he and two friends visited mines and factories, distributed leaflets with the Donetsk RSDRP Committee stamp, and a translation of Liebknecht's *Die Spinne und die Fliegen (The Spider and the Flies)*, Sutulov's father resigned.

In autumn a leaflet circulated at the Briansk steelworks in Katerynoslav.

When the brick workers downed their tools, they went with tears in their eyes to their supervisor and asked for more pay as though for charity instead of demanding straight out what was rightfully theirs. Despite their pleadings they received no raise. The police chief arrived with police and gendarmes and shouted at them. 'What's all this rioting about? I'll sling you in the hoosegow. I'll banish you to Siberia!' In the end the police chief and the rest of those crooks were invited by the factory administration to dinner.

It was a 'misfortune that many of us, the workers, look upon the administration, and the bosses as a whole, as though they were benevolent'.<sup>96</sup> The coal and steel employers' association hired 60 police superintendents and 2,320 constables, but one factory informer lasted three weeks before he was assassinated, as were others.<sup>97</sup>

Since 1896 there had been 41 strikes in the Donbass, but during 1899 Luzovka ironworks produced almost 96,000 tonnes of steel rails.<sup>98</sup> In 15 years the region's metallurgical workforce had grown from 3,500 to 39,700,<sup>99</sup> and pig-iron production had risen by 700 percent and steel output by almost 900 percent.<sup>100</sup> There were around 67,000 coal miners,<sup>101</sup> whose pay was about 50 percent higher than elsewhere,<sup>102</sup> and output had risen by over 350 percent in a decade.<sup>103</sup> During 1899 the RSDRP Donbass Committee's annual income was 1,000 rubles, including 240 from a mine workforce, 80 from factory workers and 10 from sales of literature, but sympathisers, including some elsewhere, sent the rest. The Committee spent 200 on illegal literature, 200 on 6,000 leaflets and 330 on the press, while 60 of the 110 rubles raised by *Krasny Krest* went to arrested and deported comrades.<sup>104</sup>

Early in 1900 Katerynoslav RSDRP Committee's intelligenty included Vilensky, who typeset the Kyiv *Rabochaya gazeta*, and the Bundists Dushkan, A.M. Ginzburg and Osip Kogan.<sup>105</sup> They wanted an All-Russian party,<sup>106</sup> organised on a federal and regional basis, with *Yekaterynoslavskaya rabochaya gazeta (Katerynoslav Workers' Paper)* as the 'organ of the working-class movement in South Russia'.<sup>107</sup> They anticipated a 'decisive struggle for political rights' and 'the overthrow of the autocracy', so they wanted workers to 'organise general strikes, mass meetings' and 'open, resounding celebrations' on May Day.<sup>108</sup> A thousand copies of the paper and 3,000 leaflets failed to satisfy demand, so they produced 12,000 more.<sup>109</sup> Workers took 'special pains' to ensure that foremen and factory police did not see their activities,<sup>110</sup> but the intelligenty, including Lalayants, were arrested,<sup>111</sup> and Cossacks, troops and police surrounded factories and occupied the town centre on May Day. In summer, led by David Braginsky, a tailor turned student,<sup>112</sup> the workers demanded 'electiveness' in the RSDRP organisation, and after the intelligenty refused they formed *Oppozitsya rabochikh (The Workers' Opposition)*.<sup>113</sup>

Around 8,300km of railway criss-crossed the region.<sup>114</sup> Luzovka's population was 32,000, and the New Russia Company employed 7,150 ironworkers and 5,839 miners. In six years ten new metallurgical plants had opened in the region, and the working year was 250 days, though the national average was 267.<sup>115</sup> The average workforce was 2,420, and over 37,000 produced over half of Russia's iron and steel,<sup>116</sup> while miners produced over two-thirds of its coal.<sup>117</sup> There were 29 blast furnaces at the 17 largest ironworks, and another 12 were under construction.<sup>118</sup> Plants with government contracts remained profitable, but rail orders fell and unsold iron and steel amounted to ten percent of annual output.<sup>119</sup> According to the second *Yekaterynoslavskaya rabochaya gazeta* the workers' movement had 'not yet created a stratum of worker-intelligentsia that would take upon itself the organisation of the workers' masses';<sup>120</sup> but the Bund was active in the southwestern provinces of the Pale.

Bundists promoted nonreligious Yiddish-language schools, but many Jews attended Russian schools and over 30 percent of men and 16 percent of women read Russian. Young women in Minsk sugar factories worked in primitive conditions for up to 20 hours a day and had no job security.<sup>121</sup> The Bershter Bund claimed 800 members and had a 'centre' and kassy in both Poland and Lithuania. After a strike in a Hrodna factory a Bund leaflet noted that the factory inspectors supported the 'autocratic regime' as much as gendarmes.<sup>122</sup> After four years in exile the Bundist Portnoi had escaped from Siberia to Vilnius early that year.<sup>123</sup> In spring the Bundist Isaac Gurvich heard the claim that Jews were a nation for the first time at the Bund's Kaunas Congress, but only the émigré Shloyme defended the idea.<sup>124</sup> Delegates attacked kassy for creating an 'aristocracy' that looked down on most workers, and demanded greater emphasis on illegal literature.<sup>125</sup> They elected Portnoi, Rozental and the worker Dovid Katz to the CC, and resolved to fight the PPS.<sup>126</sup>

The third *Yekaterynoslavskaya rabochaya gazeta* was called *luzhny rabochy (Southern Worker)*.<sup>127</sup> In autumn, *luzhny rabochy* supported the proposed new paper for workers, but maintained its own organisation.<sup>128</sup> Luzovka ironworks was in recession,<sup>129</sup> and 300 of the 800 strikers at a nearby coalmine were arrested. Late that year,

after two violent strikes, *luzhny rabochy* commented that it was 'a pity' that most miners 'still believe in *bunt*' (riot) or 'hope for succour and aid from the government'. 'People are saying: "If the penalties laid on by those tyrants of the factory are not rescinded, we will have only one way. To take apart the factory as was done before, so that no stone is left upon another. To go on living this way is impossible"'.<sup>130</sup> *luzhny rabochy* became influential across the southern Pale, but it needed couriers.

#### (iv) Zelikson

Tsetsilia Zelikson was born in the small Vitebsk province town of Velizh in 1878. All day her father 'counted up the profits of his masters', the lumber merchants who were his distant relatives, and then 'vainly sought the meaning of life' in the Talmud 'far into the night'. His wife was 20 years younger and illiterate, but Tsetsilia attended primary school in the later 1880s. Her teachers loaned her books that 'helped to wipe out the last traces of my belief in god', and in 1894 she dreamed of 'meeting the kind of people Chernyshevsky wrote about' in *Chto delat?* There was no local secondary school for Jewish girls, so 16-year-old Tsetsilia went to Warszawa.

She got a factory job, and had little success organising workers, but she met two women from Vitebsk who were in touch with illegal *kruzhki*, and by 1895 she had read Darwin and felt 'prepared' in political economy. 'Getting supplies of illegal literature in an organised way was out of the question so long as our colony remained a motley, amorphous, and, to tell the truth, garrulous crowd', but 'we threw ourselves upon all books and magazine articles' about debates between SDs and SRs. They read Plekhanov on Marx, and cast lots for who would be the first to read the attack on Struve by 'Tulin' (Vladimir Ulyanov), which caused 'a veritable sensation'. They organised a club to 'formulate our world outlook' and be the 'headquarters of illegal workers' *kruzhki*, with a dining room, which attracted Jewish workers and artisans who 'sincerely desired to turn from mere revolutionary phraseology to real revolutionary activity'. A paperhanger organised *kruzhki* and helped 'Litvak' (Lithuanian Jewish) artisans build mutual aid funds, while deported Moscow Jews brought illegal literature. Fyodor, a Russian student, ate for free in the dining room and Tsetsilia sometimes joined his *kruzhok* of a dozen or so carpenters. Once, after they read Dikshtein's pamphlet, Fyodor and the Orthodox Jews had 'heated theological disputes'. Tsetsilia sometimes attended a Russian braid-makers' *kruzhok*, where Sasha, a gymnasium pupil, read illegal books and translated illegal Polish leaflets. One day he told her: 'We want to come to your room and do some printing', and when he brought a hectograph, ink and paper, she was in 'heavenly bliss'. She read Marx's *Lohnarbeit und Kapital* to seven young seamstresses, but they were noisy and risked attracting the police. She also led a *kruzhok* of tailors from a big clothes shop, who discussed 'abstract things', but she 'could not get them down to reality', so she gave up. Someone in the 'commune' would draft a leaflet, and then they would all discuss, print and distribute it, but there was 'no proper distribution of functions'.

In 1896, after Zelikson heard about the St. Petersburg strikes, she believed that the number of Jewish workers interested in SD ideas would balloon, but she knew few Yiddish words. The 'commune' supported strikes, and gendarmes spotted them, but were inept. Zelikson knew of no 'centralised group', though Fyodor was influential. A student passed through on her way to St. Petersburg with GOT literature, where her sister stored it, printed leaflets, met strikers and hid activists who were on the run; and illegal literature arrived more regularly in Warszawa.

Zelikson returned to Vilnius to get a foreign passport, and one evening a friend who had lived in St. Petersburg took some leaflets out of her stocking and they 'sat in the dull candlelight' and were 'absorbed', particularly with Ulyanov's pseudonymous attack on SRs. In 1897 a sympathiser gave Zelikson a 'small stipend', a rail ticket to Vienna and a letter for Vera Axelrod, a medical student, who took her to clubs and to meet strikers. Zelikson sympathised with the 'orthodox Marxists', but when she heard members of the GOT argue with SPD leaders she found it 'very difficult' to 'make head or tail' of their 'polemics'.

By 1899 Zelikson had her midwifery diploma and went to Kharkiv, where she contacted a 'well-knit nucleus of revolutionary workers'. They printed and distributed illegal literature, found 'headquarters for secret meetings', organised illegal gatherings for reports and lectures on economics and politics, and put on concerts and plays to raise funds to support strikers and arrested activists. She hated midwifery, and for days she had 'nothing but a drink of water', but comrades fed her and found her a library job.<sup>131</sup> The RSDRP Committee intelligently looked down on the 'Ivanovo-Voznesensk type' of workers who favoured trade unions and had a 'low level of cultural and political development'. Zelikson later learned that 'More often than not', such Committees were 'formed by some active revolutionary (or group of revolutionaries) in the city, who would establish strong connections with the masses. He (or the group) would select a few capable comrades and these would declare themselves a committee', the 'directing body', whose 'periphery (executive body)' included 'several score'. Kharkiv Committee

was 'neither elected nor appointed'. There was no secretary, 'no distinct departments for organisational, propaganda or agitation work', and nobody to 'look after literary functions', so 'each one of us had to be a propagandist, organiser, printer and distributor'. The intelligenty had contacts in all the large factories, but kept most workers at 'arm's length', and this 'ultra-conspiratorial state of affairs' caused friction. N.I. Makhov, the former Ivanovo activist, led an artisan kruzhok, but 'seemed to hate intellectuals more than anything else' and was 'strongly opposed' to 'politics'. He believed workers should focus on economics, and he produced a kruzhok programme, rules and syllabus. Police knew up to 60 kruzhok members met in a forest, and suspected that Makhov distributed leaflets, so they opened a letter he had posted to Ivanovo. It noted that 'our interests and those of the intelligentsia' were not the same, and 'if there is a common element (political freedom), then this is not the main thing. We must not be taken in tow by them, but go along of our own free will only to the extent that we find it expedient'. 'It's your job to supply literature and money, the real work we will do ourselves'.<sup>132</sup>

Zelikson understood that raising workers' theoretical level meant raising that of kruzhok leaders, so she 'appointed' 15 activists to a theory kruzhok. 'We took our studies very seriously and learned a great deal', then each one 'took charge of a workers' kruzhok'. Vasily Sheykov and six young railway workers met two evenings a week to read illegal literature, but 'often deviated from the subject', and Zelikson took RSDRP intelligenty 'instructions' to Onuphry Zhelabin, a deported St. Petersburg worker. Early in 1900 an intelligent gave Zelikson 100 rubles to pick up a suitcase of illegal literature in Vilnius. 'All day long I wandered about the strange city. In the evening when I met the comrade, I found out to my chagrin that the literature for Kharkiv was in Vitebsk.' When she got to a rich merchant's house she found that she had met his son in Kharkiv, and when he unlocked his room door she saw that the floor was 'almost buried in piles of illegal literature'. She chose some, but did not know that Kharkiv intelligenty wrote for a southern SD paper, even though they used her as their 'contact' with its press.

The former St. Petersburg SD and recent exile Luly Tsederbaum was under surveillance in Poltava, visited Kharkiv and won the RSDRP intelligenty to an anti-'revisionist' line. Their May Day leaflet called for a strike,<sup>133</sup> but made no demands for freedom of assembly, since what they termed 'unconscious' workers disliked outsiders foisting demands on them. On the day some workers 'learnt for the first time, and with astonishment, that they were deprived of the rights of assembly and demonstration', and when a factory inspector asked them about their priorities, they yelled 'a constitution!'<sup>134</sup> There were 30,000 workers in Kharkiv,<sup>135</sup> and many of the 2,000 demonstrators were railway workers.<sup>136</sup> They marched from factory to factory with red banners, singing revolutionary songs,<sup>137</sup> and demanding an eight-hour day and civil rights.<sup>138</sup> Afterwards, at an RSDRP meeting, an intelligent insisted that 'We must not give the periphery any privileges; that would not be conspiratorial. It's all the doing of that little Jewess'.<sup>139</sup> Next day 10,000 workers marched with red banners, demanding the release of those arrested,<sup>140</sup> and after 11,000 strikers closed most factories, the governor gave in. The police believed that 'widely distributed' SD leaflets had influenced the strikers, who had 'thought out what they wanted, firmly adopted a programme of action, and exhibited perseverance and discipline'. This was a 'very dangerous symptom';<sup>141</sup> so they deported 18 railway workers to Vyatka, set spies on SDs, detained almost 200 others, including Zelikson, and interrogated 'dangerous' ones about an illegal paper distributed in the south.<sup>142</sup>

#### **(v) Anything, as long as it was for the cause**

In Vilnius, just before Christmas 1899, a master tailor sacked one of Tarshis' workmates, so he led a strike and propagandised. He 'was not interested in knowing who issued the leaflets', or 'by what organisation they were signed', since 'what we were doing was in the interests of the proletariat', so 'we might take risks, get arrested, be beaten – anything, as long as it was for the cause'. He organised illegal unions of 'as great a number of men and women workers of a given trade as possible', and aimed at 'shortening the working day and increasing wages'. Various political organisations 'would send out leaders of self-education circles from the unions', but the 'directing centre of Jewish workers' (the Bund CC) did not work among non-Jews and the PPS began to compete. Work among organised Jewish workers was easier than among Lithuanians, Poles and Russians, but the Bund's unions had won nothing for years, because 'during the busy season the employers made concessions', then 'took everything back' in 'the slack season'.

In spring 1900 Tarshis received 'directions as to the meeting-place and time' for planning a May Day event, and on the day a 'great many people came to the demonstration even without our having taken the preparatory measures we had taken the year before'.<sup>143</sup> Someone unfurled a red banner in a park and over 1,000 chanted 'Away with the autocracy! Long live political freedom!'<sup>144</sup> Cossacks injured many demonstrators and the police

made arrests,<sup>145</sup> and next day they made other prisoners watch as 20 received up to 30 lashes. A Bundist subsequently wounded the governor, but a court martial death sentence was swiftly carried out.<sup>146</sup>

Soon after a spy betrayed three women 'comrades' and the police found illegal leaflets and detained them; but workers went the police station and the entire suburb joined them. The police refused to release the prisoners, so workers cut telephone wires, and after a 'regular battle', and in spite of wounds from police sabres, they wrecked the police station and freed the women. Next day police 'roped off' the suburb and arrested the rescuers; but a week later Tarshis took the women to the Prussian border, one at a time, and helped them cross.

Tarshis wanted a social system in which it was possible 'to read whatever we wished, where nobody would be arrested for keeping revolutionary literature, where the police would not interfere with strikes' and 'prisoners would not be beaten in police stations'. 'A group of comrades would meet in a previously arranged place', 'receive a package of leaflets for distribution in one or several streets' and report where they succeeded. Tarshis was 'constantly being sent to Kovno [Kaunas] for literature', and his boss sacked him; but he explained the union's rules to new members and led the 'struggle against worsening working conditions in the shops'. In summer Bundists celebrated the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Johannes Gutenberg's anniversary, which was the kind of event that 'tended to unite those attending'. Robbers stole Tarshis's clothes, money and internal passport. The *Rabochee znamia* 'printing outfit' was safe in his room,<sup>147</sup> but the Bund CC continued to demand more 'open demonstrations',<sup>148</sup> in spite of the risks.

Mendel Rosenbaum had arrived at the Russian border from aboard in autumn 1898 with a trunk and two portmanteaus (large travelling bags) with double sides, tops and bottoms containing almost 30 kilos of illegal literature. Gendarmes arrested him and took him to the St. Petersburg House of Detention, and then the Fortress. The gendarmes left him alone for a month, but he gave nothing away, so they left him alone for another eight months and then told him that he might get five years' katorga in Yakutsk, rather than ten, if he talked; but he incriminated only himself. After 16 months in the Fortress he was sentenced to exile in Yakutsk, but was allowed to go to Chernihiv. He had to fight for a place to sleep in Vilnius forwarding prison, but he met four Jewish tanners on the train to Minsk who police considered state criminals for going on strike. They walked to Chernihiv forwarding prison, where ordinary criminals admired state criminals, and one quoted *Rabochaya mysl*. In spring 1900 Rosenbaum reached Yakutsk, but escaped and laid low. In summer, with the help of an 'emigration agent' and a false passport, he crossed the border to Germany.<sup>149</sup> Lithuanian Jewish SDs were active in St. Petersburg, and though they were not Bundists, they contacted dissident Bundists in Vilnius.

## (vi) Sotsialist

Eva Gordon was born in 1876 in the small town of Sventsiany, 100km or so north-east of Vilnius, on the Lithuanian side of the border with Biełaruś. Her parents had a small farm and a timber business, but her father was 'an unworldly Talmudic scholar' and one day the bailiffs arrived. In the early 1880s, after three unhappy months at a Jewish primary school in Vilnius, Eva returned home and saw locals kicking and stoning a Russian labourer to death; but an old Jewish man taught her Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian, a Jewish teacher introduced her to Russian literature and returning students broadened her horizons. All levels of pharmacy were now open to women, so she got a Tartu University student to coach her for the examinations, passed, and went to Daugavpils to begin a three-year apprenticeship in 1891. By 1894 Pisarev's articles had 'caused an upheaval' in her ideas and she was 'fairly bursting with "the spirit of freedom"'. She went to Kazan, lived with women studying to be medical assistants, and university students gave her a 'secretly printed' leaflet. She went to Rīga, met students, married, and heard two Jewish SDs speak at a 'highly conspiratorial gathering'.

In 1896 Gordon went Berlin to study midwifery and she learned German. Wilhelm Paetzel at the SPD's *Vorwärts* bookshop corrected her 'misconceptions', and after she read Bebel's *Die Frau und Sozialismus* she considered herself a 'convinced socialist'. Paetzel introduced her to the *Vorwärts* editors, and early in 1898 she heard Bebel speak and considered herself a revolutionary. By spring she had her midwifery diploma and a letter of introduction to the secretary of a St. Petersburg agricultural journal.

When she arrived in the capital the police had arrested her contact, but the journal editor asked for her address. Two months later, one Sunday morning, two 'neatly dressed' Semyannikov Shipyard workers called and one told her about his deported brother. Their kruzhek had a small library of legal books about 'political economy and similar subjects', 'chosen from a particular point of view', and if the police found them in a worker's home they would confiscate them. An intelligent (Gordon's contact) had looked after them, and they begged her to find their library and the students associated with *Rabochee znamia*. Soon after she met a childhood friend.

Mark Broido was born into a Vilnius lawyer's family in 1880.<sup>150</sup> In 1896 two of his gymnasium teachers were

'advanced liberals' and he read Kravchinsky's book on the political underground. A doctor who had spent two years in St. Petersburg Fortress, and been deported for 'subversive tendencies', encouraged Mark and half a dozen other pupils to discuss social and political issues and lead workers' *kruzhki*. Mark visited Liepāja and met 'revolutionists' and socialists, including a former Vilnius worker who had become a student.<sup>151</sup> Back in Vilnius Mark won the gold medal at the gymnasium and entered St. Petersburg Technological Institute, where he joined a socialist *kruzhok* and built a workers' library. In 1899 he met Gordon, and she joined SD University students at Lesgaft's lectures. She 'thoroughly purged' her translation of *Die Frau und Sozialismus* and had it printed. Censors banned it, but she saved ten and circulated them to comrades in the *Gruppa dvadtsati* (Group of Twenty).<sup>152</sup>

Viktor Savinkov was born into a family of gentry in St. Petersburg province, but had to sell his land in the late 1850s. He joined the army, became a military judge by 1865 and published a book on military law. He was appointed as a prosecutor in Odesa, then Kharkiv, and married in the 1870s. Sophia Yaroshenko was the daughter and granddaughter of generals, but her brother championed student revolutionaries. Sophia had become an agnostic at 17 and had an interest in literature and philosophy and a substantial dowry. Boris was born in 1879. That year his father demanded the death penalty for a teenage revolutionary; and in 1881 the tsar's assassination horrified him and he transferred to Warszawa. Boris's mother taught him French and German, and he read Russian works by Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoyevsky, Hugo and a translation of Byron. In 1890 he attended a gymnasium for the sons of Russian officials, where the director and many teachers were former guards officers and nationalists.<sup>153</sup> He met Ivan Kaliaev, the son of a Russian officer and a Polish woman,<sup>154</sup> and Nikolai Tatarov, who had learned Polish, studied Polish history and contacted the PPS. In 1897 the governor-general congratulated Boris on his graduation, and he entered St. Petersburg University; but gendarmes arrested him and his brother late that year. They ransacked their rooms and found nothing incriminating, but subsequently detained Boris's brother again. Boris admired the SRs' 'heroic struggle', but criticised 'bourgeois' aspirations and favoured 'legal Marxism'. By 1899 he ran the students' mutual aid fund, and tried to organise empire-wide demonstrations to commemorate the crushing of the student protests three years earlier. He married Vera Uspenskaya, the daughter of the famous writer, Uspensky, and joined the student *Gruppa*.

They agitated workers; but in spring 50 students were arrested, and the University suspended Savinkov for a year. In autumn he went to Berlin, enrolled at the University and was impressed by Max Stirner's ideas about instinct being superior to reason, the individual ego being a law unto itself and society being a 'war of all against all'. Berlin police supplied the Okhrana with information about Russian students, but Savinkov visited Heidelberg, Halle, Paris and Switzerland, and met the émigré SR leaders Got and Chernov. Savinkov reportedly met Plekhanov and Axelrod and considered himself a 'left-wing' SD.<sup>155</sup>

Back in St. Petersburg *Rabochee znanie* supporters propagandised workers,<sup>156</sup> and early in 1900 the *Gruppa* issued leaflets about the labour movement.<sup>157</sup> Savinkov argued against 'economism' in *Rabochaya mysl*, and for a professional revolutionary cadre that privileged conspiratorial activity over mass organisation. He saw the proletariat as the object of political struggle, and intelligenty as the key subjective factor. The *Gruppa* included Rutenberg, Kaliaev (who had been briefly banished to the Ukraine) and Lidia Tserderbaum, and they were linked to *Rabochee znanie*. Savinkov disguised himself as a worker, propagandised workers in Narva district, and criticised the lack of an agrarian policy in the RSDRP programme.<sup>158</sup> Others agreed.

Nikolai Alexeev was born in 1873. He later trained as a doctor,<sup>159</sup> and supported the St. Petersburg Soyuz in 1897. In 1898 he was deported to Vyatka province for four years, but escaped in 1899 and went to London,<sup>160</sup> where the Okhrana's agents had three times as much funding as those in Switzerland.<sup>161</sup> Takhtarev and Takhtareva (formerly Yakubova) had also fled to London,<sup>162</sup> and welcomed Bernstein's 'revisionism'. Takhtareva went to Berlin, where Kok wanted to dissociate *Rabochaya mysl* from the RSDRP. She attacked its apolitical tone and Kok's hostility to intelligenty, and demanded his resignation in the name of St. Petersburg RSDRP Committee. Early in 1900 the next issue noted his resignation,<sup>163</sup> attacked Kuskova, and included the Siberian SD exiles' protest.<sup>164</sup>

In spring there were mass arrests in St. Petersburg,<sup>165</sup> but Savinkov, Gordon, Broido, Tserderbaum and other students survived and called themselves the 'Sotsialist' group.<sup>166</sup> Savinkov wanted to include terror in their programme, but Gordon and Broido won the argument that 'the working class can attain its aims only if it is organised as a *political* party which seeks to prepare the masses for the assumption of political power'. They 'put agitation for struggle against the autocracy as the first order of business', and would 'conduct oral and literary propaganda on the idea of socialism among the working masses' and students.<sup>167</sup> Eighteen workers' *kruzhki* issued a May Day leaflet demanding the rights to 'believe and think as we wish', 'speak and write as we think', join unions and work an eight-hour day.<sup>168</sup> Broido and Gordon wanted more 'propagandist material', so they collected money from students and a friend of Struve.<sup>169</sup> They knew dissident Bundists in Vilnius ran a secret press,<sup>170</sup> in a bookbinders' shop, so Gordon went there. The front room contained 'a large table with glue, scissors



and other paraphernalia', but a 'home-made printing press' was 'sunk into a specially dug hole under the floor' in the back room. Two printers used old type that had survived a police raid in the south, and new type stolen by local compositors, and printed the Sotsialist leaflets and bound them into 'books'. Gordon took them to St. Petersburg, and 'Remnants of other disorganised groups began to flock' towards Sotsialist, so they 'formed many new links with the workers'.<sup>171</sup> The intelligenty led 14 kruzhki, and argued that only a proletarian revolution could win freedom, but workers 'must make an intensive effort to develop their political thinking' and be 'organised as a political party'. In autumn 11 intelligenty were arrested;<sup>172</sup> but by then they had issued up to 8,000 copies of six pamphlets, and Broido had begun planning a newspaper aimed at workers.<sup>173</sup>

RSDRP workers were wary of all intelligenty. The rules of St. Petersburg RSDRP workers' committee stated that 'Genuine ideologists of the working class from the bourgeois milieu' were 'as rare as "white crows"', so workers must 'run their own affairs', uninfluenced by 'fellow-travellers'.<sup>174</sup> 'Political conditions require organising the workers via separate groups' of ten, and 'the most purposive and energetic' would supervise candidates recommended by two existing members.<sup>175</sup> The committee organised 500 or so of the most 'conscious' workers, and though one recalled the 'immense importance' of intelligenty-led kruzhki, they were 'too academic'. District committees accepted no intelligenty 'directives', and the intelligent Konstantin Semënov recalled that workers 'verbally communicated the situation in a given factory or presented the draft of a leaflet' to him, 'with a request "to add what is missing"'. Leaflets agitated for strikes on economic and political issues, and a 'well-composed' one was 'read, reread' and discussed in factories, and helped the activists to 'spot future members'. Half of the workers' committee's funds supported strikes,<sup>176</sup> and the leaders strove to 'transform every unorganised movement into an organised, conscious battle against capitalist exploitation and the tsarist government'. Their 'ultimate goal' was 'the political and economic emancipation of the working-class' by 'the social democratic movement of the broad labouring masses', and since the 'unity of the enemy' meant that the 'unification' of workers was 'of prime importance', they would go 'hand in hand' with RSDRP intelligenty and 'consider temporary alliances with other revolutionary factions'. They published the émigré SD organisation's educational programme, which explained capitalism, exploitation, classes, international social democracy, Russia's economic and political system, revolutionary movements and the RSDRP programme, and listed legal and illegal literature for beginners, intermediate and advanced workers. The workers' slogan was 'Down with self-appointed representatives!' <sup>177</sup> RSDRP organisations were polarising along similar lines in the far south.

## (vii) The Caucasus

Mikhail Kalinin was born into a peasant family in the Tver province village of Verkhnyaya Troitsa in 1875.<sup>178</sup> By 1885 the ten-year-old worked on the land, but an army veteran helped him to become literate. In 1888 Mikhail attended a primary school run by a landowner. He became the top of his class and in 1889 the landowner took him to St. Petersburg to be her footman and let him use her library. In 1891 he became an apprentice at the cartridge factory and attended its Technical Society School, but in 1893 he transferred to the Putilov works. He joined a kruzhok which collapsed, but he qualified as a lathe-operator.<sup>179</sup> In 1898 he joined the RSDRP,<sup>180</sup> but was deported to Tbilisi late in 1899.<sup>181</sup> He lived with the metalworker Nazarov, and met Alliluyev, who worked in the railway workshops.<sup>182</sup> He had been deported to St. Petersburg, where he rented a four-room flat and sent his children to secondary schools,<sup>183</sup> but the family had recently returned to Tbilisi.<sup>184</sup>

On 1 January 1900 Ketskhoveri organised a strike on the horse-drawn trams, and the police got close to him, but found Jughashvili 'hard to catch'. He had gone to Baki,<sup>185</sup> and met SDs, including Ehlukidze, but when he returned to Tbilisi the RSDRP Committee refused to pay for a press. In spring *kvali* supporters published a May Day leaflet,<sup>186</sup> and someone painted portraits of Marx and Engels with SD slogans in Russian, Georgian and Armenian on a red banner. On the day someone told Alliluyev's kruzhok to leave the city in twos or threes, gave them a password and sent them to the hills, where a 'picket-leader' sent them further on. They sang the *Marseillaise* and shouted 'Long live the First of May! Down with autocracy!' Alliluyev recalled 500 were there, including railway and factory workers and the 'revolutionary intelligentsia'.<sup>187</sup> Another saw 75.<sup>188</sup>

Mikho Bochoridze had been born into a worker's family in Telavi, Tbilisi province, in 1873. By 1890 he was a blacksmith in Tbilisi's railway workshops and joined an SD kruzhok in 1893. He later joined the RSDRP Committee,<sup>189</sup> and recalled that people at the 1900 May Day meeting fired guns in the air, but the police did not learn about the event until next morning,<sup>190</sup> when an informer told them that the intelligenty Jibladze, Kurnatovsky and Jughashvili had been present.<sup>191</sup>

There were 9,000 artisans in Tbilisi, but only seven of almost 2,000 workshops employed 300 or more. There were 1,000 transport workers and 3,412 inspected workers, though many factories were overcrowded and

unhygienic, with bullying foremen and overly strict rules, and most workers still had 12-hour day, with half an hour for breakfast and an hour for lunch. The railway workshops employed over 4,000, but only 2,750 were inspected. Most of the 643 locksmiths, 147 blacksmiths and 76 turners had lived in the city for some time, and had a higher standard of living than most and were literate. Half were Russian, Ukrainian or other Slavs, and almost 44 percent were Georgian, but only one skilled man spoke Georgian. Previously almost all those under surveillance had been Armenians, but the police now considered most of the 12 SDs at the railway workshops to be a 'disruptive and rebellious element', and many were young peasants from Kutaisi province.<sup>192</sup>

Kalinin had worked at the railway workshops since early that year, and by summer the real value of wages had halved in ten years, so he agitated for a strike.<sup>193</sup> Many workmates demanded a 30 to 50 percent rise, an eight-hour day, an end to obligatory overtime, better hygiene,<sup>194</sup> and 'courteous treatment';<sup>195</sup> and 500 walked out when managers refused.<sup>196</sup> The police did not know who were the leaders, so they arrested the biggest men,<sup>197</sup> and detained 300, but 2,000 marched to the police station and demanded to join them.<sup>198</sup> A leaflet addressed to 'comrades' argued for firmness and persistence.<sup>199</sup> 5,000 came out,<sup>200</sup> and the strike generalised. Eight tobacco factories employed 2,000 and one workforce demanded the right to have their breakfast outside the kitchen. Leather factory workers demanded better canteen meals than potatoes and beans, and to be able to use their kassy to build a better kitchen. After two weeks the railway workshop strike ended with the arrest of over 1,500 strikers.<sup>201</sup> Around 400 were imprisoned or deported, and barred from working on the railways, while property owners evicted strikers' families, including Alliluyev's. He was sent to the Fortress, and when his family smuggled in notes the police arrested Kalinin,<sup>202</sup> and most SD intelligenty. The strikers had won no concessions,<sup>203</sup> but they had seriously affected freight traffic across the south,<sup>204</sup> and an experienced intelligent arrived.

The former St. Petersburg SD Leonid Krasin had spent ten months in solitary by 1892, and had 'struggled through' Chernyshevsky, Mill and Kant, and improved his German. In 1893 he was sent to Tula under surveillance, to complete his military service, and met Ulyanov. By 1894 Krasin was in Crimea, but he was deported before the tsar visited. He worked as a labourer in Voronezh province, and as a foreman on a new railway line, but in 1895 he spent three months in solitary, in connection with the case against the St. Petersburg SD intelligent Brusnev, which was followed by a sentence of three years' deportation to Vologda and then exile in Irkutsk in Siberia.<sup>205</sup> He noted that Siberian peasants sold 40 percent of their crops, and that railways were accelerating the integration of agriculture into the world economy; so he believed that a few peasants would become rich and exploit poor neighbours, and private plants employing thousands would displace artisans. In 1897 he enrolled at Kharkiv Technological Institute, then worked on the Trans-Siberian railway in 1898, but joined Kharkiv student protests in 1899. The Institute director shielded him from arrest, and when he graduated in 1900 he soon found a job.<sup>206</sup>

Klasson, Krasin's former classmate at St. Petersburg's Technological Institute, had withdrawn from SD activity in the early 1890s; but in 1895 he supervised the construction of an electric power plant near St. Petersburg and designed and built municipal plants in Moscow and St. Petersburg in 1897 and 1898.<sup>207</sup> When the Nobel Company wanted two electric power plants near Baki,<sup>208</sup> Klasson went to assess the situation late in 1899, and sent Krasin to Bibi-Heybat,<sup>209</sup> in summer 1900.<sup>210</sup> By then there was an RSDRP committee in south Ukraine.

### **(viii) Odesa**

In the four years to 1900 there had been 212 serious peasant disturbances in Ukraine, and one strike on a sugar beet plantation. Many gentry landowners grew sugar beet, which was more profitable than grain, and some employed managers, mainly from abroad, and a small team of waged labourers.<sup>211</sup> Around 2.3 million people who worked in agriculture produced over half of the empire's tobacco and most of its sugar, and supplied sugar much of western Europe. They also grew ten percent of the world's corn, 20 percent of its wheat and 45 percent of its barley. Grain formed 90 percent of Russian exports, yet Ukrainian peasants consumed around 393 kilos of bread a year, while Germans consumed 507. Kulaki formed up to 20 percent of the peasantry and owned an average of around 28 hectares, plus horses and machinery. Middle peasants formed around 30 percent and owned three to ten hectares, horses and livestock, though few had machinery. Over 50 percent of poor peasants owned little or no land, and hired themselves out as labourers or left their villages in search of seasonal work. Ukraine's industrial workforce was around 1.7 million, and 1.1 million more worked for wages in other sectors, but 7.8 million were underemployed or unemployed, and only 25 percent of schoolteachers were Ukrainian.<sup>212</sup>

Early in 1900 intelligenty formed an RSDRP Committee in Odesa, and after workers and students demonstrated on May Day, the Prefect reported that 'criminal propaganda' had caused 'public ferment'.<sup>213</sup> When student delegates from across Russia met in Odesa that summer, they were arrested,<sup>214</sup> but the RSDRP survived.

Petr Bronstein had been born into a poor Jewish clerk's family in Odesa in 1881. As a boy he tried to work out a 'world view' to escape injustice and hunger, and found Narodnaya volya attractive.<sup>215</sup> When he was a young man the 'fight against this system of injustice, exploitation and hunger' floated 'in the air', but by 1900 'training' by RSDRP intelligently offered 'a way out of this dark pit'. The Committee's periphery were 'mainly green, fervent, resolute young workers', who were 'weakly connected to the working masses and uninfluential in industrial enterprises',<sup>216</sup> but late that year Evsei Kogan, Bronstein's gymnasium teacher, gave him secret errands, and sponsored his membership of the Committee. Bronstein graduated from the gymnasium, but could not enter the University, so he tutored poor Jewish boys using the Vilnius programme.

Emerging from the narrow confines of the secret propaganda circles, the basic tactical problem of Social Democracy was to break through to the masses on the path of leading the struggle of the working class by means of agitation. The well-known brochure *Ob agitatsi* clearly reflected the critical moment of the Social Democratic movement of Russia. It exercised on all of us, the party workers of that time, a tremendous influence. The experience of the St. Petersburg strikes, the strike movement in Poland, and particularly in the Jewish movement ... was the best illustration of the correctness of the new tactical position of *Ob agitatsi*, which essentially did not 'discover' the new strategy, but simply formulated and expressed an empirical change in local Social Democratic work.<sup>217</sup>

The first language of almost 90 percent of Odesa's Jews was Yiddish, but Bronstein barely spoke it, so he organised a small furniture factory workforce of Russian speakers.<sup>218</sup>

The Committee sent workers in its periphery to agitational assemblies, whose members led artisan and factory kruzhs and established 'ties' with other factories.<sup>219</sup> Aizenshtadt, the deported Vilnius Bundist, supervised agitators, praktiki and reserves; but arrests disrupted the work. Survivors focussed on agitating Jewish artisans, but after experienced, mainly Jewish poluintelligently arrived, the Committee became more secretive and centralised, and perpetuated itself through co-option. The agitators invited Bronstein to a meeting, made 'transparent references' to the Committee's 'dictatorial habits', and wanted to lead the workers' movement. Leo the tailor could not get along with intelligently, and after he left the city stormy agitators' assemblies demanded elections. Bronstein knew that 'conspiratorial practices' contradicted 'our cherished conviction that "the liberation of the working class must be an affair of the working class itself"', but believed that 'an SD party, even at the early period of its development, must be constructed on the principles of initiative and worker autonomy'. The Committee agreed to accept a representative from the agitators, and they elected Bronstein; but after a spy was identified the agitators 'agreed to abide by the old order of things'.<sup>220</sup> The Okhrana was increasingly effective.

### **(ix) The spark kindles the flame**

Maria Ulyanova had returned to Russia in summer 1899, settled in Podolsk and travelled to Moscow to do 'minor' work for the RSDRP Committee. By autumn the police knew she met 'politically unreliable' people, raised funds and stored an illegal press. They confiscated her foreign passport and deported her to Nizhni-Novgorod; but she appealed successfully and returned to Moscow. She published revolutionary leaflets, then spent seven months in a solitary cell, then was deported to Samara for three years.<sup>221</sup> The police's 'No. 1 list of persons to be investigated for their political activity' included her brother. 'Ulyanov, Vladimir Ilyich'. 'Married to Krupskaya, a former political exile; his brother Dmitry is under secret police surveillance'. So were his sister Anna Elizarova and her husband Elizarov, and Maria had been 'interrogated in Moscow on charges of high treason'.<sup>222</sup>

Late that year, in Siberia, Ulyanov told Lepeshinsky and Lepeshinskaya about his plan for an All-Russian SD paper for workers, and quoted the Decembrist Vladimir Odoyevsky: 'The spark kindles the flame'.<sup>223</sup> When the head of Omsk railway hospital offered Lepeshinskaya a job, Ulyanov told the couple: 'You can live for a while in Omsk – until I am able to summon you for underground work in Russia.'<sup>224</sup> Ulyanov told Krzhizhanovsky he would publish the paper abroad, and it would be the 'frame' of a Russian workers' party. Krzhizhanovsky thought him over-optimistic, and by 1900 he and Lengnik worked as engineers on the Trans-Siberian railway.

Ulyanov's exile ended early that year and he, Krupskaya and her mother left with Starkov, Starkova and her mother, but the Lepeshinskys' daughter was ill, so they stayed behind.<sup>225</sup> Krupskaya had over a year of exile to serve, and could live no further west than Ufa, but the former SR Chetvergova ran a bookshop there, and it was a good place for meeting returning exiles and 'arranging for work'. Krupskaya found a 'tubercular bookbinder' who 'fabricated double-bindings into which one could stow away illegal manuscripts',<sup>226</sup> and she met an old contact.

Alexandr Tsiurupa was born into a Kherson province government official's family in 1870. He attended Kherson Agricultural College, organised SD kruzhs in 1892 and was detained for six months in 1893, then put under

surveillance, but was allowed to graduate. He was detained in 1895, but worked in Simbirsk in 1896, and Ufa in 1897,<sup>227</sup> and joined the RSDRP in 1898.<sup>228</sup> By 1900 he ran a nearby estate,<sup>229</sup> and got Krupskaya a job tutoring a millionaire's children.<sup>230</sup>

Ulyanov left Ufa with 225 kilos of books,<sup>231</sup> and visited Tomsk, Omsk, Nizhneudinsk,<sup>232</sup> Nizhni-Novgorod and Smolensk.<sup>233</sup> His brother Dmitry boarded his train in Podolsk, and accompanied him to Moscow,<sup>234</sup> where he stayed in a police spy's house.<sup>235</sup> He had written to Lalayants, and he came to Moscow on behalf of *Rabochaya gazeta*, but Ulyanov refused to cooperate.<sup>236</sup> He went to Riga to discuss the paper with SDs,<sup>237</sup> while Iuly Tsederbaum recruited agents, including his siblings.

Sergey Tsederbaum was born in St. Petersburg in 1879. As a boy he delivered illegal literature and letters on his way home from his gymnasium, and in 1897 he distributed 50 leaflets to Putilov workers in taverns. Late in 1898 he and his sister Lidia were arrested, and Sergey was deported to Poltava for three years in 1899.<sup>238</sup> Early in 1900 Iuly visited Kharkiv, Katerynoslav and Poltava, and he and Sergey recruited Lev Goldman and Vasily Shelgunov in the south, others in Kyiv, Ivanovo,<sup>239</sup> and Moscow<sup>240</sup> and their sister Concordia and other *Rabochee znamia* supporters, including Sergey Andropov,<sup>241</sup> Sofia Nevzorova in Nizhni-Novgorod,<sup>242</sup> and a worker.

Viktor Nogin was born into a Moscow shopkeeper and weaver's family in 1878.<sup>243</sup> As a boy he worked in a textile mill and educated himself. He later moved to St. Petersburg,<sup>244</sup> and became a master dyer at Pal Mill. He attended Sunday schools and SD kruzhki, and linked textile workers to *Rabochee znamia*.<sup>245</sup> Late in 1898 Spassk & Petrov Mill workers asked the organisation to print a leaflet.<sup>246</sup> Copies went into Pal Mill and there was a strike. Police used Cossack whips and arrested 200, but strikers beat a spy and threw logs, furniture and hot water at police until 50 mounted police and Cossacks stormed the barracks and beat strikers, and one woman gave birth prematurely. Nogin was deported to Poltava for three years,<sup>247</sup> and the Tsederbaums recruited him early in 1900.

The SD intelligentka Lyubov Radchenko had been deported from St. Petersburg for three years in 1897, and early in 1900 Iuly recruited her,<sup>248</sup> and her husband. They settled in Pskov, where Valerian Obolensky, a former member of a St. Petersburg University kruzhok, was a zemstvo statistician. Pskov was two hours by train from St. Petersburg,<sup>249</sup> and when Ulyanov arrived Obolensky got him a job in the bureau of statistics.<sup>250</sup> Potresov, who had married the deportee, Ekaterina Tulinoia,<sup>251</sup> left Orlov for Pskov. He and Ulyanov visited Kalmykova illegally in St. Petersburg, but though the police knew about it they made no arrests.<sup>252</sup> When Iuly Tsederbaum arrived in Pskov he agreed that limiting working class activity to economic issues had prevented RSDRP from publishing an All-Russian political paper.<sup>253</sup> He and Ulyanov took illegal literature to St. Petersburg,<sup>254</sup> where RSDRP activity was behind 'even the most god-forsaken corners'.<sup>255</sup> The police found a coded letter to Plekhanov about the new paper and arrested Ulyanov. He worried that they would decode it, and confiscate his foreign passport; but they released him and Tsederbaum,<sup>256</sup> after three weeks in prison,<sup>257</sup> and other intelligently arrived in Pskov.

Petr Krasikov was born in Krasnoyarsk in Siberia in 1870. He sympathised with revolution at school, entered St. Petersburg University in 1891, met Krzhizhanovsky, organised a workers' kruzhok and printed SD pamphlets on an old hectograph. In 1892 he went to Switzerland, met the GOT,<sup>258</sup> returned with a large amount of their literature and was arrested. The University expelled him in 1893, and he was deported to Krasnoyarsk,<sup>259</sup> for four years, and met Ulyanov in 1896. In 1898 he returned St. Petersburg, but was arrested,<sup>260</sup> and was in Pskov in spring 1900.<sup>261</sup>

Alexandr Stopani had been born into an army doctor's family in an Irkutsk province village in 1871. He attended Kazan University and Yaroslavl Juridical Lycée, and arrived in Pskov in spring 1900. He became a zemstvo statistician.<sup>262</sup> So did Lepeshinskaya and Lepeshinsky,<sup>263</sup> who noted that St. Petersburg workers had supported students 'against the will' of the RSDRP.<sup>264</sup>

## (x) The convict's badge

A paper called *Rabochee delo* (*The Workers' Cause*) had appeared in Switzerland in April 1899, edited by Krichevsky, Ivanshin and Pavel Teplov. They aimed to 'contribute to the *practical unification* of socialist forces active in Russia, and insisted that emancipation of Russian workers 'can only be the affair of the workers themselves', but the 'requirements of the purely economic struggle compel the workers to put forward political demands and to fight for political freedom'.<sup>265</sup> Economic struggle was 'the most effective method to gain broad political influence over the masses', and 'every enemy of the autocracy is an ally for the time being of the working-class', but the paper had 'unqualified sympathy' for 'political demonstrations',<sup>266</sup> in spite of the risks. (In May Nikopol-Mariupol steelworks machinists went on strike demanding a rise and clean water and several were arrested. Workers from another metalworks freed them, but troops carried out 'bloody slaughter' in July.)

Early in 1900 Teplov and Kopelzon toured Russian committees arguing for a Second RSDRP Congress. In Pskov they asked Tsederbaum, Potresov and Ulyanov to edit their paper, and gave them a draft Congress motion.

[T]he biggest town with the most firm and solid movement in a given region takes upon itself the responsibility of organising the closest possible relations with the other towns in its region. For these towns it: i) publishes a regional newspaper; ii) supplies literature; iii) prints (where necessary) leaflets and public statements; iv) distributes personnel to the extent that this is possible; v) organises the regional union's funds; vi) when necessary, organises regional congresses; vii) attends all-Russian congresses as a representative; viii) carries out various conspiratorial responsibilities.<sup>267</sup>

Tsederbaum was dubious,<sup>268</sup> and Ulyanov even more so, but they needed a secure press outside Russia.

In February former members of Narodnaya volya in Geneva printed Plekhanov's attack on *Rabochee delo*.<sup>269</sup> He quoted private letters from Kuskova, Prokopovich and Kopelzon, damned them as 'political castrates' for 'economism',<sup>270</sup> and called Kuskova 'an idealist adulterated by Marxism'.<sup>271</sup> He argued that 'revolutionary bacilli' should 'develop 'the self-awareness of the proletariat',<sup>272</sup> achieve the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', and 'quell all opposition by the exploiters',<sup>273</sup> but all this required serious amounts of money.

Dresden police deported the Russian SD intelligent Helphand in 1898, and he and Carl Lehman visited St. Petersburg and Moscow in spring 1899. When the SPD won 11 deputies in the Bavarian Landtag he acknowledged that the proletariat should 'exploit the clash of class interests', since what mattered was gaining power.<sup>274</sup> Potresov moved to Germany in spring 1900, contacted the SPD and Russian émigrés,<sup>275</sup> and Helphand urged him to print the new paper in Munich.<sup>276</sup> Potresov visited Moscow,<sup>277</sup> and St. Petersburg, and received 1,000 rubles from the liberal Dmitry Zhukovsky and 2,000 from Kalmykova, then took that and 2,000 rubles of his own to Berlin. He persuaded the SPD to print a paper and journal, and then took Ulyanov's prospectus to Switzerland.<sup>278</sup>

In summer Ulyanov reached Geneva, but his family had to write to him via Paris or Prague.<sup>279</sup> He and Potresov visited Plekhanov, who ranted about their 'opportunist' agreement with Struve and other 'traitors', and wanted to eject the Bund from the RSDRP, since it was a 'brood of vipers', 'chauvinists and nationalists'. The GOT agreed to edit the paper with Potresov, Ulyanov and Tsederbaum if Plekhanov had two votes. Ulyanov and Potresov 'sat there as if we had been ducked', but agreed.<sup>280</sup> Ulyanov recalled that Plekhanov's response to a critic of Marxism was 'First, let's stick the convict's badge on him, and then after that we'll examine his case'; but Ulyanov wanted stick a badge on 'everyone who tries to undermine Marxism, even if we do not go on to examine his case'.<sup>281</sup>

On the train to Germany Ulyanov and Potresov planned the paper,<sup>282</sup> but agreed to let Plekhanov edit the journal.<sup>283</sup> Elizarova had escaped to Munich.<sup>284</sup> Zasulich persuaded Plekhanov to let Struve and Tugan-Baranovsky write for the paper, if they acknowledged that they were not SDs,<sup>285</sup> but Tugan-Baranovsky declined.<sup>286</sup> Zasulich went to Munich,<sup>287</sup> where they all used false papers, and lived away from other émigrés, since comrades arrived from Russia,<sup>288</sup> but the paper faced considerable opposition, especially among émigrés.

The Second International had been a loose federation of delegates,<sup>289</sup> but in autumn its Paris Congress established an interparliamentary committee and an international bureau, including two representatives from each SD party.<sup>290</sup> Twelve of the 29 from Russia were Bundists, but the RSDRP got a seat on the bureau,<sup>291</sup> which elected Plekhanov as secretary and Krichevsky as chair.<sup>292</sup> Krichevsky argued that 'political demands' must 'correspond to the experience' of 'Economic struggle', which was the 'irreplaceable school of political education', but SDs should observe 'gradualness' in agitation.<sup>293</sup>

There were 35 émigré Russian SDs in Geneva and Zurich, and others in Paris, Berlin and Liege.<sup>294</sup> Most agreed that 'loose organisation' and the 'lack of a central organisation' and a paper were weaknesses, but the new paper would 'leave the working masses to one side'. They demanded a Second RSDRP Congress, but at the émigré SD organisation's congress Fyodor Gurvich read a statement, then the new paper's supporters walked out.<sup>295</sup> They and Sotsialist émigrés formed Liga russkoy revolyutsionnoy sotsial-demokratii za rubezhom (The League of Russian Revolutionary Social Democracy Abroad),<sup>296</sup> and attracted a recruit.

Nikolai Bauman, the son of a Kazan wallpaper and carpentry workshop owner, was born in 1873. He attended a secondary school, but argued with the teachers and dropped out. In 1891 he entered the Veterinary Institute, read SR and SD literature and led workers' kruzhki. He graduated in 1895 and worked as a vet in a Saratov province village until 1896.<sup>297</sup> He knew that 'Everything' was 'under the control' of the police in Moscow, and 'systematic revolutionary work' was impossible,<sup>298</sup> so he went to St. Petersburg, where he led workers' kruzhki,<sup>299</sup> and joined the Soyuz. By 1897 he was in a solitary cell in the Fortress, but read *Kapital*. In 1899 he was deported to Orlov in Vyatka province,<sup>300</sup> where there were other deportees. Vatslav Vorovsky had been born into a Polish engineer's family in 1871. He entered Moscow University in 1895, became politically active, and was deported to Orlov for three years.<sup>301</sup> In 1899 Bauman had an affair with a married deportee, Klavidia Prikhodko, who became pregnant. He sketched her as the Virgin Mary, asking who her baby resembled,<sup>302</sup> and Vorovksy circulated it.<sup>303</sup> In 1900 Bauman went to Zurich, met Ulyanov,<sup>304</sup> offered to be an agent,<sup>305</sup> and help produce the new paper.<sup>306</sup> Exiled SDs told the editors that he should be expelled. Nothing happened,<sup>307</sup> but articles arrived in Munich.

The Odesa SD intelligent Goldendakh had been arrested at the Russian-Austrian border in autumn 1891. He was sentenced to four years' *katorga* without trial, and spent 15 months in prison before being deported to Chişinău in Bessarabia province for three years, under surveillance.<sup>308</sup> In 1900 he went to Switzerland, joined a tiny intelligently *kruzhok*,<sup>309</sup> and sent an article for the new journal to Nakhamkes in Paris, who sent it with his comments to Munich. Ulyanov asked Goldendakh to stop '*needlessly embittering those who are working for Social-Democracy within the limits of their understanding*'. He added that the Munich editors '*do not undertake as yet to speak for the whole editorial board with complete certainty*',<sup>310</sup> but they had found a printer.

In SPD's Stuttgart printer Dietz had experienced harassment in 1884. The police searched house and press almost daily,<sup>311</sup> and though he supported parts of the government's imperialist policy he spent six months in jail for circulating *Der Sozialdemokrat* in 1886.<sup>312</sup> In 1890 he supported Bernstein, and after the anti-socialist law lapsed he distributed socialist literature across Germany and published *Die Gleichheit* in 1892.<sup>313</sup> In 1897 Bebel and another EC member became partners in Dietz's firm,<sup>314</sup> but in 1900 Dietz refused to publish anything linked to illegal activity.<sup>315</sup> He had type for the new Russian journal, but lacked a 'responsible editor',<sup>316</sup> and a typographer.

Joseph Blumenfeld, a Polish typesetter in his mid-thirties, worked for the GOT in Switzerland,<sup>317</sup> and Ulyanov asked Dietz to let him '*put the whole thing on its feet for us, train the Germans, etc*'. Inna Smidovich came to Munich to be the editors' secretary, and Russian students recruited worker-praktiki. Good false passports were scarce, but Ulyanov noted that Luly Tsederbaum was 'wandering successfully' in Russia, while Nogin had escaped to London and was organising workers to transport literature for 'delivery throughout Russia'.<sup>318</sup> Letters from Russia arrived in Munich via Nuremberg, Darmstadt and Liege,<sup>319</sup> and Ulyanov began learning English.<sup>320</sup>

The editors agreed to Potresov's suggestion to call the paper *Iskra* (*The Spark*),<sup>321</sup> and the Leipzig printer, the SPD's Hermann Rauh,<sup>322</sup> reportedly produced 4,000 copies in December,<sup>323</sup> on eight 300mm by 450mm pages of cigarette paper with three columns of tiny print.<sup>324</sup> All the articles were anonymous. *Iskra* argued that 'Isolated from Social-Democracy, the working-class movement becomes petty and inevitably becomes bourgeois'. To overcome the separation of economics and politics it was necessary to 'imbue the masses' with 'the ideas of socialism and political consciousness', and 'organise a revolutionary party inseparably connected with the spontaneous working-class movement'. Intelligently must learn from workers and understand 'all methods of struggle', 'train people who will devote the whole of their lives, not only their spare evenings, to the revolution', and build 'an organisation large enough to permit the introduction of a strict division of labour'. *Iskra* quoted Petr Alexeev, the defiant SR worker tried in 1877. 'The muscular arm of the working millions will be lifted, and the yoke of despotism, guarded by the soldiers' bayonets, will be smashed to atoms!'<sup>325</sup> 'From Our Social Life' was about political struggles, and there was a 'Chronicle of the Worker Movement and Letters from Factories and Workshops', while 'From the Party' included RSDRP Committee correspondence. The 'Foreign Survey' was about western European SDs; and there was a German postal address.<sup>326</sup> Ulyanov had managed to persuade Plekhanov to advertise *Kak derzhat sebia na doprosakh* (*How to behave at Interrogations*) by 'V. Bakarov'.<sup>327</sup>

Petr Makhnovets, the son of a Lithuanian Catholic blacksmith, had studied at Kazan University, then worked as a doctor among poor Voronezh province peasants. His wife's parents were freethinking landowning gentry, and she had attended St. Petersburg University lectures and met revolutionaries. Vladimir was born in 1872. He later attended a *realschule*, entered St. Petersburg Technological Institute in 1891 and became an SR, but the police spotted him. In 1893 he led a workers' *kruzhok*, and the police noticed him again. In 1895 he contacted SR students who printed SD literature in Lahti, and in 1896 he survived a raid on the press and helped to replace it; but he was in the Fortress by 1897. In 1898 he was exiled to eastern Siberia for five years, but escaped in 1899.<sup>328</sup> He considered himself an SD and worked in Katerynoslav, but was arrested and sentenced to 18 months in prison.<sup>329</sup> By 1900 his sisters were all active. Ludmila, a Warszawa Conservatory student, smuggled *Rabochee delo* to Lidia, a medical student in St. Petersburg, and Iulia printed leaflets in Voronezh.<sup>330</sup> Vladimir went to Switzerland, damned the Bund's 'appeasement politics' and thought the GOT's perspective was 'fatal'.<sup>331</sup>

## (xi) Balancing the books

In 1900 the empire's population was almost 133 million,<sup>332</sup> with an average density of around 51 per hectare.<sup>333</sup> In 40 years the rural population had grown by 34.6 million,<sup>334</sup> and peasants now formed around 87 percent of the 91 million people in the countryside.<sup>335</sup> In a decade gentry had sold 875,000 hectares,<sup>336</sup> and two-thirds of those in 45 provinces had none,<sup>337</sup> but 924 owned over 290,000 hectares, or as much as two million peasant households.<sup>338</sup> Kulaki formed 20 percent of the peasantry,<sup>339</sup> and owned over 40 percent of former gentry land and rented two-thirds of their remaining arable.<sup>340</sup> In 39 years the average peasant holding had shrunk by a third,<sup>341</sup> and 80 percent held three hectares,<sup>342</sup> while around a third of the 11 million peasant households had no

cow or horse. Only half managed to feed themselves, and only 16 percent had surplus grain to sell.<sup>343</sup> Most were well over a year behind with redemption payments and direct taxes, but peasants also paid most of the indirect taxes on matches, tobacco, sugar, tea, vodka and kerosene,<sup>344</sup> which formed five-sixths of the government's tax income.<sup>345</sup> In five years Russian grain production had risen by ten percent,<sup>346</sup> and was second highest in the world and first in exports, but yields were under a third of those in Britain and the peasants' average income was a quarter of that of British farmers.<sup>347</sup> The harvest was poor, and agricultural labourers' wages were falling.<sup>348</sup>

For 20 years 16 percent of St. Petersburg's Obstetric Institute graduates had been peasants, but midwives attended two percent of rural births in 1900.<sup>349</sup> One in four peasant babies died in their first year,<sup>350</sup> and 45 percent before they were five,<sup>351</sup> while adults averaged 35 years of poor health.<sup>352</sup> In Samara, Kazan and Simbirsk provinces, 100,000 people suffered from scurvy, because of a lack of vitamin C.<sup>353</sup> The 'surplus' rural population approached 23 million,<sup>354</sup> and 26 percent in St. Petersburg province, 20 percent in Moscow and Kaluga, 16 percent in Tver, Yaroslavl, Vladimir and Riazan, and over 11 percent in Nizhni-Novgorod, Tula and Smolensk worked away from their village for wages.<sup>355</sup> Ukrainian peasants had formed 30.5 percent of migrants to Siberia in 1891-5, but 34.1 percent in 1896-1900.<sup>356</sup> In 1900 Siberia produced 7.1 million tonnes of grain, 16 percent of the empire's total, but 1.3 million tonnes went to European Russia.<sup>357</sup> During 1900 there were 48 cases of peasant unrest,<sup>358</sup> and the urban population had grown by 8.2 million in 40 years.<sup>359</sup>

Since 1892 two-thirds of government investment had been devoted to economic development,<sup>360</sup> and it had invested 1.2 billion rubles in railways,<sup>361</sup> making a total of 4.8 billion. In 1900 it invested 235 million of its revenue income of 1.78 billion rubles in new lines,<sup>362</sup> and guaranteed five percent interest to private companies. The Russian and Polish networks covered 53,200km, and the Trans-Siberian line had reached 6,400km east of Moscow. In winter the 32,000 square kilometres of water in Lake Baikal froze over, and horse-drawn sledges carried goods and passengers, but in summer ferries could be used,<sup>363</sup> and were built at Armstrong's yard on the Tyne.<sup>364</sup>

In 1900 British speculators had invested 103 million rubles in Russian industry, Germans 197 million, the French 210 million and Belgians 220 million. Foreigners owned over 70 percent of engineering and machine-building plants and metallurgical works, including 78 percent of the southern steel industry, where Belgians had invested 550 million rubles and the French 275 million. Foreigners owned almost 40 percent of industrial capital and 45 percent of all joint-stock enterprises, and annual dividends averaged 4.8 percent.<sup>365</sup> They now owned 269 plants, compared to the 12 they owned before 1888.<sup>366</sup> Foreigners owned 85 percent of pig-iron plants,<sup>367</sup> and a 342 of the largest industrial enterprises, including 125 mining and machine-building firms with a capital of 472 million rubles.<sup>368</sup> French speculators owned a third of coal mines,<sup>369</sup> and total output was almost 11 million tonnes.<sup>370</sup>

Since 1870 the production of Urals metallurgical plants had increased by 400 percent, but since 1890 almost 5,800 industrial plants had been established, and iron and steel output had almost doubled, making Russia the world's fourth largest producer.<sup>371</sup> Donbass plants' output had increased by 15,800 percent.<sup>372</sup> National pig-iron production was 2.86 million tonnes,<sup>373</sup> and almost 1.5 million came from eight new plants in the Donbass, where production had risen by 20 percent since 1890, but the workforce by seven percent.<sup>374</sup> Since 1890 the government had bought almost two-thirds of domestic steel production,<sup>375</sup> and 28 percent became rails; but from 1895 to 1900 the Donbass's share of national output had fallen from 70 to 44 percent,<sup>376</sup> because the government cut rail orders by ten percent. Donbass iron ore mines produced 57 percent of national output, while 21 metallurgical plants had a capital of around 144 million rubles,<sup>377</sup> and produced over 1.2 million tonnes of iron and steel,<sup>378</sup> but the value Briansk steelworks' shares had fallen by almost half.<sup>379</sup>

The finance minister had given Turkestan cotton-growers tax relief,<sup>380</sup> and Turkestan, Bukhara and Khiva now supplied 36 percent of raw cotton.<sup>381</sup> European Russian mills produced 238,000 tonnes of thread and 191,000 tonnes of cloth, and Ivanovo's output was second only to St. Petersburg's.<sup>382</sup>

In five years the number of Baki oil workers had risen from 6,800 to 30,000,<sup>383</sup> and Russia's output exceeded that of the USA by over 1.5 million tonnes,<sup>384</sup> and its price in world markets was high.<sup>385</sup>

Since 1890 the number of inspected factories had risen from 32,254 to 38,141, and the number of employees (in those with over 50) from 1,424,800 to 2,373,400, while the value of their annual output had more than doubled from 1,502,000 to 3,439,000 rubles.<sup>386</sup> Inspectors supervised 1.69 million workers in 18,000 plants, and the average workforce was 93,<sup>387</sup> but those with 500 to 1,000 employed 269,000 and the 243 with over 1,000 employed 526,000.<sup>388</sup> Another 2,810,000 worked in factories, mines, steamships and on the railways, and 14,000,000 worked for wages.<sup>389</sup>

The 22 million inspected and uninspected workers and their families formed 18 percent of the population,<sup>390</sup> and over 60 percent lived in and around St. Petersburg, Moscow and the main Polish and Ukrainian cities;<sup>391</sup> but

around 62 percent of factories, and 59 percent of inspected workers were outside towns and cities,<sup>392</sup> where half worked in heavy industry,<sup>393</sup> but their output was worth ten percent of their US counterparts.<sup>394</sup>

Managers had sacked strikers in 1899, and there were now 13,000 fewer males, but 12,000 more females,<sup>395</sup> who totalled 453,000.<sup>396</sup> There were 400,000 railway workers,<sup>397</sup> and 90 percent were peasants, but 40 percent had no ties to their village.<sup>398</sup> The 500,000 transport workers, 300,000 builders,<sup>399</sup> and others, included around eight million males,<sup>400</sup> and six million females,<sup>401</sup> but average pay had declined since 1895.<sup>402</sup> The average monthly wage was 17 rubles,<sup>403</sup> but while male metalworkers averaged 34, male textile workers averaged 19,<sup>404</sup> and females 14, though that was over twice a domestic servant's pay,<sup>405</sup> and three times as much as they could earn in their villages. Women formed almost 45 percent of Kostroma province workers, but a third of infants died there in their first year. In Sereda, Vladimir province, 40 percent of women aged 15 to 19 were literate, and the literacy level was slightly higher in the flax-processing town of Shuya. Nationally 84 percent of textile workers were in mills,<sup>406</sup> and formed a large proportion of around four million workers who returned to their villages for summer, but over half of the fathers of factory, mine and railway workers had been factory workers and held no land.<sup>407</sup> Only 48 percent of wage-earners lived with their families, and most were peasant-proletarians.<sup>408</sup>

Inspectors' reports appeared for the first time for years, but only as summaries.<sup>409</sup> Officially 125 strikes had involved 29,000 workers, or 1.7 percent of the inspected workforce, for a total of 120,000 days, and around 21 percent ended in victory for the workers, 38 percent in compromise and 41 percent in defeat.<sup>410</sup> Yet at least 655 strikes and protests had involved 100,000 workers,<sup>411</sup> and troops had forcibly suppressed 33 of them.<sup>412</sup>

The government gave less than 34 million rubles to the Education Ministry,<sup>413</sup> which ran around 37,000 primary schools for 2.6 million pupils,<sup>414</sup> or 42 percent of school-age children.<sup>415</sup> There were 60,000 primary teachers and 10,000 secondary teachers,<sup>416</sup> but Orthodox primary schools were losing ground.<sup>417</sup> There were 16,357 men at eight universities,<sup>418</sup> but over half of men at all the higher educational institutes were from nobles', officials' or army officer's families.<sup>419</sup> There were 2,588 women in higher education,<sup>420</sup> and commercially-run higher courses for women had opened in Moscow.<sup>421</sup> In 40 years the number of professionals had risen from 20,000 to 85,000, and around 50,000 worked for zemstva,<sup>422</sup> but the government gave them less than 30 kopeks per person to spend.<sup>423</sup> There were around 400,000 intelligenty,<sup>424</sup> and many more rabochy intelligenty.<sup>425</sup>

Over the years there had been at least 1,000 political assassinations. In 1900 the government employed 385,000 officials, or one for every 250 people, but most of the 50,000 police employees earned less than factory workers. In the countryside there were fewer than 8,500 police, or one for every 11,760 people,<sup>426</sup> and a few might be responsible for up to 4,700 square kilometres and 100,000 people.<sup>427</sup> The St. Petersburg police headquarters had a card index with 55,000 names, 20,000 photographs and 5,000 illegal publications, and around 2,500 gendarmes had security responsibilities.<sup>428</sup> In 67 provinces, and 30 Polish districts, 272 gendarmes were at railway stations, while St. Petersburg, Moscow and Warszawa each had 500, plus up to 150 police and 150 spies. That year gendarmes investigated 20,000 political suspects and 'black cabinets' copied 5,500 letters.<sup>429</sup> The government devoted 46 million rubles to the judicial system,<sup>430</sup> and officially the Justice Ministry prosecuted 1,580, while gendarmes dealt with 1,363 and courts martial with four. Between them they exiled 49 to Siberia, deported 85 elsewhere and expelled one foreigner, while the police had 618 under surveillance, 102 in detention and 57 in prison. Reportedly almost 900 jails and seven katorga prisons held 10,000 men and 20,000 women and children,<sup>431</sup> and in the first six months of 1900 832 political suspects were sentenced without trial.<sup>432</sup> That summer katorga sentences no longer had to be served in Siberia, and merchant guilds lost their power to exile people without trial; yet by the end of the year there were 1,800 exiled state criminals in Siberia.<sup>433</sup> In 1881-1896 145 workers had been deported without trial, but 1,741 in 1897-1900.<sup>434</sup> Around 30 percent of political suspects were Jews,<sup>435</sup> and since 1891 almost 280,000 Jews had settled in the USA,<sup>436</sup> including 37,000 in 1900.<sup>437</sup>

Since 1890 the annual trade surplus had averaged 124 million rubles,<sup>438</sup> and in 1900 the annual commercial turnover was six percent,<sup>439</sup> but growth was slowing,<sup>440</sup> so the government sold securities,<sup>441</sup> to pay off some of its debts.<sup>442</sup> Exports accounted for six percent of global turnover, and Russia was the sixth most important participant in the world market.<sup>443</sup> Much of heavy industry was newer, larger and more concentrated than Germany's,<sup>444</sup> but while Germany took about 30 percent of Russia's exports, it supplied almost half its imports.<sup>445</sup> Germany had to import much of its food and raw materials, but both German and Russian industry needed land and sea routes for exports.<sup>446</sup> In 1899 the Russian government had imposed a four-year ceiling on the War Ministry budget, yet between 1891-5 and 1896-1900 the navy budget grew by 52 percent.<sup>447</sup> In 1900 the War Ministry received 26.1 percent of the state budget,<sup>448</sup> but the minister noted that, in the event of a war with Germany, while 1.5 million German and Austro-Hungarian troops could reach the border in days by train, Russian troops would have to walk.<sup>449</sup>



## 12. The first breath of revolution

### (i) The Kyiv conscripts

In the early 1870s the wealthy Białystok merchant Moses Wallach bought crops in Poland and sold them in Prussia, but he also read works by the utopian socialist Herzen and the anarchist Bakunin. Wallach married Anna Perlo,<sup>1</sup> and Meir was born in 1876.<sup>2</sup> Three quarters of Białystok's 60,000 population were Jews, and in 1881 gendarmes raided Wallach's house in the middle of the night,<sup>3</sup> since they suspected him of contacting 'foreign hostile elements'. Two 'stranger-men' lifted Meir out of his cot, searched his pyjamas and mattress,<sup>4</sup> ransacked the house,<sup>5</sup> and detained his father for six weeks, then freed him for lack of evidence.<sup>6</sup> Meir later went to the synagogue, but it was 'like doing homework', and he left the faith. He graduated from the realschule, but his Russian was imperfect,<sup>7</sup> and he could not enter a Russian university, so in 1893 he enlisted in the army. He mastered Russian, and began to learn German and French, hoping to enter a German university, but when he was stationed in Baki a fellow soldier gave him works by Marx. In 1898 he refused to fire at strikers, but his captain saved him from a court martial by dismissing him for a 'petty violation of regulations'.<sup>8</sup> He taught 'Marxism and political economy' to workers and artisans in Russia's Chernihiv province;<sup>9</sup> and in 1899 he was a clerk in a Kyiv sugar factory in Ukraine, where Yankel Gordon gave him an RSDRP 'pass' and assigned him to a cell of seven.<sup>10</sup> The city's economy depended on sugar and other agricultural products.<sup>11</sup> Seven out of ten babies died in the insanitary suburbs, but there had been 27 strikes in five years,<sup>12</sup> and new SD parties were being formed.

In Galicia Mykola Hankevych and Semën Vityk founded Ukrainskaya sotsial-demokraticeskaya partya (The Ukrainian Social Democratic Party), which accepted the Austro-Marxist programme and demanded 'political freedom and independence for all Ukraine'.<sup>13</sup> In January 1900 Polish students at Kyiv University founded the nationalist Revolyutsyna Partya Ukrayiny (The Revolutionary Party of Ukraine). Some gymnasium pupils supported the RUP and agitated peasants, but were hostile to SDs.<sup>14</sup> Kyiv's population was over 250,000,<sup>15</sup> and Wallach joined the RSDRP Committee,<sup>16</sup> bought a press and printed leaflets at night.<sup>17</sup>

In spring 1,000 bakery workers went on strike, but there were arrests, and the governor threatened stern measures if there was a May Day demonstration. The RSDRP conducted 'broad political agitation and *Vypered* reported that Minsk RSDRP Committee's Russian language leaflets told 'shop workers and labourers' that May Day was 'a holiday to celebrate the battle for their economic betterment'. It described Polish events and urged unity, but raised no political demands since 'manpower' had been 'depleted' by arrests and 'the ground was not prepared'. On May Day 10,000 printed leaflets with red headings calling for strikes and an eight-hour day were scattered in the streets, pasted on walls and thrown through windows. The Okhrana's Menshchikov arrived from Moscow with 12 detectives, engaged eight more to discover the RSDRP press, and made 37 raids.<sup>18</sup>

The previous year the education minister had announced that he would force students to attend the university nearest their home, and the government decided that any students involved in disorders would be conscripted into the army. Across the empire there were 13,548 university students by autumn 1900,<sup>19</sup> and a majority came from officials' or gentry families,<sup>20</sup> but parents with modest incomes financed most students at Kharkiv University. In Moscow over half of the 4,000 students had received 150,000 rubles in scholarships and waivers, plus grants and free meals from a charitable society, and over 3,580 St. Petersburg University students needed at least 300 rubles a year to get by. When Kyiv University reopened students discussed allegations about two of their number who had reportedly refused to pay a cab driver and beat him up. Two days later two students who had allegedly stolen a gold ring from a restaurant singer, but refused to go in to the University jail, were expelled.<sup>21</sup> A meeting of 1,000 students believed morale was low because the government prevented the student body from exerting a moral influence on its members, and when the University expelled several more, others saw them off at the station.<sup>22</sup> They demanded their reinstatement and the closure of the University jail,<sup>23</sup> and the governor summoned Cossacks.<sup>24</sup> In December 217 students were lightly sentenced, but 183 were to be conscripted.<sup>25</sup>

In January 1901 the education minister confirmed the charge of 'riotous assembly' on the 183 Kyiv students,<sup>26</sup> who would spend up to five years in the ranks.<sup>27</sup> St. Petersburg University students' committee called a protest, but 28 demonstrators were conscripted.<sup>28</sup> The RSDRP Committee was slow to react, and students left to form *Volya rabochikh* (Workers Will).<sup>29</sup> Alexey Pokotilov arrived, intending to assassinate the education minister. Sotsialist and *Rabochee znamia* supporters refused to help him, and he was arrested,<sup>30</sup> but another succeeded.

Petr Karpovich was born 1874. In 1895-6 he studied at Moscow University,<sup>31</sup> but the rektor expelled him for demonstrating.<sup>32</sup> He attended the Iuriev University in 1898-9, but was expelled for participating in the student movement, so he entered Berlin University. He returned to St. Petersburg by 1901, and on 14 February he

mortally wounded the former Moscow rektor, the minister of education, who died next day. Karpovich was imprisoned in Shlisselburg Fortress,<sup>33</sup> and the tsar attended the minister's funeral, but dared not go to the cemetery.<sup>34</sup> (Karpovich was subsequently sentenced to 20 years' katorga.<sup>35</sup>)

St. Petersburg University students belatedly called for a demonstration in support of the Kyiv conscripts,<sup>36</sup> but the RSDRP Committee refused to take part. Moisei Lure brought the second *Rabochee znamia*, published a third and negotiated a merger with Sotsialist survivors. They and *Iskra* supporters favoured a demonstration,<sup>37</sup> but on 4 March the artillery at both ends of Nevsky Prospekt pointed towards Kazan Square,<sup>38</sup> where thousands of demonstrators were assembled. Students carried red flags,<sup>39</sup> and sang the *Marseillaise*,<sup>40</sup> and up to 70 Obukhov steelworkers joined in.<sup>41</sup> After someone read a proclamation, Cossacks pinned demonstrators against a wall. They threw snowballs and boots, one of which drew blood from an officer's face, and he ordered the Cossacks to charge and use their whips.<sup>42</sup> They killed a woman student, a technology student, two medical students and three forestry students, and severely wounded 58.<sup>43</sup> The police arrested 1,500,<sup>44</sup> and almost half of the 672 students were women.<sup>45</sup> Most were expelled and banned from living in a university city for up to three years,<sup>46</sup> and around 16,000 were deported,<sup>47</sup> but were allowed to go where they chose;<sup>48</sup> so Tugan-Baranovsky went to work for Poltava zemstvo,<sup>49</sup> and Struve went to Tver.<sup>50</sup> The interior minister ordered governors to 'stop disorders as they occur', 'prevent them from breaking out' by mediation or force, and watch workers carefully, especially Jews. Across Russia 35,000 students had demonstrated in support of the Kyiv conscripts.<sup>51</sup>

On the 11<sup>th</sup> Kyiv RSDRP Committee and the University student sovet organised a demonstration of up to 20,000 with a banner reading 'For Political Freedom'.<sup>52</sup> St. Petersburg University students contacted other higher institutions, but many SD intelligently refused to demonstrate, and most of those at a planning meeting were arrested. A student called Baumstein circulated leaflets calling for a demonstration on the 19<sup>th</sup>, and about 400 turned up, but 128 female and 71 male students and 45 onlookers were arrested. That day Kharkiv students protested against the conscriptions, but ignored SDs' advice to do so in the evening, so workers could attend.<sup>53</sup> Students left the cathedral before prayers for the tsar, sang revolutionary songs,<sup>54</sup> and marched to the University;<sup>55</sup> but Cossacks knouted them, and over 100 were arrested.<sup>56</sup> Moscow students responded.

Mikhail Pokrovsky, the son of a senior Moscow civil servant, was born in 1868. He won the gold medal at his gymnasium in 1887, entered the University and won a first-class diploma in 1891. He passed his master's examination in 1894, and taught at a teachers' college, a women's institute,<sup>57</sup> in secondary schools and on University extension courses.<sup>58</sup> On 19 February 1901 the University student sovet asked a mass meeting how many wanted to discuss a demonstration in support of the conscripts, and 917 agreed, but only 358 turned up on the day,<sup>59</sup> yet Pokrovsky saw 'tens of thousands' people driving back Cossacks and building barricades,<sup>60</sup> including strikers from Prokhorov Mill and other plants.<sup>61</sup> Police and Cossacks drove demonstrators and onlookers into a military riding-school, and several were hospitalised and some later died. The rest had no food or drink for 18 hours, until workers smashed their way in.<sup>62</sup> The women were released, but the men were taken to prison.<sup>63</sup> Over 1,500 were arrested,<sup>64</sup> the University expelled 500,<sup>65</sup> and 300 were conscripted,<sup>66</sup> and this galvanised Kyiv SDs.

Alexandra Lunacharskaya had married the statesman, Vasily Lunarcharsky, but she and Alexandr Antonov, a liberal Poltava lawyer, had a son in 1875. Alexandra divorced her husband, but Anatoly bore his name.<sup>67</sup> In 1879 they went to live with Antonov in Nizhni-Novgorod, and after he died in 1885 they went to Kyiv. Anatoly entered a gymnasium in 1887,<sup>68</sup> was 'liberated from religious prejudices',<sup>69</sup> and read his brother's SR literature. The University was closed, but M.D. Fokin led student kruzhki. They fell apart in 1892, but an SD intelligent formed another. Gymnasium kruzhki 'developed exuberantly and broadly', using a Polish reading list including Plekhanov,<sup>70</sup> Marx, Engels and *Manifest Kommunisticheskoy partii*. Pupils copied them by hand or hectograph, and works by Plekhanov and Kautsky 'kept coming in',<sup>71</sup> as did *Kapital*. By 1893 some propagandised in the railway workshops, and in 1894 200 members of 25 kruzhki boarded boats on the Dnieper, heard speeches and sang revolutionary songs, but a demonstration led to arrests.<sup>72</sup> Lunacharsky attended a meeting of Struve and Ulyanov's supporters, and copied a typescript of Ulyanov's attack on SRs.<sup>73</sup> Most of his kruzhek considered themselves 'Plekhanovites',<sup>74</sup> but did not know how to intervene in strikes. Lunacharsky failed to get the 'deportment' mark to enter a Russian university,<sup>75</sup> so in 1895 he took a letter of introduction to Axelrod in Zurich and entered the University,<sup>76</sup> where Richard Avenarius's idea that 'Marxism' was a 'hypothetical myth' that motivated people impressed him.<sup>77</sup> He was critical of Plekhanov's 'narrow French Encyclopedist orthodoxy',<sup>78</sup> but Axelrod published his report of a workers' meeting in *Rabotnik*.

In 1896 Lunacharsky returned to Russia to perform his military service, but was rejected because of his shortsightedness. In 1898 he represented the GOT émigrés in Paris,<sup>79</sup> then went to Moscow with a letter from Axelrod and Plekhanov to Elizarova,<sup>80</sup> and another to Serebriakova. Zubatov boasted that 'not one revolutionary comes illegally to Moscow without reporting' to her,<sup>81</sup> so he knew that SDs met in her flat.<sup>82</sup> In spring 1899 the police briefly detained Lunacharsky. He went to Kyiv, but was sent back to Moscow and spent six months in solitary. In

1900 he returned to Kyiv,<sup>83</sup> and joined a 'closed' RSDRP kruzhok.<sup>84</sup> After May Day he was deported to Moscow, then deported back,<sup>85</sup> but went to Kaluga. He joined a 'closed' RSDRP kruzhok, read 'classic German texts' published by Dmitry Goncharev, and agitated teachers, railway workers,<sup>86</sup> and Goncharov's factory workforce. In spring 1901 Lunacharsky returned to Kyiv and lectured about Henrik Ibsen to a legal society,<sup>87</sup> to raise money for the conscripts,<sup>88</sup> but the police thought the 31 RSDRP Committee members planned a May Day demonstration, so they arrested them and 24 others, and they joined other SDs in Kyiv prison.<sup>89</sup>

Moisei Uritsky had been born into a Litvak merchant's family in Cherkasy, Kyiv province, in 1873. His father soon died,<sup>90</sup> and his mother raised him as a religious Jew,<sup>91</sup> but he attended a Russian gymnasium in Bila Tsérkva, supported himself by tutoring, then studied at Kyiv University, where he organized a network for smuggling and distributing illegal literature. In 1897 he ran an illegal mimeograph, probably for the Bund, but was in Kyiv prison by early 1901.<sup>92</sup>

In summer Lunacharsky believed that Uritsky, the 'senior "political"', ran the prison, since SDs were allowed to go out shopping and put the food sent by their families into a 'common pot', while cell doors were unlocked and there were lectures on socialism.<sup>93</sup> Outside surviving RSDRP Committee members formed editorial, technical and two agitational groups, and elected an EC of three, whose decisions would be binding, but they were accountable to monthly general meetings, and there would be new elections for the EC every six months.<sup>94</sup> Such democratic internal procedures were rare among Russian SDs.

## (ii) The compact *Iskra* company

Early in 1901 Inna Smidovich, who had married Lehman,<sup>95</sup> received *Iskra No. 1* in Switzerland, and other copies went to a Belgian address.<sup>96</sup> Most went to the Latvian students Ernests Rolau and Eduards Skubiks in Zurich. They were under surveillance,<sup>97</sup> and the police seized 3,000 copies and arrested the courier,<sup>98</sup> but that left around 1,000 which may have got through.<sup>99</sup>

In Samara Ulyanov's sister Maria received *No. 1* bound in book-covers, and made and distributed copies.<sup>100</sup> Ulyanov sent Nogin in St. Petersburg a copy and told him that he was to show it to 'no one except your friend', but 'everything now depends on Transport, which is eating up a lot of money'.<sup>101</sup> *Iskra* agents changed addresses often, relied on sympathisers for places to sleep and meet,<sup>102</sup> and might receive as little as five or up to 50 rubles a month.<sup>103</sup> When Nogin visited London Ulyanov told him that the 'transport situation has improved and we may be able to manage without the help of new people'. Fake foreign passports were scarce, but he could get him a Bulgarian one.<sup>104</sup>

Munich police knew that about five Russian students at the University and that around 70 of the 80 Russians at the Polytechnic were Jews. Many worked with the SPD,<sup>105</sup> which allowed Gruppya sodeystviya russkoy revolyutsionnoy sotsial-demokratii (The Group for Assisting Russian Revolutionary Social-Democracy) to store *Iskra* in *Vorwärts'* basement.<sup>106</sup> The *Iskra* editors contacted Sergey Tsederbaum in Vilnius via Lehman. Couriers picked up two packs of *Iskra* and three packs of silk stockings in Germany,<sup>107</sup> and put them in metal waistcoats and false-bottomed trunks. They travelled via East Prussia, Upper Silesia and Galicia to the border of the Pale,<sup>108</sup> where apparently innocent Sunday 'travellers' picked them up,<sup>109</sup> and took them to Vilnius. When a mechanic called Faivchik arrived there from Paris, he introduced Tsederbaum to Tarshis, who gave the *Rabochee znamia* 'printing outfit' to Lure and brought Bund literature from Kaunas. When he heard that *Iskra* literature was at the border, Tsederbaum sent Tarshis to bring it to Vilnius, where it was picked up by an army doctor, Fyodor Gusarov,<sup>110</sup> who was in his mid-thirties, and I. Klopov, an officer in his mid-twenties, and Jewish tanners and Russians in Lithuanian towns helped them with distribution.<sup>111</sup>

St. Petersburg police seized the Sotsialist press and arrested 'almost everybody connected with "The Labour Library"'. In Vilnius Eva Gordon's warrant read 'To arrest, whatever the outcome of the house-search'.<sup>112</sup>

Struve had raised money in Russia,<sup>113</sup> and got hold of the finance minister's secret memorandum asking the tsar to crush gentry opposition to industrialisation. He and Yakovlev went to Munich and the *Iskra* editors agreed that Struve could edit *Sovremennoye obozrenye* (*The Contemporary Review*) as a supplement to the new journal. The *Iskra* organisation would print, transport and distribute it, and Struve could contribute to *Iskra* if he did not discuss SD issues.<sup>114</sup> He donated 4,200 rubles to *Iskra*, and 1,800 to print the memorandum, then he and Yakovlev left for Russia; but Dietz did not print the agreement or the prospectus, since references to 'revolutionary activity' attracted police attention.<sup>115</sup> Soon after Zhukovsky arrived in Munich with money for Struve's supplement, but nothing for the journal or *Iskra*.<sup>116</sup>

The Okhrana regarded the revolutionaries among the 30,000 Russian Jews in London as the main external threat, and Rachkovsky went there to strengthen ties with the police.<sup>117</sup> The Special Branch was responsible for

spying on revolutionaries, and immigrants had to report their arrival.<sup>118</sup> Rachkovsky organised the surveillance of 'important' individuals, then returned to Paris and discussed with the police how to counter revolutionary propaganda.<sup>119</sup> The Okhrana had opened a Berlin Agentura,<sup>120</sup> led by Harting since 1900, and he recruited spies. There were 47,000 Russians in Germany,<sup>121</sup> and most SDs were in Berlin.<sup>122</sup> The kaiser ordered the police to keep Russian students under surveillance, and they confiscated illegal literature and expelled those who had it.<sup>123</sup>

In Russia the six RSDRP Committees each included five or six intelligenty, and there were 63 altogether in the organisation.<sup>124</sup> In St. Petersburg Ivan Radchenko, Stepan's brother, had become an RSDRP Committee organiser in 1899.<sup>125</sup> In 1900 he and Stasova had formed a 'compact *Iskra* company' to fight the 'economists'.<sup>126</sup> The Committee's organisation secretary set policy and supervised operations, its propaganda secretary managed publications and propagandists and Stasova was its technical secretary. She collected and distributed money, worked out codes for correspondence, mastered writing in invisible ink, communicated with other RSDRP organisations in Russia and abroad, stored and distributed illegal literature in a briefcase, spotted spies, memorised the names and aliases of hundreds of comrades and supporters, and safe addresses where they could hide and adopt disguises. She slept no more than six hours a night, but had a prodigious memory, wrote down nothing sensitive. A high-ranking army officer at Stasova's undercover gatherings reprimanded an Okhrana officer who knew they raised money for the RSDRP.<sup>127</sup> Stasova bought dead people's passports from a janitor,<sup>128</sup> but early in 1901 she had to use SRs to distribute *Iskra* to fearful SD intelligenty.<sup>129</sup>

The rabochy intelligent Babushkin had completed his deportation in Katerynoslav in 1900. Spies shadowed him to St. Petersburg,<sup>130</sup> but he escaped to Moscow and met Maria Ulyanova.<sup>131</sup> In summer he went to Smolensk, where he met Ulyanov and 25-year-old Vladimir Rozanov of *luzhny rabochy*,<sup>132</sup> and by early 1901 Babushkin was an *Iskra* agent based in Orekhovo-Zuevo in Moscow province.<sup>133</sup>

A Munich SPD press printed *Iskra No. 2*,<sup>134</sup> which had six pages and was dated February. It included Babushkin's anonymous report on Donbass miners' strikes.<sup>135</sup> Zasluch argued that 'Terror does not stimulate broad political activity', but 'stifles it by exhausting society's energy'.<sup>136</sup> *Iskra* called on workers to 'go to the aid of the students'.<sup>137</sup> The RSDRP intelligent Fyodor Gurvich had completed three years' exile,<sup>138</sup> and had joined the Berlin *Iskra* support group.<sup>139</sup> In February Ulyanov asked him why he had not sent information about Finnish transport routes. 'Collect cash. We have now been reduced almost to beggary'.<sup>140</sup> Ulyanov told Axelrod that Dietz and other SPD leaders were 'rather afraid'. 'When shall we get rid of the "tutelage" of these *Dreck-Genossen*?!' (rubbish comrades). Letters were 'pouring in' from Russia and his sister Maria had been arrested. There had been 'bloody battles', the prisons were 'crammed full' and 'martial law' had been imposed in Moscow. Had 'Judas' 'fooled' them'? He wrote to Struve: 'either we get sure finance for *our* enterprise, or else we refuse'.<sup>141</sup>

In Switzerland Elizarova worked for *Zarya (Dawn)*,<sup>142</sup> and Dietz printed 1,000 copies of *No. 1* for Russia and 500 for 'abroad' in Stuttgart in March.<sup>143</sup> Plekhanov noted that 'the *Social Democratic party*' was 'at first a very small column' in the working class, but 'political struggle must immediately be started' by 'the *advance guard*'.<sup>144</sup> Helphand brought addresses to Munich, installed a hectograph with a self-destruct mechanism in his flat and printed *Iskra No. 3*,<sup>145</sup> which had eight pages and was dated April.<sup>146</sup> In Paris Goldendakh, Nakhmkes and Emmanuel Gurvich had worked together since summer 1900,<sup>147</sup> and early in 1901 Goldendakh contributed to *Iskra*, and *Zarya No.1* included his critique of *Rabochee delo*. In April the troika formed Borba (Struggle). Goldendakh disliked an *Iskra* article which took sides in émigré disputes, and wanted all SD newspaper editors to attend a unity conference.<sup>148</sup> *Iskra* had not penetrated the SPD transport network,<sup>149</sup> and distribution was patchy.

### (iii) The priority of organisation over agitation

Mykola Skrypnyk had been born into a railwayman's family in the Katerynoslav province village of Yasynuvata in 1872.<sup>150</sup> His father had attended a Sunday school, and his mother had 'performed some services for revolutionaries during midwifery courses', and both had 'a vaguely hostile attitude towards the existing system of political and economic repression'. The family had to move every few months, but Mykola attended a village primary school, and then a realschule in Kharkiv province. There was 'not even one liberal-minded person', but Shevchenko's Ukrainian nationalist poetry encouraged him to read about 'class rebellions by the oppressed against the Cossack leadership' and strengthened his 'objections to the rule of the wealthy'. He borrowed legal books from a Polish railwayman and deported radicals, studied 'economic and historical problems', and he and other young men propagandised peasants and artisans while 'ostensibly collecting Ukrainian folksongs'. The realschule expelled him, but peasants put him in touch with people who had a copy of *Kapital* and a Polish translation of the Erfurter Programm, and in 1897 he propagandised 'as a Marxist' in Kharkiv, Katerynoslav and Nizhni-Novgorod provinces. He entered St. Petersburg Technological Institute in 1900, joined the Kazan Square

demonstration in 1901 and was deported him to Katerynoslav, where he and a comrade deported from Simferopol bypassed 'semi-"economist"' SDs and formed workers' kruzki. Subsequently Skrypnik returned to St. Petersburg, joined an RSDRP 'section', built workers' kruzki and tightened security.<sup>151</sup>

The St. Petersburg teenager Dmitry Sverchkov knew a forestry student who was killed in Kazan Square, and male and female students who were beaten unconscious. He began working for *Iskra*, and his 'godmother', the medical attendant Lidia Barkhatova, asked him to propagandise workers and gave him addresses. He spent 'unforgettable' evenings in tiny rooms, talking with ten workers 'in the dim lamplight about the fate of the world', struggle, and the 'aims and methods of the revolution'. He was 'ready to share with them what I knew' and 'learn from them what was still not clear to me'. They read *Iskra* until it was 'full of holes' and 'each scrap was prized', but some articles were 'too scientific and literary' and 'it was necessary to repeat them in one's own words'. Barkhatova asked him to pick up *Iskra* literature, so he gave her the address of a fellow pupil, but arrived early and was horrified to see a reactionary VD doctor's brass doorplate. He waited two hours for Barkhatova, 'grabbed the package', bid her 'a quick goodbye', and he 'organised the delivery of literature better after that'.<sup>152</sup>

The police ratcheted up pressure after an officer insulted the Kyiv conscript Piratov, who hit him in the face and was shot, as were Podgoretsky and others,<sup>153</sup> and E.K. Proskuriatov committed suicide.<sup>154</sup> Nikolai Lagovsky, a Samara zemstvo statistician influenced by some socialist ideas,<sup>155</sup> arrived in St. Petersburg and fired a revolver at the tsar's hated advisor, the Procurator of the Holy Synod; but he survived, and Lagovsky was subsequently sentenced to six years' katorga in Siberia.<sup>156</sup> St. Petersburg police made 600 raids and arrested 300, including liberal editors, professors, students and pupils. Police also raided in Moscow, Daugavpils, Warszawa and Rostov-na-Donu. In Nizhni-Novgorod they arrested 74 writers, and Kyiv police arrested 120. The government banned almost 1,900 topics from the press, barred Jews from Moscow University, limited them to three percent in others,<sup>157</sup> divided Russia into 'university regions' and barred would-be students from applying anywhere else.<sup>158</sup>

In spring Sergey Tsederbaum sent Tarshis and another man to pick up *Iskra* at the border, and Bundists asked them to bring a 'large package of literature' to Vilnius or Daugavpils. They waited for two or three weeks before taking a train to Pilvishky, where they saw their contact on the platform, but stayed on board, suspecting a trap. Back in Vilnius Tarshis was sacked,<sup>159</sup> and Tsederbaum was arrested.<sup>160</sup> The *Iskra* network needed strengthening.

Vladimir Rudnev had been born in Tula, south of Moscow, in 1874. He entered Moscow University in 1892, became a revolutionary by 1896 and the University sent him home in 1897. He believed workers should lead the workers' movement and intelligently should support them, and he helped to organise a workers' kruzok, but was deported in 1899. He went to Berlin, established a non-aligned group of SDs in 1900, and they sent a delegate to Geneva to try to heal the split between *Rabochee delo* and *Iskra*.<sup>161</sup> In April 1901 Ulyanov told Vecheslov in Berlin that Plekhanov had agreed about 'the priority of organisation over agitation', but he had not received a May Day leaflet from the *Iskra* 'promotion group' in Berlin, and expected 'more cooperation and rational work' from Rudnev's group, so Vecheslov should try to win them over.<sup>162</sup>

Ulyanov told Axelrod that it might be possible to work with Sotsialist, the 'Berliners' and the 'Parisians, perhaps'. The *Iskra* editors would give them 'the requisite scope without which they will not agree to co-operate', but keep 'full control of our print-shops and editorial boards'.<sup>163</sup> Ulyanov asked Ivan Radchenko in St. Petersburg to show 'consideration' to Sotsialist survivors who had paid for *Iskra*, and told him he could get a suitcase full from Lepeshinsky in Pskov.<sup>164</sup> In St. Petersburg Lure and his supporters were arrested,<sup>165</sup> and he was subsequently sentenced to two years in the Fortress and five years' exile in Yakutsk, for contacting Karpovich and publishing *Rabochee znamia*.<sup>166</sup> A few survivors joined the SRs and others worked for *Iskra*,<sup>167</sup> but it lacked reliable transport.

Vladimir Smirnov had been born in Pskov in 1876. He had a Russian father and Finnish mother.<sup>168</sup> He joined an SD kruzok at St. Petersburg University in the mid-1890s,<sup>169</sup> and was sent home for demonstrating in 1899, but worked underground for St. Petersburg RSDRP Committee by 1900.<sup>170</sup> He was fluent in Finnish, Swedish and Russian,<sup>171</sup> and contacted Finnish radicals with the help of Swedish SDs. The editors of *Rabochaya mysl* asked him to arrange transport, and Johan Kock, a former Russian army officer who had joined an SR kruzok in St. Petersburg in the 1890s, helped to get literature from Geneva, Zurich, Munich and Berlin to Stockholm, where SDs stored it, then gave small parcels to socialist sailors on ships going to Finland. By 1901 Smirnov was one of *Iskra's* main agents in Finland, but in spring Turku police arrested a courier and he implicated others.<sup>172</sup>

Ulyanov asked Fyodor Gurvich in Berlin to report about the 'Finnish routes', and asked Hjalmar Branting in Stockholm about the transport he ran with Axel Pettersson, and requested 'a permanent Finnish contributor' for *Iskra* and *Zarya*.<sup>173</sup> Ulyanov enclosed the address of the Swedish socialist Hinke Bergregen and asked for double-enveloped letters with 'Dietz' on the outer and 'ov' on the inner to be sent to Stuttgart.<sup>174</sup>

Smirnov went to St. Petersburg and got the RSDRP Committee to agree to fund a small foundry on an island in the Ahvenanmaa archipelago.<sup>175</sup> Pettersson organised workers in Helsinki and Turku in Finland; Smirnov sent him coded letters to arrange transport via the island, and Pettersson based himself there. In Stockholm Karl Börjesson,

Branting's friend, packed *Iskra* in small parcels, sometimes with Polish and Bundist literature, and Petterson picked up the parcels from sailors who had hidden them in the ship's coal,<sup>176</sup> then professional smugglers and female volunteers took *Iskra* in the secret compartments of suitcases and trunks to Helsinki. Otto Malm, a Finnish railway clerk at St. Petersburg's Finland Station, was an agent for *Fria Ord*, and in summer he introduced Smirnov to train crews from Helsinki. Most illegal literature went as freight,<sup>177</sup> but *Iskra* was weeks behind events in Russia.

#### (iv) The Obukhov defence

Alexandr Shlyapnikov was born in Murom, Vladimir province, in 1885. Its population was over 15,000 and there were metalworking factories, textile mills and a railway line to Moscow. Alexandr's family were Old Believers, and lived among workers, but their house had a kitchen garden with fruit trees. Alexandr's father was a mill-owner's son, and had had various unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, but in 1888 he drowned while on a drunken outing. His widow received some financial support, because of his townsman's status, but she had to work as a washerwoman, seamstress and market trader, take in lodgers, and scrub floors at a metalworking factory to raise her four children. Alexandr and his older brother, Petr, picked bits of iron from a slag heap behind a foundry, and gave their small earnings to their mother. In 1891 Petr had to leave school and became a shoemaker's apprentice, but his master beat him, so his mother transferred him to a shoemaker in her home village. His mother failed to get him a place at the parish school, on account of his faith, and he was too young for the zemstvo school, so she and her elder daughter taught him his letters. He entered the zemstvo school in 1893, but did not attend Orthodox prayers, and was sent home in tears. He enrolled at the parish school, where one teacher had over 70 pupils, but made him spend all day on his knees for not attending the Orthodox church. In summer 1894, during the holidays, he worked in a spinning mill, but the conditions were appalling and the pay was low, so he picked up bits of iron that fell from railway wagons until his mother sent him to live with Petr.

In 1895 Alexandr lied about his age to get a job at a Murom foundry and worked from 6.00am to 7.00pm with two-hour breaks. He went back to school, where he was asked to teach new boys their alphabet, and after he graduated in 1896 he borrowed books by Pushkin, Lermontov and other Russian authors from the school library. His mother took him and his younger sister to Sormovo, by steamship, to visit her elder daughter. Gendarmes had arrested her neighbour when they were looking for the people who circulated anonymous letters calling for the overthrow of the tsar, so she and husband had donated to the fund for arrested men's wives and children. In 1898 Alexandr got a job as a factory clerk in Vacha, between Murom and Nizhni Novgorod, then became an apprentice metalworker for better pay, and heard about 'special black books which were kept hidden and in which the truth was written, but in a disguised form'. In 1899 he transferred to a factory in the Nizhni Novgorod industrial suburb of Sormovo. Two-thirds of its population of 3,000 were male, and almost 11,000 worked at the shipyard and 8,500 at the steelworks. Alexandr no longer believed in god and read SD literature. One of his mother's lodgers had been a fitter in the Caucasus, and another, a foundry worker called Karpych, had been a machinist on a warship and had worked in Baki. When Karpych fell out with his foreman he had gone to work in a Sormovo factory, and later moved to the Semyannikov Shipyard in St. Petersburg. He helped Petr Shlyapnikov to get a job there, though he had to lie about his age, and Alexandr joined him late in 1900.<sup>178</sup>

By 1901 Putilov workers earned 1.85 rubles a day, while around 75 percent of textile workers got less than one ruble,<sup>179</sup> and around 92 percent were registered peasants.<sup>180</sup> The peasant Sulimov 'did not understand anything' when he had arrived in the city, but he read Russian and western literature, and learned about the French Revolution and slave and peasant uprisings,<sup>181</sup> at evening classes. After one teacher spoke about the Khodynka disaster in Moscow and the Ivanovo strikes, 'someone else would come', because the police had arrested her.<sup>182</sup>

Sixteen-year-old Alexandr Shlyapnikov considered himself an SD,<sup>183</sup> and moved to Obukhov steelworks,<sup>184</sup> where military officers managed around 7,000 workers. Overtime was compulsory and wages fell by up to 30 percent, but strike agitation failed.<sup>185</sup> Output fell, managers cut basic pay and piecework rates and the 'seniors' who led work gangs acted unfairly; but there were many 'conscious' young workers.<sup>186</sup> The workforce fell to 3,700, but skilled deputies led *kruzhki* of about 100 youngsters.<sup>187</sup>

In spring St. Petersburg students called for a May Day demonstration,<sup>188</sup> and strikes broke out in Vyborg textile mills the night before.<sup>189</sup> There was one SD at Cheshire Mill, but 500 night-shift workers struck for an eight-hour day, higher piece-rates, a hospital and a school. On May Day 12,000 workers from nine Vyborg mills and 4,000 from six other plants went on strike. They erected barricades, but police swamped the district and a military review prevented a city centre demonstration. Next day the strikers included workers from four small metalworking plants who carried red flags. They broke Lessner works' windows the workforce walked out, and someone called for a 'fight for freedom, against the tyranny of tsar and capital'. Strikers built barricades, and

threw stones, bricks and bits of metal at police from the upper stories of houses, but troops arrived and police arrested 500. Vasilievsky Island and Petersburg district workers had come out, but the police arrested Cheshire Mill strikers.<sup>190</sup> There had been strikes at the Baltic Shipyard, Alexandrov Machine-Building Works,<sup>191</sup> and up to 1,500 at Obukhov steelworks, where the assistant director, Colonel Ivanov,<sup>192</sup> sacked ten, then 16 of the 72 who asked to join them. The RSDRP Committee called a demonstration the following Sunday, and Obukhov workers joined around 3,000 carrying red flags and singing revolutionary songs, but Cossacks dispersed them.

About 30 Obukhov deputies began to organise.<sup>193</sup> Their demands included higher piece-rates, a 25 percent rise for labourers and no compulsory overtime.<sup>194</sup> Shlyapnikov heard about 'meeting after meeting – in the woods, in the meadows, in lodgings', and the intelligenty were 'extremely passionate', so the 'mood heightened'. The deputies decided to organise a strike, but to tell only those 'who could be completely relied on' beforehand.<sup>195</sup> Their demands now included an eight-hour day, the right to elect deputies, polite treatment, the abolition of fines, the provision of drinking water and washing facilities, no sackings for workers celebrating May Day, but sackings for Ivanov and obnoxious foremen and apprentices.<sup>196</sup>

On Sunday the deputies hectographed the demands, and at 11.00am on Monday they gave them to 250 or so reliable workers.<sup>197</sup> Two took a copy to Ivanov, and the rest pulled out 900 from the 'most revolutionary workshops', though some had to be 'smoked out' from under machines.<sup>198</sup> Shlyapnikov began 'inciting apprentices from all the workshops'. 'We stuffed our pockets with screws and all sorts of scraps of iron' and pelted those still working until they were 'forced into line'. Police threatened to whip them, but this 'strengthened our youthful readiness to fight',<sup>199</sup> and others joined in.

Alexandr Shotman had been born in St. Petersburg in 1880,<sup>200</sup> into a Finnish worker's family. He became a sailor,<sup>201</sup> then a metalworker, and joined the RSDRP in 1899.<sup>202</sup> In May 1901 he worked at Obukhov steelworks, and was 'unprepared for the strike', but when he heard shouts he and his workmates downed tools.<sup>203</sup> Gun carriage workers, led by Nikolai Lunikov, were closing workshops by persuasion or force, and beating and stabbing policemen.<sup>204</sup> One striker was 'prodding' Ivanov on the nose for failing to deal with an injury; another was 'loudly counting out the colonel's transgressions on his fingers', and another told him that he should be taken to court. 'Suddenly, such a menacing "Out!" burst forth' that Ivanov had to 'seek safety with his coachman in the stable'. A policeman ordered the strikers to disperse and drew his sabre, but a young worker snatched it, cut the policeman's face, broke the sword and threw away the pieces. After a stone knocked out two of another policeman's teeth and he 'beat an ignominious retreat', the other policemen were 'as quiet as mice'. The Mill director, Major-General Vlasev, arrived, and the strikers begged him not to call in troops. He agreed to take their demands to the Navy Ministry; but two hours later 150 Cossacks, gendarmes and police turned up to face a 'solid wall' of strikers who laughed at an order to disperse. Cossacks attacked with whips, but retreated under a 'hail of stones'. Police reinforcements arrived and 200 more troops were there by 6.00pm,<sup>205</sup> but women from a nearby factory supported the strikers.<sup>206</sup> Eighteen-year-old Marfa Yakovleva handed out cobblestones as she bound wounds, shouted: 'We stand behind our brother'.<sup>207</sup> Shotman's workmate, A. Shults, who had called him 'an idiot for reading and distributing illegal literature', kept up with him in throwing stones.<sup>208</sup> Anatoly Gavrillov, a former military gymnasium student, got strikers to gather cobblestones at a railway crossing on the St. Petersburg road and stationed lookouts at upstairs windows. As mounted police approached the railway barrier, strikers raised it, and the police bunched up. When then the strikers raised the barrier,<sup>209</sup> a 'hail of stones, sand, firewood and all kinds of industrial tools unexpectedly rained down', and strikers barricaded a nearby factory yard and street.

The tsar's servants, who had been exultant, were flabbergasted by this surprise move. They forced the doors of the outbuildings and clambered along dim corridors, but were soon flying out of there like arrows, beaten and bloody. They were firing but hitting tables, chests of drawers, beds and so on instead of people.

Cossacks and gendarmes who had been battered out of the ranks were continually hobbling in the direction of the police station with broken heads and blood on their faces. Companies of soldiers ran up and down the main street and other streets at the double with drums beating, trying to strike fear into women, young people and grown-up workers who were in their homes and had not taken part in the fighting. Quite often, the barbarians with naked sabres attacked a defenceless woman who was not guilty of anything or a senile old man walking down the street and beat them up until they were half-dead. But ... mounted gendarmes or Cossacks would find themselves in a crowd of workers or near some ambush and got what they deserved. In the distance, shots rang out at the plant from time to time. The militants who were fighting under cover of the barricades had no thought of surrender and rained piles of stones on their enemies.

The 600 troops killed at least three strikers and badly injured 20, but the air 'smelled of revolution'.<sup>210</sup> Eventually seven strikers were killed and 300 arrested,<sup>211</sup> but the 'more conscious' workers prevented a police station being demolished.

Next day no police or Cossacks arrived, and Vlasev told the deputies they were safe;<sup>212</sup> but police and troops

entered workers' quarters at night,<sup>213</sup> and arrested 400.<sup>214</sup>

On the following Saturday about 6,000 Obukhov workers barred supervisors and suspected spies from a mass meeting and demanded 'permanent maintenance for widows and orphans of those killed' and an amnesty for those arrested,<sup>215</sup> and elected 29 deputies, including two SDs.<sup>216</sup> On Monday Vasev conceded ten demands, including up to an hour off the day. They could celebrate May Day unmolested, and he would ask the Navy Ministry to make it a holiday. The strike ended,<sup>217</sup> and the Navy Ministry agreed to the ten concessions.

Most arrested strikers elsewhere in St. Petersburg were free by Tuesday, and agitators asked for solidarity with the 'Obukhov Defence'. Nevsky district strikers clashed with police, and Alexandrov Steel Mill, Alexandrov Machine-Building Works and Baltic Shipyard workers came out,<sup>218</sup> even though one manager at the yard believed that an 8.5-hour day would not lower profits. Vasev ordered the heads of Obukhov workshops to 'equalize' the earnings of skilled workers 'in conformity with the quantity and quality of the work', and 'determine the maximum number of workdays in a month'.

The assistant interior minister noted that 'criminal teachings have taken firm root in schools for workers, making them open breeding grounds for propagandists'. 'The majority of worker-agitators and leaders of the various strikes have visited these schools, where, under the leadership of so-called intelligenty', they had 'adopted an anti-government way of thinking, then spread it with growing success among their comrades'. Yet a study of 32,000 workers at ten plants found that most were peasants, but 17 percent were young townsmen, 'in large part literate and in their own way well read', while well-paid patternmakers, joiners, draftsmen, machinists, downwardly mobile skilled workers and landless peasants were the most volatile.

Early in July Ivanov returned to Obukhov steelworks and Vasev ordered that only workers over 25-years-old who had worked there five years could be deputies.<sup>219</sup> Navy sailors dispersed a demonstration, but the deputies brought the workforce out on strike. Some fought police, but there were arrests. Managers removed deputies' powers, but sacked Ivanov and work resumed.<sup>220</sup> Next night 250 workers were detained, then 800 more, including the deputies,<sup>221</sup> and Vasev announced that work would resume under the old conditions and without deputies.<sup>222</sup>

Eight of the 37 strikers who were later tried in camera went free, but others were sent to penal battalions, and several men and two women got up to five years in prison or up to six years' katorga. St. Petersburg's RSDRP Committee acknowledged the 'pressing need' for propaganda for 'the average working masses' about the labour movement, tax, public finance, the tsar's wealth and the British constitutional monarchy and parliament.<sup>223</sup>

'AB' in Geneva later noted that 'If the crowd of 20,000 which was standing by the factory had had firearms, the tsarist government would have had to send a 20,000-strong force to do battle with it. If all the workers fighting on the barricades had had a thousand daggers and sabres, it would have needed 5000 soldiers, not 600 to take the barricades.' Workers needed to understand the power of the tsar and his 'lickspittles'.<sup>224</sup>

## (v) Transport, transport and transport

Krupskaya's exile in Ufa ended in spring 1901,<sup>225</sup> and the police knew she was going to Germany, but gave her a foreign passport.<sup>226</sup> In Munich she published *Zhenshchina-rabotnitsa (Woman Worker)* as 'N. Sablina'.<sup>227</sup> She argued for legislation on night work, maternity leave and an eight-hour day; but she insisted that factory work helped to liberate women economically. Banning them would not create jobs for men, but would encourage employers to invest in labour-saving machinery,<sup>228</sup> so women's liberation could come only by 'fighting hand to hand with men'.

Krupskaya became *Iskra's* secretary and received and sent around ten letters a day,<sup>229</sup> and after Lidia Tserderbaum arrived, Krupskaya ironed incoming letters to reveal the invisible ink and Lidia decoded them.<sup>230</sup> Krupskaya wrote to the *Iskra* agent Knipovich in Astrakhan.

Literature has been sent to Persia (from Berlin) in four packages, just as I wrote. The packages contain: *Iskra* No 3, *Zarya*, *Witte's Memorandum*, *The Woman Worker*, *May Days*. This means we have probably sent you everything. Let me know whether everything has been done correctly. How soon can the literature be delivered? We must know this so as to decide whether this route is suitable for *Iskra* or only for pamphlets and the like. Write me whatever you know about this.

It would be best to forward the literature received in Baki to Poltava. Send it there either by mail or with a messenger. The address for arrivals or for mail is ---, the password ---. We have written to Samara – we are thinking of organising a distribution centre of literature there for central Russia (we have Pskov and Smolensk for the North). You can correspond with the centre through Voronezh (addresses), and with the Ural through Ufa (address). Has anybody gone [heavily cross out]?

Let me know what literature you have. Perhaps you could procure some addresses to which illegal revolutionary literature could be sent by mail?<sup>231</sup>



Krupskaya received 'a heap of letters' from *Iskra's* worker-agent Babushkin,<sup>232</sup> who was agitating in Smolensk, Podolsk, Pokrov, Ivanovo and Orekhovo, and in Moscow, where he liaised with the *Iskra* agent Bauman.<sup>233</sup>

*Iskra No. 4* was dated May and had six pages.<sup>234</sup> A correspondent acknowledged that the movement was 'quiet and lethargic' in Orekhovo, mainly because of 'an unsatisfied hunger for knowledge'. 'We have no literature such as is commonly met with in the capitals and other big towns, workers from the towns rarely come here and so we are kept in the dark about what is going on elsewhere' and 'lack the courage and partly the ability to undertake the work ourselves.'<sup>235</sup> *Iskra* explained that it was a 'collective propagandist', 'collective agitator', 'collective organiser' and 'tribune'.

The mere technical task of regularly supplying ... copy and promoting regular distribution will necessitate a network of local agents of the united party, who will maintain constant contact with one another, know the general state of affairs, get accustomed to performing regularly their detailed functions in the All-Russian work, and test their strength in the organisation of various revolutionary actions. This network ... will form the skeleton of precisely the kind of organisation we need – one that is sufficiently large to embrace the whole country; sufficiently broad and many-sided to effect a strict and detailed division of labour; sufficiently well tempered to be able to conduct steadily *its own* work under any circumstances, at all 'sudden turns', and in face of all contingencies.

Agents should 'Lay siege to the enemy Fortress' by 'systematic, planned preparation' for a 'decisive struggle', but they could develop 'combat readiness' among workers 'only through constant activity of regular troops' and reacting to demonstrations, peasant uprisings and outrageous acts by officials. 'In principle we have never rejected, and cannot reject, terror', but now it was 'inopportune', since it 'disorganises the forces not of the government, but of the revolution'. *Iskra No. 4* reached Samara, Tambov, Nizhni-Novgorod and Siberian RSDRP Committees, and they reprinted 5,000 copies of the article about the function of *Iskra*.<sup>236</sup>

Iuly Tserderbaum had used several pseudonyms,<sup>237</sup> but evidently did not use 'Martov' (March) before 1901.<sup>238</sup> In Munich, a locally-posted letter with material for *Zarya* arrived at *Iskra's* press between 22 May and 1 June, but nobody recognised the identity of 'Lenin',<sup>239</sup> yet he used at least 160 other pseudonyms before and after that.<sup>240</sup>

The Borba group was now in Berlin,<sup>241</sup> and wanted *Iskra* to tone down its criticism of *Rabochee delo*.<sup>242</sup> Goldendakh visited Munich, where Ulyanov was optimistic,<sup>243</sup> but he wanted 'severer conditions' put to *Rabochee delo*, and Krupskaya told agents in Russia that 'Unification is hardly likely', since *Iskra* was the 'controlling organ'.<sup>244</sup> Ulyanov told Bauman in Moscow to spend the minimum from sales of *Iskra* and send the rest to Munich. Transport was 'unorganised and haphazard'. The agents in Pskov and Poltava were 'no burden on our exchequer', but professional smugglers wanted 100 rubles to bring two suitcases across the border. There was no news about transport from Riga or Finland, so he asked Bauman to go to the German border with 'at least 2-4 suitcases',<sup>245</sup> and suggested to Leitensen in Paris that Krasikov should go there too.<sup>246</sup> Ulyanov asked Krasikov and Lepeshinsky in Pskov to persuade Vecheslov to come to Munich to collect a French passport. The 'swift delivery of a small quantity' of *Iskra* was better than a few large consignments, and eight kilos a month was better than 160-320 kilos in three or four months'. The priority was monthly delivery, and that 'hinges on transport, transport and transport'.<sup>247</sup> Ulyanov suggested to the Berlin 'promotion group' that Vecheslov should go to Polangen, north of Memel, where *Iskra* had a 'depot' and 'connections'. He should practice medicine, 'establish good relations' with border officials, and 'accustom them to frequent crossings', using a 23-day *grenz karte* (border pass). It would be possible 'to carry across (on one's person or in a suitcase by our method, which requires a small case for medical instruments) a little at a time'. It was 'very important' that 'crossings should be regular and frequent', and if Vecheslov would 'undertake to arrange this and do the work himself, we will give him the fare money and a couple of month's living expenses, until he settles down'.<sup>248</sup>

*Iskra No. 5* was dated June and had four pages. It praised the 'unprepared Obukhov workers',<sup>249</sup> but police intercepted those sent to Rolau and Skubiks in Zurich. *Iskra* reportedly had nine main agents in Russia. Two ran the Chişinău press.<sup>250</sup> Silvin was in St. Petersburg. Krzhizhanovsky was in Samara,<sup>251</sup> and responsible for distribution in eastern Russia, but showed little energy. Lyubov Radchenko was in Kharkiv,<sup>252</sup> Lengnik worked in Samara, Katerynoslav and Kyiv,<sup>253</sup> with 27-year-old Viktor Krokmal,<sup>254</sup> and they encouraged strikes.<sup>255</sup> Another agent was in Odesa.<sup>256</sup> Sergey Tserderbaum was in Vilnius and Babushkin and Bauman were in the Moscow region.

Nationally the average inspected plant with over 20 workers employed 148, and 32 percent employed over 1,000.<sup>257</sup> Women formed almost 27 percent of the inspected workforce, and more in textile mills.<sup>258</sup> There were 286,000 workers in Moscow province,<sup>259</sup> and 40 percent of the 14,000 in Shuya were women.<sup>260</sup> *Iskra No. 6* was dated July and had eight pages.<sup>261</sup> It included an article from a 'close friend',<sup>262</sup> who wrote about the abuse of girls at Shuya textile mills, strikes in Ivanovo, arrests in Orekhovo, and failures to get Moscow workers to scab, and named a police informer.<sup>263</sup> Ulyanov complained to Sergey Tserderbaum about the concentration of agents in St.

Petersburg, given 'how few contributors and reporters we have, how few people with political connections, how few practical workers to handle technical jobs and distribution',<sup>264</sup> but Rudnev's Berlin group disbanded.<sup>265</sup>

Elizarova travelled across Germany and France, joined 'local Social-Democratic groups' and visited workers' meetings.<sup>266</sup> Five years earlier French socialists had envisaged the gradual nationalisation of monopolies, local control of large firms through reforms, and alliances with other progressive groups. The ownership of property and the receipt of donations by associations of over 20 people were illegal, but in 1901 the restrictions were removed, and rival socialist parties formed. The Parti Socialiste de France was for 'social transformation and republican defence', while the Parti Socialiste was 'the party of revolution'.<sup>267</sup> Elizarova attended an SD conference in Paris,<sup>268</sup> then went to Berlin to organise transporting 8,000 copies of *Iskra* to Russia.<sup>269</sup>

#### **(vi) Kick the intellectuals out of the Committee!**

The Bund leader Arkady Kremer had escaped to Geneva late in 1900, and in spring 1901 he took part in a demonstration in front of the Russian consulate, and sang revolutionary songs. He and another Bundist were deported, so Kremer went to Paris. The Bund had a smuggling organisation through Germany to Poland and Lithuania. Shloyme, who was a member of the Bund's émigré committee, had to spend a good deal of time in Berlin, where it was dangerous to subscribe to *Vörfwärts*.<sup>270</sup> He edited *Der yidisher arbeyter*,<sup>271</sup> but Bundists were divided in the Pale.

Mikhail Goldman, Boris's brother, was born in Vilnius in 1880.<sup>272</sup> At secondary school he contacted Lithuanian SDs and befriended the SDKPiL's Dzierzynski, but by 1900 Goldman was a Bundist, and by 1901 he believed that Russian Jews were a nation.<sup>273</sup> In the Pale the slogan of the Daugavpils 'opposition' was 'Kick the intellectuals out of the Committee!'<sup>274</sup> In Minsk the Bund's basic kruzki studied economics, the class struggle, the working day, wages, surplus value and organisation, and higher kruzki tackled advanced political theory. In Białystok 3,000 Jews and Christians sang revolutionary songs and shouted 'Down with autocracy' at a bristle worker's funeral, but no Bundists demonstrated on May Day, since the city was 'swarming' with spies and gendarmes. Vilnius carpenters worked up to 15 hours a day and all Thursday night, and few joined a May Day demonstration, so the Committee complained that only 'small segment' of the proletariat was 'engaged in the decisive struggle against tsarism'.<sup>275</sup>

In May the Bund CC, the émigré committee, 24 representatives from Vitebsk, Daugavpils, Minsk, Gomel, Vilnius, Kaunas, Grodno, Białystok, Warszawa, Lodz, two towns in south Russia and the Bershter Bund met in Białystok, and their resolutions appeared in *Rabochee delo*.<sup>276</sup> They agreed that terror 'blunts workers' Social-Democratic consciousness, worsens their material situation and discredits the labour movement',<sup>277</sup> and favoured 'more intensive political agitation', encouraging strikes and demonstrations to raise 'political consciousness'. They also expressed sympathy with 'all students fighting for academic freedom and against the arbitrary behaviour of the police'.<sup>278</sup> Shloyme demanded national rights for Jews,<sup>279</sup> but there was a bitter row. A majority agreed that there was oppression 'by one nation over another', but it was 'sufficient for the present to fight against all discriminatory anti-Jewish laws' and not 'fan national feeling, which can only cloud over the class-consciousness of the Jewish proletariat'.<sup>280</sup> Internationalist delegates believed that Russia was 'fated to become a federation of nationalities with full national autonomy for each of these peoples, irrespective of the territory it settles'.<sup>281</sup> The RSDRP was a 'federal union' of SD parties, and the Bund was 'the representative of the Jewish proletariat', so its CC was to negotiate a separate 'federative section', and the Congress added Lithuania to the Bund's name.<sup>282</sup>

In summer Nezavisimaya yevreyskaya rabochaya partya (The Independent Jewish Workers' Party) was founded at Zubatov's suggestion by disgruntled former Bundists. The headquarters were in Minsk and there were branches in Vilnius, Kraslave, Bobruisk and Odesa. The party argued that Jewish workers would benefit economically from tsarist rule if they stayed aloof from political protests, and its followers were nicknamed *Zubatovchikes*. When the organisation demonstrated, the Bund organised counter-demonstrations and disrupted their meetings.<sup>283</sup> Kremer moved to London with the Bund's émigré committee and its press.<sup>284</sup>

In Ukraine around 250,000 of the 360,000 industrial workers lived in or near Kharkiv and Katerynoslav.<sup>285</sup> Coal miners' annual pay averaged 266 rubles and factory workers' 323.<sup>286</sup> Iuzovka ironworks employed 15,000, but 81 percent of orders came from the government,<sup>287</sup> and contracts dried up,<sup>288</sup> so thousands were unemployed.<sup>289</sup>

Representatives of the Bund, *Rabochee delo*, *Iskra* and *Zarya* failed to agree a common policy in Geneva.<sup>290</sup> Most opposed terror,<sup>291</sup> but some RUP Committees in Ukraine and 14 Bund Committees did not.<sup>292</sup> The Bund's Russian language paper, *Poslednia izvestia (Latest News)*, was influential outside the Pale, and Kremer, Shloyme and Nokhem Levinson met *Iskra's* Iuly Tsederbaum,<sup>293</sup> and they agreed to form a federal union of émigré SDs;<sup>294</sup> but the struggle for hegemony continued in Russia.

Petr Moiseenko, the former Orekhovo strike-leader, had left Siberia in 1889, and in 1894, when he was in Rostov-na-Donu, he was deported to Vologda province.<sup>295</sup> In 1898 he completed his sentence and contacted a mine engineer near Katerynoslav, who introduced him to the director and the worker Grigory Petrovsky, and they propagandised miners.<sup>296</sup> Petrovsky joined Katerynoslav RSDRP Committee, and was active across the Donbass, but was briefly detained in 1900.<sup>297</sup> In 1901 he and Moiseenko got the GOT's *Sotsial-Demokrat* from Poltava,<sup>298</sup> and Katerynoslav SD workers aimed to build *kruzhki* in Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Voronezh, the mining and metal-workers' union and in Odesa,<sup>299</sup> but SD intelligenty refused to distribute *Iskra*.<sup>300</sup>

Odesa artisans, waiters, quarry workers and sailors had mutual aid funds. So did many of the 33,000 young, literate, Jewish male shop assistants and clerks, who worked up to 16 hours a day for 350-355 days a year, but 80 percent had no lunch breaks and almost half lived in cold, damp basements. The city's economy was faltering, and unemployment was high. Nakhamkes had told *Iskra* that SDs were 'unnoticeable' in factories, so agitators focussed on workshops;<sup>301</sup> but after the *Iskra* agent Andropov arrived from abroad,<sup>302</sup> its supporters left the Committee and attacked it for failing to agitate.<sup>303</sup> Worker-agitators demanded independence and elections, and the police arrested intelligenty, but the survivors still controlled the Committee and suspected that workers had betrayed them.<sup>304</sup> By autumn the Bund and RSDRP had organised armed self-defence groups.<sup>305</sup> There was a strike, and the Prefect reported that SD propaganda was influential;<sup>306</sup> but the Okhrana fought back.

### (vii) The Moscow Society of Mutual Help of Workers in Mechanical Factories

*Iskra No. 7* was dated August 1901 and had six pages. It noted that the Bund's 'nationality' policy was 'completely illegal' in the RSDRP,<sup>307</sup> and included Dietz's Stuttgart address,<sup>308</sup> and a weaver's response to *No 4*.

[E]veryone sees that strikes alone are not enough and that we must now fight for freedom, gain it through struggle. Today everyone, young and old, is eager to read but the sad thing is that there are no books. Last Sunday, I gathered 11 people and read to them *Where to Begin*. We discussed it until late in the evening. How well it expressed everything, how it gets to the very heart of things.

They thought *Iskra* was better than *Rabochaya mysl* and that the police feared workers and intelligenty. 'All that is wanted is a spark, and the fire will break out', but the weaver wanted to know 'how to begin', 'how to live and how to die'.<sup>309</sup> *Iskra*'s negotiations with the Bund subsequently broke down.<sup>310</sup>

At the Second International Congress in Brussels, Krichevsky and Plekhanov announced that Russian workers had 'exceeded' their 'most optimistic hopes' by demonstrating in support of the Kyiv conscripts, and Russia 'had entered into a revolutionary period with enormous significance' for 'international socialism'.<sup>311</sup>

*Iskra No. 8* was dated September and had six pages. It noted that workers in Bogorodsk, Moscow province, had no illegal literature, since 'suspects are not sent here'. Workers in a large Orekhovo factory were 'strictly forbidden to collect in groups in the corridors, passages, rooms' and lavatories, 'carry on discussions', or read a paper or book to illiterate workmates. Many read *Iskra* because it identified spies, but it could not print every interesting story or counter all anti-*Iskra* arguments.<sup>312</sup>

*Iskra No. 9* had eight pages and was dated October. It reported that Moscow and St. Petersburg RSDRP Committees supported the paper,<sup>313</sup> as did the worker-led Orekhovo Committee,<sup>314</sup> and included details of police informers. A supplement included Babushkin's lengthy anonymous account of the Ivanovo movement, and a plea for *Iskra* literature aimed at army conscripts.<sup>315</sup> The article subsequently appeared as a pamphlet and Babushkin joined *Iskra*'s central organisation,<sup>316</sup> but the Okhrana was working harder in Moscow.

Fyodor Slepov was born into a peasant family near Moscow in 1871. His father soon died, but Fyodor had taught himself to read and write by 1879. He later became a tailor's apprentice, but ran away to Moscow, worked in Morozov's mill and attended evening classes,<sup>317</sup> but hated intelligenty and Jews.<sup>318</sup> In 1900 he met Mikhail Afanasev, a patternmaker who had been a leader of the Soyuz a decade earlier. The police detained Afanasev, but released him under surveillance,<sup>319</sup> and he got a job in the Prokhorov Mill machine shop. Early in 1901 he suggested organising a mutual-aid fund,<sup>320</sup> and in spring a University professor drafted statutes for *Moskovskoye obshchestvo vzaimnoy pomoshchi trudyashchikhsya na mekhanicheskikh fabrikakh* (The Moscow Society of Mutual Help of Workers in Mechanical Factories),<sup>321</sup> which intelligenty and 'hotheads' could not join.<sup>322</sup> The police chief approved the statutes in May,<sup>323</sup> but insisted on approving the leading sovet. The statutes allowed the Society to relieve unemployed workers, but not strikers.<sup>324</sup> After the governor approved the statutes, the Okhrana paid the leaders' wages. Afanasev was chairman and Slepov was secretary, and they met the chairs of 17 districts on Saturdays. A University lecturer gave the first Sunday lecture about mutual-aid funds to 50 workers, and

encouraged debate. Zubatov subsequently argued that Bernstein was an ‘ally against the hideous social democracy’, because his ideas separated ‘anti-government elements’ from the ‘masses’. A hall that held 200 became too small. Several leaders had been ‘sufferers’ for the cause,<sup>325</sup> and negotiated better pay and conditions at work, because employers knew of the link to the Okhrana. Textile workers formed a Zubatovite society, and Moscow region textile workers formed ten.<sup>326</sup> The Society’s Moscow lectures took place in a 2,000-seat auditorium,<sup>327</sup> and Zubatov gave SD literature to prisoners and ‘displayed a “fatherly concern” for their welfare’ to persuade them to be spies.<sup>328</sup> RSDRP Committee leaders were detained,<sup>329</sup> as were Sergey Tserdobaum and Nogin,<sup>330</sup> and Rudnev was exiled to Siberia for three years;<sup>331</sup> but the RSDRP had other organisations in the region.

Varentsova, the veteran Ivanovo SD intelligentka, was a member of Yaroslavl RSDRP Committee,<sup>332</sup> and the Russian CC.<sup>333</sup> When Yaroslavl, Ivanovo, Kostroma and Vladimir Committees formed Severnyy soyuz (The Northern Union),<sup>334</sup> she became its secretary,<sup>335</sup> and getting hold of *Iskra* was becoming easier.

### (viii) Nina

Stepan Shahumyan was born into an Armenian businessman’s family in Tbilisi in 1878. He attended a realschule, joined kruzki, and read radical Russian literature by 1894. By 1896 small groups of Armenian, Georgian and Russian SDs, including graduates of St. Petersburg, Moscow and Iuriev universities were active in Tbilisi. In 1901 Shahumyan entered Riga Polytechnical Institute, and joined the RSDRP, but the Institute expelled him and the police sent him back to Georgia, where he organised Armenian SD kruzki near Tbilisi,<sup>336</sup> and assassinated Tbilisi’s railway workshop director.<sup>337</sup>

In Gori the wealthy Armenian merchant Arshak Ter-Petrosian had been 35 when he married a 16-year-old girl, and she bore a son in 1882.<sup>338</sup> Semeno subsequently attended an Armenian primary school,<sup>339</sup> and then the Junior Seminary, but he was expelled several times. His father whipped him, and bribed officials to allow him back, but Semeno threatened to kill him. In 1898 his mother died.<sup>340</sup> He attended a zemstvo secondary school, but was expelled for insulting the Orthodox Church,<sup>341</sup> and his father sent him to an aunt in Tbilisi. He had various tutors,<sup>342</sup> including Jughashvili in 1899,<sup>343</sup> and they frequented criminal hangouts.<sup>344</sup> By 1901 19-year-old Ter-Petrosian had joined the RSDRP,<sup>345</sup> and a Russian SD intelligent arrived.

Kurnatovsky had met Ulyanov in Siberia,<sup>346</sup> and escaped to Tbilisi in 1901.<sup>347</sup> Kalinin, Alliluyev and Kurnatovsky got false passports, raised funds,<sup>348</sup> and formed an RSDRP Committee.<sup>349</sup> In spring the Okhrana learned that Ter-Petrosian was printing agitational May Day leaflets in Georgian, Armenian and Russian at Kheladze’s press for Kurnatovsky’s kruzok.<sup>350</sup> The police arrested 15 leading SDs,<sup>351</sup> including Kurnatovsky.<sup>352</sup> (Jibladze was to spend over two and a half years in prison, followed by four years in Yakutsk.<sup>353</sup>) The police raided Jughashvili’s room,<sup>354</sup> but he was in Gori.<sup>355</sup>

On May Day 2,000 people met in Tbilisi’s soldiers’ bazaar and others spilled out into the gardens opposite the viceroy’s palace.<sup>356</sup> They sang the *Varshavyanka* and shouted ‘Down with autocracy!’ and ‘Long live Freedom!’ Cossacks and police took casualties, but used sabres,<sup>357</sup> and wounded 14 workers.<sup>358</sup> Kurnatovsky had been released but he was arrested for making a revolutionary speech,<sup>359</sup> as were 40 others, and officials imposed martial law for four days. The Okhrana knew about Zhordania’s links to *kvali* in Tbilisi so they requested translations of articles and related publications, then arrested most of the editors, including Zhordania, as he was about to board a boat to Europe from Lanchkhuti. Tbilisi gendarmes questioned prisoners about workers’ kruzki and kassy, and their links to Batumi and Baki;<sup>360</sup> but it was not until July that *Iskra* noted that Tbilisi’s May Day was ‘of historical significance’ for the Caucasus and ‘the revolutionary movement’ had ‘commenced’.<sup>361</sup>

The RSDRP CC asked Eukidze to be a full-time organiser, so he and Ketskhoveli went underground,<sup>362</sup> and formed an RSDRP Committee in Baki,<sup>363</sup> where the former St. Petersburg intelligent Starkov was an engineer.<sup>364</sup> Tbilisi railway workshop managers sacked Alliluyev, so he also went to Baki,<sup>365</sup> and Lev Galperin, who was in his late twenties and had joined the RSDRP in 1898, arrived as an *Iskra* agent.<sup>366</sup> Leonid Krasin and Klasson sacked reactionary power station workers,<sup>367</sup> and employed Galperin, Alliluyev, Eukidze and Vasily Shelgunov, the deported St. Petersburg rabochy intelligent.<sup>368</sup> Krasin contacted Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Batumi RSDRP Committees,<sup>369</sup> and became an *Iskra* agent in Batumi.<sup>370</sup> *Iskra* arrived from Persia by horse,<sup>371</sup> and Knipovich, the Astrakhan agent, suggested to Ulyanov in Munich that they should print *Iskra* in Russia. He was ‘ready to snatch’ at the idea ‘with both hands’, and told Galperin that a shipment had got through via Vienna, and the Tabriz agent would receive ‘books’ from Berlin, so Galperin should ask him to find a Black Sea port used by French ships.<sup>372</sup> Ulyanov told Klasson that it would take ‘at least a year of full-scale work for the enterprise to begin paying for itself’, and he wanted ‘at least three to five thousand copies’ of *Iskra* a month, including some for Katerynoslav,<sup>373</sup> where Shelgunov may have already joined the Committee.<sup>374</sup>

A Baki *Iskra* group was formed by autumn,<sup>375</sup> and Ketskhoveri raised 100 rubles from 'various sources', 200 from his brother, 800 from liberals and 2,000 from the mayor, a veteran SR, then forged the governor's signature, got a notarised copy, secured a permit,<sup>376</sup> built a flatbed press,<sup>377</sup> and he and Ehlukidze ran 'Nina'.<sup>378</sup>

Briansk police had exiled Petr Smidovich for life in the late 1890s, but he escaped, joined the RSDRP and was an *Iskra* agent by 1901.<sup>379</sup> Krupskaya sent literature to him in Marseilles, and he got ships' cooks to wrap it in waterproof material and drop it in the sea near Batumi, where Krasin's 'Horses' fished it out.<sup>380</sup> Nina printed the Georgian language *brdzola* (*Struggle*), which was given away free. It noted that it 'must simultaneously play the part of an all-Party and of a regional, or local organ', since 'the majority of working-class readers cannot freely read the Russian paper'. It had 'space for every revolutionary movement', and would 'influence every one who is fighting for freedom', but 'keep free of all Bernsteinian illusions'.<sup>381</sup> It included letters from workers and poems dedicated to workers' struggles, called for political agitation and demonstrations, reported on local strikes and those in European Russia, and on the debates among Russian émigrés on 'economism', agitation, propaganda and the structure of the RSDRP. It criticised kruzhki leaders who discouraged workers from raising 'difficult questions' and prevented them from viewing 'conditions of life with a critical eye'.<sup>382</sup> Nina also reprinted *Iskra* No. 7 to No. 10 and *Iuzhny rabochy* No. 5 to No. 8,<sup>383</sup> one of whose contributors was the deported Georgian SD intelligent Tskhakaya.<sup>384</sup> In Munich Krupskaya made a cardboard matrix of the four-page *Iskra* No. 11, dated 20 November, from set type,<sup>385</sup> bound it in a science book and sent it to Baki. The type was too large for Nina, so the printers reset it,<sup>386</sup> and produced 10,000 copies.<sup>387</sup> The second *brdzola* supported a party 'armed with strong principles and indestructible conspiratorial techniques' that was ready to 'use the current street movement', and discussed the relationship between socialism and nationalism.<sup>388</sup>

Jughashvili reportedly spoke at a meeting in Tbilisi, hoping to lead the RSDRP Committee,<sup>389</sup> and the 25 SDs decided to agitate in factories, intensify work with apprentices, create an emergency fund, publish an underground paper and request intelligenty from Kharkiv. They elected a temporary Committee of Chkheidze, Tsabade and Jughashvili, and three workers. Tsabade and Jughashvili protested that if all the organisation elected a permanent Committee, it would be vulnerable to spies.<sup>390</sup> They 'carried out hostile and disruptive agitation against the leadership',<sup>391</sup> so they sent Jughashvili on a 'propaganda mission' to Batumi.<sup>392</sup> *Iskra* No. 12, which had four pages and was dated 6 December, considered *brdzola* of great importance,<sup>393</sup> and Ketskhoveri relocated Nina in Tbilisi's Moslem quarter.<sup>394</sup>

Alliluyev quarrelled with Krasin, and left, but found work at a Baki oil refinery, where Russian and Caucasian workers slept on 'dirty-plank-beds' in their barracks, without taking off their clothes, while Persian workers slept on cane mats on the earthen floor.<sup>395</sup> Chkheidze arrived to run a hospital, and persuaded Ramishvili to establish an RSDRP Committee, and by the end of the year there 11 workers' kruzhki. Much Baki oil was exported via Batumi,<sup>396</sup> then it went up the Volga.

### **(ix) Saratov Worker's Paper**

In the 1880s workers' kruzhki and SD intelligenty kruzhki had operated separately in the Volga port of Saratov, but by 1888 workers read SD literature.<sup>397</sup> In 1890 the province had around 5,700 artisans, and 775 factories with 13,369 workers. Saratov's 103 factories employed 2,362; but the largest flour mills, tobacco factories and the Nobel plant employed between 100 and 150. In 1895 the former St. Petersburg SD intelligent Vasily Golubev and the former SR intelligentka Maria Golubeva, arrived in Saratov and propagandised. The railway workshops expanded, and by 1896 workers read SD literature in the Golubevs' apartment,<sup>398</sup> and another comrade arrived.

Maria Essen was born into a Jewish family in 1872. She became a revolutionary in 1892, and by 1897 she was a full-time revolutionary in Kyiv,<sup>399</sup> but left for Saratov, joined the Golubevs and led a railway workshop kruzhek.<sup>400</sup>

By 1897 Saratov's population was 137,100, Simbirsk's 41,700, Tsaritsyn's 55,200, Samara's 90,000, Astrakhan's 112,800 and Kazan's 130,000.<sup>401</sup> The rural population of Saratov province was just over two million, and the average village was home to 422 peasants, or 40 percent higher than elsewhere in European Russia; but when the teacher Bogdanov gave Petrovsk peasants illegal literature he was arrested. Saratov SD students formed a kruzhek in 1898. More metal plants were built and workers with revolutionary experience arrived from St. Petersburg, Tula, Ivanovo and Moscow.<sup>402</sup> E.O. Zelensky arrived from Kharkiv, and he and A. Panfilov linked metallurgical factory kruzhki to form *Demokraticheskaya rabochaya gruppa* (The Democratic Workers' Group), but the wood plant and railway workshop kruzhki remained independent.<sup>403</sup> In January 1899 Zelensky was arrested, but survivors contacted the SD students and issued a May Day leaflet. In summer workers checked some articles in two issues of the students' *Saratovskiy rabochy* (*Saratov Worker*); but spies betrayed the workers and

they were arrested. Surviving workers and students discussed the SD and SR programmes. Student demonstrators were arrested, but there were industrial disturbances in Tsaritsyn and elsewhere in the province.

Stepan Balmashev had been an SD, but reverted to being an SR, while Golubeva played a key role in the RSDRP; and workers and intelligenty attended a 'salon' run by Ekaterina Diakova, who had formerly supported Narodnaya volya, and was known as 'Auntie Marseillaise', but had become an SD. The SR A.V. Panov had arrived in 1900. He owned the largest collection of SD literature in the city, and let SR, SD and unaligned workers use it.<sup>404</sup>

The St. Petersburg SD rabochoy intelligent Heinrich Fischer had been deported to Archangelsk province for three years in 1896.<sup>405</sup> He led basic SD kruzhki and attended a higher level kruzhok,<sup>406</sup> and by 1898 one member regarded him as a 'man of steel'.<sup>407</sup> He disliked intelligenty, but on his release in 1899 he acknowledged that workers needed 'deserters from the bourgeoisie' in 'the same way that a fish needs water'.<sup>408</sup> He married the trainee midwife Lyubov Zhidova, a tailor's teenage daughter born near Saratov, who was an SD. When Fischer was freed he was barred from large cities and university towns for two years, and by 1900 the couple lived in Saratov. Fischer worked as a turner at the steel plant, and later moved to the Gantke nail and wire plant.<sup>409</sup>

Early that year the SD rabochoy intelligent Semen Kanatchikov was in a solitary cell in a St. Petersburg prison, but received food parcels every week and a 'receipt' for three or five rubles from Krasny Krest once a month. He read old radical literature, Lassalle and *Mir bozhy*, and found a piece of paper with the tapping alphabet. He contacted the SD intelligent Ilya Shendrikov next door, who told him that the police had arrested his Nevsky district kruzhok. In spring Kanatchikov faced interrogation, but refused to betray comrades, and found a small book by Gorky, and *Pesnya sokola* 'summoned' him to 'battle and great deeds'. His aunt told him that some Nevsky shipyard workmates had escaped arrest, and after his release, when he went to pick up his tools, they gave him a ten-ruble note. In summer a policeman escorted Kanatchikov to his home village of Gusevo, but there was little work for anyone deemed politically unreliable. In autumn he failed the army medical examination, but met a student in a Moscow military hospital who 'never believed that worker-intelligentsia types existed'. Back in Gusevo Kanatchikov read all his books, and his brother and other young men had left to work for wages. Late that year he argued with an Orthodox priest, and gendarmes escorted him to Saratov.

Kanatchikov found that Saratov was 'a place of exile for political criminals and unreliable elements of every kind', and workers 'at the "beginners" stage of untrustworthiness'. He lived with Langeld, his deported St. Petersburg workmate, and heard that Diakova's 'salon' attracted 'prominent *Iskra*-ites', while her husband, the statistician Nikolai Solovev, who had also been in prison, was politically active in Samara. In Saratov Elena Averkievaya's 'salon' attracted SRs, whose 'higher leadership' kept apart from SDs; but there were 'no clear political boundaries' between 'rank and file' workers who attended both 'salons'. Kolpino police had deported the fitter Mikhail Ivanov to Saratov, and he told Kanatchikov about vacancies at the steel foundry. Fischer upbraided Kanatchikov for consorting with 'light-minded triflers', but had contacts at the foundry and got him a job at 1.5 rubles a day. There were ten 'sluggish, conservative middle-aged men with families' in the pattern shop, but Kanatchikov believed there was 'no such thing as a worker who is satisfied with absolutely everything. What is needed is to locate his weak spot. Then beat on it, keep pecking away at that one point – and he will give in'. He went from 'meaningless exchanges' to 'serious themes', and then introduced legal and illegal literature.<sup>410</sup>

By 1901 over 15,000 of the 46,000 factory workers in Saratov province were in Saratov, where the Riazan-Urals railway employed 3,190, Volzhsky steel foundry 1,000, iron foundries 675, machine-building plants 600, print shops 586, Bari shipyard 400 and the Gantke plant 120. Flour mills, tobacco plants and others employed 7,789 between them, but layoffs began.<sup>411</sup>

The former SR Baramzin had become an SD in exile in Siberia, and arrived in Saratov as an *Iskra* agent early in 1901.<sup>412</sup> Baramzin, P. Lebedev, Kanatchikov, students and others formed an RSDRP Committee, and Kanatchikov forged 'ties' with workers and printed May Day leaflets. They were illegible,<sup>413</sup> but his workmate, Rudolph Kubicheck, a Czech nationalist, 'became a highly energetic and resourceful disseminator', and they 'spread large quantities' of leaflets; but Kanatchikov was sacked. SD intelligenty celebrated May Day separately, and criticised workers 'contaminated by economism', but there were strikes at the railway workshops and the Bering plant.<sup>414</sup>

After seven years of prison and exile in eastern Siberia, the former St. Petersburg SD rabotnitsa intelligentka Natalia Grigoreva had settled in Saratov.<sup>415</sup> She favoured the SR intelligenty,<sup>416</sup> and terror, but Kanatchikov recruited her to a kruzhok that included Fischer, Ivanov and two intelligenty they 'honoured with our trust', who met in the home of Semën and Katya Voronin, who had been Ivanovo weavers before they were deported. Ivanov subsequently became an SR and left the SD kruzhok, but the others let Grigoreva stay because of her links to intelligenty and money. All except Kanatchikov had 'a rather strong anti-intelligentsia orientation', and 'a conciliatory position' on the relation between political and economic struggle, but 'would sometimes lean in the direction' of *Rabochee delo*, because of the intelligenty. "'First let's overthrow the autocracy', they would say, 'let's win our political freedom, and then we can see to your petty, material interests'." Two kruzhok members

got Kanatchikov a job at the Bering plant, but most of the 400 workers were 'rather "gray," worn down, and passive'. He tried to 'cultivate and recruit the most advanced and active', and led 'systematic classes' based on his experience. He used Dikshtein's pamphlet, and an intelligent explained political economy; but they saw *Iskra* 'rather late' and greeted it 'rather coolly', because of its 'excessive tendency to favour purely political struggle',<sup>417</sup> and Fischer thought it 'unfit for broad dissemination'.<sup>418</sup>

The former St. Petersburg worker and activist Semën Sheplev worked at the Chirikhinaya plant, and he and Ponty Denisov, who was 'close to workers at a flour mill', used leaflets to make contacts. The workers' kruzhki and the 'salons' considered 'broader agitation', and Kanatchikov persuaded a man with a technical education to help him to hectograph a paper. The man's dog ate the gelatine, but Kanatchikov bought more, and they made 900 copies of *Rabochaya gazeta* (*The Workers' Paper*), which included Kanatchikov's article about the deteriorating conditions at the Bering plant. SR intelligenty criticised the paper's failure to support terror, and SD intelligenty called it 'economist', yet workers' kruzhki 'read it inside and out, praised it for the simplicity and accessibility of its language and the skill with which it revealed' their 'needs and aspirations'. The hectographer's new wife barred him from 'conspiratorial activities', but Kanatchikov decided to 'devote more attention to politics'. The Bering kruzhok was beginning to 'influence the larger mass', and managers helped by 'squeezing the juices out of the workers even more', and a turner 'began to move "leftward"', distributed literature and introduced Kanatchikov to other 'conscious' workers. The second *Rabochaya gazeta* included his article about child labour and managers' 'fraudulent devices', and demanded higher pay. In summer Bering managers announced new rules, and the kruzhok drafted a leaflet. The intelligenty did not print it, owing to their 'slovenliness', but Kanatchikov and one intelligent hand-wrote 200 leaflets, which called for a strike. Bering workers read it openly and went on strike, but the provincial governor threatened them with the sack. The police soon freed most 'instigators', but put Kanatchikov, the 'principal inciter', in solitary; yet Faina Rykova pretended to be his fiancée and brought 'very good dinners', money and 'interesting and useful books', including Ulyanov's pseudonymous analysis of Russian capitalism. The police also broke a strike at Makarov engineering works, led by Sheplev, but made no arrests.

Kanatchikov was freed after a few weeks, but the kruzhok members could not find jobs, so they beat up policemen and conducted 'widespread agitation and propaganda' at plants where their 'links' were weak.<sup>419</sup> They considered themselves 'worker-thinkers', and insisted on equality with intelligenty.<sup>420</sup> Ulyanov's book had convinced Fischer that the proletariat would 'play a large part in the workers' movement of the whole world';<sup>421</sup> but the authorities regarded him as German, and told him that if he did not leave Russia in a month he would be marched to the border in irons and handed over. He faced conscription in Germany, and perhaps imprisonment for not having turned up on time; but he had a contact in England. Alexandr Khozetsky, a metalworker from Kozelsk in Archangelsk province, had been a leader of Moscow Soyuz in the mid-1890s. He had been freed from exile before Fischer, visited Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and contacted socialists, and in 1901 Fischer contacted him. He and his pregnant wife travelled to Warszawa, waited for Khozetsky to arrive, then all three went by train to Hamburg, sailed to Grimsby and reached Tyneside that summer.<sup>422</sup>

Okhrana spies from Odesa visited Vilnius, Tbilisi, Kharkiv, Kazan, Katerynoslav, Kyiv and Saratov,<sup>423</sup> where attempts to form a flour mill SD kruzhok failed, but SD workers' kruzhki formed a workers' committee, broke from the intelligenty, published leaflets and criticised *Iskra* for its polemics against *Rabochaya mysl*. Kanatchikov borrowed 100 rubles from the SR Zora Sazonov and his kruzhok established a furniture-making cooperative called *Khozian* (*Master*). They made ingenious pieces to hide illegal documents,<sup>424</sup> and their 'conspiratorial' tables 'sold like hot cakes'. They read Plekhanov on the role of the individual in history, but saw 'no essential difference' between poor peasants and proletarians. Two issues of *Rabochaya gazeta* reached the *Iskra* editors, who were interested that 'Everything, down to the very last line, is written by workers', so the kruzhok contacted them via Golubeva. They responded in a 'serious, calm and very convincing' manner, and another comrade arrived.

Alexandr Efimov was born in St. Petersburg in 1869. He served an apprenticeship as a woodcarver, but in 1899 gendarmes questioned him about an 'antigovernment workers' kruzhok' and 'criminal acts of propaganda among workers'. Late in 1900 they deported him to Nizhni-Novgorod for three years, under surveillance, but in summer 1901 the police sent him to Saratov. Kanatchikov had met him in St. Petersburg when he delivered illegal literature, and Efimov became one of the most active kruzhok members, since he could 'convert a corpse with his propaganda'. By late that year he and Kanatchikov held the kruzhok contact list and led factory kruzhki. Workers heard lectures by the intelligenty Golubev and Petr Maslov, but most were 'long, boring and hard to follow', so workers discussed 'every conceivable question' with young SDs, and Diakova's contacts in St. Petersburg, Moscow and south Russia sent *Iskra* and *Zarya*. 'All the great whales' of the SRs were in Saratov, and their relations with SDs were 'completely neighbourly'. The RSDRP Committee recruited Efimov and Kanatchikov, who recalled that 'if they trusted you sufficiently', 'you simply announced your adherence to the Party and agreed to take on a specific line of Party work'; and when the pamphlet about how to behave at interrogations arrived from Geneva,

Kanatchikov learned it 'virtually by heart'.<sup>425</sup> The RSDRP workers produced the seventh *Rabochaya gazeta*, and cooperated with SRs,<sup>426</sup> and a national SR organisation which took SD ideas on board was taking shape.

#### **(x) The All-Russian Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries**

Early in 1900 Viktor Chernov had attended Lavrov's funeral in Paris, and he and other leading SRs formed *Agrarnaya sotsialisticheskaya liga* (The Agrarian Socialist League). They believed that land was the 'common possession of all who earn their livelihood by agricultural labour', and wanted to 'contribute to the evolution of Russian life' towards 'international socialism' through cooperation and avoid 'capitalist development'. They believed that the 'working peasantry' was 'more closely approximating to the proletariat', and aimed to publish 'popular revolutionary literature' for peasants and 'urban factory and craft workers, especially those who have links with the countryside', in order to familiarise them with the 'socialist propaganda employed in the west among the working peasant masses', and their forms of 'organisation for the agrarian class struggle'.

Chernov went to Saratov, where almost 100 schoolchildren and students ran SR workshops in sheds and attics. Young men operated hectographs and women checked their work and copied pamphlets by hand, put them in the covers of exercise books or official publications, and 'developed' peasants and workers distributed them.<sup>427</sup>

The veteran Breshkovskaya recalled that 'circles existed all through Russia. Scores of secret printing offices' there and in Switzerland 'were working day and night, pouring out revolutionary literature', and 'underground mails' carried it 'from one end of the country to the other'. After women teachers' attended a conference in the Caucasus, a colonel ordered them to disperse. When two or three protested he 'was so enraged' that he told his men, 'These women are yours.' The colonel was assassinated.<sup>428</sup> The Liga was overwhelmed with requests for literature, but a spy was in charge of smuggling, and 31 leaders were arrested in spring, and, late that year,<sup>429</sup> Gershuni and Breshkovskaya were detained.<sup>430</sup> A southern SR manifesto argued that terror was a tactic, not a substitute for a movement, but while Marx's works were useful there would be no bourgeois revolution.<sup>431</sup>

Early in 1901 Gershuni was sent to a Moscow prison. Zubatov kept him there a fortnight, then let him go to Minsk.<sup>432</sup> In summer a network of teachers' mutual aid societies joined the SR organisation. Breshkovskaya had been released and she and Gershuni were active in Perm, while Chernov, Sletova and her husband worked in Tambov province, where he read his programme about work with peasants to teachers.<sup>433</sup> Saratov SRs mimeographed 400-500 copies of *Krestyanske delo* (*The Peasant Cause*), which argued for a peasant union to overthrow the autocracy and socialise the land. They sent hectographers to other towns, but demand exceeded supply,<sup>434</sup> since hectographing took too long, and the police had confiscated their Penza press.<sup>435</sup> There was a spy.

Yevno Azev was born into a poor Jewish tailor's family in Hrodna province in 1869. In 1873 they moved to Rostov-na-Donu, where the father ran a small shop. Evno attended the technical high school, and in the late 1880s he joined pupils who read SR and SD literature, including Marx. He graduated in 1890, earned a meagre living as a tutor, clerk and travelling salesman, and after some acquaintances were arrested in 1892, he got butter from a merchant, sold it and used the 800 rubles to go to Karlsruhe. He enrolled at the Polytechnic, shared a flat with a man from Rostov-na-Donu, and joined an SD circle, but suffered from cold and hunger. In 1893 he wrote to Rostov-na-Donu gendarmes, anonymously, naming socialists and offering his services, but they identified him from his handwriting and their list of Russian students in Karlsruhe. When he wrote again under his own name the Interior Ministry employed him as an agent,<sup>436</sup> for 50 rubles a month,<sup>437</sup> plus a New Year bonus. In 1894 he joined émigré SRs in Bern and married a Russian student in 1895. He went to study in Darmstadt in 1896, and after he graduated he worked in Frankfurt and Berlin. His police salary doubled to 100 rubles a month, plus an Easter bonus. In 1899 he returned to Moscow and received a letter of introduction to the SR leader Andrey Argunov. In 1900 Azev worked for the General Electrical Company in Moscow for 175 rubles a month, and late in 1901 Argunov gave him passwords, names, addresses and credentials to represent the northern SRs. Azev contacted Zubatov, and days after Azev left,<sup>438</sup> Argunov was arrested,<sup>439</sup> along with other SRs, and the police seized the proofs of the first issue of *Revolutsionnaya rossya* (*Revolutionary Russia*).<sup>440</sup>

The northern survivors and groups in the south, Saratov and elsewhere formed *Vserossyskaya partya sotsialisticheskikh revolyutsionerov* (The All-Russian Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries),<sup>441</sup> and around 15 percent of the members were women.<sup>442</sup> The VPSR programme acknowledged the social differentiation in the countryside and the need for 'revolutionary propaganda of the ideas of political freedom, the nationalisation of the land, and the organisation of all social life on socialist principles' among the rural proletariat and 'land-short' peasantry. The VPSR would cooperate with rural intelligenty and peasant groups to conduct revolutionary propaganda, but 'concentrate our existing forces in towns – mainly because of the higher cultural level of the urban working population' and the 'greater productivity of work' among this 'more advanced sector'.<sup>443</sup> The VPSR aimed to



establish 'collective forms of control over the economy', including 'factory constitutionalism', a minimum programme of civil liberty, an eight-hour day in factories and agriculture and a constituent assembly.<sup>444</sup> Chernov and Gots would edit *Revolyutsionnaya rossya* in Switzerland, and Breshkovskaya would be the provisional VPSR leader in Saratov.<sup>445</sup>

The VPSR established Boyevsvaya Organizatzia (The Battle Organisation),<sup>446</sup> led by Gershuni. Only he knew its members and he was the sole link to the CC, which would draw up a list of potential targets.<sup>447</sup> The organisation included the anarchist Fyodor Nazarov, the bomb-maker Dora Brilliant, Boris Moiseenko, a 'heretic on many issues', the Kantian Gots, the Christian Maria Benevskaya, Ivan Kaliaev, who wrote sacred poetry, and Egor Sazonev, whose political beliefs 'merged' with religion.<sup>448</sup> They would use terror 'as a means of propaganda and agitation' to undermine the government,<sup>449</sup> at a time when the RSDRP organisation was in danger of fracturing, and *Iskra* had problems in printing and distributing its literature.

By summer 1901 Tarshis had become 'closely connected' to the *Iskra* network in Vilnius, and in autumn members of the Bershter Bund brought 48 kilos of literature from the border. A Kaunas customs officer had found *Iskra* No. 7 and pamphlets, but Tarshis's last five-ruble piece and a translation of Marx's *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich* abated his curiosity. The police freed Sergey Tsederbaum, and Tarshis returned to Kaunas. A shipment arrived at Yurburg and Tarshis went to pick it up and pay the peasant transporters, but when he returned the police had arrested Tsederbaum. Tarshis had to get the literature to Gusarov in Vilnius, so he gave it to the foundry worker Solomon Rogut and bristle worker Saul Katezenellenbogen, and sent them to Bundists in Vilkomir. Their cab horse's bell caught the attention of the police chief, and Katezenellenbogen walked off with a parcel, but the police arrested the driver and found the rest. They beat Rogut 'until he lost consciousness, then dragged him naked' to the police station, 'demanding the names of his comrades and where he got the literature', and then sent him to Kaunas. Weeks later Tarshis heard that Rogut was dead and went to Vilnius. A PPS comrade brought chemicals and hectograph ink from Kaunas, and Tarshis and Bundists drafted a leaflet which 'explained the nature of absolutism, the bondage of the people, the poverty of the peasants', the 'miserable lot of the working-class', the 'causes of Comrade Rogut's arrest' and police brutality. They distributed it to workers' homes and pasted them on walls near synagogues on Friday night. Jewish officials dispersed the crowds who read them, and tried to tear them down, but they were the 'talk of the town'. (Seven years later Tarshis was in what had been Rogut's cell, and the warden told him that the gendarmes had left him 'in such a condition that he quite probably hanged himself'.)<sup>450</sup>

### (xi) The League of Southern Committees

In October 1901 three émigrés from Borba, eight from *Sotsial-Demokrat*, including the three members of the GOT, and six from *Iskra* had met in Zurich, but an attempt at unification failed.<sup>451</sup> In Stuttgart Dietz printed *Zarya* No. 2,<sup>452</sup> early in December. It included an article signed by 'N. Lenin',<sup>453</sup> and Zasluch stressed the importance of intelligenty.

For the workers to answer their own questions without the whispers of the 'bacillus' of the intelligentsia; for their Weltanschauung [world view] to be formed exclusively under the influence of their factory work and material existence ... is just as impossible to achieve as it would be to insulate the factory proletariat from the *raznochintsy* ... who represent in their social position and education the natural ties which exist between the lowest strata of the urban poor and the world of the intelligentsia and the book.<sup>454</sup>

Dietz helped to get *Zarya* to Russia,<sup>455</sup> and Joseph Basovsky sent copies via Prague, Lviv, Teofipol and Kyiv.<sup>456</sup>

The Bund's Osip Kogan called an RSDRP conference in Katerynoslav.<sup>457</sup> Ten delegates arrived,<sup>458</sup> from Kharkiv, Chişinău and Kyiv Committees, and unaligned Odesa SDs.<sup>459</sup> They established Liga yuzhnykh komitetov (The League of Southern Committees),<sup>460</sup> elected a CC,<sup>461</sup> adopted *luzhny rabochy*,<sup>462</sup> and aimed for a new Congress.<sup>463</sup>

Sendor Zeldov went to St. Petersburg to work on *Rabochaya mysl*,<sup>464</sup> which moderated its 'economism' and no longer claimed to be the 'organ of the St. Petersburg workers',<sup>465</sup> but Odesa RSDRP Committee took few copies of *Iskra* and prevented an agent from contacting its periphery. From Munich Ulyanov told *Iskra* agents that their 'main task' was to 'completely' 'penetrate' and 'blow up' the southern Liga. Soon after Odesa police arrested three leaders and several *Iskra* agents, and the *luzhny rabochy* editors sought a compromise.<sup>466</sup>

Kyiv police had closed the RSDRP press, but Lev Goldman printed the *Vypered* in Chişinău.<sup>467</sup> Ulyanov told Inna Smidovich in Kyiv that it was 'simply unbelievable' that people who had collected thousands of rubles for *Iskra* 'should go over secretly to another undertaking and that at a critical moment'. The 'entire North and Centre (and

the South, too!) have flooded us with complaints at the absence of *Iskra*, since 'shipments have come to a stand'. Ulyanov sent a 'special representative' to Russia to try to postpone the Second Congress.<sup>468</sup> Kyiv RSDRP Committee now supported *Iskra*,<sup>469</sup> but protested at an 'increasing tendency to dispatch comrades with special instructions, commissions, and organisational tasks, which conflicted with the activities of *Iskra* agents', while Goldman thought it 'harmful' that émigré intelligently ran *Iskra* and believed that the 'central core for all technical matters' should be in Kyiv.<sup>470</sup> He reprinted *Iskra No. 10*,<sup>471</sup> which had four pages and was dated November, <sup>472</sup> but complained: 'We have no men'. Ulyanov told him to 'find people who are suitable and have earned your complete confidence, make up a management committee' and 'we shall of course write to everyone we can to have them abide by the committee's instructions'. *Iskra's* 'whole future depends on whether it will be able to overcome local rule-of-thumb work and district separateness' and become an 'all-Russia paper'.<sup>473</sup>

Late in December, in Katerynoslav, in spite of the governor's threats, an RSDRP leaflet called for a demonstration. Some demonstrators wore red jackets and ties, waved a red banner, sang the *Marseillaise* and shouted 'Long live political freedom!' Bystanders cheered, but Cossacks waded in with whips and sabres,<sup>474</sup> and 104 workers and 17 students were arrested. Next day demonstrators carried red flags and shouted 'Freedom for ever!' and 'Down with absolutism!' Police and Cossacks injured hundreds and deported over 250.<sup>475</sup> *Iskra* desperately needed reliable agents and money.

## (xii) Combining legal work with conspiratorial activity

In 1897 the third edition of Gorky's stories had included a third volume,<sup>476</sup> and sales eventually reached 100,000 in a population that was 15 percent literate.<sup>477</sup> Late in 1898 Posse invited him to write for *Zhizn (Life)*, but early in 1899, when Gorky visited St. Petersburg, Struve and other intelligently looked at him as if he 'were an alligator or a person with two heads'. He thought they were bourgeois and 'all their parties' were of 'little importance';<sup>478</sup> and though he appeared on the staff photograph of *Nachalo*, he did not contribute.<sup>479</sup> He invited Chekhov to write for *Zhizn*, and he acknowledged that it aimed to begin the 'merging of Populism and Marxism into a single harmonious whole', but he did not have 'a favourable impression of Petersburg journalists': 'all these political parties of theirs have little to do with real life. They are concerned more with the personal vanity of some not very talented people than they are with souls which have been inflamed by the desire to build a new, free life for all on the debris of the old, cramped one.' In spring Gorky spent a night in Moscow and told Chekhov about 'how vile it is to live under surveillance'. 'A policeman comes to visit you; this sordid duty embarrasses him as well.' 'He has the right to ask you whatever he pleases: "Who visited you? Where was he from, where was he going, and why? But he doesn't ask anything, because he is convinced that you will tell him lies, while you find this conviction of his offensive and insulting."' By summer Gorky's works had been translated into 'several foreign languages' and he earned about 4,000 rubles a year, but was in debt. 'I cannot bear the "educated" and "cultured" people. I prefer to keep the company of my brothers, the common people, the workmen, draymen, down-and-outs, etc. these are simple, sincere, good people, and I love to be in their midst'. Gorky told the painter Ilya Repin.

I do not know anything better, more complex, more interesting than man. He is everything. He even created God. I am convinced that he is capable of perfecting himself endlessly. I believe in the infinity of life, and I understand life as a movement towards perfection of the spirit. But I also see that man's development has been going wrong for some time – our minds have been developing whilst our feelings have been ignored.

... I do not belong anywhere as yet, not to any of our 'parties'. I am glad of that, for it is freedom.<sup>480</sup>

Gorky also met Konstantin Alexeev. He had been born into a wealthy Moscow family who owned factories that made gold and silver braid for the military in 1863. In 1884 he adopted the pseudonym of 'Stanislavsky', to hide his theatrical activity from his parents,<sup>481</sup> and in 1890 the realistic acting, costumes and sets of the Meiningen Players from Germany impressed him. In 1898 he co-founded the 'rational, moral and generally accessible' Moscow Arts Theatre, which put on plays by Tolstoy and Chekhov,<sup>482</sup> and attracted a famous actress.

Maria Yurkovskaya, the daughter of the director of the Alexandrinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, was born in 1868.<sup>483</sup> She studied at Moscow Conservatory,<sup>484</sup> graduated in 1886 and went to Kazan. Andrey Zhelyabuzhsky, the director of the Kursk and Nizhny-Novgorod railway, was involved in theatre, and was twice her age, but they married, and she adopted the stage name of 'Maria Andreeva'. When the couple moved to Moscow in 1894 she was a great success, but secretly joined the RSDRP. In 1900 she met Gorky in Sevastopol,<sup>485</sup> where he also befriended the industrialist Savva Morozov, who supported Moscow Arts Theatre,<sup>486</sup> and a St. Petersburg publisher.

Konstantin Piatnitsky was born into a Novgorod province priest's family in 1864. After graduating from Kazan University he moved to St. Petersburg, joined the Committee for Literacy in 1892 and wrote for *Mir bozhy* in 1893. In 1898 he founded *Znanie (Knowledge)*, and in 1900 it published for the RSDRP Committee, and Piatnitsky invited Gorky to join the company.<sup>487</sup>

Early 1901 Gorky believed that the conscription of the Kyiv students was 'a vile crime against the freedom of the individual' by 'scoundrels who have gorged themselves on power', and early in March he wrote to his wife.

It's now 5 o'clock in the evening. I've just come from a demonstration at the Kazan cathedral. It started at 12 p.m. and is continuing even now. The crowd was huge, about twelve or fifteen thousand. Two to three thousand were demonstrators, the rest were sympathetic onlookers. I can't tell you anything about it at present, I'm too upset. People were beaten with whips in the cathedral and on the church porch; they say that two were killed. A great number of people were beaten up both inside and outside the cathedral.<sup>488</sup>

Gorky and 42 other prominent writers protested, and he accused the military governor and police of 'planning a trap' and beginning the violence. He was briefly detained in April. He later found *Iskra* interesting, and attended secret meetings at *Zhizn's* offices, and the police noted he was 'combining legal work with conspiratorial activity'.<sup>489</sup> The sales of *Zhizn* had reportedly risen from 4,000 to 15,000, largely because of his contributions, and the interior minister noted that it discussed the 'intellectual basis for Social Democracy',<sup>490</sup> so he closed it.<sup>491</sup> Most staff were briefly detained, but Posse went to Helsinki to arrange to print *Zhizn* and smuggle copies into Russia.<sup>492</sup>

By early summer Gorky's police file was huge,<sup>493</sup> and Nizhni-Novgorod's black office opened his letters and discovered his 2,000-ruble donation to the students who had bought a mimeograph, hidden it in Sormovo and printed agitational leaflets.<sup>494</sup> Gorky was released,<sup>495</sup> but the policemen in his kitchen and hall had orders not to let him leave unaccompanied.<sup>496</sup> Censors banned his *Pesnya o burevestnike (Song of the Stormy Petrel)*, which was nominally about a bird that welcomed turbulence, but appealed to radicals and revolutionaries. Thousands of handwritten, typed and hectographed copies were in circulation,<sup>497</sup> and it reportedly 'had no less an influence on the masses than the proclamations of the various revolutionary committees', so they distributed it.<sup>498</sup>

In autumn Gorky was sentenced to deportation to Arzamas, a very unhealthy town; but he got a doctor's note and was allowed to go to the Crimea, though not to Yalta.<sup>499</sup> Late that year, as his train left Nizhni-Novgorod,<sup>500</sup> a mass of students gave him a send-off and scattered revolutionary leaflets. The police had his carriage put in a siding in Podolsk, then attached to a train to Crimea, and when Kharkiv students turned out to support him, the police beat them.<sup>501</sup>

### (xiii) Extraordinary protection

In 1901 the empire's population was reportedly 134.8 million.<sup>502</sup> In 40 years peasants in European Russia had acquired over 17.4 million hectares, and in 30 years the rural population had risen from 58 to 86 million.<sup>503</sup> Peasants paid 8.7 rubles, or around 18 percent of their annual income, in rent and taxes,<sup>504</sup> and direct tax took about six percent.<sup>505</sup> Many households in the central provinces held one hectare, and 1.2 million landless peasants formed a fifth of Poland's rural population.<sup>506</sup> The harvest was a disaster,<sup>507</sup> and the issue of internal passports to poor peasants in central, Riazan, Tula and Tambov provinces reached new heights.

During 1901 the government's revenue income was 1.83 billion rubles, and it invested 203 millions in the railway network, which had grown from 30,600 to 56,500km since 1890.<sup>508</sup> On the Trans-Siberian line three trains a day could pass in each direction at low speed,<sup>509</sup> and though the line from Moscow to Vladivostok was almost completed at a cost of 844 million rubles, the journey took 13 days. The government owned 68 percent of the entire network, which carried 69 percent of freight and almost 72 percent of passengers, and the line from Tashkent brought raw cotton to Moscow.<sup>510</sup> Leading locomotive manufacturers had established the Proddparovoz cartel,<sup>511</sup> and the government approved the Prodogol coal cartel, which raised prices.<sup>512</sup> The government had underwritten over five billion francs invested by French speculators, and approved the Prodamenta metallurgical cartel, a French initiative, whose 30 plants produced 74 percent of railway tyres and axles and 82 percent of sheet and ordinary iron.<sup>513</sup> Railways took half of domestic steel production.<sup>514</sup>

In 1895-1900 investment in the southern iron industry had averaged around 20 million rubles, but it was 5.5 million in 1901.<sup>515</sup> That year Russian workers produced 16.5 million tonnes of coal, 2.9 million tonnes of iron, 2.2 million tonnes of steel,<sup>516</sup> and over 11.5 million tonnes of oil,<sup>517</sup> or two million more than the USA.<sup>518</sup> In the 15 months to autumn, the value of shares in 98 mainly mining and metallurgical firms had fallen by 59 percent,<sup>519</sup> and textile production, especially cotton, stagnated, while industrialists owed the State Bank 33 million rubles in

loans and 560 million in short-term credit.<sup>520</sup> Large industrial enterprises went bust, dragging down St. Petersburg banks.<sup>521</sup>

Since 1884 the number of railway workers had risen from 215,000 to 554,000, and since 1887 the number of manufacturing workers and miners from 1.3 million to over two million.<sup>522</sup> There were over 1.7 million inspected workers; and while 15,000 factories with less than 100 employed 414,000, 2,288 with 101-500 employed 492,000, 403 with 501-1,000 employed 269,000 and 243 with over 1,000 employed 525,600,<sup>523</sup> but 13,000 of the 89,000 Donbass miners were unemployed,<sup>524</sup> Caucasian oil companies had sacked around 10,000, and Russian and Polish workers had lost 2.3 million rubles in fines.<sup>525</sup>

Officially 164 strikes had involved 32,000 inspected workers for a total of 110,000 days, and around 37 percent ended in victory for the workers, eight percent in compromise and 55 percent in defeat.<sup>526</sup> Most strikes were for shorter hours, more pay or better conditions, but 17 were for other reasons.<sup>527</sup> An inspector noted that strikers were 'almost exclusively' from 'machine industries', who 'received better wages' than most, but were 'denied any possibility of association in unions' and were 'a fertile soil for outside influences'.<sup>528</sup> Reportedly at least 911 strikes and protests had involved 176,000 workers,<sup>529</sup> and troops had suppressed 271.<sup>530</sup>

That year 63 percent of army conscripts in 48 provinces and 40 percent of people in Polish provinces were literate,<sup>531</sup> and the rifle-manufacturing programme had been completed at a cost of 270 million rubles.<sup>532</sup> Jews formed 5.73 percent of the armed forces, compared to 4.13 percent of Russians,<sup>533</sup> yet the interior minister saw Jews as 'true enemies of the government'.<sup>534</sup>

The government had renewed 'extraordinary protection' in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kharkiv, Katerynoslav, Kyiv, Podolia and Volhynia provinces, the cities of St. Petersburg and Odesa, and dozens of towns and districts, so 24 of the 50 European provinces and one Siberian province were under virtual martial law. Officially the Justice Ministry prosecuted 1,784 political suspects, while gendarmes dealt with 1,238 and a court martial with one. Between them they exiled 38 to Siberia, deported 51 elsewhere and expelled nine foreigners, while the police had 486 under surveillance, 141 in detention and 203 in prison,<sup>535</sup> though 13 SD and SR women in Moscow had overpowered their guards and escaped.<sup>536</sup> The government had taken powers to control public meetings and hold landlords accountable for tenants at night. Suspects could be detained for three months without trial and secret courts martial were permitted.<sup>537</sup> At least 3,800 suspects were under surveillance and over 4,100 had been deported or exiled, including 180 sentenced to *katorga*.<sup>538</sup> In 1900 and 1901 60,000 people had been deported without trial,<sup>539</sup> and the regular police's annual budget for 1902 would be 23 million rubles.<sup>540</sup>

The government had released the Kyiv student conscripts in summer, and most of the St. Petersburg conscripts returned to their studies in autumn. Late that year the government issued 'Temporary Rules' which allowed higher education students to have libraries, dining halls, music and drama clubs, credit unions and discussion groups, if a professor supervised them.<sup>541</sup> There were 962 women on the St. Petersburg Bestuzhev courses, while the University ignored the three percent Jewish quota.<sup>542</sup> *Realschulen* now had a seventh year and graduates could enter all higher educational institutes and universities.<sup>543</sup>

During 1901 *Rabochee delo* noted that the workers' movement had 'grown considerably in both ideological and practical terms' and, 'merging with social democracy, moves on to an ever-broader path of revolutionary class struggle'. Economic struggle 'made the demand for political rights increasingly tangible', so May Day demonstrations were vital. If the state used violence, 'individual acts of terrorism' would 'develop the political consciousness of the proletariat', but 'systematic offensive terror' was 'inappropriate'. For the 'unification of social democracy we must underline, develop and fight for the broad democratic principle', and 'every enemy of autocracy is a temporary ally of the working class in its struggle for emancipation', but there were 'anti-democratic tendencies' in the RSDRP, and especially in the *Iskra* organisation.<sup>544</sup> That year almost a tonne of *Rabochee delo* literature was smuggled into Russia,<sup>545</sup> and at least 160 illegal groups in 52 provinces held 51 demonstrations and issued 459 leaflets.<sup>546</sup> According to Luly Tsederbaum there were still only nine main *Iskra* agents in Russia at the end of the year,<sup>547</sup> and the transport network was struggling.

Paul Egede-Nissen was born in Norway in 1835. He qualified as a doctor in 1858 and joined the Italian revolutionary nationalist army in 1859. In 1863 he married a 37-year-old widow, and by 1867 he was an army major in Levanger. Adam was born in 1868 in nearby Frol. He later attended Trondheim Cathedral School and became a post office assistant in Nordland County in 1887,<sup>548</sup> the year that the *Norvegisk arbeidsfest* (The Norwegian Labour Party) adopted an SD programme.<sup>549</sup> Egede-Nissen received his master's degree in 1888, became a mail clerk in 1890, transferred to Bergen in 1897, and later became the postmaster in Vardø, near the Russian border. He founded the socialist *Finnmarken (Paper)* in 1899, joined the Liberal Party, and was elected to the Storting (parliament) in 1900.<sup>550</sup> Late in 1901 Krupskaya sent several small 'barrels' of *Iskra* literature to Vardø,<sup>551</sup> where Egede-Nissen was to wrap small batches in greaseproof paper, put the parcels in boxes of salted fish and smuggle them to Archangelsk;<sup>552</sup> but only one 'barrel' arrived.<sup>553</sup>

# 13. Propaganda of the higher sort

## (i) *What Is To Be Done?*

Early in 1902 Krupskaya sent 16-kilo 'barrels' of *Iskra* from Munich to St. Petersburg, but the 'beer' remained in the cellar of the People's Home in Stockholm. She also sent *Iskra* to central Russia via Kamenetz-Podolsk and Lviv, but recalled that though a 'heap of money, energy, and time was put into all this', and 'tremendous risks were entailed', 'probably not more than one-tenth' arrived.<sup>1</sup> *Iskra* agents in Russia met to discuss tactics.

Vasily Artsybushev was born into a Kursk province landowner's family in 1857. He later became an SR, then an SD, and was active in Kursk, Orel, Krasnoyarsk, Yeniseisk and St. Petersburg. He was a founder member of the RSDRP's Samara Committee and eastern bureau,<sup>2</sup> but he won few supporters.<sup>3</sup> Kharkiv police had deported the *Iskra* agent, Stopani, in 1901,<sup>4</sup> but Tsiurupa replaced him,<sup>5</sup> and he joined the RSDRP Committee.<sup>6</sup>

In January 1902 Artsybushev and Tsiurupa joined the other mostly intelligently agents in Samara.<sup>7</sup> Lyubov Radchenko, Sergey Tsederbaum,<sup>8</sup> and Lengnik came from Poltava, and Lepeshinsky, Lepeshinskaya, Krasikov and Stopani from Pskov.<sup>9</sup> Ivan and Stepan Radchenko, Silvin,<sup>10</sup> Stasova and Kalinin came from St. Petersburg, Bauman from Moscow, Knipovich from Astrakhan,<sup>11</sup> Krokmal from Kyiv,<sup>12</sup> and Petr Bronstein from Rostov-na-Donu.<sup>13</sup> Most RSDRP Committees published leaflets, and young workers distributed them, but *kruzhki* had shrunk or lapsed, training was often poor, and intelligently did not consult experienced workers, who stayed away from demonstrations. They agreed that Krzhizhanovsky was to lead the 'Central Bureau of the Russian organization of *Iskra*' in Samara,<sup>14</sup> Krzhizhanovskaya would be its secretary,<sup>15</sup> and Artsybushev was to be a bureau member,<sup>16</sup> while Stepan Radchenko would liaise with the *Iskra* editors,<sup>17</sup> and Silvin and Ivan Radchenko would be 'flying' agents'.<sup>18</sup> They would visit Committees, offer literature and printing, 'strive to acquire the greatest possible influence' and get them to recognise *Iskra* as 'the party paper'; but if a Committee was hostile they would form another.<sup>19</sup> Two would go to central Russia, four to the east, and one of the 'flying agents' to the north. They would choose a candidate to replace themselves in case of arrest, and raise money for *Iskra*, while Krzhizhanovsky and Krzhizhanovskaya would produce a fortnightly bulletin in Samara, where they lived legally.<sup>20</sup> From Munich Ulyanov exhorted them to 'Reach out wider!' and 'operate more independently, with greater initiative'.<sup>21</sup>

Students remained restive. St. Petersburg University students voted 1,063 to five to strike for the rights of free speech and assembly and a free press, and students at other higher educational institutions agreed.<sup>22</sup> St. Petersburg police arrested 900 to prevent a demonstration on the anniversary of serf emancipation, but 40,000 people reached Kazan Square, waved red flags and shouted 'Down with tsardom!' Many were arrested,<sup>23</sup> and the government closed the University dining hall and let it reopen only after students left its governing board. Early in March another demonstration attracted thousands, and the 92 arrested included 63 students. (Most were sent to Siberia.)<sup>24</sup> RSDRP Committee intelligently supported *Iskra*,<sup>25</sup> but the workers' organisation broke away.<sup>26</sup> By mid-February most higher education students across Russia were on strike.<sup>27</sup>

Zeldov of *Rabochaya mysl* and the Bundist Portnoi tried to persuade northern RSDRP Committees and the editors of *Iuzhny rabochy* to call for a Second Congress,<sup>28</sup> and had a draft agenda.

A) Economic struggle and means of struggle (strikes, boycott, demonstration, economic terror.) B) Political struggle and means (demonstrations, terror: offensive and defensive.) C) Political Agitation. D) May Day. E) Relation with oppositional elements. F) Relations with revolutionary groups that are not part of the party. G) The organisation of the party. The central party paper, foreign representation and émigré organisation of the party.

Recipients of the agenda should take 'all measures to ensure that the broad public does not find out'.<sup>29</sup> From Munich Ulyanov complained about the agenda's 'economism' and the short notice, and suggested that an 'unofficial conference' should elect a congress organising committee and a committee to draft a programme for a congress the following summer, since it was 'very important' to 'expose' *Rabochee delo*. He drafted a report which included a motion about 'preparatory measures' for armed struggle,<sup>30</sup> and sent it to an ally in Switzerland.

Vladimir Noskov was born into a Yaroslavl merchant's family in 1878. In 1898 the police arrested him in connection with the St. Petersburg Soyuz and sent him home, and then to Voronezh, where he helped to organize a northern workers' organisation,<sup>31</sup> in Yaroslavl, Tver and the upper Volga.<sup>32</sup> Early in 1902 he went to Switzerland and chaired the committee drawing up the proposed RSDRP rules,<sup>33</sup> and in spring he discussed the draft programme with the *Iskra* editors in Munich.<sup>34</sup> In Switzerland Plekhanov acknowledged that capitalism was 'becoming' dominant in Russia,<sup>35</sup> but the RSDRP must be 'secret, strongly conspiratorial and centralised',<sup>36</sup> and a

'dictatorship of the proletariat' should 'substitute socialist for commodity production'.<sup>37</sup> In Munich Ulyanov believed that capitalism was already dominant in Russia and wanted an 'organisation of revolutionaries to direct the struggle of the proletariat' to revolution.<sup>38</sup> Plekhanov conceded that capitalism had developed, and defined the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' as a 'legislative assembly' of 'representatives of the people' to ensure the 'inviolability of the person and the home', 'freedom of conscience, speech, press, assembly, strike and association', and 'suppress all resistance' from 'exploiters'.<sup>39</sup>

RSDRP delegates met in Białystok on 23-28 March.<sup>40</sup> The old émigré SD organisation sent Osip Kogan of *Iuzhny rabochy*, while Portnoi, Kremer and Rozental represented the Bund and Meer Kogan its émigré committee. F.I. Shipulinski came from Katerynoslav, A.I. Piskuniov from Nizhni-Novgorod and Zeldov from St. Petersburg RSDRP Committee, with Vladimir Krasnukha,<sup>41</sup> a 35-year-old Military Medical Academy graduate.<sup>42</sup> Piskuniov protested that *Iskra* was under-represented and left,<sup>43</sup> but Kremer, Portnoi and Rozental mostly supported *Iskra* or abstained.<sup>44</sup> *Iskra's* Fyodor Gurvich had a mandate from the revolutionary émigré SD Liga, and arrived late,<sup>45</sup> but the delegates agreed it was a conference, not a congress.<sup>46</sup> They elected a congress organising committee of Kogan, Portnoi and Gurvich,<sup>47</sup> who distributed a pamphlet by 'N. Lenin' printed in Germany.<sup>48</sup>

*Chto delat? nabolievshie voprosy nashego dvizheniya (What Is To Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement)* acknowledged that the 'spontaneous' St. Petersburg 'industrial war' of 1896-1897 had demonstrated workers' political class-consciousness in an 'embryonic form', but 'Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement'. Socialism and the class struggle 'arise side by side and not one out of the other', and 'socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge'. The working class could develop 'trade-union consciousness', but could not 'develop a conscious worker into a "tribune of the people"'. 'Lenin' was not against giving 'popular' literature to 'backward workers', but workers could help to create a 'Marxist' 'ideology' only when they became 'socialist theoreticians'. There had been a 'wide spread of Marxism' in Russia, but a 'lowering of the theoretical level' in kruzhenki. Intelligenty had to 'saturate' the 'awakening' proletariat with 'the consciousness of its position and the consciousness of its task', and a 'military organisation' of full-time revolutionaries, including workers, would win the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'.

A worker-agitator who is at all gifted and 'promising' *must not be left* to work eleven hours a day in a factory. We must arrange that he be maintained by the Party; that he may go underground in good time; that he change the place of his activity, if he is to enlarge his outlook, and to be able to hold out for at least a few years in the struggle against the gendarmes. As the spontaneous rise of their movement becomes broader and deeper, the working class masses promote from their ranks not only an increasing number of talented agitators, but also talented organisers, propagandists, and 'practical workers' in the best sense of the term (of whom there are so few among our intellectuals, who, for the most part, in the Russian manner, are somewhat careless and sluggish in their habits). When we have forces of specially-trained worker-revolutionaries who have gone through extensive preparation (and, of course, revolutionaries 'of all arms of the service'), no political police in the world will then be able to contend with them, for these forces, boundlessly devoted to the revolution, will enjoy the boundless confidence of the widest masses of the workers. We are directly to *blame* for doing too little to 'stimulate' the workers to take this path, common to them and to the 'intellectuals', of professional revolutionary training, and for all too often dragging them back by our silly speeches about what is 'accessible' ... to the 'average workers'.<sup>49</sup>

Subsequently Potresov thought the pamphlet was 'superlative',<sup>50</sup> though he later claimed to have had misgivings.<sup>51</sup> Plekhanov did not criticise it publicly, but Axelrod protested to Luly Tserderbaum about the proposed three-person editorial board.<sup>52</sup> Tserderbaum's brother, Vladimir, recalled that the pamphlet gave 'practical workers what we particularly needed'.<sup>53</sup> In Samara Krzhizhanovsky thought it was 'brilliantly written', and Lepeshinsky reported that most comrades in St. Petersburg, Moscow and other major centres agreed with it,<sup>54</sup> while Gurvich thought it was a 'concretisation of the organisational ideas' of *Iskra's* programme.<sup>55</sup> *Rabochee delo* ceased publication,<sup>56</sup> but transport remained a problem for *Iskra*.

In Riga, Latvia, the Polytechnical Institute SD student Janis Ozols led the committee which linked workers' kruzhenki, while Pauls Kalnins, a young doctor, led Jelgava students.<sup>57</sup> The Latvian police disrupted *Iskra's* transport,<sup>58</sup> but *Iskra* had a press in Georgia .

## (ii) Without making any kind of application to the owners

By 1902 around 43 percent of Tbilisi's population, including most factory workers, were unmarried peasants. Unskilled women and apprentices earned 30-40 kopeks a day, but a room cost up to 2.5 rubles a month, so many ate bread, cheese and greens on weekdays, and meat on Sundays. Unskilled men in inspected plants earned from

10 to 13 rubles a month, and skilled workers from 14 to 23, but railway workshop workers got 50. The police claimed that some joined strikes because family or friends of a 'traitor' would ostracize, beat or assassinate them.

The SD intelligent Zhordania was in prison, and was surprised to see a leaflet announcing the formation of Tbilisi RSDRP Committee. He feared it would ignore the peasant and national questions, but it soon accumulated 1,646 rubles.<sup>59</sup> Jughashvili took a press from Tbilisi to Batumi and installed it at his lodgings,<sup>60</sup> in the home of Konstantin Kandelyaki,<sup>61</sup> an SD worker.<sup>62</sup> Oil production was falling and unemployment was rising,<sup>63</sup> but they organised a strike of oil-drum factory workers.<sup>64</sup> Jughashvili got a job at a refinery and next day it caught fire. Managers agreed to a 30 percent rise,<sup>65</sup> but announced 389 sackings, so all 900 went on strike. The provincial governor threatened to deport them,<sup>66</sup> but strikers clashed with scabs and the police made 32 arrests.<sup>67</sup>

In spring, when Jughashvili visited Baki, most of members of the Tbilisi RSDRP workers' committee were arrested.<sup>68</sup> Jughashvili returned to Tbilisi, wrote a leaflet and others printed it.<sup>69</sup> It called for a mass demonstration outside the jail,<sup>70</sup> and 400 turned up,<sup>71</sup> but they were arrested. Next day 3,000 demonstrated,<sup>72</sup> but Cossacks killed 14 and wounded 54,<sup>73</sup> The police arrested almost 1,000, and detained 800.<sup>74</sup> RSDRP leaflets flooded the city, and a suspected spy and a factory manager were assassinated. Jughashvili joined the 7,000 mourners at the workers' funerals,<sup>75</sup> then went to an RSDRP Committee meeting in a worker's home.<sup>76</sup> The police raided what they called 'the leading RSDRP group',<sup>77</sup> and arrested Kandelyaki, and Jughashvili,<sup>78</sup> who had no passport and gave no address. He threw a note out of his cell window, asking his mother to say he had been in Gori during the demonstration at Tbilisi prison, but the guards intercepted it.<sup>79</sup>

In Baki Nina printed *Iskra*, *luzhny rabochy* and *Rabochaya mysl*, and Ketskhoveri added 'Russian Social Democratic Labour Party' in Georgian to the *brdzola* masthead. It condemned émigré squabbles, advocated an alliance of oppressed classes and ridiculed *Rabochaya mysl*, but was open to other revolutionaries.

Tbilisi 'yard keepers' checked visitors' documents and told the police if they suspected anyone.<sup>80</sup> In summer 86 RSDRP members were arrested,<sup>81</sup> including the *Iskra* agent Sophia Ginsburg, and the police discovered more names and addresses. Ketskhoveri was depressed when the police raided his lodgings, and though he was armed, he gave his real name.<sup>82</sup> They put him in the Fortress,<sup>83</sup> and he smuggled out a note to Enukidze,<sup>84</sup> but it was intercepted, and Enukidze was arrested and charged with organising a May Day demonstration.<sup>85</sup> Reportedly, Ketskhoveri was tortured, but he did not betray the press.<sup>86</sup> On May Day 15,000 Tbilisi demonstrators carried red flags, shouted anti-capitalist and anti-government slogans,<sup>87</sup> demanded an eight-hour day, fought police and scattered leaflets. The governor sent troops, and reported that workers 'from all possible types of factories and plants' had left 'without making any kind of application to the owners'.<sup>88</sup>

Batumi police deported 500 peasant strikers to Guria district of Kutaisi province, where 90 percent of gentry owned less than 27 hectares and 53 percent owned eight or less. Around 53 percent of peasants held an average of 8.7 hectares, but 70 percent needed more land.<sup>89</sup> Many deportees were literate,<sup>90</sup> and had a history of revolt.<sup>91</sup> In early summer, after an argument about grazing rights, 22-year-old Grigol Uratadze, a Kutaisi Junior Seminary dropout, argued that peasants should stop redemption payments and not work on gentry land. Around 700 vowed to fight and punish 'traitors', and peasants made similar vows in other village meetings, including one reportedly led by three teachers, two students and a priest. Uratadze sought support from Kutaisi and Batumi RSDRP Committees, but though Chkheidze told him that peasants could not be socialists, the imprisoned Jibladze and Zhordania were enthusiastic. The police took Uratadze to Tbilisi and then deported him to his village, where he got involved in the peasant struggle and was imprisoned with around 200 others, including teachers.<sup>92</sup> Gurian peasants refused to pay the annual two rubles tax for the clergy,<sup>93</sup> and most gentry conceded other demands. Tbilisi RSDRP Committee criticised Uratadze's 'adventurism', but approved an RSDRP rural workers' committee.<sup>94</sup>

In Baki Armenian students and workers founded Հայ Սոցիալ-Դեմոկրատների Միություն (The Union of Armenian Social Democrats), which advocated federalism and was independent of the RSDRP.<sup>95</sup> Vasily Shelgunov was a member of Baki RSDRP Committee,<sup>96</sup> and Bogdan Knunyants arrived. He had been born in Dzhamiat in the south Caucasus in 1878. He entered St. Petersburg Technological Institute in 1896, joined the Soyuz in 1897, but was deported to Baki in 1901.<sup>97</sup> In 1902 he helped to edit *brdzola*, but after arrests,<sup>98</sup> the paper closed.<sup>99</sup>

Leonid Krasin refused to contact Baki RSDRP Committee, but went to Berlin, studied the *Vorwärts* press, returned to Baki, modified Nina and relocated it.<sup>100</sup> It printed the Erfurter Programm and *Chto delat?* by 'Lenin',<sup>101</sup> and 3,000 copies of *luzhny rabochy*. Some copies reached Moscow,<sup>102</sup> where *Iskra* and the RSDRP were struggling.

### (iii) The weak link in the chain

By 1902 Moscow was the tenth largest city in the world,<sup>103</sup> but over 73 percent of its 1.17 million inhabitants were migrants. Two-thirds were peasants, and a quarter of them had come from neighbouring provinces,<sup>104</sup> and

Moscow was turning 'more and more into a peasant city'.<sup>105</sup> Over 115,000 had arrived the previous year, but 138,000 had been there five to ten years and 335,000 for 11 or more. For every 1,000 males there were 826 females, and over half the population was 29 or younger, but young males outnumbered young females by almost two to one.<sup>106</sup> Around 80 percent of single women and 41 percent of married women supported themselves, including 29 percent of domestic servants aged 15 or over. Of a sample of 525 married women textile workers and lower civil servants, 112 had left their husband in the village.<sup>107</sup>

There were almost 177,000 waged workers,<sup>108</sup> including 111,000 factory workers,<sup>109</sup> and 93 percent lived in the suburbs.<sup>110</sup> Most workshops were not covered by factory legislation, but while only 1,823 of over 53,300 garment workers were in factories,<sup>111</sup> there were 4,000 at Prokhorov Mill,<sup>112</sup> and 2,300 at Tsindel Mill,<sup>113</sup> where over three-quarters of workers came from Riazan and Tula provinces. The city's 27,000 metalworkers averaged 20 per workshop, but two-thirds of 13,000 machine-tool makers were in factories,<sup>114</sup> including 2,000 at Moscow Metalworks,<sup>115</sup> and 1,200 at Bromley Metalworks.<sup>116</sup> The city's industrial plants accounted for ten percent of national production, but around 18,000 workers were unemployed. Ten railway lines converged on the city,<sup>117</sup> and employed over 26,000.<sup>118</sup> Over 60 percent of city people were literate,<sup>119</sup> and in factories near the city only 18 of the 30 percent of workers who held land harvested it themselves.<sup>120</sup>

In January police arrested the University student sovet, but alternates called a meeting on 6 February, the anniversary of peasant 'emancipation'. Hundreds arrived and about 550, including 73 women, barricaded themselves in. On the 9<sup>th</sup> police and troops broke in and took 509 to the cavalry barracks and then to prison.<sup>121</sup>

The Zubatovite society leaders toured the city announcing a one-day strike, and the RSDRP Committee argued for a boycott, but an *Iskra* leaflet called for a demonstration to demand political freedom. In the event around 50,000 attended a religious and patriotic ceremony at the Kremlin,<sup>122</sup> but the government banned similar demonstrations after a minister protested about this allegedly 'anti-capitalistic' activity.<sup>123</sup> The police arrested society members, including 30 'mechanical' workers suspected of contacting revolutionaries, but weavers, button-makers, confectioners and perfumery and tobacco workers established new societies.<sup>124</sup> Nikifor Krasivsky led 1,800 textile workers, but thousands more attended the main society meetings.<sup>125</sup> When a silk factory manager sacked two workers, society activists urged the 1,500-strong workforce to demand negotiations. Others led a strike at Moscow Metalworks, and the city дума was 'compelled to place itself on the side of the workers'. Zubatov gave the society leaders 250 rubles a week each,<sup>126</sup> and they broke one of their rules and supported strikers financially.<sup>127</sup> Police pressured the owner to accept the society's demands,<sup>128</sup> and the governor threatened to deport him, but the government gave him support to defeat the strike.<sup>129</sup> After a student leaflet demanded free speech and assembly and 'personal inviolability', and argued for working with revolutionaries,<sup>130</sup> 45 students were arrested and the governor sent troops to large factories to repress 'disorders' at 'any cost'. The police broke up a student rally,<sup>131</sup> and arrested almost 100,<sup>132</sup> then 682 more. (Subsequently 567 were sentenced to up to six months in prison in Archangelsk, and 95 were exiled to Siberia for up to five years, all without trial.<sup>133</sup>)

The RSDRP Committee had issued 10,000 leaflets in 12 months, and now sent a fifth of its income to *Iskra*, whose supporters led seven factory kruzki, but they lasted three months or so before police shut them down. The Dynamo works kruzok included nine mechanics and fitters, a metal-drawer, an armature worker and two draughtsmen, while three fitters and two turners were supporters. One kruzok leader distributed 700 May Day leaflets, which argued for linking the struggles against capitalists and the autocracy.<sup>134</sup>

After the *Iskra* agent Bauman was arrested, 23-year-old Lidia Tsederbaum took over.<sup>135</sup> She recalled that the city was the 'weak link in the chain' and a 'seething cauldron'. In winter someone could hide a small package in their clothes and hand it over at a pre-arranged place and time, but for the rest of the year smuggling 50 copies of *Iskra* was considered a success. She slept in different rooms each night and contacted comrades only at specific times and places. A bookshop owner gave her access to a safe house and a press, but comrades advised her to leave, so she went to Yalta, where Gorky gave her contact addresses in Moscow,<sup>136</sup> and money.<sup>137</sup> In Moscow Zubatov thwarted a May Day event,<sup>138</sup> and when Tsederbaum returned and met a comrade, she was arrested.<sup>139</sup> In prison she met Mikhail Bagaev, who had worked in Vladimir, Ivanovo and Nizhni-Novgorod. He had attended RSDRP Committees, 'discussed how to prepare strikes and demonstrations', distributed literature and read works by Plekhanov, but none by Marx, and his understanding of *Iskra's* politics was 'unsystematic',<sup>140</sup> yet the RSDRP established other organisations in the north.

After the Okhubov defence, Shlyapnikov had been unable to find work at any large factory in St. Petersburg, so he took low-paying jobs, then returned to Sormovo, the industrial suburb of Nizhni Novgorod, where all workers from St. Petersburg were suspected to be radicals. After comrades entrusted him with illegal literature, including an SD paper published in Nizhni Novgorod, and *Iskra*, he considered himself as a member of the RSDRP and went back to Murom;<sup>141</sup> and a young man became active in Sormovo.



The Jewish engraver Mikhail Sverdlov and his wife had left Podolsk for Nizhni-Novgorod, and the twins Yakov and Zinovy were born there in 1885.<sup>142</sup> In the early 1890s their parents allowed deported 'old revolutionaries and young Marxists' from St. Petersburg to store illegal literature and meet workers in their flat,<sup>143</sup> and SDs circulated illegal Moscow pamphlets in 1894. On May Day 1895 60 workers met in a remote spot and an agitator exhorted them to strike to improve their conditions. Agitational leaflets appeared early in 1896, but stopped after arrests.<sup>144</sup> Yakov Sverdlov entered a gymnasium, but by 1900 his parents could not afford the fees,<sup>145</sup> so he became a chemist's apprentice,<sup>146</sup> and after his mother died and his father remarried Yakov lived at the shop.<sup>147</sup> His brothers involved him in SR activity,<sup>148</sup> and he got propaganda from timber yard workers and contacted a kruzhok in Sormovo.<sup>149</sup> Over 5,000 workers joined a May Day demonstration there, and police made many arrests, but Gorky knew members of the RSDRP Committee and bought Zinovy Sverdlov and other students a mimeograph, and helped to pay for lawyers.<sup>150</sup> In autumn 1901 the RSDRP established a Nizhni-Novgorod Committee, and Yakov got his father's employees to make a press and hid literature and activists in his flat. On May Day in 1902 there was a demonstration in Sormovo.<sup>151</sup> The worker Petr Zalomov was arrested after he picked up a red flag, and in court he insisted on his right to elect a deputy, strike, assemble, speak, publish and demonstrate against laws that denied workers 'any opportunity to improve their living conditions'. 'That is why I wrote on my banner: "Down with the autocracy and long live political freedom!"' (His speech later appeared in *Iskra*,<sup>152</sup> but Zalomov was sentenced to exile to Siberia for life.<sup>153</sup>) Yakov Sverdlov was briefly detained, then left for Saratov, but police harassment drove him back,<sup>154</sup> and Sormovo RSDRP Committee co-opted him.<sup>155</sup>

The police raided bomb factories in Nizhni-Novgorod, Kyiv, Moscow and Vyborg, where they found 15 kilos of dynamite, and Saratov police discovered explosives and a kit for making false passports. The police liquidated 27 VPSR and 11 RSDRP groups in St. Petersburg, Kyiv, Kursk, Smolensk, Tambov, Odesa, Katerynoslav, Poland and Finland, and closed nine presses, including those in Penza, Zhytomyr, Katerynoslav and Chernihiv, while border gendarmes arrested couriers of illegal literature. Some of the arrested political suspects accepted up to 150 rubles a month to become spies, but 3,000 went to Siberia without trial.<sup>156</sup> Odesa workers, led by V. Trakhtenberg, split from the intelligenty-dominated RSDRP Committee, formed Rabochaya volya (The Workers' Will) and issued thousands of leaflets.<sup>157</sup> Across Russia there were 36 May Day events.<sup>158</sup> The Okhrana was being reorganised to help to deal with revolutionaries who had supporters in England.

#### **(iv) The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom**

In 1877 the Newcastle-upon-Tyne MP Joseph Cowen had inveighed against the tsar's war against the Ottoman emperor, and in 1880 he described Russia as 'a crushing and devouring political mechanism' which had 'annihilated full fifty distinct nationalities' and killed 'every spring of independence'. In 1881 Cowen's *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* published five articles by the anarchist Petr Kropotkin, who argued that the starving Russian peasantry had inspired student revolutionaries. The *Chronicle* printed an eye-witness account of an anti-Jewish riot in Ukraine, and reported that a riot had ruined 6,000 Jewish families in Warszawa. By 1883 just over ten percent of the coal exported from the Tyne went to Russia, and the collier vessels returned with grain and timber. In 1889 the former SR terrorist Sergey Kravchinsky addressed a very large audience in Newcastle, including 'almost the whole of the Socialistic party', and he inspired Spence Watson, who was in contact with the veteran SR Volkhovsky in London. Late that year Kravchinsky's *The Career of a Nihilist* was printed in Newcastle, but published in London,<sup>159</sup> and he hoped that a constitution would end the sufferings of the 'dumb millions of our peasantry' in Russia.<sup>160</sup> Fanny Kravchinskaya recalled that he and Engels sometimes talked about 'political subjects', but had 'arguments and misunderstandings', so they met only occasionally.<sup>161</sup>

In 1890 the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom published *Free Russia* in London,<sup>162</sup> at the Russian Free Press, and sailors who visited London left for Finland and St. Petersburg with Society literature.<sup>163</sup> Several MPs supported the Society and a Fabian became its secretary.<sup>164</sup> Kennan's articles were published in Russian in Paris and London,<sup>165</sup> and in spring a very large demonstration in Hyde Park protested against the Russian government's treatment of political prisoners.<sup>166</sup> Kravchinsky and Paul Lafargue spoke on the same May Day platform, while Eduard Bernstein had a 'stunning reception' on another.<sup>167</sup> Kravchinsky invited Plekhanov and Axelrod to meet Engels,<sup>168</sup> and in 1891 the Society published Plekhanov's book about Russian revolutionary workers in the 1870s. Kravchinsky lectured in Newcastle, and by late that year Spence Watson's appeal had reached Siberia, where exiles copied a translation by hectograph and hand, and it circulated widely. In 1892 Spence Watson reviewed George Kennan's *Siberia and the Exile System*, and described the autocracy as 'the worst tyranny the sun looks down upon today'. Kravchinsky gave more lectures in Newcastle,<sup>169</sup> and there were sympathisers in London.

The Democratic Federation had been founded in London in 1881, but became the Social Democratic Federation in 1883 and published *Justice*. In 1884 some members, including Eleanor Marx, split away to form the Socialist League, which attracted tens of thousands of members. In 1894 Engels estimated that 100,000 of them had left, but by 1896 the SDF claimed over a million members.<sup>170</sup>

In London the émigré Russian Vladimir Burtsev intended to organise a new group to edit and publish a radical journal, *Narodvolets (Member of the People's Will)*, which would advocate terror, and the Okhrana soon found out about it. Burtsev went to Switzerland, and in spring 1897 *Narodvolets* advocated terror, and criticised SDs for their lack of support, though the police suspected that Bonch-Bruевич had printed it. Burtsev called for the revival of *Narodnaya volya* and a struggle for a constitution and civil rights, including 'nocturnal invasions of the Palace, to the extent of bombs and dynamite', regicide and systematic terror. The London police threatened him with 16 months in prison, but successive issues maintained the same perspective. Burtsev's *Za sto let (Over a Hundred Years)* contained a mass of information about arrests, trials, exiles, escapes, peasant and worker uprisings and other information about the Russian government, and a year-by-year list of legally and illegally-published books and articles. On 14 December a policeman arrived at Burtsev's flat, gave him a false name and address and bought two copies of each of the first three issues of *Narodvolets*, and he also bought copies from a news vendor. On the 16<sup>th</sup> a senior detective arrested Burtsev, took his keys, illegally raided his flat and seized many of his papers and belongings. The Society set up a defence fund and hired a solicitor and barrister. Burtsev's trial began in February 1898. The policeman perjured himself at least twice, and Burtsev's barrister noted that the most incendiary language in *Narodvolets* was also in a book by Kravchinsky that was freely available; but the jury found Burtsev guilty in 14 minutes and the judge sentenced him to 18 months hard labour. He was the first Russian revolutionary to be imprisoned in Britain. A month later, at a rally in Trafalgar Square, Harry Quelch, the SDF leader, called for the release of all political prisoners, including Burtsev. Ministers and parliament were petitioned unsuccessfully, but late that year Burtsev had a Russian visitor.<sup>171</sup>

Fyodor Rothstein was born in Kaunas, Lithuania, in 1871,<sup>172</sup> into a Jewish apothecary's family.<sup>173</sup> Fyodor later entered Poltava gymnasium,<sup>174</sup> contacted SRs,<sup>175</sup> got into trouble with the police and left for London in 1891.<sup>176</sup> He contacted the Free Russian Press,<sup>177</sup> and became a journalist. He joined the SDF in 1895, began writing for *Justice* in spring 1897,<sup>178</sup> and visited Burtsev in prison in December 1898. Burtsev was planning a new periodical, *Byloe (The Past)*, which would include reprints of rare SR literature and reminiscences from the 1860s to the 1880s, but by summer 1899 his health had deteriorated. After his release he recuperated in Ramsgate, and returned to London in autumn. He was barred from the British Museum, though that decision was reversed in January 1900. He persuaded *Iskra's* Andropov to take some of his publications to Russia, but he was arrested almost immediately and subsequently sentenced to two years in prison followed by 20 years' exile. In spring 1901 the Okhrana's London Agentura reported that Burtsev had left to attend a socialist conference in Lausanne with a large sum of money from the Russian Free Press. In summer Burtsev met Russian revolutionaries and discussed the tsar's planned visit to Paris in autumn. The second *Byloe*, published late that year, contained a letter from the exiled failed assassin Karpovich. Burtsev had reportedly been involved in organising the VPSR's battle organisation, and it became active; but he had disappeared by 1902,<sup>179</sup> when peasant unrest swept across much of Ukraine.

#### **(v) You forget what has happened in Kharkiv and Poltava**

Early in 1902 the VPSR battle organisation leader Grigory Gershuni had sold his possessions and left Minsk,<sup>180</sup> and *Revolutsionnaya rossya (Revolutionary Russia)* was printed secretly in Finland.<sup>181</sup> Thousands of peasants joined the VPSR,<sup>182</sup> which focussed on literate peasants and rural intelligenty, and favoured terror, hoping to provoke a popular rising and sweep the autocracy from power.<sup>183</sup> On 6 February there were demonstrations all over Russia on the anniversary of serf emancipation.<sup>184</sup>

In Ukraine the revolutionaries favoured peasant socialism,<sup>185</sup> and branches in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Poltava, Katerynoslav and elsewhere included secondary school pupils and university students, while the papers *Haslo (Slogan)* and *Selianyn (Peasant)* were influential in Austrian Galicia.<sup>186</sup> They and Bundists propagandised Ukrainian-speaking artisans, and brought Galician peasants into Kyiv for political education<sup>187</sup> where three Sunday schools taught reading, writing and arithmetic. The city's 117 industrial plants employed over 8,750,<sup>188</sup> but fewer than half returned to their villages for harvest.<sup>189</sup> During February troops attacked a joint VSPR-SD demonstration. The police arrested 150 of the 10,000 spectators,<sup>190</sup> and some RUP members formed *Ukraïnska sotsial-democratic robitnicha partiya (The Ukrainian Social Democratic Labour Party)*.<sup>191</sup>

In three months to the end of March, according to the Justice Ministry, 853 of the 2,953 political suspects had been sentenced, and gendarmes had imprisoned the rest, without trial. Reportedly thousands more workers, students and others had been deported from large towns and cities without trial.<sup>192</sup>

In Kharkiv province the average peasant held under 2.2 hectares of mostly sandy and infertile land, but rents had doubled in five years and there had been a shortage of bread and no fodder the previous spring.<sup>193</sup> Many Poltava province peasants held 'poverty lots',<sup>194</sup> and Alexeev, a landowner's son who was a Kyiv University student, taught young Poltava peasants to hectograph radical Kyiv leaflets. They claimed they had an 'order' to send landowners to Kyiv, convert their houses into schools and share their land.<sup>195</sup>

In Saratov the VPSR's Stepan Balmashev encouraged SDs to join Sotsialistichesky kustarnyy soyuz (The Socialist Artisanal Union), which issued leaflets and published two issues of *Remeslennyi listok* (*Artisans' Sheet*).<sup>196</sup> In April Balmashev dressed as an aide-de-camp, went to St. Petersburg police headquarters, gave the interior minister an envelope containing his death sentence and shot him.<sup>197</sup> The new minister lived at the headquarters and doubled the size of the Okhrana. There, and in Moscow, Kyiv, Kharkiv, Warszawa, Rostov-na-Donu, Odesa, Omsk, Chişinău, Sevastopol and Tbilisi, experts taught gendarmes how to liquidate revolutionary organisations.<sup>198</sup>

Alexey Lopukhin was born into a family of landless gentry in 1864. He graduated from Moscow University in 1886, worked for the Justice Ministry,<sup>199</sup> in Kharkiv, and became director of the Police Department in St. Petersburg in May 1902.<sup>200</sup> The London Agentura cost 6,000 francs a month, or around one third of the Okhrana's foreign budget. Lopukhin sacked Rachkovsky, 'the fountain of police corruption',<sup>201</sup> and purged other senior officers, but devoted 100,000 of his 882,500-ruble annual budget to the Paris Agentura and took control of the Moscow flying squad.<sup>202</sup> Harting of the Berlin Agentura stationed detectives at busy border crossings and authorised them to give gendarmes up to 50 rubles for information about revolutionaries, false passports and illegal literature, but revolutionaries bribed or threatened the gendarmes. He recruited Yakob Zhitomirsky of the *Iskra* organisation,<sup>203</sup> and paid him 250 rubles a month,<sup>204</sup> but while he sent codes and addresses to Moscow, gendarmes let suspects escape.<sup>205</sup>

In June *Revolutsionnaya rossya* announced the formation of Krestyansky Soyuz Parti Sotsialistov-Revolutsionerov (The Social-Revolutionary Peasants' Union). The paper argued that intelligenty 'must appeal to the peasant through Land to liberty, and lead him to liberty through land', advocated the socialisation of the land and the creation of cooperative associations, and argued that terror against hated officials, 'spies, traitors and informers' was legitimate. It announced the formation of secret 'brotherhoods' and advocated wage- and rent-strikes and boycotting landowners, but if that failed peasants should to 'adopt your own means', including 'letting your cattle trample his fields', 'chopping down his forest' and setting 'fires "from unknown causes"', while a bridge might collapse when an official or police chief crossed it, 'especially on quiet roads on dark nights'. The VPSR made a federative link with the agrarian Liga, and in August its first congress heard that 25,000 copies of ten publications had been circulated. Delegates approved 'revolutionary activity in the countryside', and confirmed that 'brotherhoods' would conduct revolutionary political and economic propaganda and agitate for a democratic revolution and socialisation of the land. Where 'peaceful means' were ineffective, terror was legitimate.<sup>206</sup>

Kharkiv and Poltava province gentry refused to give needy peasants grain and fodder, so they broke into their barns and carted it away.<sup>207</sup> Around 150,000 took over 28 Kharkiv province estates and wrecked 54.<sup>208</sup> Village assemblies often took the decision and elders led raids. They assaulted few gentry,<sup>209</sup> but burned their houses. The provincial governor sent 10,000 troops,<sup>210</sup> who killed two peasants and wounded many more, and almost 1,100 were arrested. Villages had to pay an 800,000-ruble indemnity,<sup>211</sup> and 20 peasants got 200 lashes.<sup>212</sup> The unrest generalised and there were land-seizures, boycotts and strikes in Bessarabia,<sup>213</sup> Tambov, Voronezh, Kherson, Katerynoslav, and Saratov provinces,<sup>214</sup> in over 160 villages,<sup>215</sup> on 340 occasions.<sup>216</sup> Most strikes took place where repartition predominated,<sup>217</sup> and some villagers prevented the lease or sale of land.<sup>218</sup> Saratov peasants had bought over 490,000 hectares in 20 years,<sup>219</sup> and the police noted 'gatherings' reading 'subversive pamphlets', while Poltava province police reported that peasants 'had changed for the worse during the last three years', and they would not betray revolutionaries.<sup>220</sup> The police exiled Alexeev to Siberia, but peasants sat on benches in market places with their feet sticking out and 'three rubles a day!' chalked on the soles of their boots. If officials abused them they replied that 'You forget what has happened in Kharkiv and Poltava'.<sup>221</sup>

## (vi) The Kyiv jail break

Early in 1902 the Bund CC in Russia argued that the Bershter Bund represented 'the principle of international revolutionary social democracy', and the 'general interests of the entire revolutionary proletarian movement', so it was 'a political organisation, which fights not only individual capitalists but the regime'. Some Bundists took

'organised revenge' by assassinating officials, and threatened members of the Zubatov-inspired Jewish party in Vilnius, which dissolved itself. Christians in the tanners' union joined the SDKPiL,<sup>222</sup> but six Poles and 22 Jews were arrested at a May Day demonstration in Vilnius and the governor ordered 20 to be flogged.<sup>223</sup> The Bund gave terrorists 60 rubles and told them to 'do what you like', but 'the organisation knows nothing'.<sup>224</sup> The 21-year-old Bundist Hirsh Lekert wounded the governor and was hanged.<sup>225</sup>

In spring ten Bund leaders, including Shloyme, Kopelson and Kremer, arrived in Geneva to prepare for the Bund's fifth congress.<sup>226</sup> The SD typographer Blumenfeld lived at 7 rue de la Cluse, and sometimes worked with the Bund's printer at 4 Chemin des Pervenches; but *Iskra* agents were being arrested in Russia.

Vladimir Bobrovsky was born in Belgorod, Kursk province, in 1873. He attended a Nizhni-Novgorod realschule, graduated from Kharkiv Veterinary Institute in 1898 and contacted Moscow SDs. He was detained in January 1900, freed in March under surveillance, detained in November, and released in February 1901. He joined Kyiv RSDRP Committee, but the police got close, so he returned to Moscow, but was in Kyiv prison by early 1902.<sup>227</sup>

Joseph Basovsky ran *Iskra's* transport routes,<sup>228</sup> including those to Odesa, Katerynoslav, Samara, Nizhni-Novgorod, Moscow and St. Petersburg. The Lviv route had carried 150 kilos of literature a month, including 22,645 copies of *Iskra Nos. 16-30*, 3,000 of the *No. 29* supplement and 365 pamphlets, including the recent one by 'Lenin'; but border gendarmes arrested Blumenfeld, decoded his address book,<sup>229</sup> and arrested the Kyiv transporters,<sup>230</sup> and the Chişinău printers.<sup>231</sup> The police found a letter with a password which Krupskaya had posted to a Voronezh address. The Okhrana's Menshchikov posed as an *Iskra* agent, A.N. Liubimov gave him addresses in Yaroslavl, Kostromo and Vladimir, and over 50 members of the northern workers' organisation were arrested, including Osip Kogan, and Fyodor Gurvich,<sup>232</sup> who was later exiled to eastern Siberia for six years.<sup>233</sup>

In Vilnius Tarshis had found it impossible to satisfy demand for *Iskra*, and a spy followed him, so before he was arrested he showed Artsybushev his 'connections'. The gendarmes knew Tarshis's real name and his role in the '*Iskra* organisation', and in March they charged him with 'organising the conveyance of people and literature' and running a press, and he ended in Kyiv prison. Students were singing revolutionary songs in the criminal wing, but guards took Tarshis to the political wing, where he met a new arrival who had been arrested after border gendarmes discovered bundles of *Iskra* in his double-bottomed suit-case. Tarshis 'scrutinised him carefully', asked him where he got the papers, if he was an *Iskra* member and which *Iskra* comrades abroad he knew. He mentioned Tarshis's party nickname, and Tarshis knew the man's nickname, but his real name was Blumenfeld. The prison became Tarshis's 'university'. He debated with SRs, read the 'latest illegal literature', including *Iskra*, and his cellmate Lev Galperin taught him about the western European labour movement, the 'principles of Marxism' and the techniques of revolutionary work; but Kyiv gendarmes intercepted and decoded letters to Krokmal, and arrested *Iskra* agents who arrived in the city for a conference.<sup>234</sup>

The imprisoned *Iskra* agents faced interrogation,<sup>235</sup> but Tarshis's Vilnius contacts supplied false passports and escape routes,<sup>236</sup> and one evening in late summer the agents twisted bed linen into a rope, bound and gagged a warder, left Silvin in charge of him, overcame a guard and scaled the wall.<sup>237</sup> Thirteen of the 64 'politicals' were women, but only men escaped, including the SR Plesky and 11 SDs - Tarshis, Blumenfeld, Galperin, Krokmal, Bauman, Bobrovsky, Basovsky, Wallach, Bomelev, Marian Gursky and Boris Maltsman.<sup>238</sup> Tarshis and Basovsky went to the home of a 'very hospitable Pole', but his neighbour was a gendarme, so they drank vodka, ate something, drove around in cabs and parted. Tarshis visited a shoemaker he had met in prison. He asked to see a member of the RSDRP Committee, and a student he had met in prison sent him to a safe address. A week later he went to Zhytomyr by stagecoach, hid in the home of a leading Bundist and attended the Bund Committee. They discussed the 'lack of class-consciousness' of Russian workers who blacklegged on Jews, and agreed that Russians must agitate Russians. No Vilnius trade union accepted 'all workers in a particular trade irrespective of nationality', and the Bund, LSDP, SDKPiL and PPS organised separately. Tarshis later believed it was 'largely the fault of the Bund', since it had once been 'easy to arrange for simultaneous action among all the workers'.<sup>239</sup>

Wallach and Blumenfeld had stayed with a daughter of a veteran of the 1863 Polish rising in Kyiv, then posed as a land surveyor and assistant. They took a train to Vilnius, got off before getting there, met professional smugglers, avoided guards and crossed the border. Wallach went to Berlin and wrote to his mother, but his letter was intercepted. He went to Zurich, and he and other escapees sent a 'congratulatory' telegram to the Kyiv police chief.<sup>240</sup> By then the *Iskra* editors had moved to London.

#### **(vii) Make sure that the whole thing is entirely in your hands**

By 1902 the Russian SD intelligently Takhtareva, Takhtarev and Nikolai Alexeev had been in London for some time and organised debates between Bundists, anarchists and SDs. In March Iuly Tsederbaum told Alexeev that the

*Iskra* editors were moving to London and would like to use the SDF's Twentieth Century Press in Clerkenwell Green. He enclosed a letter from Zasulich to Quelch, who agreed if *Iskra* found typographers who could set Russian type. Ulyanov told Alexeev he would receive letters addressed to 'Jacob Richter',<sup>241</sup> and told his sister Elizarova in Berlin that he and Krupskaya would leave Munich. The London address of the 'doctor' was 'valid', but 'anything urgent' should go to 'Mr. Alexejeff' at 14 Frederick Street, Gray's Inn Road, London W.C.<sup>242</sup>

A decade earlier, in St. Petersburg, the SR Kornilov School teacher Meshcheriakov had regarded Krupskaya as a 'fervent and opinionated Marxist',<sup>243</sup> but he considered himself an SD by 1894,<sup>244</sup> and in 1901 he became the Belgian representative of the revolutionary émigré Liga. In spring 1902 Elizarova put him in touch with Krupskaya, and he met her and Ulyanov in Liege and took them to Brussels.<sup>245</sup>

They arrived in London on 1/14 April,<sup>246</sup> and Alexeev met them at Charing Cross Station. He spoke English and became their guide.<sup>247</sup> They met the Takhtarevs, and may have stayed with them until they found a two-room flat in Holford Street, Pentonville,<sup>248</sup> which took £1 of their £1.50 weekly RSDRP pay.<sup>249</sup> They met the GOT founder-member, Lev Deutsch, who had spent 16 years in Siberia, but had escaped via Japan and the USA to London.<sup>250</sup> Ulyanov sent his own address to Axelrod in Switzerland, but 'would earnestly request you not give it to anyone ... with the exception of those closest to us, such as L.Gr. or B.N'. (Deutsch and Noskov). Others should write via Alexeev, and 'outsiders' via Dietz in Germany,<sup>251</sup> but most letters from Russia came to Takhtarev.<sup>252</sup>

Petr Smidovich, his sister Inna and her husband Lehman arrived. They suggested printing *Iskra* in Russia from celluloid plates, and made examples.<sup>253</sup> Smidovich considered himself 'an expert in faking passports', by smearing them with sweat compressing them. Zasulich and Iuly Tsederbaum arrived and lived with Alexeev.<sup>254</sup>

Ulyanov told Krzhizhanovsky in Samara 'to ensure that our own reliable people penetrate into the largest possible number of committees and try to undermine the southern Central Committee'. He had to win St. Petersburg Committee and 'think about an attack' on Ivanovo Committee, and others in central Russia and the Urals.<sup>255</sup> Ulyanov told Lengnik in Samara to 'turn *yourself* into a committee', accept the Bundist Portnoi 'after assessing him from every angle', and 'push your own people through into the largest number of committees possible'.<sup>256</sup> Ulyanov told the Donbass Committee to make demands on the government 'on behalf of the working class and the whole people', and terror was a 'possible ancillary means'.<sup>257</sup>

St. Petersburg RSDRP Committee had 25 propagandists and 24 students,<sup>258</sup> and Ivan Radchenko reported to London that intelligenty had '*gobbled up 75 copies* of *Chto delat?* 'like a dessert after dinner', but '*did not give any to the workers*'; yet some metalworkers 'talked in its spirit and were 'longing to get down to business'.<sup>259</sup> He and Silvin picked up *Iskra* literature from secret stores, distributed it in St. Petersburg, and sounded out their few contacts elsewhere; but the police arrested *Iskra* agents in the south, closed two presses, destroyed the transport network,<sup>260</sup> and liquidated the southern Liga.<sup>261</sup> Krupskaya told an *Iskra* agent that the Bund had 'tipped towards *Iskra*',<sup>262</sup> and in summer Ulyanov sent Portnoi's contact information to Ivan Radchenko in St. Petersburg. 'You and he (+ a bureau or someone else) must form a Russian Committee for preparing the congress.' He should 'behave *as impressively as you can* and act with *caution*. Take on yourself the greatest number of districts', and give the Samara bureau 'some other name'. He could say he had 'formed this committee' and was 'very glad to have the Bund *participate*'. 'Take on yourself, *without fail*, to be secretary', and say that 'connections have been established with the Volga, the Caucasus, the centre – we have a man from over there – and the South – we're sending two down there', and 'make sure that the whole thing is *entirely in your hands*'.<sup>263</sup>

Ulyanov spent no more than an hour at the Frederick Street 'commune' each day. He did not meet the veteran SR émigrés, and criticised their tactics, but spoke to workers in Whitechapel and explained the RSDRP programme to a Russian-German called Schiller, who had been a bookbinder in Moscow, and was now a typographer for *Iskra*.<sup>264</sup> He and the escapee Blumenfeld got Russian type from local firms, set *Iskra*, and Ulyanov checked the proofs.<sup>265</sup> *Iskra* No. 22 was dated July and had eight pages and two cartoons.<sup>266</sup>

Plekhanov and Potresov rarely visited London, and Axelrod never.<sup>267</sup> When Ulyanov and Krupskaya met his mother and Elizarova in Brittany,<sup>268</sup> Ulyanov wrote to Plekhanov that the congress organising committee would be reorganised 'from top to bottom'.<sup>269</sup> Krasnukha was helping to win St. Petersburg RSDRP committee for *Iskra*,<sup>270</sup> and Ulyanov congratulated Radchenko on 'the beginning of the reorganisation'. It had 'suffered mostly from narrowness and isolation' and reluctance to '*actively* and *resolutely*' work out 'general Party questions'. He should focus on workers and 'friends in the intellectual half', and prepare for 'war on the remnants of "economism"'. Committees should acknowledge *Iskra* as 'the *leading organ*', even if they had doubts.

St. Petersburg RSDRP intelligenty issued a pro-*Iskra* leaflet,<sup>271</sup> which argued that party leaders should be the 'most conscientious and developed elements regardless of whether they come from the workers or other classes'. The workers' organisation wanted to include 'only the advanced revolutionary proletariat', and make 'persons carrying out separate functions' accountable without a 'centralising principle' or 'premature or paper unifications', and they used *Rabochaya mysl* for mass circulation and *Iskra* for 'developed' workers.<sup>272</sup> When A.S.

Tokarev, the 'Bouncer', expelled *Iskra* sympathisers from the Committee,<sup>273</sup> Stasova burned workers' organisation leaflets. When Tokarev was away Radchenko persuaded the Committee to support *Iskra*; but when Tokarev returned he reversed the decision and *Iskra* supporters were arrested.<sup>274</sup>

Krupskaya and Ulyanov returned to London,<sup>275</sup> and he suggested to Petr Smidovich, who was now in Marseilles, that four or five workers in Russian factories should form *kruzhki*, but only one should be 'known'.

[L]et it be said of him: he is one of us, a clever chap, *although he does not take part in the revolution* (not visibly). One member maintains contact with the centre. Each of them has an alternate member. They conduct *several kruzhki* (trade-union, educational, distribution, spy-catching, arming, etc., etc.), the degree of secrecy of a *kruzhok* for catching spies, for example, or for procuring arms, being quite different from that of one devoted to the reading of *Iskra* or the reading of legal literature ... The degree of secrecy will be inversely proportional to the number of members of the *kruzhok* and directly proportional to the remoteness of the *kruzhok's* aims from the *immediate struggle*'.

For further guidance he referred Smidovich to his *Chto delat?*<sup>276</sup>

Noskov smuggled *Iskra* from Zurich to Russia,<sup>277</sup> and complained that the editors recruited agents 'too lightly'. Ulyanov acknowledged that 90 percent of the plans 'end in smoke', and 'the "creaking" of our machinery' was 'nerve-racking', but 'the solution is for *Iskristis* in Russia to get together at last, *find the people and take the management of "Iskra" into their own hands*'.<sup>278</sup> The Samara bureau reported the imminent 'conquest' of Nizhni-Novgorod Committee, and good prospects in Moscow, Odesa and Kharkiv. *Iuzhny rabochoy* had acknowledged *Iskra* as the 'leading organ',<sup>279</sup> but failed to fuse,<sup>280</sup> and Ulyanov asked Ivan Radchenko to go to Kharkiv or Kyiv.<sup>281</sup>

Some *Iskra* agents arrived in London and formed a new congress organising committee with the editors. Krupskaya told agents in Russia that the Bund would join 'eventually', but 'For the time being the O.C. will be considered as not established, and no one but us knows about it'.<sup>282</sup> Krupskaya told Radchenko that printing *Iskra* cost 1,500 marks a month, plus 'considerable transport expenses' and agents' pay, so he should send money via Leipzig. A Swede in the transport network was 'a great bungler', so she asked Lepeshinsky to be his 'nursemaid'. Knipovich became an agent in Odesa and Krasnukha and Krasikov went to London for debriefings and briefings.<sup>283</sup>

*Iskra No. 24* was dated 1 September and had six pages.<sup>284</sup> It argued that terrorists hoped to avoid the 'broader and more difficult struggle of the entire proletariat against the whole of bourgeois society', but they had no roots in the working class, and were 'wreaking vengeance' on one 'scoundrel' only to see another replace him.<sup>285</sup>

From Dresden Kalmykova offered *Iskra* a large amount of money. Ulyanov told her that escapees were 'putting a mass of people at *Iskra's* "disposal"', but they were 'very hard up' and had '*urgent expenses*'. 'Therefore, please send *two thousand marks* immediately, if possible, but 'draw some *three thousand rubles* and keep it at home, so that we could get it from you at short notice'. They needed 'about 300 rubles for departures (quite essential)' and 'about 200 for people here soon'.<sup>286</sup> *Iskra No. 25* was dated 15 September and had six pages.<sup>287</sup>

Ulyanov wrote *Pismo k tovarishchu o nashikh organizatsionnykh zadachakh* (A Letter to a Comrade on Our Organisational Tasks). He argued that *Iskra* should be the RSDRP's '*ideological leader*', 'evolving theoretical truths, tactical principles, general organisational ideas' and tasks; and it should be 'in complete harmony' with the CC and act as the '*direct practical leader*', 'maintaining *personal* connections with all the committees, embracing all the best revolutionary forces' and '*managing*' the 'distribution of literature, the issuing of leaflets, the allocation of forces, the appointment of individuals and groups to take charge of special undertakings, and the preparation of demonstrations' leading to 'an uprising on an All-Russian scale'. All Committees should include enough 'fully convinced' and trained full-time revolutionaries to 'direct *all* aspects of the local movement', and while large Committees might have an '*executive*', every comrade had to be part of a literature distribution 'machine' that could 'inform and mobilise' workers in a city like St. Petersburg 'over-night'. Intelligently should 'rigorously select and train propagandists', who must 'deliver several lectures a week', and be accountable to the Committee via district organisations. They should be all-rounders, not specialised trade unionists, spy-catchers or police-killers. The 'main strength of the movement' was in '*large factories*'. 'Every factory must be our Fortress', with 'a very small number of *revolutionaries*' taking instructions '*directly from the committee*', but combining the '*greatest possible centralisation*' with '*the greatest possible decentralisation*', while 'keeping the Party centre (and therefore the Party as a whole) *informed*'.

For the centre not only to advise, persuade, and argue ... but really conduct the orchestra, it is necessary to know who is playing which fiddle, and where and how instruction has been or is being received in playing each instrument; who is playing out of tune ... and where and why; and who should be transferred, and how and where to, so that the discord may be remedied, etc. At the present time ... we either know nothing about the *real internal* work of a committee, except for its proclamations and general correspondence, or we know about it from friends or good acquaintances. But it is ridiculous to think that a huge Party, which is capable of leading the Russian working-class movement and which is

preparing a general onslaught upon the autocracy, can limit itself to this. The number of committee members should be cut down; each of them, wherever possible, should be entrusted with a definite, special and important function, for which he will be held to account; a special, very small, directing centre must be set up; a network of executive agents must be developed, linking the committee with every large factory, carrying on the regular distribution of literature and giving the centre an exact picture of this distribution and of the entire mechanism of the work; lastly, numerous groups and circles must be formed, which will undertake various functions or unite persons who are close to the Social-Democrats, who help them and are preparing to become Social-Democrats, so that the committee and the centre may be constantly informed ...

We should particularly see to it that as many workers as possible become fully class-conscious and professional revolutionaries and members of the committee. Once there is a *single* and not a dual committee, the matter of the committee members *personally* knowing many workers is of particular importance. In order to take the lead in whatever goes on in the workers' midst, it is necessary to be able to have access to all quarters, to know very many workers, to have all sorts of channels, etc., etc. The committee should, therefore, include, as far as possible, all the principal *leaders* of the working-class movement from among the workers themselves; it should direct *all* aspects of the local movement and take charge of *all* local institutions, forces and means of the Party.

A lithographed copy was sent to St. Petersburg, where it was copied by hand and hectograph and distributed widely,<sup>288</sup> while Ulyanov tackled émigré SDs and VPSR intelligenty in western Europe.

Saül Piker was born into a Pinsk merchant's family in 1865.<sup>289</sup> He became a revolutionary at school, entered St. Petersburg University in 1884 and joined Narodnaya volya, but was twice arrested.<sup>290</sup> After two years in prison, and ten in exile,<sup>291</sup> he joined the RSDRP in 1899.<sup>292</sup> By 1900 he was an editor of *Rabochee delo* in Paris,<sup>293</sup> and a leading 'economist'.<sup>294</sup> In November 1902 Piker, his co-editor Vladimir Makhnovets, and VPSR intelligenty packed a hall in Geneva to hear Ulyanov speak, and several young SDs joined the few *Iskra* supporters;<sup>295</sup>

In Germany Wallach addressed postal packages of *Iskra* in such a way that recipients could deny they had ordered them if the police asked questions. He cycled round the countryside with 500 copies, filled false-bottomed cases for others, and recruited sailors to take consignments from Marseille to Black Sea ports.<sup>296</sup>

Tarshis was one of very few workers on the new RSDRP congress organising committee,<sup>297</sup> and he and Galperin went to Berlin and joined Gruppa sodeystviya russkoy revolyutsionnoy sotsial-demokraty (The Group for Assisting Russian Revolutionary Social-Democracy). It was based in a woman's house, and she took Tarshis to see what looked like a 'bourgeois gathering' of 'well-dressed gentlemen sitting around small tables drinking beer', which turned out to be an SPD meeting. Mikhail Vecheslov, the *Iskra* 'representative', rented a damp basement for Tarshis and Galperin, who spoke German, but fell ill. Tarshis went to 'renew old connections' and get Ivan Babushkin across the border. He asked an émigré Bund leader who had led his Vilnius kruzhok why they ignored non-Jews, he replied that '*Iskra* does not ask what the workers want; it lays down a line of policy which it considers correct and necessary for the workers. The Bund does the same';<sup>298</sup> but *Iskra* needed more money.

### **(viii) The Lower Depths**

The *Iskra* agent Tsetsilia Zelikson read Ulyanov's pseudonymous book on the development of Russian capitalism in Kharkiv prison in 1901.<sup>299</sup> She went on hunger strike, and was allowed her to go home to Vitebsk province under surveillance, then claimed that she needed medical treatment, got the governor's permission to go abroad and went to Daugavpils. The Bundist Kaplinsky was a police spy, but maintained his cover by getting some 'illegals' across the border. He gave Zelikson the address of a woman who handed over her legal passport, and Zelikson went to Zurich. She memorised addresses and passwords, copied an *Iskra* leaflet on linen, sewed it into her coat hem and left for St. Petersburg, where 'Arrests were constant'. 'Every night I slept at a different place'. She sent Nogin to London to rest, read and meet the *Iskra* editors, tracked down 'fragments' of the northern workers' organisation and its paper's correspondents with SD 'leanings', and she and the former Putilov workers Kitik and Ivan Alexandrov built the nucleus of an RSDRP Committee in central Russia. Kitik went to Kostroma, and Zelikson to Yaroslavl and Ivanovo, to recruit students to build workers' kruzhki. Zelikson went on to Tver, where her host, 'a draftsman or land surveyor', treated her 'rather uncivilly', and her contact, a doctor, 'protested against the Committee not cancelling his address' and sending him 'all sorts of trouble'. He was not a 'firm' SD, but a 'reserve' with 'a good theoretical training', so he could 'weave together the torn threads of the organisation and hand them over to fresh workers' after arrests;<sup>300</sup> but *Iskra* agents need a considerable amount of money.

That year the hero of one of Gorky's novels joined a socialist kruzhok and became a 'conscious worker'. The police deported Gorky to Arzamas, but hundreds of students carried him to the station and he was allowed to break his journey in Moscow.<sup>301</sup> He wrote a play in which a worker showed the superiority of socialist

consciousness to moralism,<sup>302</sup> but the St. Petersburg authorities refused to allow performances until an official gauged the audience's reaction at a dress rehearsal. Even after cuts, the censors allowed only four performances for selected audiences, and police surrounded the theatre and acted as ushers.<sup>303</sup> In January 1902 Gorky wrote a play about tramps, with a cast of 20.<sup>304</sup> He told his publisher Piatnitsky that 'we don't need the perfect man, we need a fighter, a worker, an avenger. We'll perfect ourselves later, once we have settled the scores'.<sup>305</sup> In February the Russian language and literature division of the Imperial Academy of Sciences elected Chekhov, Korolenko and Gorky as members, but the tsar ordered his advisors to persuade the Academy to unelect Gorky, and they did so in March.<sup>306</sup> (Korolenko and Chekhov later resigned.)<sup>307</sup>

In summer six Moscow RSDRP Committee intelligently complained to London that the government had 'organised a gang of traitors-provocateurs, together with thick-headed slaves, under the leadership of Zubatov, the super-spy',<sup>308</sup> and they felt 'powerless to deal with police socialism'.<sup>309</sup> A workers' group, Trud (Truth), distributed *Iskra* leaflets which demanded free speech and the rights to join a union and strike.<sup>310</sup> When *Iskra's* Vera Kozhevnikova left Zurich for Moscow she found the Committee 'non-existent'; but she met Gorky at a 'secret social evening', and he invited her to his new play and gave her another ticket for Zelikson.<sup>311</sup>

The St. Petersburg Bestuzhev student Concordia Gromova had joined a demonstration against the conscription of the Kyiv students in 1901, and the police searched her room and found a revolver and illegal books, including Kravchinsky's *Andrey Kuzhukov* and Chernyshevsky's *Chto delat?*<sup>312</sup> She was expelled, and imprisoned for three months, then deported to Irkutsk.<sup>313</sup> In 1902 she went to Paris, enrolled in the Free Russian School of Social Sciences, heard Ulyanov and other émigré SDs speak,<sup>314</sup> trained as an *Iskra* agent,<sup>315</sup> and returned to Moscow.

In autumn Gorky read his new play script to the Moscow Arts Theatre company,<sup>316</sup> and they went to the Khitrov Market and tenements to see beggars, thieves and tramps. The censors expected the play to flop and let it pass unscathed.<sup>317</sup> Gorky met Moscow RSDRP Committee,<sup>318</sup> in a woman dentists' surgery, and Gromova reported to London that he thought *Iskra* was 'worthy of respect, talented and intelligent', and the RSDRP was the 'strongest and most solid' organisation.<sup>319</sup> Kozhevnikova left Moscow to work for *Iskra* in Munich.<sup>320</sup>

In December Stanislavsky directed Gorky's *Na Dne* (*The Lower Depths*). It was set in a doss house, where there was much talk of passports, so a corrupt policeman felt at home. A pie-seller scorned the idea that the police might stop her husband beating her, since she had 'complained to God for eight years' and 'he did not help'. A cap-maker needed no conscience since he was poor, and a Tatar argued that the Koran had all the answers, but he could not persuade anyone that honesty mattered, since everyone lied to a judge. A *barin* (gentleman) jailed for murdering his wife's lover told a prostitute she 'should have made me drop on all fours when I was above you', and a pilgrim noted that 'Nobility is like small-pox. A man may get over it - but it leaves marks'. He believed the 'people' would escape from their difficulties, and 'whatever you believe in, exists', then 'vanished under the very eyes of the police'. The prostitute thought it might take 100 years to realise her hopes, and the actor hanged himself. Gorky took 22 curtain calls.<sup>321</sup> Pro-government newspapers damned the play, censors made cuts, authorised one performance at a time and barred it from workers' districts or in any language other than Russian, but provincial theatres staged it, and the play script sold 40,000 copies in a fortnight.<sup>322</sup> Gorky told Piatnitsky that its success was 'exceptional' and enclosed an invitation from the Kleines Theatre to stage the play in Berlin.<sup>323</sup>

In Munich Helphand's publishing house raised money for the RSDRP by protecting Russian copyrights.<sup>324</sup> He went to Sevastopol to meet Gorky, who gave him power of attorney to collect fees for *Na Dne* in Germany. Helphand could keep 20 percent, but he had to give Gorky 20 percent and the RSDRP 60 percent.<sup>325</sup> Gorky agreed to give 1,000 rubles a year to the Moscow RSDRP Committee, 4,000 to *Iskra* and 5,000 to the RSDRP CC.<sup>326</sup> His partner, Maria Andreeva, had performed in *Na Dne*,<sup>327</sup> but gave up acting,<sup>328</sup> and the couple organised fund-raising concerts for the RSDRP. They also hid illegal literature, found passports, supplied addresses, arranged meeting places, set up presses, transported illegal literature and supported Krasny Krest.<sup>329</sup> Gorky knew that the wealthy industrialist Savva Morozov had 'highly revolutionary views',<sup>330</sup> so he introduced him to Leonid Krasin.<sup>331</sup>

In London, earlier that year, Bonch-Bruevich had offered money to Gorky's friend Vladimir Posse for *Zhizn*. Some of its editors lived in Paris and Geneva, but then the first London issue appeared. By summer all the editors were in Geneva,<sup>332</sup> and Bonch-Bruevich and Vera Velichkina helped to transport copies to Russia. Late that year the editors asked Gorky to take charge of the literary section, but while he agreed, he declined to donate. Bonch-Bruevich fell out with the editors, gave 19 manuscripts intended for *Zhizn* to *Iskra* and joined its network.<sup>333</sup>

The former exiled SD Glafire Okulova had propagandised in the workers' districts of Kyiv in 1899, and became a member of Ivanovo RSDRP Committee in 1900.<sup>334</sup> She subsequently became an *Iskra* agent in Samara, and then Moscow, and was co-opted onto the new congress organising committee late in 1902. She was arrested and exiled for three years to Yakutsk,<sup>335</sup> where many Jews were exiled, but the Bund remained a problem for *Iskra*.



## (ix) Be stricter with the Bund!

In September 1902 the Bund conference in Berdichev, Ukraine, decided that members should be 'primarily' those who 'display constant revolutionary energy and activity', knew 'everything happening at *all* levels' of the working class and 'society' and how to 'seize of every sign of discontent and protest' and 'unite the separate streams into one river'.<sup>336</sup> The Bund CC had hailed the courage of the assassin Lekert, and the conference decided to oppose terror as a means of political struggle, but to carry on avenging atrocities.<sup>337</sup>

In November *Iskra* supporters met in Pskov.<sup>338</sup> Ivan Radchenko, who had helped to establish an underground press in Chişinău,<sup>339</sup> represented *Iskra*, Krasnukha St. Petersburg RSDRP Committee intelligently and E.Ya. Levin *luzhny rabochy*, while Krasikov and Lepeshinsky attended unofficially.<sup>340</sup> The three delegates formally constituted themselves as the Russian congress organising committee, and co-opted Krasikov, Lepeshinsky, Krzhizhanovsky, Lengnik and Stopani.<sup>341</sup> They agreed that negotiations with the Bund would have a 'scrupulously polite character', if only to 'deprive the esteemed oppositionists of unnecessary excuses for obstruction'.<sup>342</sup> The Bundist Portnoi had received a vague invitation very late, and had been unable to attend.<sup>343</sup> Krasnukha, Lepeshinsky and Radchenko were soon arrested, and Iuly Tsederbaum reported to London.

The forces aren't prepared for victory at a congress attended by all committees. If business continues in such a slapdash, lazy fashion as now, then there remains just one decisive step: agreement (whether by means of a congress, conference or a tour of all 'our' committees: St. Petersburg, Moscow, Tver, Nizhni-Novgorod, Saratov, Kyiv, Kharkiv, *luzhni rabochy*, the Northern Union about whether *Iskra* should be the central paper, about whether these committees should unite to into one organisation, appoint a Central Committee and invite groups remaining outside the agreement to enter into agreement with the Central Committee. On the condition that in the aforementioned committees there will be plenty of ours, this way remains the only method of obtaining rapid unification without ... entering into a compromise with the Union [the original émigré SD organisation] and Borba.<sup>344</sup>

Krasikov's announcement of the formation of the congress organising committee claimed that the Bund had not responded to an invitation. 'We hope that these reasons were purely accidental, and that the Bund will not delay in sending its representatives'.<sup>345</sup>

From London Ulyanov told Krasikov that he was 'surprised' that the Pskov meeting had co-opted *Iskra* agents without inviting the Bund, but that was 'not so important if you are sure that it will cause no inconvenience'. 'Be stricter with the Bund! Be stricter, too, in writing to the Bund' and *Rabochee delo*, 'reducing their function to such a minimum' that 'it cannot be of importance'. Krasikov could 'entrust technical arrangements' for the congress to 'special delegates from you or to your special *agents*;' but 'don't hand this matter over to *anyone* and don't forget that the people abroad are weak in secrecy techniques.' The committee should outline the congress agenda and 'provide mandates for those who have fled from Russia', in order to 'economise expenses'.<sup>346</sup> Krupskaya put 'links (transport, technical and other)', literature, funds and agents at the committee's disposal,<sup>347</sup> and Ulyanov told Krzhizhanovsky that the 'main task' was to strengthen it, 'give battle' for recognition from 'all who are opposed' and 'prepare for convening the congress as soon as possible. Please do everything you can to ensure that everybody understands this task correctly and that it is energetically carried out'.<sup>348</sup>

Vladimir Rozanov,<sup>349</sup> a 'soft' *Iskra* supporter, joined the organising committee,<sup>350</sup> as did two women. Ekaterina Alexandrova was born in 1864. She later supported Narodnaya volya, but joined Brusnev's St. Petersburg SD kruzhok in the early 1890s, was arrested in 1896 and exiled for five years, but joined the *Iskra* organisation in 1901. In October 1902, after several members of the congress organising committee were arrested in Pskov, but none of those from *luzhny rabochy*, Alexandrova was sent to Russia to work for the paper's unification with *Iskra*, and join the organising committee.<sup>351</sup> So did 28-year-old Rozalia Halberstadt, who had married Krokhmal,<sup>352</sup> but she and Krasikov supported *luzhny rabochy's* independence.<sup>353</sup> Krokhmal and Gerasim Mishinev became Ufa RSDRP Committee's congress delegates.<sup>354</sup> and Krasnukha went to Geneva to get '*Iskra*-fied' by Plekhanov.<sup>355</sup>

St. Petersburg RSDRP Committee had fewer than 100 members,<sup>356</sup> but distributed at least 10,000 leaflets a week and had received 160 kilos of literature from abroad.<sup>357</sup> The workers' organisation chose Lidia Makhnovets as a congress delegate, and, after consulting Stasova, *Iskra's* Boris Goldman chose Alexandr Shotman. He had been abroad a long time and knew little about the party, but Stasova appointed him as the Vyborg district organiser and told him he had to go to the congress because he was a worker.<sup>358</sup> Finding *Iskra* worker-delegates was harder in the south.

In spring 1901 23-year-old Andrey Shestakov had attended a meeting of 'unemployed' RSDRP members in Samara, then left for the Donbass. 'You could not speak of an organisation, but of individuals who passed you on one to the other', and the 'flying squads' who distributed agitational literature had little success.<sup>359</sup> Early in 1902 he and two others formed Donetsk sotsial-demokratichesky soyuz rabotnikov gornodobyvayushchey

promyshlennosti (The Donetsk Social-Democratic Union of Mine Industry Workers).<sup>360</sup> Donetsk RSDRP Committee knew nothing about the Soyuz, whose headquarters were in a Rostov-na-Donu newspaper office,<sup>361</sup> but the Soyuz did not 'go too deeply into all the fine points' of the RSDRP programme or take part in sectarian wrangles. The Bund and *Rabochaya mysl* influenced them, and they exchanged literature with other socialists, but refused to import any from abroad. They recruited only people they knew well, and distributed leaflets agitating for strikes, but peasants and workers did not understand them, and after they leafleted in Luzovka, Mykolaiv, Taganrog and Rostov-na-Donu, the police made 30 arrests. Shestakov went to Luzovka, posed as the clerk of a lawyer specialising in compensation claims, and met workers; but it took time to contact 15 SDs who were mainly Jewish tailors, barbers and shoemakers, plus a printer, two or three intelligenty and 'external students'. They would not let Shestakov meet three 'amateur kruzhki' of ironworkers, and they had no contacts with miners, so he and others pasted leaflets on fences and pit props, and stuffed them in ironworkers' toolboxes and pockets. When one picked up a leaflet, the ironworks police beat and arrested him and 18 others.<sup>362</sup> Late that year a leaflet demanded a nine-hour day, a rise, the abolition of fines and sacking of obnoxious engineers. Railway workers went on strike and SDs distributed thousands of leaflets. After Rostov-na-Donu railway managers cut pay,<sup>363</sup> 3,000 went on strike,<sup>364</sup> and it developed into a general strike for a large rise, a nine-hour day and the end of the autocracy.<sup>365</sup> When 10,000 others joined them, meetings attracted up to 40,000,<sup>366</sup> and *Iskra's* Petr Bronstein and I. Stavsky spoke.<sup>367</sup> Strikers injured ten Cossacks, but they killed six strikers and injured many more.<sup>368</sup>

Some RSDRP intelligenty wanted conspiratorial arrangements which marginalised workers, and recently-arrived intelligenty in Katerynoslav persuaded the RSDRP Committee to take major decisions and control 'centres' and 'cells';<sup>369</sup> but after the workers' organisation called themselves the Committee, the intelligenty relented.<sup>370</sup> The governor noted that miners were 'less dangerous' than factory workers in their 'propensity for disorder or their receptivity to different types of propaganda', since their 'intelligence and literacy' were 'considerably lower', and they acted 'exclusively on the basis of unjust payment for work, or a lowering of wage rates'. The Okhrana sent spies across the Donbass,<sup>371</sup> but Rostov-na-Donu RSDRP Committee distributed 30,000 leaflets.<sup>372</sup>

In December Zasulich argued in *Iskra* that the RSDRP should include only 'chosen, illegal revolutionaries' who were 'dedicated solely to revolutionary activity' and who can 'at any and all times, alter their names as well as their conditions of existence in order to escape persecution'. Only they could 'acquire that conspiratorial acumen, that agility in revolutionary matters which even under different conditions could not be achieved unless one had a most outstanding ability.'<sup>373</sup> More *Iskra* agents arrived in Russia from abroad.

The Saratov SD Maria Essen had been exiled to Yakutsk, but in 1901 she got a copy of *Iskra* and had heated discussions with other exiles. She escaped to Geneva in 1902, and late that year Ulyanov told her that 'We must have our "Bebels"', and gave her and other émigrés several tasks.

- 1) to create, reinforce and consolidate Iskraist committees in the great industrial centres; 2) introduce advanced workers into the leading party organisations; 3) inculcate workers with the principles of scientific revolutionary Marxism; 4) deploy and reinforce the struggle against opportunist tendencies of all kinds; 5) advocate in the working masses the necessity of performing public actions, demonstrations, strikes and other forms of revolutionary struggle against the autocracy and the ruling classes; 6) prepare the Second Party Congress.

Essen went to Kyiv and met Krzhizhanovsky, Lengnik and Noskov, who co-opted her onto the Russian RSDRP CC.<sup>374</sup> Lengnik struggled to control the Kyiv Committee,<sup>375</sup> but the police seized 1,400 copies of *Iskra*.<sup>376</sup>

## (x) Saratov

The Saratov peasant Ivan Rykov was a trader when Alexey was born in 1881. Ivan died in 1889, but Alexey's sister Klavidiya helped him to enter a gymnasium in 1892,<sup>377</sup> and he tutored other pupils by 1894. He stopped believing in god, discussed the peasant question with SRs, helped to produce an illegal journal and read Marx; and by 1900 he hid illegal literature so well that it survived a police raid. His imperfect conduct mark barred him from entering Moscow or St. Petersburg University, so he enrolled at Kazan University, joined the RSDRP Committee and led a workers' kruzhok. In spring 1901 he was imprisoned, and after nine months he was deported to Saratov under surveillance, pending sentence. Early in 1902 he joined the RSDRP Committee, which supported *Iskra*,<sup>378</sup> and led a large kruzhok.<sup>379</sup>

Earlier that year the St. Petersburg *Iskra* agent Mykola Skrypnik had been sentenced to five years' exile in Siberia. At Krasnoyarsk a doctor told him about a mass prosecution of *Iskra* supporters, so he escaped and reached Saratov by summer.<sup>380</sup> Egor Baramzin and Maria Golubeva had formed a secret *Iskra* cell inside the

Committee,<sup>381</sup> but Baramzin was struggling against the influence of ‘economism’, so he and Skrypnik printed leaflets, propagandised workers and students and ‘worked for the final split’ of the artisans’ organisation.<sup>382</sup>

The SD rabochy-intelligent Semën Kanatchikov felt that *Iskra* wanted to attract the ‘warrior, whose blood is already boiling’ and put ‘the sharply honed weapon of revolutionary socialism into his hands and teach him how to use it’; but it was too intelligently-oriented for mass circulation, so his kruzhok carried on publishing *Rabochaya gazeta* and giving illegal literature to peasants. Kanatchikov’s ‘novice’ worker contacts distributed legal and illegal material, got scarce works from the local agents of a St. Petersburg book-dealer and prized Nekrasov’s poetry; but while they led successful strikes they lacked ‘propaganda of the higher sort’.

The deported Moscow intelligent Grigory Mandelshtam arrived and joined the RSDRP Committee, which ‘set’ him against the ‘conceited, inflated, empty-headed SR generals’. Kanatchikov was in prison before May Day,<sup>383</sup> with most of the Committee, and Baramzin, Golubeva and others took over, but the workers’ committee remained independent. SDs and SRs issued May Day leaflets, and managed a small demonstration with anti-government banners and slogans praising the assassination of the interior minister, but the police arrested 62 and beat Rykov severely. More arrests followed, and though some were released quite soon, most were to be detained until their trials. In summer a cabinet-maker betrayed the artisans’ workshop and the police closed it.<sup>384</sup> The police got too close to Skrypnik, so a former St. Petersburg classmate gave him 1,000 rubles to take to Samara, and Krzhizhanovsky sent him to pick up literature in Kyiv and drop some off in Kharkiv, and then go to Ekaterinburg in Siberia. Skrypnik worked at the power station, led a workers’ kruzhok and recruited. He failed to split *Iskra* supporters from the unaligned SD Urals organisation; but two *Iskra* agents arrived, and one joined the RSDRP Committee and linked workers’ kruzhki.<sup>385</sup>

By late that year Saratov RSDRP Committee had distributed 32,000 agitational leaflets, but the number of new arrests were ‘the most massive in memory’.<sup>386</sup> Ponty Denisov was sentenced to a year in prison, followed by exile to Siberia for life, for posting May Day leaflets. Workers debated about ‘economists’ and ‘*Iskra*-ites’, until they read *Chto delat?* by ‘Lenin’,<sup>387</sup> then the RSDRP Committee adopted *Iskra* as its organ, and called on other Committees to do likewise,<sup>388</sup> but transporting *Iskra* from abroad remained difficult.

## (xi) The northern transport route

Konrad Zilliacus was born into a middle-class Finnish family in 1855, and he later trained as a lawyer.<sup>389</sup> In 1878 he married a widow who was 11 years older and had seven children,<sup>390</sup> but was wealthy, and he became a gentleman farmer. The couple had three children, but in 1886 he went to Chicago, where he trained as a journalist,<sup>391</sup> and had the marriage annulled.<sup>392</sup> By 1892 Finnish colleagues convinced him to be a nationalist, so in he sailed home, married the daughter of a successful US wine merchant, and published demands for Finnish independence. The police got too close, so the couple went to Japan in 1894, but they returned in 1898.<sup>393</sup>

Early in 1899 the tsar announced that the Finnish army would be integrated into the Russian army,<sup>394</sup> and the governor-general banned an outspoken newspaper and tightened security to prevent smuggling.<sup>395</sup> That year trade unionists founded Suomen Työväenpuolue (The Finnish Workers’ Party).<sup>396</sup> By 1900 87 percent of Finland’s 2.7 million people lived in rural areas, but 60 percent had no land and half were waged labourers. The Party demanded the right to vote and autonomy from Russia;<sup>397</sup> but in summer the tsar announced that Russian would be the language used in official correspondence and government institutions in Finland.<sup>398</sup>

Zilliacus and Arvid Noevius monitored illegal Russian papers and wrote most of *Fria Ord* (*Free Words*). Two men printed it in Stockholm, usually twice monthly, on up to six pages of onionskin paper,<sup>399</sup> weighing under three grammes.<sup>400</sup> Late that year Zilliacus sent small packages with trusted passengers on ships plying between Stockholm and Helsinki, and small boats carried consignments of up to 50 kilos to the Finnish coast. By 1902 he worked with professional smugglers and Swedish fishermen who sailed to Finland, and in spring his specially-constructed yacht could sail through shallow waters. He reached an agreement with Russian revolutionaries and liberals,<sup>401</sup> and by summer Finnish couriers took illegal literature to the Russian border.<sup>402</sup>

By late that year Bobrovsky, Bauman and Krokhmal were members of the émigré revolutionary Liga in Geneva.<sup>403</sup> The SD intelligent Isaak Lalayants had been exiled to Siberia, but soon escaped to Geneva, and ran Blumenfeld’s former press, and in summer the *Iskra* agent Praskovia Kouliabko escaped from Siberia to Geneva.<sup>404</sup> A Swiss bookbinder invented a dissolvable glue to stick copies of *Iskra* together to form board which could be made into cartons, book-bindings, picture-backs, ornaments, suitcases and trunks, to be taken to an agent at the Finnish-Russian border.<sup>405</sup>

Nikolai Burenin was born into a wealthy St. Petersburg merchant’s family in 1874. After graduating from a commercial school he spent three years at the Art Academy,<sup>406</sup> but early in 1901, after he attended the Kazan

Square demonstration,<sup>407</sup> Stasova recruited him to the RSDRP,<sup>408</sup> and tasked him with establishing *Iskra's* 'northern route'.<sup>409</sup> His estate on the Finnish-Russian border was accessible by both horse and train,<sup>410</sup> and by autumn 1902 he had warehouses, presses and funds, and smuggled weapons as well as illegal literature.<sup>411</sup> He dissolved the boards of *Iskra* in warm water, dried them and sent them to St. Petersburg, 50km away.<sup>412</sup>

Stasova authorised Vladimir Smirnov in Helsinki to pay for transport, and he negotiated with Zilliacus, who offered to get large quantities of literature to Finland, but it would probably take one or two weeks to reach St. Petersburg. Couriers already took VPSR literature from Finland to Russia, and Zilliacus offered the RSDRP the same service for 1.25 marks per kilo. From December most smuggled copies of *Iskra* and *Zarya* probably went that way. Zilliacus's 'express service' for urgent correspondence took one week from western Europe to St. Petersburg, and he offered to help 'illegals' travel to and from Russia for 40 marks each. He paid couriers 70 marks a trip, and 50 marks for freight, but the operation cost around 500 marks a month and was dangerous. Noevius took charge of transport across Finland, and Zilliacus moved to Sweden, but was politically ostracized for advocating closer ties with Russian revolutionaries. He paid women couriers to make two crossings from to Finland with small packages each month, and had them transported by rail to close to the Finnish-Russian border. That year Zilliacus shipped almost 10,000 kilos of illegal literature to Russia.<sup>413</sup> The economic recession was ending,<sup>414</sup> but the Bund CC had to do much of its organising from abroad, though it attracted a promising young recruit.

## (xii) Grinberg

David Grinberg was born in the Kaunas province town of Shavel in 1836. He entered St. Petersburg Military-Medical Academy, graduated, settled in Minsk practised in the army. His wife was from Vilnius, and nearly all her siblings had converted to Orthodoxy. The Grinbergs observed Russian holidays, and Grinberg attended an Orthodox church. The family had a large apartment, but holidayed in a dacha.

Vladimir was born in a Liepāja dacha in 1879, and his parents had him baptized in an Orthodox Church. When he was three a Baltic German woman looked after him and helped him to learn German, and a French woman later taught him French. Most of his parents' acquaintances were Jews, but they read German authors and spoke German, though Vladimir's mother sometimes spoke *zhargon* (Yiddish). Vladimir recalled that his Jewish origins felt 'like a heavy burden' and 'shameful'; so he parroted the adults who insisted that 'We are Russians'. His father was also the chief medical officer of the Liepāja-Romny railway, and held a civilian rank which was equivalent to somewhere between a colonel and a general. Jews could not become generals, yet he had a large portrait of the tsar in his study, and an old Torah with a French translation, which he read to Vladimir.

In autumn 1888 nine-year-old Vladimir entered Minsk's Russian gymnasium. He recalled that most teachers lacked the ability to teach, had a very limited outlook and did not like their pupils, and the feeling was reciprocated. In 1892, when Jewish officials were under attack, his father converted to Lutheranism; but he died early in 1893, and left nothing but debts. His widow was severely ill, and had to sell almost all the library, move her family into a modest house, and she also converted to Lutheranism. During Vladimir's last years at the gymnasium he was top of his class, but lost his religious faith. He was anxious when the tsar was gravely ill in 1894, but after he died the streets of Minsk were calm and the shops remained open. Vladimir 'had never heard anything about a workers' movement', though he had heard the term 'Social Democracy', but he remained a moderate liberal until 1896, when he read a work by Vissarion Belinsky. At Passover he heard about Jews and soldiers clashing in the market square, and read a book by the German radical Gerhart Hauptmann. In spring 1897 Vladimir took his final examinations, and in autumn he entered Kyiv University. It felt like being abroad; but the lectures were not worth attending, and he joined an illegal *zemliachestvo*. One student commented about 'Jewish whistling' and was 'seized, placed in the defendant's dock' and condemned. When a monument was to be erected to the Polish poet, Adam Mickiewicz, the University student sovet organised a meeting, and Grinberg heard a Polish socialist deliver a 'strikingly revolutionary speech' from behind a bench and surrounded by Poles.

In spring 1898, in Minsk, Grinberg met Grigory Gershuni, a distant relation who had been a student at Kyiv University, and a friend of Grinberg's mentioned the name of Marx. Grinberg had heard about *Das Kapital*, but knew nothing about Marxism. When a friend explained it in a few words it was a 'tremendous revelation', and he soon met a leading Bundist.

Mark Vilter had established an illegal press in Bobruisk which printed *Die arbetar shtimme*. That summer the police arrested the Bund CC and seized the press, but Vilter escaped to a small town near Kyiv, where he ran another press, and visited Kyiv occasionally. In autumn Grinberg studied political economy and met Vilter, but did not know his real name. He used Grinberg's flat to meet Uritsky and other members of the Kyiv Committee, and told Grinberg about Plekhanov, Ulyanov and Iuly Tsederbaum. Grinberg's flatmate bought a 'civilian coat' and 'a

big black fur hat', and 'dashed off' to kruzhki. Grinberg read many SD works, and though he 'remained on the sidelines', he plunged 'wholeheartedly into the student movement'.

In February 1899 Kyiv students were horrified by news that Cossacks had beaten St. Petersburg University students with their deadly whips. The sovet called a huge meeting in the largest auditorium, which decided to strike. Grinberg was elected to the sovet, which issued daily hectographed bulletins about the struggle across the empire, and he spoke at mass meetings. One day the University gates were locked, and that evening a few hundred students discussed what to do, but troops appeared, surrounded them with flashing bayonets and took them to prison. More students were arrested, and when the governor promised a delegation he would release them if they promised to hold no more demonstrations, they agreed. Grinberg and others disagreed with this decision, but a majority supported it. The University remained closed, but only a handful of students took their examinations. Many were deported, and Grinberg was given 24 hours to return to Minsk under surveillance.

The Bund had published thousands of copies of *Di arbeter shtime* and *Der yidisher arbeiter* in Minsk, Vilnius, Białystok, Łódź and Warszawa, as well as local organs and tens of thousands of small pamphlets on thin paper; but they were scarce in Minsk, and were passed around until they were in tatters. Grinberg, Ilyussha Vilenkin and Yashka Kaplan, who had also been expelled from university, decided to issue a newspaper, and Yitskok Teumen asked Grisha Shakhnovich, a highly skilled factory locksmith to provide technical assistance. It was the first time that Grinberg had been in a worker's room, and he was surprised that it was no worse than his own. The paper never appeared, but the three young men studied political economy. Grinberg 'turned towards Marx', studied *Das Kapital* 'meticulously', and considered himself 'a confirmed Marxist'; but in autumn two gendarmes arrived during the night and took him to Kyiv prison. It was full of students, but their solitary cell doors were left open, and they played and sang together. After a fortnight Grinberg was sent home to await his sentence.

Gershuni had previously helped Krasny Krest in Minsk, but Grinberg found that he was involved in 'some kind of underground activity'. In 1900 Ekaterina Breshkovskaya visited him, and Grinberg met her and an older man who had served a sentence of katorga, but Gershuni was briefly detained in autumn. Grinberg and Vilenkin led a kruzhek of three or four young workers, and that winter, along with Kaplan, they met leaders of the Minsk Bund. The three young men suggested unsuccessfully that they should lead workers' kruzhki, and be admitted to the leadership, but were given a few contacts with Christian Russian and Polish workers in the railway workshops and two immense metallurgical plants. They wrote a May Day leaflet in Russian in the name of the Minsk workers' committee, Gershuni hectographed printed copies and Grinberg handed them to a worker in a park, but nothing came of it. Kaplan had Bund contacts, and Grinberg wrote two articles for the May Day issue of *Der veker*, and on May Day Kaplan and Grinberg attended a meeting in nearby woods. The Bund's *razborka* (agitators' assembly) was divided by trades and led by a *skhodka* (gathering), which selected a delegate to the 'centre'. Grinberg and Kaplan had no trade, but they were co-opted. The *razborka* mainly consisted of young male workers, but there were three young women, plus 'Khatshe', who may once have been a weaver, and the intelligent Albert Zalkind, and they discussed whether to focus on kruzhki or 'mass action'. Grinberg was told to choose a pseudonym, but make sure the initials matched those on his boots. There were a few thousand Jewish workers in Minsk, and the Bund organised 1,000 of them. In a few months Grinberg, Kaplan and Vilenkin were 'admitted' to the 'centre', which included Boris Frumkin and Zhenya Hurvich, who had translated the first volume of *Das Kapital* into Yiddish. They met in a small forest near the railway line to Brest, and discussed whether or not to publish a legal newspaper and allow Zionists to enter Bundist unions. Agitators operated in the *birzha*, a street frequented by workers, but though the three young intelligentsy were forbidden to take part, Grinberg met comrades in a nearby teahouse, whose proprietor reserved one of his two rooms for Bundists. In summer the *razborka* met in the woods on Saturdays, and included a group of poluintelligentsy with literary talent, and propagandists. There was no full-time 'professional revolutionist', but one member secretly liaised with the CC.

In small towns near the border the Bund smuggled literature and comrades, including a young bristle worker known as Abram, but he soon left. In autumn the three young intelligentsy produced *Der Minsker arbeter* (*The Minsk Worker*), but the leaders 'examined each item, word by word', before they allowed it to be published. Grinberg opposed the way in which the RSDRP was being built 'from the top down', and believed it should 'arise of itself, from below'; but he was under surveillance, and his home was searched twice in rapid succession. Over winter Minsk workers were savagely beaten for the first time.

By 1901 Minsk Bundists wanted to form a Committee, but needed the permission of two party bodies, and neither the Kyiv Committee nor the Bund CC agreed. Grinberg could not read or write Yiddish, but understood it when it was spoken, though he struggled to speak it accurately himself; yet when a gendarme arrested him early that year, at 3.00am, and gave him a questionnaire, he wrote 'Jew' as his nationality. In Minsk prison the glove-maker Tsilal Bulkin, a member of the Vilnius Committee, explained how they used Yiddish in propaganda and agitation; but Grinberg was soon moved to a Moscow police station cell, since Taganka Prison was full; but he was

later transferred there, and the guard outside his cell did not know his name, but only his number. All the political cells were surrounded to the left and right, above and below, by those of ordinary criminals, to prevent knocking messages on the wall, but the political simply knocked harder. Eventually Grinberg heard that he would stay in prison until he was exiled to Siberia; but when he was taken to the Okhrana, Zubatov told him that his relatives had interceded for him and he could return to Minsk until he was sentenced. In summer he was sentenced to five years' exile in Yakutsk, but late that year he was due to be conscripted into the army. He had to strip naked to be minutely examined, and was sent to the hospital to confirm that he had a chronic kidney ailment, as he claimed, and he was given a year's deferment, but tricked his guard and escaped.

At the border a Jewish smuggler wanted 50 rubles to get him to Leipzig, and at the dead of night he boarded a wagon with two young comrades, an older Jewish woman and ten peasants heading to the USA. The Jewish guide left with their cash, but promised to return it, and two gentile smugglers remained. The ride lasted until 5.00pm next day, and then a soldier arrived and demanded two rubles from each of them. Eventually they reached the border and were told to run across. Next morning a Jewish smuggler tried to give them a 'frightful exchange fee' for German marks, but Grinberg agitated the peasants, and the man caved in; but instead of accompanying them he gave them a list of railway stations, and they had to run for 15km in two hours to catch a train, and just made it. Grinberg reached Frankfurt, then took a train to Bern.

The Bund leader Avrom Mutnik lived in Bern, as did three leading SRs, and the city was 'swarming with Russians'. There were many young male and female Jewish students, since the University did not have discriminatory policies or require diplomas; but lodging houses often had a sign reading 'No Russians!' or 'No Slavs!' Grinberg enrolled in the philosophy faculty, but also raised money, distributed Bund literature, led political circles and organised lectures. Other Bund leaders would arrive from time to time, but Grinberg was puzzled by the term 'Bundist', since Minsk comrades described themselves as working 'in the Bund'. He was soon invited to join the 'intensely conspiratorial' Bundist leadership, and learned about the 'national programme'.

Early in 1902 Grinberg saw Ulyanov for the first time. He recalled that he looked like 'a crafty Russian grain dealer', and spoke 'smoothly and with a quiet, dogged forcefulness; drily, without embellishment and without enthusiasm'. He had an 'imperious will' and a 'pronounced distrust of people' 'When you speak to him he looks at you with his small eyes – in a kind of sidelong glance – and with a cunning, devilish smile, as if to say "There's not a word of truth in what you're saying! Oh well, go on, you won't deceive".'

Grinberg first heard Plekhanov on May Day, and he looked like a 'middle-aged gentleman, dressed in the most respectable fashion'. His speech began in a 'most pedestrian' manner, and the rest was 'rather tasteless and unimpressive'. The other prominent *Iskra* supporters in Switzerland were Axelrod, Potresov and Iuly Tserderbaum, while Liuba and Eda Axelrod were 'loyal pupils of Plekhanov'. Piker and Vladimir Maknovets of *Rabochee delo* lectured in Russian 'colonies' across western Europe, and Tserderbaum debated with them, but they generally prevailed. In May Grinberg was chosen to speak about the flogging of Vilnius demonstrators, along with Plekhanov and Jerzy Warszawski. Late that year representatives from the Bundist émigré colonies met in Bern and Nokhem Levinson arrived from London. They decided to establish a 'unified organisation of the Bund groups' in Switzerland, with a central office in Bern and elected Grinberg as its secretary.<sup>415</sup>

By the end of the year Iuly Tserderbaum, Krokmal and Alexandrova lived in Paris. Tserderbaum reported to the 'London Section of the Editorial Board of *Iskra*' that Alexandrova was going to Moscow to meet Krasnukha and re-establish the congress organising committee,<sup>416</sup> at a point where the government's financial position was fragile.

### (xiii) The costs of the recession

From 1893 to 1902 the rural population of European Russia had grown by 13 percent.<sup>417</sup> Since 1897 88 percent of village communes had repartitioned land, and since 1898 the agriculture minister had allocated 15.3 million rubles for agricultural training schools, experimental facilities, and subsidised seed and agricultural implements. By 1902 the value of land purchased with the help of the Peasants' Land Bank had more than doubled,<sup>418</sup> but land worth 650 million rubles 41 years earlier had cost peasants 1.5 billion rubles in redemption payments.<sup>419</sup> Agricultural labourers' wages were falling, and over a fifth of peasant men were unfit for military service.<sup>420</sup> The last five harvests had been below average,<sup>421</sup> and while the 1902 harvest was normal, kerosene tax had risen by 50 percent and sugar and match taxes had more than doubled since 1899.

In 1902 the government spent 358 million of its income of 1.92 billion rubles on railways.<sup>422</sup> In 11 years almost one third of over 27,000km of new lines had been built in Asiatic Russia,<sup>423</sup> and since 1894 an annual average of 115,000 had settled there.<sup>424</sup> In 1902 the railway network covered 58,000km,<sup>425</sup> and the government owned two-

thirds of it. It had invested 10.6 billion rubles in infrastructure in eight years,<sup>426</sup> but its total debt was 2.12 billion rubles,<sup>427</sup> and interest payments would take 289 million of its 1.3 billion rubles budget for 1903.<sup>428</sup>

In a decade Russia's industrial share capital had increased by two billion rubles,<sup>429</sup> but gross industrial production had flat-lined, while iron and steel production had fallen by 8.6 percent and metalworking and machine-building by 18 percent.<sup>430</sup> French capitalists had invested over 1.1 billion francs, then stopped; but German banks loaned almost 200 million rubles. During 1902 Germany took 41 percent of Russian exports and provided 35 percent of its imports,<sup>431</sup> but in December a heightened German tariff on grain almost halted vital Russian exports, and German corn-growers raised domestic prices.<sup>432</sup>

In Russia almost 19,500 inspected plants employed over 1.9 million workers,<sup>433</sup> but 291 companies made 45 percent of all profits.<sup>434</sup> In Georgia Poti's coal exports had risen from 229,300 tonnes to almost 729,000 tonnes since 1889, and 1.21 of the national total of 1.5 million tonnes of oil left Batumi.<sup>435</sup> Around half of inspected workforces of over 100 had 1,000 or more, including several Donbass metallurgical plants and coalmines.<sup>436</sup> Steel production had risen by 250 percent in a decade, and at double that rate in the Donbass, but the number of working iron ore mines had fallen from 64 to 40. National industrial production had doubled in that decade, and coal production had more than doubled, but it had tripled in Ukraine,<sup>437</sup> though coal orders were falling.<sup>438</sup> Donbass miners produced around 201 million tonnes that year, and the New Russia Company employed 8,760 miners, but four of its seven Luzovka blast furnaces had been idle all year.<sup>439</sup> The government ordered rails from six firms, including the Luzovka plant,<sup>440</sup> and Russia ranked fifth in the world for steel production and fourth for pig-iron, but the number of steelworkers had fallen from 50,400 to 42,900.<sup>441</sup> St. Petersburg's Putilov metalworks' output had fallen by 45 percent and its workforce by 23 percent, and most of the city's 7,700 unemployed were metalworkers.<sup>442</sup> In four years average wages had risen by five percent, but food prices by 25 percent,<sup>443</sup> and a St. Petersburg couple with children needed 32 rubles a month.<sup>444</sup>

According to factory inspectors, 123 strikes in 1902 involved 36,671 (2.2 percent) of inspected workers, for a total of 128,000 days, and 17.9 percent ended in victory for the workers, 13.7 percent in compromise and 68.4 percent in defeat;<sup>445</sup> yet reportedly at least 694 strikes and protests had involved 147,000 workers. Officially there had been 61 demonstrations,<sup>446</sup> 143 'civil disorders' and 179 'incidents'. A third of the infantry and two-thirds of the cavalry had carried out 522 operations and some had 'occupied' towns. At Zlatoust in western Siberia troops reportedly killed 69 railway workshop strikers and wounded over 250, and when 2,600 struck in Ufa, strikers shot policemen;<sup>447</sup> and late that year troops shot strikers in Tikhoretsk in the Caucasus.<sup>448</sup>

Officially the Justice Ministry had prosecuted 3,744 political suspects, but sent 38 to civil courts.<sup>449</sup> There were 10,000 gendarmes,<sup>450</sup> and they dealt with 1,678 state criminals, and courts martial with five. Between them they exiled 115 to Siberia, deported 77 elsewhere and expelled ten foreigners. Officially 198 suspects were under surveillance, 217 in detention and 362 in prison; but thousands had been deported without trial.<sup>451</sup> Around 30 million Russians lived under martial law,<sup>452</sup> and the few thousand organised SDs were under severe pressure.<sup>453</sup>

## 14. The intelligenty fall apart

### (i) Things will never advance an inch without full-time revolutionaries

Late in 1902 the *Iskra* agent and rabochy-intelligent Ivan Babushkin used a smuggled file to break out of his St. Petersburg prison, and reached London without knowing a foreign language.<sup>1</sup> Plekhanov was there on a rare visit, and his relations with Ulyanov were strained, but after Ulyanov encouraged Babushkin to write his autobiography Plekhanov was impressed. Babushkin expected to be sent to the USA,<sup>2</sup> but early in 1903 he arrived in St. Petersburg. Ulyanov wrote to ask if the workers' committee had a press. Was there a 'proper distribution' of leaflets and was propaganda 'widely conducted' about why they 'should pass to an illegal position as frequently and as extensively as possible'? Were 'regular lectures read' on organisation and did they 'keep track' of the Zubatovites' 'every step'? Ulyanov wanted 'ten times as many letters', but 'Mind you disappear at the first sign that you are being spied on'. Ulyanov told Stasova in St. Petersburg that the RSDRP intelligenty were 'fooling' her, and she should 'wage war vigorously and carry it widely into the midst of the workers'. He would 'strongly advise' her to let 'Bogdan' (Babushkin) replace the 'missing member' of the congress organising committee, since 'things will never advance an inch without full-time revolutionaries'.

Ulyanov offered to train Kharkiv workers, and told Krzhizhanovsky in Samara, who had received over 50 kilos of literature, that 'we cannot do anything' since 'we have no letters'.<sup>3</sup> Ulyanov told Bonch-Bruевич in Zurich to ask 'Leo Alleman' (Deutsch) in London for money for 'popular literature' and to consult him on 'administrative questions'.<sup>4</sup> Ulyanov told *Iskra* agents in Russia that he preferred congress delegates who, 'even if they are new, are the most energetic, influential, and devoted to revolutionary work', including deported, exiled, émigré and former members, and it was 'particularly desirable' to have 'a large number of worker delegates'. He lambasted the agent Fridrikh Lengnik for 'senseless twaddle', a characteristic trait in the mood of many present-day revolutionaries: waiting for instructions; demanding *everything* from above, from others, from outside; looking lost when faced by failures caused by local inactivity; piling up complaint after complaint'. It was as if they were saying, 'Masticate it for us, put it into our mouths, and perhaps we'll manage to do the swallowing ourselves'. Such 'confused "inactivists"' were 'unable to take and distribute *even 100th part* of the mass literature we are publishing'. 'Every month we get tens and hundreds of leaflets, reports, news items, and letters from all parts of Russia', but none about *Iskra's* distribution 'among the masses', the 'reaction of the masses' or 'discussions among the masses.' Yet up to 15 workers in one 'out-of-the-way factory' in central Russia read the paper, and some Committees put the 'five to eight (maximum: *eight!*) copies which were all that they got owing to the helpless inactivity of the activists near the border', to good use, and were '*planning* jointly just how to use each article in agitation'. In London 'three and a half writers' wrote '99 per cent' of *Iskra*, but the 'absurd division into an intellectual movement and a working-class movement' had to end.<sup>5</sup>

The *Iskra* agent Nikolai Bauman was in Berlin,<sup>6</sup> but left for Moscow and found that 'ties' with workers were 'weaker than in 1895'. Another SD recalled that the 'more intelligent and sincere' workers, especially in 'mechanical factories', gave 'no evidence of revolutionary activity'. A 'sound' SD education was unavailable, so the 'most gifted' read legal literature and attended Sunday schools. There was a 'complete absence of a revolutionary frame of mind' among these 'worker-academics', but they understood the 'political deception' of the 'Zubatov professors'.<sup>7</sup> The renegade SR leader Tikhomirov had become anti-Jewish;<sup>8</sup> but few worker attended lectures by him and a bishop.<sup>9</sup> Zubatovites had recruited 'a very large part' of the 'advanced workers' at Prokhorov Mill, and while *Iskra* had contacts there, thanks to school pupils, the kruzhenki lasted three months at most. Leaflets at the Bromley, Gonner, Mussa and Borodin plants and Brest railway workshop had called for an eight-hour day and an end to autocracy;<sup>10</sup> but there were seven spies in RSDRP kruzhenki.<sup>11</sup> In February the police arrested most of the Committee, but left one free, then arrested her and 31 contacts.<sup>12</sup> Survivors accepted the draft congress rules,<sup>13</sup> and *Iskra's* L.S. Zeitlin,<sup>14</sup> and Bauman, became delegates, though Boris Goldman's choice was controversial.<sup>15</sup>

Klavidia Prikhodko, the married woman who Bauman had impregnated in Orlov, had complained of the 'prevailing indifference' to 'personal morality' in the *Iskra* network in 1902,<sup>16</sup> and subsequently hanged herself.<sup>17</sup> In spring 1903 her husband, a party member, demanded justice from the editors in London.<sup>18</sup> Ulyanov insisted that 'B. is a hugely useful person, loyal to the revolution and the party', and 'I do not care about anything else'.<sup>19</sup> Potresov,<sup>20</sup> Zasluch and Iuly Tserderbaum denounced Ulyanov's 'utterly cynical resistance to the investigation' of 'one of his outstanding agents'. After Ulyanov and Plekhanov threatened to publicise the issue, and the émigrés' relations 'went completely to pieces'.<sup>21</sup>



In March the *Iskra* agent Alexandrova told the congress organising committee in Orel not to consult RSDRP Committees about the agenda, but to send agents where they could secure delegates who supported *Iskra*. Krzhizhanovsky, Krasikov, Stopani and Boris Goldman represented *Iskra* on the committee,<sup>22</sup> and Portnoi and Aizenshtadt represented the Bund,<sup>23</sup> while Levin and Rozanov of *Iuzhny rabochy* acknowledged that *Iskra* agents were the 'best praktiki available'. They decided that Goldman would be responsible for St. Petersburg and Moscow, Alexandrova for Kyiv, and Levin and Rozanov for Ukraine and the Caucasus.<sup>24</sup> They would discuss the draft congress rules with Committees,<sup>25</sup> and select delegates.<sup>26</sup> The Bund would nominate three, plus two from its Bern committee.<sup>27</sup> Rozanov and Levin would be congress delegates,<sup>28</sup> but Ulyanov told them to 'do without' Krzhizhanovsky if he 'remains adamant', and he doubted that the Donbass Committee supported *Iskra*.<sup>29</sup>

The *Iskra* agent Zelikson had been released from prison in St. Petersburg, but barred from university cities, so she went to Tver. It was hard to distinguish between Committee members and workers, since there was 'more democracy than centralism'. The head doctor and pharmacist at the zemstvo hospital let them meet there, and a nurse mimeographed their leaflets, which the members of 20 workers' kruzhki distributed, while intelligently ran 'advanced' kruzhki on boats on the Volga and propogandised in villages. The police raided Zelikson's lodgings, but she escaped, yet when she arrived in Moscow she was detained. There were the 'usual mass arrests' of students, but 300 imprisoned political suspects went on hunger strike, 'broke windows, slammed doors, and sang at the top of their voices'. After soldiers 'jostled' them into punishment cells, the women 'went into hysterics'.<sup>30</sup>

St. Petersburg RSDRP workers' organisation lacked funds and literature, but it opposed the *Iskra*-led Committee.<sup>31</sup> The police could not recruit spies, so they brought in Moscow Zubatovites,<sup>32</sup> but RSDRP members tried to take over their meetings.<sup>33</sup> The *Iskra* agent Maria Essen was arrested,<sup>34</sup> and a May Day event was prevented.<sup>35</sup> Demonstrators in 12 other industrial centres called for a republic and civil liberties,<sup>36</sup> and the peasantry had become restive.

Russia's population was around 130 million,<sup>37</sup> and while 181,000 gentry owned over 550,000 square kilometres,<sup>38</sup> much of it in the most fertile provinces,<sup>39</sup> over a third was mortgaged.<sup>40</sup> Kulaki had borrowed from the Peasant Land Bank to buy 60,000 square kilometres.<sup>41</sup> Peasants leased almost half of the gentry's agricultural land,<sup>42</sup> and productivity had risen by ten percent in 20 years.<sup>43</sup> Around 115 million peasant households sowed grain on 97 percent of the land they owned, leased or held from the village commune, but the price of the grain had fallen on the world market.<sup>44</sup> Food constituted 62 percent of exports, and grain brought in over 610 million rubles.<sup>45</sup> Taxes had risen by 49 percent in ten years,<sup>46</sup> and poor peasants were 130 million rubles in arrears. Agricultural labourers' wages had fallen, and over 1.1 million peasants had left Ukraine for Siberia in a decade.<sup>47</sup>

Ulyanov had studied the peasant question since 1902,<sup>48</sup> and *K derevenskoi bednote (To the Rural Poor)*, which was printed in Geneva in May 1903.<sup>49</sup> It stressed that poor peasants could win socialism only by allying with workers to 'fight with both hands and on two sides' against 'all the bourgeois' kulaki, officials and landowners.<sup>50</sup> The pamphlet circulated in at least 75 Russian districts,<sup>51</sup> but *Iskra's* main targets were urban workers.

The SD worker Shlyapnikov had enrolled at a Murom Sunday school to learn French. His teacher, Vera Yanchevskaya, copied SR literature on the mimeograph at the railway offices where she worked, and recalled he was a 'sentimental idealist populist', but loaned him books, and he organised SD kruzhki in several factories. In summer *Iskra* carried a report about how RSDRP leaflets were received there. Shlyapnikov got a job at a machine-building plant, joined a kruzhek with 'ties' to local intelligenty, and Nizhni Novgorod and Moscow SDs, and when the organiser left for Moscow, Shlyapnikov took over.<sup>52</sup>

After Nizhni-Novgorod police raided Yakov Sverdlov's flat, and found illegal literature, the RSDRP Committee sent literature to Shlyapnikov,<sup>53</sup> and he distributed it in a Murom factory, then pasted the rest on fences and walls around the town.<sup>54</sup> Subsequently Murom, Kovrov and Orekhovo Committees formed a joint organisation,<sup>55</sup> and recognised the congress organising committee.<sup>56</sup> The *Iskra* agents Stopani and Knipovich became congress delegates,<sup>57</sup> but gendarmes arrested Babushkin. (He was sentenced to 19 months in solitary followed by five years' exile in Yakutsk.)<sup>58</sup>

Most central Russian Committees accepted the draft congress rules.<sup>59</sup> Tula RSDRP Committee supported *Iskra*,<sup>60</sup> and *Iskra's* S.I. Stepanov and Dmitry Ulyanov became congress delegates,<sup>61</sup> but *Iskra* needed more writers.

## (ii) The Pen

Early in 1898 17-year-old Lev Bronstein shared a Mykolaiv prison cell with the bookbinder Misha Yavich. They wrote letters by pricking holes in a newspaper and found that all of the 28 intelligenty and workers in the Mykolaiv organisation had been arrested. Bronstein was moved to Kherson prison and spent three months in a solitary cell with no pen, ink, pencil, paper, clean linen or soap. He became covered with lice, but his mother

bribed a guard with ten rubles to let him have a pillow, blanket, tea, sugar and food. By May he was in a solitary cell in Odesa prison, where prisoners had written about themselves by putting dots under letters in library books. Bronstein knew the alphabet for tapping on walls, and when he contacted a neighbour it turned out to be one of the Sokolovsky brothers from Mykolaiv. Bronstein read Russian, French, English, German and Italian New Testaments to learn the languages, and a guard moved him next door to his former Mykolaiv comrade Grigory Ziv.<sup>62</sup> Early in 1899 Bronstein's relations brought books by the Italian SD Antonio Labriola,<sup>63</sup> and Darwin's book about human origins 'destroyed the last' of his 'ideological prejudices'.<sup>64</sup> His Mykolaiv comrade Sokolovskaya was in a solitary cell in the same prison and they exchanged notes by writing in book covers. They managed to meet in autumn, and wanted to marry, but his father persuaded the interior minister to prevent it.<sup>65</sup> If Bronstein had been tried in court he could have got 20 years' *katorga* in the Siberian mines, but he and his comrades were sentenced to four years in Siberia without trial. In the Moscow transit prison he read Plekhanov on Marx,<sup>66</sup> *Kapital* Volumes 1 and 2, and Ulyanov's pseudonymous book about the development of Russian capitalism,<sup>67</sup> and heard about the RSDRP.<sup>68</sup> By 1900 he believed that SD intelligenty had to relate to workers' 'daily interests', and smuggled out an article to be printed in Geneva.<sup>69</sup> In spring he and Sokolovskaya married in order to go to Siberia together.

On the journey Bronstein read works by Bernstein.<sup>70</sup> The couple stayed for a time in Alexandrov and Irkutsk prisons, and reached Ust-Kut, 500km north of Irkutsk, by summer. Officials gave them 19 rubles a month to live on and they rented a little two-storey house and hired an exiled Polish shoemaker, Mishka, as a cook. Policemen paid unannounced visits until Bronstein chased one away.<sup>71</sup> He read Russian and western European novels,<sup>72</sup> but believed that the RSDRP should stop giving literature and money to undisciplined local organisations and send a loyal 'detachment' to 'proclaim' themselves as the Committee.<sup>73</sup> In spring 1901 the Bronsteins had a daughter, Zinaida, and were allowed to move to Nizhny-Illinsk, where there was a doctor. In autumn they moved to Verkholsk, where newspapers and post arrived every week when the weather was good, but every six weeks when it was bad. Bronstein published pseudonymous articles in an Irkutsk periodical, and reviewed journals and books, for three kopeks a line.<sup>74</sup> In 1902 Bronstein wrote about his admiration for 1860s Russian radicals, since only those who 'stand on the shoulders of great predecessors' could say anything important. He praised Gorky's realism, but criticised his '*social fatalism*',<sup>75</sup> and thought him a rebel, but not a revolutionary.<sup>76</sup> He argued that art should 'throw light on the complex content of life by singling out its general typical features', and that revolutionary socialism was the 'consummation of the greatest cultural traditions', though his village was 'economically devastated by the kulaks, physically by syphilis and all sorts of epidemics, and spiritually it lives in a dense concentrated darkness'. His fame reached western Europe,<sup>77</sup> but after Nina was born,<sup>78</sup> he needed money, so in spring he visited the Irkutsk editor, who offered him 60 rubles a month, but the St. Petersburg censor refused to let 'Antid-Oto' (antidote) accept the job. Bronstein had met exiled SDs when they passed through, including Moisei Uritsky,<sup>79</sup> and Bronstein heard from exiles, and railway workers,<sup>80</sup> that SDs in Irkutsk, Krasnoyarsk and other towns had formed *Sibirsky sotsial-demokratichesky soyuz* (The Siberian Social Democratic Union).<sup>81</sup> They asked him to write leaflets,<sup>82</sup> and he condemned the RSDRP's leaders,<sup>83</sup> and *Iskra* agents arrived in Tomsk.

The Berlin police had noted that Elizarova had 'joined the local group of the revolutionary organisation of *Iskra*' and wrote for the paper. In summer she returned to Russia, and the police noted her 'extremely harmful tendencies'. 'Using her foreign contacts she gives assistance to the introduction of illegal literature to the limits of the empire, communicates information about events in Russia to foreign revolutionary activists and underground publications, and gives support and services to revolutionary organisations'. Moscow police had deported Elizarov to Tomsk for two years, and Elizarova visited him. The SD Soyuz was not part of the RSDRP, and many Tomsk SDs had gone to Irkutsk; so she told the *Iskra* editors about the struggle with 'primitive enterprises', and asked for copies of her brother Vladimir's *Chto delat?* She and two other former Berlin *Iskra* agents formed *Sibirsky gruppa revolyutsionnykh sotsial-demokratov* (The Siberian Group of Revolutionary Social-Democrats), informed *Iskra*, and received addresses for Omsk and Irkutsk Committees and orders to win congress delegates.<sup>84</sup>

Bronstein received a file of *Iskra* and *Chto delat?* by 'Lenin'.<sup>85</sup> With his wife's support he left under the straw in a peasant's wagon, and Irkutsk comrades gave him a carelessly forged passport and a letter for Krzhizhanovsky in Samara. He sent Bronstein to find correspondents and connections with SD organisations in the south, and he persuaded a Poltava workers' *kruzhok* to abandon 'economism'.<sup>86</sup> He visited 'practically everywhere' in Poltava and Kharkiv provinces, and Kyiv, and found that 'organisational links were extremely defective'.<sup>87</sup> *Iuzhny rabochy* exhibited '(1) under-estimation of the peasant movement; (2) dissatisfaction at the sharp polemics with the liberals; (3) the desire to remain a separate group and publish their own popular organ'. Krzhizhanovsky told the *Iskra* editors that he was 'a fervent supporter',<sup>88</sup> and asked them to invite him to London so he could return as an organiser.<sup>89</sup> When they agreed Krzhizhanovsky gave him a border contact, money for train tickets and the Axelrod's Zurich address. Near the Galician border a 'college boy' unsympathetic to *Iskra* kept Bronstein waiting for two days, and Jewish smugglers raised the tariff for a 'comrade' from 11 to 25 rubles. In Zurich Bronstein woke

Axelrod at 2.00am to pay the cabman, and Axelrod gave him money for train tickets to Paris,<sup>90</sup> where Alexandrova reportedly introduced him to Natalia Sedova,<sup>91</sup> in summer.<sup>92</sup>

Her father, Ivan Sedov, was from a family of landed Poltava province Cossack gentry and had freed his peasants in 1861. He befriended Shevchenko, the Ukrainian nationalist poet, and Natalia was born in 1882. Her parents died in 1889, and her grandmother and aunt raised her until the early 1890s, then sent her to a Kharkiv boarding school, where a teacher discussed the revolutionary movement. Natalia read illegal literature, collected money for political prisoners, and attended the St. Petersburg Bestuzhev courses in 1896. She visited Geneva, met SDs, and smuggled literature to Poltava. She went to Paris, attended the Sorbonne and the SD émigrés' Higher Russian School,<sup>93</sup> then enrolled at Geneva University.<sup>94</sup> In 1897, after Vetrova's grisly death in St. Petersburg, she met Plekhanov,<sup>95</sup> became an SD,<sup>96</sup> smuggled *Iskra* to Russia in 1901.<sup>97</sup>

Bronstein did not reach London until autumn, but his English was poor and he had to use signs to direct the cabman to the address he had been given. He knocked on the door the 'prescribed number of times' and Krupskaya greeted him as 'Piero' (The Pen). He reported about the problems at the border and the 'valueless' contacts and 'inner groupings' of Siberian SDs. None of them agreed with Bernstein, but they had seen no link between 'theoretical struggle' and 'organisational-political quarrels' until they read *Iskra* and *Chto delat?* Ulyanov introduced him to Zasulich, Iuly Tserderbaum and Blumenfeld,<sup>98</sup> and they gave him a room in Frederick Street. Ulyanov asked him to write about the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shlisselburg Fortress, and he praised the 'hands unvanquished' (including Ulyanov's brother Alexandr) who had been imprisoned there.<sup>99</sup> The veteran SR Nikolai Chaikovsky had lived in London for 20 years,<sup>100</sup> as had the anarchist Alexandr Cherkesov. Ulyanov asked Bronstein to debate them, and he was surprised that the 'famous gray-bearded émigrés' talked 'complete nonsense'. Nikolai Alexeev told Bronstein that Ulyanov was 'more important for the revolution' than Plekhanov, and Zasulich called Plekhanov a 'greyhound' who 'will shake you and shake you and will let you go', but Ulyanov was a 'bulldog' with 'a deadly grip'. Bronstein noted that Krupskaya was 'in the centre of all organisational activity', and comrades reported to her.

[S]he briefed and sent them off; she established contacts and clandestine connections; she gave instructions, she wrote letters, she encoded and decoded notices and messages. Nearly always her room held that faint smell of paper warmed up over a flame. And how often did she complain that people did not write enough, or that someone made mistakes in the code, or wrote in chemical ink in such a way that one line was blurred by the next.

Deutsch attended *Iskra* editorial boards without a vote, but Axelrod and Potresov rarely did so and wrote little. Tserderbaum was the main writer, but his and Zasulich's perspective was largely based on 'moral foundations' and they were 'tempted to defend terroristic methods'. Neither contacted workers, but Ulyanov took Bronstein to a workers' meeting. Bronstein felt 'dissatisfaction and irritation' with Plekhanov, who insisted that the editors move to Switzerland, but only Ulyanov disagreed. Bronstein prepared lectures on 'What is historical materialism and how do the revolutionary socialists understand it?' and Ulyanov suggested that he publish them in *Zarya*, but he 'never had the courage'. He left for Paris to lecture émigré Russian SDs.<sup>101</sup> Early in 1903 Sedova found him a room, and they fell in love,<sup>102</sup> but he spoke about the difference between SDs and SRs in Brussels and Liège.<sup>103</sup>

In London Iuly Tserderbaum suggested that Bronstein should be sent to strengthen St. Petersburg RSDRP committee,<sup>104</sup> but Ulyanov proposed co-opting him onto the editorial board, since he was of 'more than average ability, convinced, energetic, and promising', and 'could do a good deal in the sphere of translation and popular literature'. He was young and sometimes 'too pretentious', but he had 'the "intuition" of a Party man'.<sup>105</sup> Tserderbaum acknowledged that he had 'undeniable talent', 'wholly identified' with *Iskra*, spoke 'magnificently', had 'knowledge and works hard to increase it'; but Plekhanov got the proposal deferred,<sup>106</sup> and the editors co-opted Krasikov instead,<sup>107</sup> then summoned Bronstein to London.

Ulyanov wanted him to go to Russia,<sup>108</sup> since Krzhizhanovsky was complaining about a 'lack of personnel', but Deutsch won the argument to keep him in western Europe. Bronstein returned from Paris, but soon returned.<sup>109</sup> In Siberia the Kazan, Ufa, Irkutsk RSDRP Committees now supported *Iskra*,<sup>110</sup> appointed 23-year-old Bronstein and Avidgor Mandelberg as congress delegates,<sup>111</sup> and he told Ivan Radchenko about 'a very valuable person, steady, devoted to the cause'.

Rosalia Zalkind had been born into a wealthy Jewish family in Mariñě, Bietaruś, in 1876. Her father owned a business in Kyiv and her mother taught their children 'very democratic ways of thinking and living'. In 1881 her parents sympathised with the tsar's assassins, and when police searched the house their mother hid the older children's illegal pamphlets. Rozalia attended a gymnasium, and in 1890 her brother gave her illegal literature and she considered herself a revolutionary. In 1891, after she graduated, she was briefly detained. She read Marx,<sup>112</sup> became politically active in 1892,<sup>113</sup> considered herself an SD by 1896,<sup>114</sup> and joined the RSDRP in 1898.<sup>115</sup> She

taught a workers' kruzhek about the western European labour movement and was briefly detained,<sup>116</sup> but became an *Iskra* agent in Odesa in 1901.<sup>117</sup> The RSDRP Committee refused to distribute *Iskra* leaflets,<sup>118</sup> but though it influenced about 1,500 workers, most of them wanted a 'purely economic organisation'. Yet in spring 1903 the Committee announced 'full solidarity' with *Iskra*,<sup>119</sup> and Zalkind and 24-year-old M.S. Zborovsky became congress delegates.<sup>120</sup> The congress organising committee co-opted Zalkind;<sup>121</sup> but anti-Jewish prejudice was rife.

### (iii) *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*

The Moldavian Pavalachy Crușevanu had overseen the writing of anti-Jewish propaganda in 1902, and an Okhrana agent in Paris reportedly wrote *Programa zavoevaniya mira evreyami* (*The Jewish Programme to Conquer the World*, later known as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*).<sup>122</sup> In Russia the anti-Jewish Svyashchennyye brigady (Holy Brigades) became known as 'Black Hundreds',<sup>123</sup> and there were riots in the Pale.

By 1903 Chișinău, the capital of Bessarabia province, had a population of 147,000 including 50,000 Jews. In spring, after someone stabbed a Christian boy to death in a nearby village, a local paper reported that Jews had killed him to use his blood to knead Passover bread. Just before Easter a Jewish family's Christian servant committed suicide. The governor knew a riot was imminent, and had 8,000 troops, but sent only some of the 350 police to guard factories and warehouses. On Sunday 19 April boys threw stones at Jewish homes and shops, and workers looted them. Jewish workers responded, but 12 died and 100 were severely injured. On Monday peasants arrived from nearby towns and committed gang rape, torture, mutilation and murder, and stuck pikes into Jews' bodies and heads. The governor made the garrison commander responsible for dealing with the violence, and he ordered troops to stop up to 2,000 mostly Moldavian rioters, who included students, seminarians, troops and police, though other police tried to protect the Jews. By the end of the day 47 Jews were dead and 424 wounded, while damage to 700 Jewish homes and 600 shops reportedly amounted to three million rubles. The interior minister put the city under martial law, and when the police chief blamed Jews for starting the violence, he sacked him and the governor.<sup>124</sup> The Irish republican Michael Davitt had been an eye-witness and believed the rioters had had the 'passive connivance' of the police chief.<sup>125</sup> Crușevanu was suspected of fomenting it,<sup>126</sup> and in St. Petersburg the war minister had heard the interior minister and tsar agreeing that Jews led the 'revolutionary movement' and 'must be taught a lesson'.<sup>127</sup>

Katerynoslav RSDRP Committee did not risk a May Day demonstration, because of the miners' 'extreme lack of culture', but 250 denounced the Chișinău massacre.<sup>128</sup> The workers' committee reportedly had 750 of the Committee's 1,000 'ties' with workers, and 35 mostly artisan *Iskra* supporters led 25 kruzki.<sup>129</sup> After arrests, *Iskra*'s Vladimir Tserberbaum arrived, used a pseudonym, and demanded that the intelligenty form a new Committee and appoint a workers' committee. About 100 workers met him on the steppe and demanded to know his real name, but he walked away with the intelligenty, so the workers took the press and seal and produced a leaflet denouncing the usurpation. Zalkind arrived, followed by spies, and escaped arrest, but 'infected' *Iskra* supporters were arrested. Alexandrova arrived and reported to London that 'the forces of the rebels are many times greater than those of the Orthodox, who sit without a penny', 'technical apparatus' or 'ties'.<sup>130</sup> Five intelligenty called themselves the Committee;<sup>131</sup> but the workers called themselves the Committee, and they and the intelligenty denounced each other as impostors.<sup>132</sup> *Iskra*'s Nogin arrived,<sup>133</sup> and L.D. Makhlin and L.S. Vilensky became congress delegates.<sup>134</sup> After Nogin left there was no trace of the Committee for two years.<sup>135</sup>

Donbass coalmines were closing and only 23 of Luzovka's 35 blast furnaces were operating. The number of miners had fallen by 10,000 and Luzovka ironworkers by 7,000. SDs had produced 25,000 pamphlets arguing for a strike on May Day, but after the Luzovka police chief warned of a riot they backed down.<sup>136</sup> Most agreed with Ulyanov's perspective, but wanted *Iskra* to be more accessible, and the RSDRP leadership to be in Russia.<sup>137</sup> The 500 supporters included rabochy intelligenty who reprinted tens of thousands of local and Katerynoslav leaflets. They had contacts with 30 kruzki in most Donbass towns,<sup>138</sup> and called themselves an RSDRP Committee to qualify for congress delegates.<sup>139</sup> Police got close to Shestakov,<sup>140</sup> but intelligenty gave him money to escape.<sup>141</sup>

Yakov Drabkin had been born in Riazan province in 1874. He became a revolutionary at St. Petersburg Technological Institute in the early 1890s,<sup>142</sup> and joined the Soyuz in 1896.<sup>143</sup> In 1899 the police deported him to Rostov-na-Donu,<sup>144</sup> and he became an RSDRP organiser.<sup>145</sup> About a third of men and eight percent of women in the province were literate,<sup>146</sup> but workers denounced the few SD propagandists as 'Jewish unbelievers', 'Polish rebels' or Orthodox priests who wanted to restore serfdom.<sup>147</sup> In 1903 *Iskra*'s Drabkin and A.S. Lokerman became congress delegates, and I.N. Moshinsky of the metal workers' union and Marko Makadzyub from Crimea had two votes. Kharkiv Committee intelligenty elected E.S. Levina and L.V. Nikolayev as delegates, and Kyiv Committee

intelligently elected *Iskra's* Krasikov and I.K. Nikitin.<sup>148</sup> Sergey Tsederbaum recalled that 'there could be no thought' of delegates being elected by 'any collective broader than the committee'.<sup>149</sup>

Caucasian workers were mostly Georgian, but the bourgeoisie was overwhelmingly Armenian, and most officials were Russian. The 67 inspected factories in Tbilisi province employed an average of around 20, and 1,668 of the 4,181 we know about were in leather and shoe workshops, but many of the over 2,000 skilled men were in Tbilisi railway workshops. The Okhrana had a list of 238 suspects who were mostly SDs, and they knew the RSDRP structure, where it met and what it discussed;<sup>150</sup> but Ter-Petrosian had built a press.<sup>151</sup>

Chkheidze had moved to Batumi in 1898, and was a city дума deputy until 1902. After workers were killed at an oil plant he and another intelligent and three workers formed a democratic RSDRP Committee with a subsidiary role for intelligently.<sup>152</sup> Batumi Committee and Tbilisi Committee had 'ties' with about 1,200 workers,<sup>153</sup> and *Iskra* welcomed the formation of the Armenian SD organisation, but criticised its federalism.<sup>154</sup>

The socialist sympathiser Giorgi Tsereteli's son, Irakli, was born in the Kutaisi province village of Gorisa in 1881. He later enrolled at Moscow University, but was exiled to Siberia after a demonstration in 1902. Early in 1903 he returned to Georgia and joined the RSDRP.<sup>155</sup> Every village in the Guria district was 'part of the general movement', and one or more kruzhski of ten peasants elected a delegate to a regional committee, which elected a delegate to the Gurian Committee. After arrests peasants stopped paying taxes, boycotted government institutions and burned portraits of the tsar, while priests refused to bury assassinated spies.<sup>156</sup>

By spring there were at least 15 RSDRP organisations in the Caucasus, but Okhrana agents spied on workers' kruzhski, including the 20 in Batumi, where there had been 12 strikes the previous year. Many factory owners had left, but the trial of the strike leaders was a national *cause célèbre*. Delegates from Tbilisi, Baki, Batumi, Kutaisi, Chiatura, Khashuri, Ozurgeti, Gori, Guria and the Armenian organisation met in Tbilisi. At least 80 percent were Georgians and many were typesetters. They elected an acting Caucasian RSDRP Committee which included the Georgians Tsereteli, Zhordania, Makharadze, Jibladze, Tskhakaya and Tsulukidze, *Iskra's* Knunyants and Arshak Zurabov, and two Armenians. A majority favoured a federal structure, and they agreed to publish a paper in Georgian and Armenian. They elected Makharadze and Jughashvili as sub-editors in Tbilisi, and asked Zhordania to write a programme; but next day 14 leaders were arrested.<sup>157</sup> Zhordania fled to western Europe, but Bochoridze, who was now a clerk, led the Committee.<sup>158</sup> They had contacts in Chişinău, Kharkiv and St. Petersburg, but heard about the congress very late, and only because Plekhanova told Zhordania in Geneva.<sup>159</sup>

Nina printed the Georgian *proletariats brdzola (Proletarian Struggle)*,<sup>160</sup> and Armenian *proletarians brdzola*, in Baki.<sup>161</sup> The city's 184 engineering plants employed 9,300,<sup>162</sup> but 30,000 of almost 80,000 workers were in the oilfields.<sup>163</sup> The RSDRP organised Azerbaijani Turks, and led 30 basic kruzhski of 1,000 workers and six kruzhski of 50 'conscious' workers, and the police let 15,000 demonstrate on May Day. The Caucasian Committee now supported *Iskra*.<sup>164</sup> Alliluyev worked on the Baki-Batumi oil pipeline,<sup>165</sup> and was arrested in Tbilisi, but the Okhrana failed to recruit him.<sup>166</sup> Enukidze was released in time to vote in Tbilisi,<sup>167</sup> and the Committee was the only one in Russia to consult workers about congress delegates.<sup>168</sup> They elected Diomide Topuridze, an Armenian nobleman, but Batumi Committee appointed *Iskra's* Zurabov, and Baki Committee appointed *Iskra's* Knunyants;<sup>169</sup> but the Bund posed a serious challenge to *Iskra* in the Pale.

#### **(iv) War even to the extent of a split**

In January 1903 the Bund's émigré committee in London issued the Russian language *Poslednie izvestia (The Latest News)*. It noted that Katerynoslav RSDRP committee had criticised the Zionist 'myth' about 'the united and indivisible Jewish people', but failed to mention the Bund, and it claimed that the congress organising committee had informed the Bund of its existence a month after its first meeting. It declared that the RSDRP 'no longer exists', so the congress should be 'a founding Congress' with delegates from every SD organisation.<sup>170</sup>

The governor-general of the north-west provinces reported that the Bund 'acts with enormous energy, is rapidly expanding its ranks', and its 'fighting detachment' made it 'omnipotent'. It distributed thousands of leaflets, intimidated 'peaceful and loyal' workers, organised strikes and demonstrations, hoisted red flags and led 'resistance to the authorities' in Vilnius, Hrodna, Kaunas, Białystok, Brest, Smorgon and elsewhere.<sup>171</sup>

In spring Ulyanov asked the congress organising committee in to demand a 'formal declaration' of 'full solidarity' from the Bund, including on the national question, before inviting delegates, and to 'prepare the ground for a struggle against the Bund at the congress'. Only a 'firm determination' to expel the Bund from the Party would 'compel it to give way.' Ulyanov told Krzhizhanovsky that 'Almost all our hope' for 'a majority of intelligent (and "our") delegates' rested on him, and the Bund was 'very important'. 'We have stopped the polemic with it over the O.C., but not, of course, the polemic over principles'. 'We must make everyone

understand, simply “ram it into every head”, that it is necessary to prepare for war against the Bund if we want peace with it. War at the Congress, war even to the extent of a split’.<sup>172</sup> Late in March some *Iskra* and *luzhny rabochy* members of the organising committee opposed *Iskra*’s polemics with the Bund.<sup>173</sup>

On May Day ‘N. Ulyanov (Russia)’ spoke at Alexandra Palace in London.<sup>174</sup> He wrote to Alexandrova that the congress organising committee should ‘be politically correct and loyal with the Bund (and not hit them directly in the mouth)’, but ‘be austere and buttoned up’ and ‘suppress them mercilessly and incessantly’.<sup>175</sup> When Pavel Milyukov, a liberal Russian historian, visited London, Ulyanov invited him to his ‘miserable room’. ‘Our conversation turned into an argument over the realism of his views on the tempo of impending events’, but Ulyanov ‘constantly repeated his position’, and the idea of a ‘bourgeois revolution’ preceding a socialist revolution was ‘firmly implanted in him’.<sup>176</sup> Krupskaya was well aware of the ‘desperate struggle of tendencies’ in Russia, as *Iskra* supporters ‘gradually won ground’ or were ‘knocked out’.<sup>177</sup> Tarshis socialised with Zasulich, Tserderbaum and Blumenfeld, and met former Bundists who had been in *Iskra* organisations in Kaunas, Vilnius and Kyiv, but were now ‘anarchist-individualists’. Tarshis spent most of his time in the SDF print shop, and was amazed that *Justice* had a circulation no greater than *Iskra*,<sup>178</sup> whose print-runs were up to 15,000,<sup>179</sup> while those of pamphlets were up to 200,000.<sup>180</sup> It all went to Noskov in Vilnius,<sup>181</sup> via Lithuanian smugglers, and after Tarshis went to Germany to recruit contacts at Schirwind on the border, Noskov tested the crossing both ways. Tarshis also explored possibilities at Tilsit, and a friend in the USA sent him his legal passport. Across Russia SD groups were ‘springing up in every town’, and *Iskra* and *Rabochee delo* supporters were splitting RSDRP Committees, but the demand for *Iskra* ‘was impossible to meet’ from abroad. St. Petersburg *Rabochee delo* supporters visited London to pick up copies, and distributed them in Russia to ‘retain their hold on workers’;<sup>182</sup> but Russian border gendarmes confiscated consignments of *Iskra No. 23* and *No. 24*,<sup>183</sup> which had been printed in August and September 1902.<sup>184</sup>

The Okhrana had ten spies in the RSDRP,<sup>185</sup> and a gendarme general knew of about 20-30 *Iskra* agents.

Welded into a compact conspiratorial group of professional revolutionists, they travelled from place to place wherever there were party committees, established contacts with their members, delivered illegal literature to them, helped to establish printshops and garnered information needed by *Iskra*. They penetrated into local committees, carried on their propaganda against ‘Economism’, eliminated their ideological opponents and in this way subjected the committees to their influence.<sup>186</sup>

He was aware of a ‘degree of culture’ among those workers who grasped Marx’s ideas.<sup>187</sup>

Around 30 or so RSDRP intelligently organised workers’ kruzki in Kyiv, and Alexandrova wrote to the *Iskra* editors from there late in May. She and Krasikov had fallen out, and she called him and other *Iskra* supporters ‘dogs’, and believed that the agents were ‘the root of the problem’. ‘Everybody gives out orders and carries out, or at least tries to carry out, plans without consulting anybody’. She told duplicate Bund committees to merge with RSDRP committees ‘or face war’, but Krasikov became the congress delegate from Kyiv.<sup>188</sup>

The Bund’s Grinberg had embarked on a lecture tour of Bund ‘colonies’ in Switzerland, and argued that *Iskra* ‘constantly neglected the important task of fighting anti-Semitism’, but encountered Lev Bronstein, who insisted that a rise in the ‘general awareness’ of the masses would make ‘a special subject of discussion’ about Jews unnecessary. In June the Bund Congress in Zurich revoked the policy of ‘organised revenge’,<sup>189</sup> and Grinberg argued that a ‘nation’ without territory was problematic, and there was a danger of adapting to nationalism, so the Bund should focus on the Jewish proletariat.<sup>190</sup> The RSDRP claimed 9,000 members, and the Bund claimed 25,000.<sup>191</sup> The Bund CC appointed only the agreed five comrades - Aizenshtat, Portnoj, Mikhail Goldman, Kremer and Nokhem Levinson - as its RSDRP congress delegates,<sup>192</sup> and other SD organisations were wary.

#### **(v) We are concerned only with the moral factor**

Rosa Luxemburg had refused to write for the SPD’s *Vorwärts* in 1899, because the ‘pathetic old nag’ was ‘on its last legs’,<sup>193</sup> but Helphand introduced her to Ulyanov,<sup>194</sup> and they met again in Berlin early in 1900.<sup>195</sup> In spring, at the PPS Congress in Berlin, Luxemburg faced two days of ‘constant struggle by the entire party’, but won ‘all along the line’, and in summer she stopped writing for the SPD’s *Leipziger Volkszeitung*. In autumn PPS delegates at the Second International Congress in Paris challenged her mandate. By spring 1901 she despised the ‘entire Bund’ and its ‘sidekicks’ for their ‘political behaviour’ and ‘methods of operation’, and had no time for the Lithuanian SD Trusiewicz. She advised a comrade to give those who favoured a federal All-Russian SD party ‘a kick in the place

they sit on' and to 'break off all relations'. The SPD Congress denounced the deputies who had approved the Baden Landtag budget,<sup>196</sup> and by autumn Luxemburg had won the SPD to an internationalist perspective.<sup>197</sup>

Trade union membership in Germany was over 600,000,<sup>198</sup> and the Reichstag extended workers' accident insurance and demanded industrial arbitration courts in towns with a population of over 20,000.<sup>199</sup> By the end of the year workers' average wages had risen by up to ten percent, but the cost of living had risen too.<sup>200</sup> The government allowed Bernstein's arrest warrant to lapse, so he returned to Berlin, won a by-election and became a Reichstag deputy.<sup>201</sup> The trade union wing of the SPD favoured reformism, and Kautsky wrote in *Iskra* that the 'epicentre of revolution' had left western Europe, but Russia might be 'a source of revolutionary energy for the West';<sup>202</sup> yet Luxemburg convinced SPD leaders not to publish a translation of Ulyanov's *Chto delat?*<sup>203</sup>

The SDKPiL's 1901 Congress rejected Polish independence, but would struggle for 'constitutional democracy on the basis of complete autonomy' for 'all the inhabitants of the Russian state'. In 1902 Feliks Dzierzynski escaped from Siberia,<sup>204</sup> and Bundists gave him Luxemburg's Berlin address.<sup>205</sup> He attended an SDKPiL conference,<sup>206</sup> and became leader of its émigré organisation,<sup>207</sup> based in Kraków,<sup>208</sup> five hours by train from Warszawa.<sup>209</sup> He organised the smuggling of literature,<sup>210</sup> and edited the review, but his health worsened. He entered a Geneva sanatorium; but returned to Poland late that year.<sup>211</sup> The SDKPiL had organisations in Warszawa, Łódź and Białystok.<sup>212</sup> The PPS had a base among workers in Białystok, Vilnius, Hrodna, Kyiv, St. Petersburg and Moscow, and agreed that a central workers' committee should organise others; but older EC members remained nationalists.<sup>213</sup> The PPS Jewish section failed to get them to denounce anti-Semitism,<sup>214</sup> and the SPD broke off relations; but the RSDRP wanted congress delegates from the PPS,<sup>215</sup> and the SDKPiL. Lev Jogiches liked the draft programme, except for the right of nations to self-determination,<sup>216</sup> and he and other SDKPiL leaders discussed joining the congress organising committee.<sup>217</sup> The few hundred SDKPiL members were mainly artisans, and while 125-150 were in Warszawa, their kola were loosely linked. Literature published abroad reached ten large Polish towns and cities, and appeals were published in runs of up to 5,000. *Czerwony zstądan* (*Red Banner*) appeared less frequently than the PPS organ *Robotnik* (*The Worker*), the print runs were similar; but the SDKPiL's annual budget for 1903 was 1,500 rubles, and the PPS's was 18,000. It had around 400 members in Warszawa, a large group in Łódź and others in Radom, Lublin, Kalisz and the Dąbrowa coalfield. They included workers, particularly in metallurgy and machine-building plants, and intelligently sympathisers, including some in Galicia, and literature reached 25 major centres. The Warszawa workers' committee issued appeals in runs of up to 20,000, and some local organisations had presses.<sup>218</sup>

The RSDRP refused to work with the PPS,<sup>219</sup> and Plekhanov told Ulyanov that RSDRP workers should not give 'unconditional obedience' to intelligently, who 'must moderate the excessively centralistic fever of our followers'.<sup>220</sup> but Luly Tserderbaum argued in the SDKPiL's review for 'drawing the wide masses into the movement through a whole network of all sorts of unions and groups',<sup>221</sup> and the SDKPiL leadership had a new member.

Yakov Ganetsky was born into a Warszawa factory owner's family in 1879. He was an SD by 1896, went to Berlin to avoid arrest in 1899, and on to Leipzig and Paris. He returned to Poland in 1900, left in 1901, studied at Berlin, Heidelberg and Zurich universities, and then worked as a salesman. By 1903 he was an SDKPiL leader,<sup>222</sup> and he and Warszawski were elected as candidate delegates to the RSDRP congress.<sup>223</sup>

Łódź police had arrested 65 SDKPiL members and broken the Białystok organisation, but Dzierzynski reconstituted the leadership. Its Berlin Congress agreed to merge with the RSDRP if it could be autonomous in organisation, agitation and recruitment in Poland. It elected Dzierzynski as a candidate delegate to the RSDRP congress,<sup>224</sup> but Luxemburg told Warszawski to delay merger negotiations, since the RSDRP's 'moral value' was 'minimal', and 'we are concerned only with the moral factor'.<sup>225</sup>

## (vi) Samara

Mikhail Lachowiecki was born into a peasant family in Kherson province around 1860, but was orphaned by the age of nine, and reared by his illiterate uncle. Mikhail became a porter at Kherson boys' gymnasium, and his uncle later got him a place there and supported him. After his uncle died in 1874, Mikhail tutored other pupils and did odd jobs to get by. After he graduated he entered Odesa University, and sympathised with SRs, but was not active. He graduated in 1882 and married the daughter of a minor official. She had graduated from a gymnasium, but could not afford to go to university, and had become a teacher in a Ukrainian village school and an SR.<sup>226</sup>

The couple moved to the Novgorod province town of Kirillov, and Jan was born in 1884.<sup>227</sup> His father later entered the Army Medical Academy in St. Petersburg, which offered loans, but they were insufficient to maintain a family, and another child arrived in 1886. Mikhail graduated in 1888 and was posted to the city of Omsk in Siberia, to pay back the loan. The population was well over 30,000, but the houses were made of wood and there

was mud everywhere; and it was unbearably hot in summer, but could reach 40 degrees below in winter. The family had a cook, and Mikhail had an orderly, but his 100-150 rubles a month had to keep a family of seven. By 1889, when they had moved further east to the town of Kainsk, five-year-old Jan could read.

In autumn 1893 Mikhail was ordered to go to St. Petersburg's Experimental Medicine Institute. A servant cleaned the family apartment and looked after the children, but Jan's mother did the cooking. Jan entered a gymnasium, and his parents gave him works by Russian and western European radicals, but when his father completed his course in 1895 he and his family were sent back to Omsk. In summer 1896 Mikhail took Jan on a convict barge from Tyumen to Tomsk, and the boy heard a crewman saying 'We've got "politicals" on board. In cell number seven'. Jan had heard about state criminals from his parents, but had never seen one. The 11 men and one woman were SRs, and were 'rather critical of social democracy' and 'pupils' of *Kapital*. They sang revolutionary songs, and one told Jan about peasant life. He asked him if he had heard of Nekrasov and recited *Zheleznaya doroga (The Iron Road)*, which described the appalling conditions of workers who built the St. Petersburg to Moscow railway in the 1840s. A crew member told Jan that SRs were 'good people. You can't get away from that. It's senseless, that's what it is.' He had been exiled for four years for lashing a gendarme with his own whip, and state criminals had taught him to read and write and introduced him to political ideas.

In summer Jan spent time with his 15-year-old cousin in Moscow, and she became a major influence. In autumn he became interested in 'questions of a social-political nature' and enjoyed Pisarev's 1860s articles. He wrote a critical article about the gymnasium, and late that year he and a boy called Oliger organised a kruzhek of five or six of the 'most advanced' of their 23 classmates. They met mostly at the home of two Jewish boys, whose widowed mother had 'an extensive, well-chosen library'. They issued a manifesto and pasted copies on walls around town, including those of the police headquarters. At school one boy challenged censorship, and another suggested founding an 'underground' paper, like Herzen's 1850s *Kolokol*. Oliger was expelled, and half the class, including Jan, received a poor conduct mark; but he learned that a man called Siminov, who had been expelled from university, ran a small stationery shop and liked to talk about social and educational subjects.

After the demonstration in St. Petersburg in February 1899, deported students arrived in Omsk, and became the 'centre of attraction' for 'radically inclined school boys and girls'. Natasha Korolev had attended the Bestuzhev courses and 'liked to parade her modernity and her connections with the "illegal world"'. She was not politically aligned, but was strongly influenced by Marx, and her family read Gorky's *Foma Gordeyev*, sang the *Marseillaise* and discussed national and international events. Four members of Jan's kruzhek had been detained for a fortnight or so, then released on their parents' bail, but were not allowed to return to the gymnasium and left town. Jan looked for an SD in vain, but a history teacher at a girls' gymnasium, who had recently arrived from the south, loaned him Albert Lang's *Die Arbeiterfrage (The Labour Question)*. In autumn 1900 Jan began to learn German. Oliger returned from Saratov with news of SD groups, student and factory kruzki, and illegal literature, and he and Jan discussed how to bring down the autocracy.

Seventeen-year-old Lachowiecki graduated from the gymnasium with the gold medal in 1901, and should have gone to Kazan University; but St. Petersburg University's faculty of history and philology was short of applicants and he offered him a place. Students from Omsk invited him to join their zemliachestvo, which was rebuilding its mutual aid fund, and he saw a Russian edition of the Webbs' *History of the Workers' Movement in England*, translated by 'Papern',<sup>228</sup> the joint pseudonym of Krupskaya and Ulyanov,<sup>229</sup> and paid 1.25 rubles for a copy. He engaged in revolutionary activity, and after the University expelled him in 1902,<sup>230</sup> he went to Samara.

By summer 1903 Maria Ulyanova junior was secretary of *Iskra's* Samara bureau. She sent the paper to 'clean' addresses, contacted St. Petersburg and Ufa Committees and wrote a pamphlet calling for a 'decisive struggle' against 'economism'. After her brother Dmitry graduated from Iuriev University, he worked as a doctor in the Samara district and joined the bureau,<sup>231</sup> as did Lachowiecki, and he led kruzki and wrote leaflets that were hectographed. The metal turner 'Petro' arrived. He was about 23 and had a southern accent, and was no theorist, but reformed the RSDRP Committee, established 'zones', organised branches according to trades, entrusted agitation and propaganda to a 'separate department', then vanished. The police were after him, and he had orders to alter his papers and move.<sup>232</sup>

Rozanov had travelled 38,000km on behalf of the congress organising committee;<sup>233</sup> but did not invite SDs in Jelgava,<sup>234</sup> Riga, Windau, Lindau, Talsen and Liepāja in the Baltic provinces to send delegates.<sup>235</sup> In Belgium Vladimir Makhnovets edited a journal for Russian workers who supported the old émigré SD organisation, which had sent 3.5 tonnes of literature to Russia. He and Piker heard about the RSDRP congress at the last minute,<sup>236</sup> but became delegates.<sup>237</sup> Saül Piker later claimed that the congress organising committee enfranchised 21 of the 50 RSDRP Committees,<sup>238</sup> disenfranchised 17,<sup>239</sup> and claimed that the Voronezh, Poltava, Chişinău and Samara Committees were inactive;<sup>240</sup> but *Iskra* won St. Petersburg RSDRP committee in June.<sup>241</sup> There was evidently no thought of inviting the VPSR, even as observers, in spite of its leftward political trajectory.



## (vii) The differences between the VPSR and the RSDRP

By 1903 VPSR émigrés in Paris and London produced literature, and youngsters took it to Russia,<sup>242</sup> where it reached 42 provinces.<sup>243</sup> The VPSR still believed that the peasantry was the key revolutionary agency, but acknowledged that many workers were from peasant families. In Kyiv the VPSR led 30 or so 'flying circles' of eight workers which met twice weekly, and the syllabus included 'Labour and capital', 'The interests of toilers and capitalists', 'Socialism', 'A short history of the workers' movement abroad', 'The role of autocracy and the struggle against it', the VPSR minimum programme and 'an explanation of each of its points', 'The struggle against the autocracy and the bourgeoisie' and 'The differences between the PSR and the RSDRP'. Workers used the intelligenty library, attended meetings and demonstrations and distributed leaflets, and some were invited to join a special propagandists' kruzhek that met 25 times in three months.

V. Zenzinov had returned from abroad and joined the VPSR Moscow Committee.

Attached to our committee was a so-called 'group of propagandists', consisting of twelve to fifteen persons, almost exclusively students. Each of them had two or three circles of workers, to whom they delivered a more or less systematic course of lectures on Russian history, politics and political economy... [I]n circles of the first kind the lectures were very basic. Often the themes would be broadened or modified, depending on the questions of the participants. The work sometimes turned into acquainting [workers] with the fundamental principles of astronomy, natural science or even theology, if they asked questions on these areas. But of course, circle leaders tried to steer the conversation on to political topics. In circles of the second kind, study was more systematic – popular books were read on political economy, Russian history and the revolutionary movement.

The 'favourite themes' were land, terror and how the RSDRP differed from the VPSR.

Katerynoslav VPSR intelligenty led kruzhek of seasonal workers, artisans, railway workshop employees, and workers from two urban and suburban factories and Briansk steelworks.<sup>244</sup> The intelligenty told them that 'Russia is a country of 120 millions with only two million proletarians scattered across its vast expanse', so it was 'unthinkable to attempt to overthrow the autocratic system by the efforts of the workers alone'.<sup>245</sup>

The former Sotsialist member Viktor Savinkov had been exiled to Vologda in 1902, pending trial, and was convinced that the autocracy could be overturned only by conspiracy and violence. He described himself as 'a former Social Democrat', yet he was elected to the Moscow RSDRP CC in his absence. Early in 1903 he was exiled to Vologda for three years, and though his partner was pregnant, and his case was due for review, he took a train to Arkhangelsk and, with Breshkovskaya's help, he caught a ship to Norway, while she went to Geneva to meet Avram Gots, the acting head of the VPSR combat organisation.<sup>246</sup> Grigory Gershuni had given Savinkov passwords, letters, names and addresses, and appointed Yevno Azev as head of the combat organisation, and when he went to Geneva Gots appointed him to the CC.<sup>247</sup> The combat organisation had a nucleus of half a dozen,<sup>248</sup> and Azev recruited,<sup>249</sup> but an SR student failed to convince the VPSR that Azev was a spy,<sup>250</sup> and assassinations continued.

In spring the governor of Ufa ordered troops to shoot strikers, and they killed 28 and wounded almost 200, including women and children spectators.<sup>251</sup> Gershuni sanctioned an assassination of the governor, and the successful assassin, Egor Dulebov, escaped. In May, after Gershuni was arrested at a station outside Kyiv, Gots appointed Savinkov as head of the combat organisation,<sup>252</sup> and he went to Geneva, met Gots and Azev, and agreed to assassinate the interior minister.<sup>253</sup> Azev told the Okhrana about Gots, Gershuni, the St. Petersburg combat organisation and the planned assassination, and they raised his salary to 500 rubles a month.<sup>254</sup> Soon after a new criminal code expanded the range of 'state crimes'.<sup>255</sup> Okhrana officers became responsible for collecting political information from provincial governors, prosecutors and gendarmes, and recruiting and guiding spies; and in 'extreme circumstances' they could act in other provinces without the governor's permission.<sup>256</sup>

Kharkiv's Jewish population was the third largest in Russia outside the Pale,<sup>257</sup> and after an SR wounded the governor,<sup>258</sup> the authorities extended the martial law in Kharkiv and Poltava to other provinces.<sup>259</sup> The Kharkiv woodworker Foma Kachurenko fired bullets doused in strychnine at the governor, and missed, but wounded the police chief and people close to the VPSR combat organisation.<sup>260</sup> Azev, Gershuni and M.M. Melnikov met in Kyiv and discussed assassinating the interior minister. Reportedly Azev controlled the VPSR's St. Petersburg Committee,<sup>261</sup> but he intended to leave the party when there was a constitutional government.<sup>262</sup>

Early that year Odesa police had reported that the VPSR was 'very small in numbers', but SDs helped them to distribute leaflets. Girls at a tobacco factory refused to assist women for 30 kopeks a day. The women earned one ruble, so they asked for a ten-kopek rise, but managers refused. A strike began, but the police dragged women back to the factory, many by their hair. After another strike, Cossacks dragged men back to work. In February the VPSR and RSDRP jointly celebrated the anniversary of serf emancipation. Meer Kogan noted that the 1,500 SDs had no strong roots and the city was ripe for Zubatovite agitation. The RSDRP and VPSR cooperated in a May Day

demonstration, and by summer Kogan and Iury Volin formed an independent workers' group which included typographers, shop assistants, bakers and factory workers.<sup>263</sup> Others organised teachers.

Sergey Akramovsky had been born into a Saratov priest's family. He graduated from Kazan Seminary in 1891 and he and the veteran SR N.A. Malinowsky formed a teachers' organisation in Saratov. Akramovsky propagandised peasants in Saratov province, but was deported for distributing Bakh's pamphlet; so he worked for Kursk zemstvo as a touring teacher of peasants, and injected politics into the curriculum. He accepted some socialist ideas and joined the VPSR in 1902. Late that year Breshkovskaya forged links with revolutionary teachers, and in spring 1903, when she was about to go abroad, she appointed Akramovsky as her successor, and gave him the addresses of many teachers across Russia. In May he was the delegate of the Saratov teachers' organisation at a congress in Moscow, where the VPSR and RSDRP sought to influence the 350 delegates. At the urging of Akramovsky, some delegates formed a clandestine teachers' union, whose members saw themselves as 'revolutionary socialists', but the union was unaligned for fear of 'complicating practical work among the masses'. Its leaders included several SDs, mainly from Moscow, who were in contact with the VPSR Moscow regional bureau, and they urged cooperation between SDs, SRs and 'constitutional democrats'. In summer VPSR and RSDRP intelligently taught teachers' in ten mainly central provinces and built 25-30 small district libraries. Akramovsky visited legal and illegal teachers' groups, distributed literature from 'a huge laundry basket stuffed with SR and social democratic pamphlets', works by Herzen, Lavrov and Kropotkin, and *Iskra*, and the union acquired a press.<sup>264</sup>

Saratov's 186 inspected plants employed around 9,200, and small workshops around 16,000, but the RSDRP Committee had received no literature for months and used SR leaflets. Some SDs had formed *Volya (Freedom)*, and wanted a joint SD-SR committee; but the SDs were 'forced to refrain from mass agitation' after many arrests following May Day, and Baramzin complained to *Iskra* about the lack of literature.<sup>265</sup>

Early that year Grigory Mandelshtam had left Saratov for Berlin.<sup>266</sup> After the police bribed postal workers and searched Vecheslov's flat, Mandelshtam got the SPD to investigate, and Bebel's Reichstag question caused a sensation.<sup>267</sup> In summer Saratov RSDRP Committee appointed Mandelshtam and Vladimir Galkin as congress delegates.<sup>268</sup>

*Revolutsionnaya rossya* published the Saratov VPSR programme for workers' kruzhki, which aimed to instil 'the conviction that only the working class can help itself' and 'free itself from centuries of oppression' through revolution. Kruzhek leaders shared information and new recruits discussed working conditions, the Orthodox Church, the autocracy, and how to resist exploitation through unions, strikes and demonstrations. After three to five sessions the most promising members studied primitive communism, the origins of class, the rise of modern industry, the development of capitalism, the history of western European socialism, the growth of the Russian proletariat, worker-peasant solidarity and the VPSR programme, and graduates trained leaders for basic kruzhki;<sup>269</sup> but the VPSR had not been invited to the RSDRP congress.

# 15. Is our Party doomed to perpetual splits over trifles?

## (i) The hard and the soft

By April 1903 the editors of *Iskra* and *Zarya* were in Geneva, but Ulyanov spent a fortnight in bed with shingles.<sup>1</sup> He wanted land nationalisation to be in the RSDRP programme, but Plekhanov and Axelrod dissuaded him.<sup>2</sup> When Iuly Tserderbaum arrived with Lev Bronstein, who felt a 'coolness' was 'creeping into' the editors' relations. Ulyanov was '*hard*' and Tserderbaum was '*soft*'. The editors met delegates, but some *Iskra* agents were 'full of doubts or reservations' and 'complaints'. Bronstein believed the *Iskra* editorial board should be 'subordinated' to the CC, but Ulyanov persuaded him that the board should have a complete 'dictatorship'. Zasluch took Bronstein to a board where he had no vote, but won the argument to let Blumenfeld decide 'administrative and organisational questions' about the press, and this was the 'last straw' for Plekhanov.<sup>3</sup> The editors accepted Ulyanov's idea of two 'troikas' for the board and CC, and no co-option without mutual agreement,<sup>4</sup> and Tserderbaum showed Ulyanov his draft Party rules in May.<sup>5</sup>

Of the 1,256 known revolutionaries born in the 1860s, 71 percent were intelligentsy and one percent workers, artisans or peasants. Of the 5,664 born in the 1870s, the proportions were 65 and 21 percent.<sup>6</sup> By 1903 there were 405 illegal groups in 312 centres in 68 provinces, plus 300 associated groups, and SDs led 85 percent of the largest. Workers formed 56 percent of SDs and 75 percent of RSDRP Committees,<sup>7</sup> but the 100 to 150 in the 'special *Iskra* organisation' were overwhelmingly intelligentsy.<sup>8</sup>

Three male workers were 'brought in' to Geneva, 'not without some trouble', and had 'long discussions' with Ulyanov, who asked Bronstein about Dmitry Kalafati from Mykolaiv,<sup>9</sup> and sent Shotman to him for 'training'.<sup>10</sup> Goldendakh arrived and acknowledged Borba had had no organised support in Russia,<sup>11</sup> but published *Materialy po Programme rabochey partii* (*Materials on the Programme of the Workers' Party*). He argued that Russia capitalism was fundamentally different to western Europe's, since the bourgeoisie was much weaker, but SDs might push a bourgeois revolution towards a proletarian revolution.<sup>12</sup> There had been no socialist movements in western Europe when capitalism was in its infancy, and it had not 'experienced the same breakneck speed' of development as Russia, or its 'degree of large-scale industry'; but since all 'independent producers' were 'condemned to inevitable destruction', SDs must avoid 'overestimating the possible political role of the peasantry'. There were too few SDs to take 'the *living word*' to workers, but workers made 'no "purely economic" demands'. Social Democracy was the 'party of a *class*, not a *sect*', and 'aims to make *history*, not histories', but '*history* is made only by the masses'. His slogan was '*revolution in permanentia*': 'not "order" in place of revolution, but revolution in place of order'. Plekhanov called this perspective 'a parody of Marxism'.<sup>13</sup>

Boris Ginzburg was responsible for practical arrangements for the Second Congress. He had been born in 1863, and he had been a member of Brusnev's St. Petersburg SD kruzhok. He booked the Brussels' Maison du Peuple/Volkshuis;<sup>14</sup> but the *Iskra* agents Zalkind and Drabkin organised another venue,<sup>15</sup> in a flour store, hoping to fool the Belgian police, and the Congress opened there on 17/30 July.<sup>16</sup>

Axelrod, Zasluch and Potresov of the GOT, Alexandrova, Halberstadt and Noskov of the congress organising committee, and *Iskra*'s Lepeshinsky, (who had escaped from Exile), Takhtarev, Takhtarova and Krupskaya had a 'voice', but no vote. Five men from south Russian committees had two votes, as did Ulyanov, who represented the émigré revolutionary Liga, and Iuly Tserderbaum the *Iskra* network. Plekhanov and Deutsch of the GOT, Piker and Maknovets of the old émigré SD organisation and two from the Bund's émigré organisation had one, as did the three delegates from the Bund CC, one of the two from *luzhny rabochy* and the 25 from Russian committees, who included five women.<sup>17</sup> The delegates' average age was 31, and they had been active for 8.5 years.<sup>18</sup> One delegate's name evidently did not appear in the minutes, but *Iskra* delegates reportedly had 33 votes out of 51.<sup>19</sup>

No western European SD organisation sent greetings and no foreigner attended.<sup>20</sup> The delegates elected Plekhanov as chair, Ulyanov and Krasikov as vice-chairs and Krokhmal as secretary.<sup>21</sup> Krasikov gave a detailed report from the organising committee, and he was the only one of the *Iskra* committee members with a vote. Krzhizhanovsky and Lengnik were formally members of the committee, but had been largely inactive, and were not present.<sup>22</sup> Makhnovets and Piker proposed that Helphand have a 'consultative voice', but delegates backed the credentials committee's refusal,<sup>23</sup> and its rejection of the proposal to let Goldendakh speak.

The five Bund delegates argued for a federative party, the right to hold separate congresses, control executive institutions, publish in any language, make temporary agreements with other SD organisations, organise fighting squads and elect RSDRP congress delegates. The SDKPIL's Ganetsky and Warszawski arrived five days late. They claimed to represent all Polish SDs, and had a mandate to walk out if the Congress agreed to national self-

determination.<sup>24</sup> Luxemburg sent them a telegram: 'Make no concessions', but 'Avoid any open defeat. In such a case you must move towards a split'.<sup>25</sup>

The Brussels police arrested and deported *Iskra's* Zalkind,<sup>26</sup> and told the Belgian comrades who had helped to organise the Congress that all the delegates had to leave the country; so they went to London, and the Bundists settled in their émigré committee's house.<sup>27</sup> The first sessions took place on 29 July/11 August in a room at the Communist Club, 107 Charlotte Street, which belonging to the German Workers' Educational Association.<sup>28</sup> Ulyanov proposed that a party member 'accepts the Party's programme and supports the Party both financially and by personal participation in one of the Party organisations'. Piker argued that Ulyanov marginalised the role of intelligently in freeing workers from bourgeois ideology. Plekhanov replied that Ulyanov's *Chto delat?* had been 'a polemical article against the economists', but Maknovets objected that in Ulyanov's writing "'Party" always appears as the subject' and "'proletariat" as the object'. Ulyanov argued that the party's 'greatest shortcoming' was a lack of 'fully conscious workers, worker-leaders and worker-revolutionaries'.

Piker argued that Ulyanov's draft RSDRP programme denied the proletariat 'any creative power in the development of Social Democracy' and ignored 'factors which create the distinctive, sharply defined psychology of the proletariat and stimulate' class-consciousness. Ulyanov replied that there was 'no conscious activity of the workers independent of the influence of the Social-Democrats', and Plekhanov claimed that the 'basic principle' was '*salus populi suprema est*' (the welfare of the people is the most important thing, which he mistranslated as 'the success of the revolution is the highest law'). If the party had 'to restrict the functioning of a particular democratic principle' it would be 'criminal' not to. If the people elected 'a very good parliament' it 'would suit us to try and make that a *Long Parliament*'; but if elections 'turned out badly for us, we should have to try to disperse' it 'after two weeks'.

Tsederbaum argued that 'the huge extent of Russia, and experience of our centralised administration', legitimised 'regional self-government' for Finland, Poland, Lithuania and Caucasia; so he proposed 'self-government for those border districts which in respect of conditions of life and made-up of population differ from the strictly-Russian localities'. After two thirds of delegates voted in favour, the SDKPiL delegates walked out. The Bundists proposed including language equality in the RSDRP programme; but a majority of delegates argued that assimilation was the only way to end the oppression of Jews.<sup>29</sup>

Zhordania wanted the RSDRP to be 'at the head of the peasant struggle',<sup>30</sup> but Bronstein responded that 'we appeal to the peasants' as 'a mass already proletarianised or in the process of proletarianisation'. Delegates later adopted Ulyanov's agrarian programme, which argued that 'only activity aimed at uniting the proletariat' had 'social-revolutionary content', and described the 'Socialist-Revolutionaries' as 'a bourgeois-democratic faction towards whom Social-Democrats can in principle have an attitude no different than towards liberal representatives of the bourgeoisie'. It was 'possible to make agreements with them in 'particular instances', but only with the CC's approval, and delegates condemned 'any attempt' at 'uniting' with the VPSR.

Tsederbaum argued that 'Party organisation is the flywheel that sets in motion the work of the Party' and required 'strict centralisation'. 'The question of rights and duties is decided by the statement: "there is the work you have to do".' Many groups could not join the RSDRP, but a 'conspiratorial organisation only has meaning when it is enveloped by a broad SD working-class party'. Ulyanov wanted the CC to be 'A fist!' so as to exclude 'confusion, vacillation and opportunism', and separate 'those who chatter from those who do the work'. Bronstein wanted 'a noose to hang those politically corrupt and depraved characters from the "intellectual" milieu', but Krasikov pointed out that workers and intelligently needed a 'fairly high level of political consciousness', and Zhordania asked: 'Who will be left the Party? Only generals without an army'. The RSDRP had to include 'prime movers' and 'a mass of fighters'.<sup>31</sup>

At some point Bronstein chaired an *Iskra* caucus. 'Everybody's nerves were strained to breaking point'. Ulyanov wanted 'clear-cut, perfectly defined relationships' in the party, while Tsederbaum wanted 'diffuse forms'. Ulyanov walked out, banging the door behind him. Zalkind and Dmitry Ulyanov told Bronstein that they had 'orders to bring you with us at any cost', but he 'flatly refused',<sup>32</sup> yet some delegates called him 'Lenin's Big Stick'.<sup>33</sup>

Alexandrova had taken an important role in the *Iskra* delegates' caucuses; but resigned, and supported the *luzhny rabochi* delegates. Ulyanov's proposed membership rule received five votes from Bundists, two from *Rabochee delo* supporters and one from *luzhny rabochy* supporters,<sup>34</sup> but only 15 from *Iskra* delegates, and it fell by 23 votes to 28. Delegates voted for Tsederbaum's proposal that a member 'accepts the Party's programme, supports the Party financially, and renders it regular personal assistance under the direction of one of its organisations', by 28 to 22.<sup>35</sup> Afterwards Shotman reportedly threatened to beat up a supposed *Iskra* 'hard' who had failed to support Ulyanov, but he pulled him away, saying 'only fools use fists in a polemic'.<sup>36</sup>

Delegates did not let Makhnovets report from the older émigré SD organisation, so he and Piker left,<sup>37</sup> though Lydia Makhnovets stayed.<sup>38</sup> There were 21 Jewish voting delegates,<sup>39</sup> and the five Bundists issued an ultimatum about their proposals, but lost by 41 votes to five, with five abstentions. All the *Iskra* delegates had voted against, and Bronstein pointed out that the 12 Jewish delegates among the majority had as much right to speak for the Jewish proletariat as the Bund. Mikhail Goldman shouted that they had never worked amongst the Jewish proletariat, announced that the Bund was leaving the RSDRP,<sup>40</sup> and the Bundists walked out.

*Iskra* was confirmed as the RSDRP's central organ and its network of agents formally ceased to exist. Rozanov acknowledged that *luzhny rabochy* had no reason to continue, but suggested that the CC discuss its future. Tsederbaum proposed postponing the discussion, but Ulyanov, who was in the chair, said that would put the Congress 'in an impossible position'. 'Great commotion, shouts, protests' were followed by Tsederbaum withdrawing his proposal, while 'vigorously protesting', and the '*uproar in the hall*' grew louder; but delegates voted 24 to 11 against the paper being a duplicate party central organ, and, according to Drabkin, Tsederbaum was 'hysterical with anger'.

In the secret ballot for the Central Committee, 20 delegates abstained. Three *Iskra* agents won 24 votes, though Noskov had only a 'consultative voice' and neither Krzhizhanovsky nor Lengnik were present. Delegates agreed that the CC and the *Iskra* board should each elect two members of the ruling Party Council, but though 20 did not vote for a fifth member, and two slips were blank, one candidate received two votes, but Plekhanov received 20 and became chair of Party Council.<sup>41</sup>

Tsederbaum did not deliver Krupskaya's report, which argued that most Committees in Russia regarded *Iskra* as 'wholly alien'.<sup>42</sup> Axelrod had previously declined to be a member of the editorial board,<sup>43</sup> but Tsederbaum confirmed that he, Axelrod, Potresov and Zasulich would not serve on a three-person editorial board. Plekhanov won 23 votes, Tsederbaum 22, Ulyanov 20 and Ginzburg three, but Tsederbaum and Ginzburg refused. Delegates accepted the three-person board by 25 votes to two, with 17 abstentions, and they also accepted Tsederbaum's proposal about propaganda.

Considering: (a) the growth of the labour movement in Russia is far outrunning the growth of the cadre of conscious worker Social-Democrats capable of acting as leaders in the ever more complex struggle of the Russian proletariat; (b) that conditions of police-imposed clandestinity hinder in the highest degree the correct presentation of propaganda through study-circles on any wide scale at all; and (c) that the lack of a sufficient number of experienced and skilled propagandists puts considerable obstacles in the way of propaganda of this kind – the Congress recognises the necessity for local committees to give very serious attention to the correct presentation of propaganda, being guided in this above all by the task of developing conscious and active agitators with a definite revolutionary world-outlook. The Congress proposes that local committees give particular attention to selecting skilful propagandists and instructs the Central Committee to take all needful measures for systematising and co-ordinating propaganda work in the localities, by providing systematic guides for study-circles, a series of systematically chosen propaganda pamphlets, and so on.

Delegates agreed that *Zarya* would be an RSDRP organ, while *Iskra* would be a daily. The editorial board were ordered to publish 'extensive pamphlet literature' for 'popularising' the programme and the Congress's tactical resolutions, but give 'as much space as possible to the widest circle of readers', eliminate purely theoretical articles and 'ensure a more systematic elucidation of socialist theory'.<sup>44</sup>

Ulyanov had argued that the CC and the *Iskra* editorial board had to be 'completely welded together', and while appointed local committees should be subordinate, they should co-opt and select 'a network of executive agents', including 'working class revolutionaries', to distribute literature, 'arrange demonstrations and similar collective actions', and special groups, especially for security. Reportedly delegates adopted most of these proposals,<sup>45</sup> but they agreed not to publish all the minutes.<sup>46</sup>

The GOT had been formally dissolved, but on the final day Ulyanov suggested to Tsederbaum that the former GOT editors should be coopted. At the final session there were 16 delegates, including all three former members of the GOT. Pavel and Lyubov Axelrod, Bronstein and Krokhnal supported Tsederbaum, but others, including Zalkind, Knipovich, Karpovich, Bauman, Noskov and Krasikov supported the 'majority'-controlled editorial board.<sup>47</sup>

After the Congress ended on 10/23 August, Axelrod criticised Plekhanov for supporting Ulyanov. He acknowledged that 'From such stuff Robespierres are made',<sup>48</sup> but he privately called Axelrod a 'cripple' and 'completely valueless to the party'.<sup>49</sup> Bronstein drafted a report to the Siberian organisation.<sup>50</sup> He noted that many of the '*hardest* Iskraists' were former 'economists', but their 'Narrow activism' had been 'replaced by total distrust of the rank and file members and a senseless faith in the omnipotence of the Editorial Board in exile'. Ulyanov had imposed a 'state of siege' with an 'iron fist'. He was a '*caricature*' of Robespierre and was preparing a counter-revolution with other 'Thermidorians of socialist opportunism'.<sup>51</sup>

Krasikov was sent to Russia to win committees for the 'majority', but was arrested in Berlin with false papers. SPD comrades helped him get free, and he toured western European cities including Geneva, Zurich, Heidelberg and Brussels.<sup>52</sup> The August *Zarya* included an article by Tsederbaum, but it proved to be the last.<sup>53</sup> The émigré 'majority' and 'minority' former *Iskra* delegates split; yet a huge strike wave had swept across south Russia.

## (ii) The southern strike wave

In spring 1903 the Bund and RSDRP had reorganised their self-defence groups in Odesa, but there was no May Day rally, and then some workers met in a field, Jewish shopkeepers informed the police, who arrested 30. A third of the city's 400,000 inhabitants were Jews,<sup>54</sup> and a third needed charity at Passover. During May and June 3,500 workers went on strike, and there were 'disorders' at the University,<sup>55</sup> where students debated about which revolutionary organisation to join.<sup>56</sup> Around half of Odesa's dockers earned about 60 kopeks a day; but at least 2,000 were unemployed.<sup>57</sup> Male RSDRP propagandists feared arrest and refused to try to organise them, but a young Jewess called Lia built a meeting of 40, the Bund organiser addressed them and Lia and two other Jewesses, Anna and Marusia, led three dockers' *kruzhki*.<sup>58</sup> On 1 July 2,500 dockers struck for a 150 percent pay rise.<sup>59</sup> Soon after a railway worker won a court case against a foreman who had slapped his face, and when managers sacked the worker,<sup>60</sup> 200 workmates went on strike demanding his reinstatement, the sacking of the foreman, an end to personal searches, a pay rise and a nine-hour day. SDs agitated and 2,000 more workers came out. When striking dockers spurned the police chief's offer of mediation, policemen beat them, but a mass picket stopped scabs and witnessed the unusual spectacle of a policeman running away. Navy officers ordered 500 sailors to break the dock strike, but sailors, stokers and engineers came out, so the port was at a standstill, and tram workers closed the system. Strikes broke out at quarries, a tin plant, a tannery and a cement works, and flying pickets closed other plants. Up to 50,000 strikers attended meetings, and 3,000 broke through a cordon of troops. Some people emptied food shops, so strikers guarded bakeries.<sup>61</sup> Around 30,000 were out, and the Prefect believed that socialist propaganda was influential.

When news of the Odesa events reached Mykolaiv one factory workforce came out, others followed and strikers sang revolutionary songs.<sup>62</sup> The military commander thwarted an RSDRP intervention,<sup>63</sup> but leaflets argued for an eight-hour day, rises of up to 70 percent and a minimum wage across the south.

In the Caucasus over half of Baki oilfield workers were Persians or Azerbaijani Turks.<sup>64</sup> Earlier that year Armenian strikers had won all their demands, and even though their language had no word for 'strike', the Turks followed suit.<sup>65</sup> Thousands of oil workers walked out on 2 July,<sup>66</sup> demanding an eight-hour day, better pay and conditions, no more fines and the release of imprisoned strikers.<sup>67</sup> They stopped trams, papers and the telegraph and telephone systems, and agitated factory workers with 'flying speeches'. Troops fired at them and Cossacks charged, causing severe wounds and deaths,<sup>68</sup> but in days no electricity or water reached the oilfield. Agitational leaflets in four languages appeared daily. Up to 45,000 were out, and as many as 20,000 listened to political speakers under the noses of police on the outskirts.<sup>69</sup> Troops took a week to suppress the strikes,<sup>70</sup> and the authorities noted that the RSDRP had created their 'political character'.

Kyiv RSDRP Committee could print 2,000 leaflets a day, and strikes broke out. Iushuf, a Jewish schoolteacher,<sup>71</sup> persuaded the Committee to call 100 'organised workers' to a meeting in nearby woods. They distributed leaflets to railway workers, printers and metalworkers, demanding an eight-hour day and other economic reforms, and as the Committee discussed further action strikers passed by shouting 'Down with the Autocracy!'<sup>72</sup>

Katerynoslav RSDRP Committee had 'ties' with around 350 workers.<sup>73</sup> Some formed a strike committee with *Rabochee delo* supporters and held rallies outside town, but they lacked leaflets and postponed a general strike. Troops guarded the railway workshops, but 2,500 workers, including Jewish artisans and shop assistants, marched to the suburbs, distributing leaflets and shouting 'Stop working now!' Tram and paper mill workers came out, and RSDRP speakers exhorted up to 15,000 Briansk steelworks strikers to refrain from violence, but some tried to break through a military cordon and troops opened fire, killing 13 and seriously wounded 14. The strike ended on 13 July. The Committee believed that 'bitter disillusionment and the consciousness that their humble sacrifices had been in vain prevailed among the gray masses', but the strikes had 'greatly revolutionised the most conscious elements'.<sup>74</sup> Some workers blamed intelligentsy. 'If they hadn't attacked the government, hadn't demanded in their leaflets and speeches the overthrow of the autocracy, the workers undoubtedly would have won.'<sup>75</sup>

On the 13<sup>th</sup> Odesa's police chief gave a tramway director the alternative of accepting the strikers' demands or being deported, but he insisted that he would reverse the decision when 'order was re-established'. When the strike spread to other firms, he noted that it was 'impossible to say that our company was at fault. As the state of siege was proclaimed, we knew we were saved'.<sup>76</sup> On the 18<sup>th</sup> Cossacks broke the tram strike, but every tram had

to carry a policeman. Police and Cossacks broke the port strike, but seamen won a rise. Other workers won up to half an hour off the day,<sup>77</sup> and rises of up to 35 percent, while railway managers sacked three foremen.<sup>78</sup> The police arrested 200 strikers, and exiled 75 to Siberia,<sup>79</sup> including the Jewish women agitators.<sup>80</sup>

Tbilisi office, workshop and factory workers had struck on the 14<sup>th</sup>, and 2,000 shop workers won five hours off their 17-hour day.<sup>81</sup> By the 20<sup>th</sup> troops had driven Baki strikers back and thousands faced deportation. There had been a general strike in Batumi,<sup>82</sup> and a Tbilisi civil servant had 'no doubt that a significant role in the rising number of strikes' was the 'developing Social Democratic movement',<sup>83</sup> and the army's loyalty had been tested.<sup>84</sup>

On the 21<sup>st</sup> pickets from Kyiv's railway workshop and a machine-building works brought out around 4,000 workers. Workers at other large factories, and printers, bakers and workshop employees came out next day, and though ten were arrested,<sup>85</sup> foundry workers came out on the 23<sup>rd</sup>,<sup>86</sup> as did Arsenal workers. Boat builders commandeered a vessel on the Dnieper. Troops fired and caused many casualties, but more workers came out and commercial life had stopped by the 24<sup>th</sup>.<sup>87</sup> After two strikers were arrested, others and their families sat down on railway lines, and when troops threatened to shoot them, the men bared their breasts in defiance. A salvo killed up to 40.<sup>88</sup> 'Conscious' workers addressed huge meetings, demonstrators carried red flags and sang revolutionary songs, and the police freed prisoners.<sup>89</sup> Next day up to 15,000 were out. SDs distributed 24,000 leaflets, including 4,000 to troops,<sup>90</sup> but there were casualties, and the strike ended on 1 August. SD leaflets had criticised the harsh discipline and poor conditions in the army, and SDs built a soldiers' *kruzhok*.<sup>91</sup> Printers won a nine-hour day, a ten-percent rise and sick pay,<sup>92</sup> and yeast factory workers won an eight-hour day.<sup>93</sup>

The tsar sacked the finance minister,<sup>94</sup> and the interior minister ordered the Zubatov to go on leave in 24 hours. (He later sacked him,<sup>95</sup> and had him deported to Vladimir province.<sup>96</sup>)

During August Crușevanu published an abridged version of the anti-Jewish *Programa* pseudonymously in St. Petersburg,<sup>97</sup> in his government-subsidised paper, *Znamia (The Banner)*. In the Pale Gomel's population of 36,800 included 20,400 Jews,<sup>98</sup> and 200 Zionists and Bundists formed self-defence groups. On 11 September, after a brawl between a Russian peasant and a Jewish fishmonger, peasants and workers destroyed Jews' homes and businesses. The self-defence groups fought back, and killed one peasant, but many were injured on both sides. Jews appealed for protection and the police chief sent for troops. On the 13<sup>th</sup> up to 500 railway workers rampaged through the Jewish district, but met resistance. Next day more peasants arrived, but so did 1,600 troops, and the self-defence groups held firm. By the 15<sup>th</sup> dozens had been seriously injured, and ten Jews and eight Christians had died, including five Jews and three Christians shot by troops. Twelve Christians and 18 Jews were later sentenced to up to a year of *katorga*.<sup>99</sup>

'Stepan' arrived in *Iuzovka* with illegal literature. The SD Shur could not recall who published them, since comrades 'didn't differentiate very sharply in such matters'. Workers failed to prevent a seasonal pay cut, and the police heard someone they thought was Jewish shouting to a crowd. 'We should fight for our own rights and not rely on the government or on management. Our wives and children are nearly dead in this dirt and poverty. These vampires suck our blood when all this [the works] should rightfully be ours'. He spotted the police, hid in the crowd and escaped. Ironworks managers issued an ultimatum and imposed a 20 percent pay cut, but Donetsk RSDRP Committee disappeared. *Iskra* later reported that miners' union leaflets in *Iuzovka*, Lugansk, Taganrog and Rostov-na-Donu had been 'incomprehensible' to miners, but met 'more success among 'intelligent and conscious' factory workers 'who openly call themselves Social Democrats'. The police arrested 30, but the union survived.<sup>100</sup>

Printers had joined strikes in Odesa, Tbilisi and Katerynoslav;<sup>101</sup> but they evidently had no organisational links with unionised printers in Moscow.

### **(iii) The Union of Typographical Workers for the Struggle to Improve the Conditions of Labour**

In 1902 there had been 7,302 typographers and lithographers in Moscow. Virtually every major private firm was a joint-stock corporation, but few had typesetting machines. Typographer's work was 'murderous'. Some did not reach 30 and most died before they were 40.<sup>102</sup> Well over half of Sytin & Co 1,000 employees worked in the paper and book plants. Two of Sytin's sons contacted the RSDRP, and the Okhrana added their names and those of eight printers to their list of political suspects.<sup>103</sup>

By 1903 there were 11,884 typographers and lithographers in the city. All the largest plants employed 500 to 600: nine employed a third of all print workers, and the government plant employed over 1,000. Stepan Tsorn had been sacked 18 times for defending typographers' 'just and vital interests', and August Tens had been a member of the book workers' union in Paris and of the Society of Typographers in London. He wrote about their 'defence of their members' interests in all possible circumstances' in the St. Petersburg periodical, *Naborshchik (Typographer)*, and copies reached Moscow, where Mitrofan Biriukov and Nikita Potashev spoke about western

European workers' struggles against capitalists. Some typographers decided to draft a letter to others to suggest a struggle for a shorter working day and higher pay. It is not clear if the letter was sent,<sup>104</sup> but some organised an illegal union and chose starosty to form a sovet.

In June 50 Bromley machine-builders went on strike because of a foreman's abusive behaviour, and demanded a shorter day and the end of fines for lateness. Managers, backed by factory inspectors, sacked them all, and there were arrests;<sup>105</sup> but the government approved the starosty, hoping to channel discontent.<sup>106</sup>

Early in July 400 typographers' met in a tavern and Potashev spoke about the southern strike wave and western European trade unions. The police threatened the tavern-keeper, so the typographers moved to a different tavern. They asked former Zubatovite Society leaders to intercede with the police chief, who refused twice, and though some members of the sovet were arrested, the plans for a strike went ahead.<sup>107</sup>

By August Alexey Medvedev had drafted a charter for Soyuz tipografskikh rabotnikov po borbe za uluchsheniye uslovy truda (The Union of Typographical Workers for the Struggle to Improve the Conditions of Labour). The sovet members were all self-appointed, and their identities were kept secret, but seven of the nine whose birthdates are known were 26, Potashev and Medvedev were 29, Biriukov was 31 and the oldest was 32. The Soyuz was open to all print workers, and the members would be consulted on important issues, and encouraged to recruit kruzhenki, collect money for a strike fund and elect starosty. The sovet met outside the city but used word of mouth or hand-written or hectographed leaflets to call a meeting. Around 150 met in woods near Kuskovo railway station and the sovet's Vladimir Kairovich read out letters from his brother, who was an army typographer in Kyiv, about the southern strike wave. On the 17<sup>th</sup> around 200 print workers met near Prevovo and Chukhlinka railway stations. Medvedev read a list of demands that Biriukov had drafted, and in spite of Biriukov's objections the meeting unanimously decided to strike if they were not met. On the 24<sup>th</sup> 150 met in a large tavern in a northern suburb, and on the 29<sup>th</sup> 600 met in the woods north of Ostankino. On 5 September the employers' organisation announced a meeting four days later, and the chairman, who owned a large firm, immediately raised his employees' wages and reduced their hours. Late on the night of the 6<sup>th</sup> gendarmes raided Biriukov, Kairovich and Potashev's apartments, and arrested them. By next day the police knew the time and location of the workers' next meeting, and arrested 28 activists, but Medvedev and another sovet member escaped and announced a strike would begin two days later. On the 8<sup>th</sup> the police prevented another meeting, but on the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup> around 3,000 workers presented their handwritten demands to their employers and walked out.

Every list of demands included collective negotiations. Other demands included a nine-hour day, an eight-hour night shift, a 20 percent rise, higher piece rates, fortnightly payment of wages and a limit of two hours of overtime with a bonus of 30 kopeks an hour. Several workforces also wanted adequate lighting, ventilation and cleaning, a free medical clinic and medicine in plants that employed more than 15, a qualified medical assistant, a weekly visit by a doctor, half-pay for workers off sick, the end of searches at the end of a shift, the use of 'polite address' by managers and employers and the election of starosty. Others wanted four-year apprenticeships, with a substantial wage rise, but a limit on their numbers, giving them only jobs they were qualified to do and no more sweeping floors or running errands; and one leaflet argued for an illegal struggle using language associated with SDs.<sup>108</sup> Cossacks prevented other workers and students from showing solidarity, while the police at print shops threatened strikers with deportation, and others tried to break up groups of strikers.<sup>109</sup> By evening nearly 6,000 from 70 firms were on strike, and 2,000 gathered in Red Square to shut down the Holy Synod's press.

The numbers of strikers rose on the 10<sup>th</sup>, and the police chief ordered the arrest of 300 he deemed 'harmful for public order and peace'. By evening 412 were in jail, including Medvedev, even though the police had reported 'no resistance or violations of the public order'. Next morning the police chief had an order posted at every print shop announcing that any worker who failed to turn up by noon next day would be considered to have quit and his wages and internal passport would be sent to his place of registration; but 65 firms, including all the largest, agreed to a ten-hour day shift and nine-hour night shift, and met the strikers' demands for most piece rates. By the 12<sup>th</sup> over 6,500 workers from 87 firms were on strike, including 12 of the 13 plants with over 100 employees, and over half of those with over 200. The police estimated that 80 percent of workers from 60 percent of print works and binderies were out; but by afternoon only 947 were still on strike and that fell to 612 on the 13<sup>th</sup>. By the 15<sup>th</sup> all the strikers were back at work, and many prisoners were released, but 44 remained in the cells.<sup>110</sup> The police arrested 446 alleged leaders, deported 286, and put the rest under surveillance. They estimated that 6,599 of the 8,233 typographers had come out, including at least 703 of Sytin & Co's employees, but none at the firms' newspaper, *Russkoe slovo*, whose press run had reached 43,000. Sytin & Co and other employers later reneged on their promises,<sup>111</sup> but the print workers had found a useful ally.

Sophia Khernkova had taught in a village in Crimea and ran free literacy classes for peasants; but when she moved to another village school, and carried on teaching literacy, she was forced to resign. After her husband died she took her two daughters to Tomsk, but she was sacked, so they moved to Moscow, where she contacted



liberals and socialists. During the strike two soviet members, Dmitry Komkov and Sergey Reshetov, had met a 'representative of the intelligentsia' who gave them money and advised them to see Khernkova.<sup>112</sup> She was an RSDRP sympathiser and had collected money from intelligenty for arrested strikers,<sup>113</sup> those in jail and those who had been deported, but some employers subsequently made more concessions.

By October Khernkova had initiated a new printers' union led by a typographers' *tseñtr* (centre), who were mainly in their mid-20s and had been active during the strike. They set up a small illegal print shop and built a library which included popular and agitational literature. Every evening up to 15 of them met at Khernkova's apartment and discussed working conditions and articles for their paper, *Vestnik soyuza tipografskikh rabochikh* (*The Herald of the Union of Typographical Workers*); but they soon had competition.

Print workers' wages were twice those of most others, and 460 were members of legal kassy.<sup>114</sup> Nikifor Krasivisky, formerly one of Zubatov's leading workers, plus another typographer and a book gilder, tried to organise a legal society. Several dozen attended the first meeting in a tavern, and up to 300 attended a second. Krasivisky denounced strikes as illegal, dangerous and ineffective. He told them that if they renounced such methods the Okhrana would support them, and by mid-October the Okhrana was satisfied that a 'schism' had been achieved between the illegal and legal organisations.

The third *Vestnik soyuza* had appeared by November, and a new programme advocated 'the development of self-consciousness' by reading 'good books', mass meetings, demonstrations with the slogan of 'freedom of assembly, freedom of strikes', economic strikes and association with other 'workers' liberation organisations'. By December the soviet accepted the need for political struggle and adopted the RSDRP platform and programme; but did not affiliate, because of its narrow definition of membership and its unwillingness to support workers' spontaneous struggles.<sup>115</sup> Some supported the Second Congress 'minority',<sup>116</sup> as did many RSDRP members.

#### **(iv) Prepare for a decisive war**

In August 1903 Krupskaya had written from Geneva to ask Maria Ulyanova, Krzhizhanovsky and Lengnik in Samara to ensure the 'even distribution' of *Iskra* and correspondence. 'This is a terribly important moment. It smells of a split. If our old friends don't exert their strength, in order to demonstrate the Central Committee's efficiency, all our work will have been wasted.'<sup>117</sup> Noskov, Krasnukha and Krasikov were invited to Geneva to discuss *Iskra*,<sup>118</sup> and early in September Ulyanov wrote to Kalmykova that the 'Californian sources' of money had 'gone up in smoke', but he did not answer her query about whether she should split the 'bucket' (her donation). He tried to reassure Potresov that they could work together,<sup>119</sup> but he later recalled that he heartily disliked Ulyanov's 'monolithic, one-note nature', and how he 'over-simplified the complexities of the human condition, reducing everything to narrow-minded sectarianism'.<sup>120</sup>

Axelrod had written four articles in the first 45 issues of *Iskra*, Zaslulich six and Potresov eight, but none were leading articles, while Plekhanov had written 24, Ulyanov 32 and Tseñderbaum 39, including all the leading articles.<sup>121</sup> In Geneva Ulyanov wrote an account of the Congress for '*personal acquaintances*', and claimed that *Iskra's* editorial board had previously been 'so ineffectual that *never once in all its three years* did it meet in full force'. Axelrod rarely contributed, and while Zaslulich and Potresov sometimes 'contributed and advised', they '*never did any actual editorial work*'. He and Tseñderbaum had written 'virtually every' article and '*never once* was any *major* theoretical issue raised by anyone but Plekhanov'. Ulyanov believed that the RSDRP was 'in the throes of the last difficult transition' from a network of *kruzhki* to a party.<sup>122</sup>

Ulyanov wrote to Krzhizhanovsky to 'prepare for a decisive war' against the 'Yegors' (the 'minority') who had 'deprived us (I don't know for how long, *possibly even forever*) of two of our largest sources of money. Please make the most desperate efforts to obtain money', 'appoint *members*' of Party Council, and send Lengnik to Geneva, or 'find a successor' and come himself.<sup>123</sup> (Party Council was intended to resolve conflicts between the CC and editorial board and take decisions neither could make independently.)

Fyodor Gurvich escaped from exile and joined the 'minority' émigrés in Switzerland,<sup>124</sup> and was one of the 17 who met in Zurich and formed a 'Bureau of the Minority' which included Axelrod, Potresov, Iuly Tseñderbaum and Lev Bronstein.<sup>125</sup> They noted 'the weakness of the local committees and the limited consciousness of their members' in Russia, and damned the 'state of siege' and 'deformed centralism' achieved by the 'majority' at the Second Congress. They agreed to 'boycott' *Iskra*, and not to write for it until the former editors were reinstated, but formed a 'literary group'. They would ask the CC to publish their articles and pamphlets, and failing that they would have them printed by 'a non-Party firm';<sup>126</sup> but *Iskra* No. 50, which was dated 15 October, asked for letters to go to 'Mr. Paul Axelrod, Acacias, Geneve (Suisse)'.<sup>127</sup>

Blumenfeld resigned from the Geneva print shop,<sup>128</sup> and Lengnik had failed to get the fractions to merge.<sup>129</sup> When Ulyanov, Plekhanov and Lengnik were in a minority at an editorial board,<sup>130</sup> Plekhanov proposed co-opting two 'minority' supporters, who declined, and Tserderbaum told him afterwards that Ulyanov had previously suggested the idea.<sup>131</sup> Ulyanov complained to Krzhizhanovsky and Noskov in Russia that Kharkiv, Katerynoslav, Rostov-na-Donu and Gornozavodsky Committees were 'in the hands of the mutineers', and Kyiv's 'majority' supporters had not 'gone into the committees to fight'. 'We must by all means fill the places on *all* committees without exception with our own people'.<sup>132</sup>

Hirsch Apfelbaum, the 24-year-old son of an Elizavetgrad province dairy farmer, visited Geneva.<sup>133</sup> He had been a member of a Bundist kruzhok,<sup>134</sup> but respected Ulyanov, yet Plekhanov insisted that 'Lenin' would 'only be fit to be put up as a scare-crow' in weeks, since he had 'raised the banner of revolt'. 'Don't you understand that this is an unequal fight? Lenin is practically a dead man from the moment that he broke away from us'. When Apfelbaum told Ulyanov, he laughed, and insisted that 'we shall fight' and 'see whom the workers will follow'.<sup>135</sup>

The 'majority' supporters Deutsch and Wallach were members of the émigré Liga EC,<sup>136</sup> which met late in October.<sup>137</sup> Lepeshinsky supported the 'majority'; but when Axelrod, Potresov, Zasluch and Tserderbaum criticised Ulyanov's 'bureaucratic centralism' at the Liga EC, some 'majority' supporters abstained,<sup>138</sup> so Ulyanov and others walked out, and Babushkin later joined them.<sup>139</sup> Plekhanov co-opted two 'minority' and two 'majority' supporters onto Party Council,<sup>140</sup> including Lepeshinsky, who became its secretary.<sup>141</sup> At a 'majority' meeting Plekhanov threatened to resign from *Iskra*: 'Better a bullet in the brain than a split',<sup>142</sup> and Ulyanov resigned from Party Council and the board.<sup>143</sup> Plekhanov insisted that Galperin should resign too, and he subsequently did so.<sup>144</sup>

In Moscow a lawyer gave the *Iskra* agent Zelikson money to use the 'excellently organised' illegal transport route to Switzerland.<sup>145</sup> In Geneva Ulyanov asked her about the Tver RSDRP organisation, and she told him that his pamphlet for poor peasants helped them to contact rural kruzhki. One incident particularly interested him.

We had sent an old and experienced comrade to work with a village kruzhok. Next day, he returned, carrying a folded sheet of paper, in the name of the Tver Committee. In this letter, the kruzhok leader begged us confidentially not to send this propagandist again. 'He is not one of us', he is a 'gentleman', it said. The evidence was that in the morning, after passing the night in a peasant's wooden hut, he took out of his pocket not only soap but a brush as well, and 'he brushed his teeth; and only gentlemen groom themselves like that'.

Zelikson met Ivan Alexandrov, a Putilov worker who had been deported to Kostroma and contracted tuberculosis. She also met Bobrovsky, Bauman and Wallach, who supported the 'majority' and called Plekhanov a 'traitor', but the 'minority' controlled the press, communications with Russia and the funds.<sup>146</sup> Zelikson 'could not understand why the Ulyanovists were being blamed' for the split, and why Tserderbaum 'stormed and raged' at 'a local Party worker' who opposed the 'minority'. Ulyanov explained that there could be no 'narrow circle of leaders', and 'tireless, devoted rank and file workers' were 'indispensable', but they had to be 'utterly devoted to the Party' and their 'personal life' and 'Party life had to be one'. Zelikson decided to 'enlist' with Ulyanov's 'rams' and subsequently married Bobrovsky.<sup>147</sup>

Goldendakh reviewed the 'minority' draft programme sympathetically, but denounced the 'organisational fetishism', 'sectarianism' and '*Personencultus*' (personality cult) of the 'majority'. 'Unconditional obedience is demanded of everyone: workers are to obey the committees, which in turn obey the Central Committee, and the latter, under the supervision of the Central Organ', *Iskra*, was 'counting on working masses who are willing to be subordinated' and 'prepares, orders, and produces the general armed uprising'. Such a conspiratorial party could not achieve socialism, since 'functionaries will transform themselves from its servants to "dictators"', and the rest of the RSDRP would be 'an assembly of sheep'.<sup>148</sup>

*Iskra's* transport routes remained crucial. In spring the tsar had given the Finnish governor-general extraordinary powers, and he deported the leaders of the constitutional opposition; but the Finnish workers' organisation adopted an SD platform and helped Russian SDs,<sup>149</sup> and Zilliacus used the railway to get literature from Sweden to Finland.<sup>150</sup> In the basement of the *Vorwärts* building in Berlin the *Iskra* transporters Tarshis and Galperin made identical small batches and covered them with waterproof material. For smaller consignments they had used identical double-bottomed suitcases, but the police had become suspicious, so they put false bottoms in ordinary cases that could hold 100-150 copies. Every SD who left for Russia, including male and female students, took a case, but they and the Lithuanian smugglers could not meet demand. The 'minority' *Iskra* editors in Geneva harassed the transporters, so they developed a man's waistcoat that held up to 300 copies and a woman's bodice that held 400, with more sewn into the skirt, and all literature now went by this 'express transport'. Tarshis helped to get Congress delegates back to Russia, and did not know whether to support the 'majority' or 'minority', but Tserderbaum, Zasluch, Potresov and Axelrod summoned him and Galperin to Geneva.

Blumenfeld tried to bully Tarshis, and Gurvich attacked him, so Tarshis supported the 'majority',<sup>151</sup> as did Galperin. Plekhanov's article 'Chego ne delat' ('What Is Not To Be Done') in the *Iskra* dated 1 November argued for 'concessions' to 'those who, by mistake, tend towards revisionism and act as anarchist individualists'.<sup>152</sup> Tarshis and Galperin returned to Berlin and supported the 'majority'-controlled Russian CC.<sup>153</sup>

The *Iskra* dated 12 November was set in type that did not belong to the RSDRP,<sup>154</sup> and in it Ulyanov argued for '*More light!* - let the Party know *everything*, let it have *all, absolutely all the material* required for the judgment of all and sundry differences'. There must be 'confidence in the independent judgment of the whole body of the Party workers', who 'must constantly, steadily and systematically *train* suitable persons for the central bodies' and see '*all the activities* of every candidate'.<sup>155</sup> Days later he rejoined Party Council and wrote a conciliatory letter to Tsereteli,<sup>156</sup> and another to the Russian CC.

*The only salvation is - a congress. Its watchword: the fight against disrupters. Only by this watchword can we catch out the Martovites, win over the broad masses, and save the situation. In my opinion, the only possible plan is this: for the time being, not a word about the congress complete secrecy. All, absolutely all, forces to be sent into the committees and on tours. A fight to be waged for peace, for putting a stop to disruption, for subordination to the Central Committee. Every effort to be made to strengthen the committees with our people.*<sup>157</sup>

The Russian CC co-opted Ulyanov.<sup>158</sup> On 25 November *Iskra* No. 53 was produced by the editorial board which included the former editors who had not been elected at the Second Congress.<sup>159</sup> They refused to print Ulyanov's statement about his resignation from the editorial board, but it appeared on a leaflet in Russia.<sup>160</sup>

#### **(v) Have they gone crazy over there, abroad?**

By autumn 1903 the RSDRP Congress delegates had returned to Russia safely, thanks to the Bund.<sup>161</sup> Kremer went to the USA to raise funds, and the émigré committee returned to Geneva.<sup>162</sup> The CC co-opted Grinberg, who lived on money from home, while others took what they needed from the treasury and recorded it precisely in the ledger. They sent 'massive amounts' of literature into Russia via the German or Austrian borders, posted envelopes to commercial firms, or sent batches to other Bundists in western Europe to mail on; but there was 'literally a handful' in Bern.<sup>163</sup> The CC broke off relations with Ulyanov;<sup>164</sup> but the workers' opposition in Minsk wanted elections to committees,<sup>165</sup> and when the intelligently refused, the workers left the organisation.<sup>166</sup>

The Russian police had allowed Anatoly Lunacharsky to go to Vologda,<sup>167</sup> where he heard that Ulyanov was 'a schismatic and no matter what the cost wants to establish an autocracy in the party', so Axelrod and Tsereteli would not 'swear an oath of allegiance to him as all-Party Khan'. Lunacharsky asked rhetorically: 'The first paragraph of regulations. Is that worth a split?' 'Have they gone crazy over there, abroad?'<sup>168</sup>

Bakı RSDRP Committee supported the 'majority',<sup>169</sup> but the Congress had recognised the Batumi Committee,<sup>170</sup> which sided with the 'minority'. Chkheidze denounced the 'majority' as 'Jacobins',<sup>171</sup> but the police found their press and arrested him and others.<sup>172</sup> Tbilisi Committee expelled their delegate, Topuridze,<sup>173</sup> for supporting the 'minority', but the delegate Zhordania won some southern Committees for the 'minority'.<sup>174</sup> Tbilisi police sentenced to Kurnatovsky to four years' exile, Jibladze to three,<sup>175</sup> sent Eukidze to eastern Siberia,<sup>176</sup> and Jughashvili to western Siberia for three years. Ketskhoveli saw some of them in the Fortress yard from his cell, whistled the *Marseillaise* and shouted 'Long live socialism!' Guards told him to stop, but he kept shouting. An officer ordered a guard to point his rifle at him, but he carried on, and the guard shot him dead.<sup>177</sup>

The Caucasian Committee included Ramishvili and Noe Khomeriki from Batumi, Bochoridze, Tsulukidze and Dmitry Postolovsky from Tbilisi, Tskhakaya from Kutaisi, and Irakli Tsereteli and others from Bakı, Guria and Samegrelo. Tsulukidze denounced Ulyanov for organising the split and criticised the 'majority' for 'ignoring the national question, promoting centralism' and refusing to make *proletariatis brdzola* an RSDRP organ, but the Congress delegates Knunyants and Zurabov condemned the 'minority' for boycotting central RSDRP organisations. The Committee condemned the 'minority' for breaking the 'elementary principle of submitting to the majority', urged members to support the CC and demanded that *Iskra* end its polemics. Tsereteli's proposal that they should reject some Congress resolutions fell, but it was agreed that the Committee should appoint only those people proposed by local Committees. Zurabov and Topuridze supported the Congress decisions and were voted off the Caucasian Committee, and Tsereteli gave up his seat in return for the co-editorship of *kvali*. Subsequently *kvali* hammered home the differences between the VPSR and RSDRP, but promoted a broad progressive coalition, while the RSDRP's Russian CC expelled Tsereteli from the Tbilisi Committee for distorting Congress decisions and

disobeying their order to stop talking about a split.<sup>178</sup> Ter-Petrosian supported the 'majority',<sup>179</sup> and there was an assassination attempt on the governor-general of Georgia, while some SDs bombed gentry and police.<sup>180</sup>

The Russian CC had co-opted Leonid Krasin, Essen,<sup>181</sup> Zalkind, and Gusarov,<sup>182</sup> who organised the transport of *Iskra* across Russia.<sup>183</sup> The CC established regional bureaux to transport literature, other materials and comrades, forge passports, set up safe houses and raise funds. Enukidze escaped on the way to Siberia, returned to Baki and became one of eight printers working 11 hours a day on Nina for 25 rubles a month. They went out in pairs on two evenings a week, but got back by 11.00pm and took one holiday a year away from the city. Krasin charged wealthy citizens 50 rubles to attend cultural events, including one at the home of the police chief, and bought machines for folding, cutting and binding paper, type in Russian, Armenian, Georgian, Tatar, German and other languages, and a stereotype-casting machine to reproduce stencils from Switzerland. He paid 3,000 rubles for an Augsburg press, which was twice as fast as Nina. It printed for other socialist organisations, and Krasin organised transport across the empire. He corresponded with the CC's foreign representative, Ulyanov, liaised with Russian Committees,<sup>184</sup> and transferred the press to the Muslim quarter.<sup>185</sup> He visited only to bring copy, materials and technical advice, and was unconcerned about the split among the émigré intelligenty. In eight years the RSDRP had issued around 3,500 leaflets, but the Baki press had printed 1,400 in 1903 alone.<sup>186</sup>

In Tver the *Iskra* agent Gromova supported the 'majority', and after most of the RSDRP Committee were arrested, the survivors recruited her. They had few 'ties' with workers, but when a kruzhok member betrayed her, others killed him, and she escaped to Katerynoslav. The RSDRP Committee made her responsible for propaganda and contacts. Workers in large plants sympathised with the 'majority' and she organised a demonstration with slogans of 'the eight-hour day' and 'Down with the Monarch', but some demonstrators were killed. The Committee established a press and 'technical machinery' for distribution, but the first consignment was lost. Gromova refused a false passport, and was detained,<sup>187</sup> but 'majority' supporters at the Briansk plant joined the workers' organisation.<sup>188</sup>

The former St. Petersburg Kornilov School teacher Meshcheriakov had completed his studies in Belgium in 1902 and gone to London.<sup>189</sup> He returned to Moscow as an *Iskra* agent, and joined the RSDRP Committee, Moscow Region Committee and Regional Bureau,<sup>190</sup> but was arrested and exiled to Yakutsk in autumn 1903. He did not recognise the handwriting on a letter, but 'chemical analysis' revealed that Krupskaya had sent news of other exiles and messages for them.<sup>191</sup> Siberian SDs censured their Congress delegates and transferred their centre to Tomsk.<sup>192</sup> One member wanted a 'Fighting Organisation', but others denounced the 'breach' of 'centralism' by the 'minority', and Elizarova left,<sup>193</sup> because she feared she would be arrested.<sup>194</sup>

In Samara Krzhizhanovsky condemned Luly Tsederbaum's 'far-fetched' opportunism,<sup>195</sup> and began 'to merge all the dispersed little circles of the first Committees into one', support comrades 'engaged in a struggle against Zubatov-type methods', and 'the sophisticated methods of the police', who had the 'crushing force of historical inertia'.<sup>196</sup> He went to Kyiv, and sent Skrypnik to Odesa, where the Committee supported the 'majority';<sup>197</sup> but the workers' organisation announced its support for *Iskra*.<sup>198</sup>

In Geneva Krupskaya noted that the 'rather respectable number' of members of the RSDRP in Saratov outnumbered those of the VPSR, but there was 'terrible enmity'. The SDs 'close to' *Rabochaya gazeta* were the 'most active', while members of the VPSR 'engage in a good deal of idle chatter' but 'accomplish very little'.<sup>199</sup>

The former Tbilisi SD engineer, Kalinin, had spent six months in a St. Petersburg prison which was 'crammed with shouting, jostling political prisoners', and it 'turned into a mad-house.' When the governor took repressive measures, there was a hunger strike, and Kalinin was transferred to Kresty Prison, where he and 41 others received harsh treatment and one died. When Kalinin was released, late that year, he returned to the Tallinn factory,<sup>200</sup> and sent a sailor's address in Toulon to the 'majority' supporter Stasova in St. Petersburg.<sup>201</sup> Only 360 remained in the organisation,<sup>202</sup> and most intelligenty supported the 'minority', as did most in Moscow.<sup>203</sup>

Years earlier in exile the former Proletariat leader Felix Kon had heard about the St. Petersburg Soyuz, read works by Marx and Engels, rethought his position on terror and joined exiled SDs. He was freed in 1903, and returned to Warszawa,<sup>204</sup> but the Bund's Malka Frumkin was tortured in Piotrcrów prison and died there late that year.<sup>205</sup>

Nikifor Vilonov had become an *Iskra* agent in Kyiv in 1902, at the age of 19, and wrote to Ulyanov in Geneva late in 1903.

[W]hat I cannot understand at all is the fight that's going on now between the majority and the minority, and to a great many of us it seems wrong. Look, comrade, is it a natural state of affairs when all energies are spent on travelling around the committees for the one purpose of talking about the majority and the minority? Really, I don't know. Is this issue really so important that all energies should be devoted to it and because of it people should look on each other practically as enemies? For that's what it comes down to: if a committee is, let's say, made up of followers of one camp, then

nobody from the other camp will ever get into it, no matter how fit he may be for the work and it suffers badly without him. I don't mean to say, of course, that the struggle over this issue should be given up altogether, no, I only think it should be of a different kind and should not lead us to forget our principal duty, which is to propagate the Social-Democratic ideas among the masses; for if we forget that we shall rob our Party of its strength. I don't know if it's fair or not, but when I see people trampling the interests of the workers in the mud and completely forgetting them, I call them all political intriguers. It really hurts and fills you with alarm for the work when you see the people at the head of it spending their time on something else. When you see that, you ask yourself: is our Party doomed to perpetual splits over trifles, and we incapable of waging the internal and external struggle at the same time? What's the use of having congresses if their decisions are ignored and everybody does just what he pleases, saying that the Congress decision is wrong, that the Central Committee is ineffectual, and so on. And this is being done by people who before the Congress were always clamouring for centralisation, Party discipline, and so on, but who now want to show, it seems, that discipline is only meant for ordinary mortals, and not for them at the top. They seem to forget that their example has a terribly demoralising effect on inexperienced comrades; already we have the workers complaining again that the intellectuals are forgetting them because of their own dissensions; already the more impulsive are dropping their hands in despair, not knowing what to do.<sup>206</sup>

Nevertheless Vilonov supported the Congress 'majority'.<sup>207</sup>

In Germany revisionism had taken its toll on the SPD, and Zionists had cautioned Jews against voting for the SPD in the summer's Reichstag elections.<sup>208</sup> The SPD received over three million votes (31.7 percent of those cast), it won only 81, or 20 percent of the 397 seats,<sup>209</sup> though that included three in rural constituencies.<sup>210</sup> The number of SPD Reichstag deputies rose from 56 to 81, but those Bernstein deemed 'progressive' fell from 49 to 33,<sup>211</sup> and he believed that a third of the SPD's votes came from 'bourgeois adherents'.<sup>212</sup> In autumn the SPD's Dresden Congress repudiated revisionism, refused to 'participate in the government of a capitalist society' and reaffirmed its revolutionary perspective.<sup>213</sup> Kautsky told Fyodor Gurvich that he sympathised with the Congress 'minority',<sup>214</sup> and Helphand acknowledged in an SPD paper that the RSDRP needed an effective organisation, but that 'does not mean throwing a rope around the masses in order to keep them together' or 'succumbing to the absurd notion that Social Democracy can tyrannise the masses to a greater degree even than Russian absolutism'. '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'. On the other hand an organisation that is 'detached from the working masses' and 'suspended' above them was not Social-Democratic and 'disorganises and demoralises a fighting army through internal discord'.<sup>215</sup>

The minutes of the Second Congress were probably published in Geneva in December. Plekhanov feared that the émigré 'general staff' would be 'deserted by its army' in Russia, and appealed for unity, but added that 'Consistent Marxists are not able to be and, of course, will not be centralist *utopians*'.<sup>216</sup>

During December Ufa, Sredne-Uralsk and Perm RSDRP Committees told the 'minority' *Iskra* editors in Geneva that the Russian proletariat needed a centralised, 'strong and authoritative' organisation, led by a 'good commander', and trained 'dictators' to 'administer' the 'power which would ere long fall under its control'.<sup>217</sup> Essen, Gusarov and Zalkind visited committees to report on the split, and when 20 supported the 'majority', Essen went to tell Ulyanov in Geneva.<sup>218</sup> He told Krzhizhanovsky that he was 'furious' at his 'harping on peace'. It was 'war', and a split 'would be better than what we have at present'. 'Martovites' controlled Kyiv, Kharkiv, Gornozavodsky, Rostov-na-Donu and Crimea Committees. 'This makes ten votes + the League + the editorial board of the combat organisation + two in the [Party] Council = 16 votes out of 49'; but if 'all efforts' were 'directed' to Mykolaiv, Siberia and the Caucasus it was 'fully possible to leave them with one-third'.<sup>219</sup>

In Kyiv Maria Ulyanova junior hoped for 'calmer, more friendly work' in 'the best interests of the party', but when her sister Elizarova and her mother arrived the police knew precisely how much luggage they had. The sisters worked for the RSDRP technical bureau, dealing with correspondence, literature and activists, but on 1 January 1904, after their brother Dmitry arrived, the police made over 200 searches and 50 arrests. They had no evidence to link the siblings to the RSDRP, but detained them,<sup>220</sup> and left their ageing mother living virtually alone.<sup>221</sup>

In Geneva Bonch-Bruevich, who ran the RSDRP distribution centre and archives and supported the 'majority',<sup>222</sup> later recalled that when Ulyanov heard about the arrests of his siblings he seriously considered going to work as a statistician in the USA.<sup>223</sup>

## A working conclusion

Who were the proto-Bolsheviks? The few hundred intelligenty who Anglophones and Francophones know much about were mostly from comfortably-off or wealthy families, and they often had a higher education; but many became émigrés, so they were always well behind events in Russia. Many intelligenty and praktiki who stayed in Russia died in prison or exile, sooner or later, or were killed during the 1905 and 1917 revolutions, the civil war or the purges of the 1930s. Consequently Stalinist archivists and editors have been able to control which surviving biographies and autobiographies, or which parts of them, have been available for translation, and even the works of Vladimir Ulyanov ('Lenin') remain incomplete and chronologically jumbled. Dozens of works by Lev Bronstein ('Trotsky') have been translated, but his autobiography ignores praktiki and mentions key intelligenty like Leonid Krasin ('Nikitich') and Alexandr Malinowsky ('Bogdanov') only in passing. Few political writings by these two members of the early troika with 'Lenin', or works by Iuly Tserderbaum ('Martov'), Nadezhda Krupskaya ('Sablina') and other well-educated women revolutionaries, have been translated into English or French. Ivan Babushkin ('Bogdan'), Iosif Tarshis ('Piatnitsky'), Konkordia Gromova ('Natasha'), Tsetsilia Zelikson (Bobrovskaya), Heinrich Fischer ('Genrikh', who became an émigré) and Semën Kanatchikov (who became a Bolshevik years after 1903), are among the very few worker-intelligenty whose autobiographies have been translated, though most were written and sometimes rewritten under Stalinist supervision. The surviving writings of the vast majority of praktiki and almost all their working-class supporters have not been translated and published in full, if at all, and almost all western academics, from conservatives to liberals, social-democrats and revolutionary socialists, pick snippets from otherwise untranslated biographies and autobiographies to suit their political perspectives, but focus on the well-known male intelligenty and marginalise most women and virtually all praktiki. They all have an elitist perspective, yet so far as I know no academics, and a minuscule number of political writers, have any experience of working in a revolutionary socialist organisation, so a huge amount of translating remains to be done; but before that can happen academics and political writers who know Russian will have to challenge their conservative craft attitude of being self-appointed gatekeepers.

How did the proto-Bolsheviks become revolutionary socialists? The above difficulties make accurate generalisations impossible, but it is clear that the development of capitalism in Russia had important unintended consequences. The autocracy's industrialisation policy, which got underway in the 1860s, was intended to enable the Russian empire to compete with western European powers, economically and militarily, and it came at the expense of the peasantry, yet there was no peasant rising after a handful of self-appointed intelligenty terrorists organised the assassination of the tsar in 1881. Instead a massive security clamp-down forced all oppositionists either to give up hope of changing the social arrangements, or focus on small reforms, though a courageous minority worked clandestinely and risked arrest, prison, exile and death. The autocracy's policy of expanding the number of universities and higher technical institutes, in order to train highly skilled professionals and administrators, exposed a cohort of male gymnasium graduates from modestly-off families to the problems of surviving financially as students, and the repression of their self-help organisations and peaceful demonstrations led to confrontations with the civic and military authorities. Young women with a secondary education were not allowed to take degrees, and the higher courses for women were not always available, but a minority of those who did attend became radicalised, supported male students' struggles and taught workers at evening schools. The autocracy's policy of achieving a literate industrial workforce, who could operate ever more sophisticated imported machinery, helped many young male and female peasants to become literate, and the growing railway network allowed many of them to travel to the few large industrial centres and regions to work in mills and factories, some of which were technically in advance of those in western Europe. Once again, when the police, gendarmes and troops repressed their economic struggles, they politicised a minority. The punishment of these minorities of workers and intelligenty in prison, deportation and exile, often without trial, encouraged contacts between them, and when they escaped, or completed their sentences, a minority engaged in systematic underground work. Thanks to the railways, deportation and exile, workers and intelligenty reached places that were often inaccessible before, but the ideas they took and met with were often contradictory.

What were the proto-Bolsheviks' ideas? The autocracy had clamped down on the importation of liberal, social-revolutionary, social-democratic and revolutionary socialist literature, even in the relatively less illiberal early 1860s, but in 1872 Marx's *Das Kapital* Volume I was translated into Russian and the censors let it pass. More works by western European liberals, radicals and socialists, including some by Marx, Engels and German SDs, were smuggled in, mainly by Jewish praktiki in the Pale, who also supplied intelligenty in a few European Russian cities. Being able to read these works required a knowledge of German or French, and this had the effect of giving many

intelligently the knowledge of some, but by no means all the latest western European SD ideas, and some taught their incomplete understanding to clandestine workers' circles. Unlike western European states, Russia had no sizeable industrial bourgeoisie or working class, so the appeal of social-revolutionary ideas and methods, including individual terror, continued to be influential long after 1881; but in the early 1880s a tiny handful of émigré intelligently in Switzerland, most of whom had recently been terrorists, struggled to apply SD ideas based on western European conditions to Russia. They believed that Marx's dictum that 'the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves' could not be applied directly in an overwhelmingly peasant society, so this, and their partial access to the SD texts, produced a rather mechanical form of 'Russian Marxism'. Their publications were smuggled into Russia, and became increasingly influential among SR and SD intelligently; yet year by year the lack of first-hand knowledge about Russian developments, and especially the economic and political consequences of industrialisation, made the émigrés ever more out of touch. In the early 1890s the SPD's Erfurter Programm influenced a minority of RSDRP intelligently in St. Petersburg, and in 1899 one exiled intelligent in Siberia argued that Russia's working class included both proletarians and 'semi-proletarian' peasants; but some SPD leaders, and especially party officials and trade union bureaucrats, became deputies in the Reichstag and other elective bodies, and a majority were impressed by the very modest reforms they managed to achieve and began to reject key elements of Marx's analysis. This helped to fuelled 'revisionism' and reformism among a few émigré Russian SD intelligently, which they exported to intelligently in Russia, who often remained partly hegemonised by social-revolutionary ideas and methods and partly by 'Russian Marxism'.

How did the proto-Bolsheviks organise? In the early 1880s the 'Russian Marxist' intelligently in Switzerland had a tiny number of contacts with a handful of St. Petersburg students who propagandised a few illegal workers' *kruzhki*. In the mid-1890s a group St. Petersburg SD intelligently liaised with a network of skilled and politicised engineers. There were mass strikes in a few industrial centres in 1896; but the Okhrana was increasingly effective and many SD workers and intelligently were imprisoned and exiled without trial before the mass strikes of 1897. In 1897 Jewish SD intelligently in the Pale organised the Bund, hoping to form an empire-wide SD party, and they played a decisive part in the founding of the RSDP in 1898, though most of its initial intelligently leaders were imprisoned, and the two who survived changed the organisation's name to the RSDRP and allowed a non-revolutionary to write its programme. In 1899 a handful of the exiled former St. Petersburg SD intelligently in Siberia planned an émigré 'centre' to produce an SD paper *for* workers, after they were freed, and from early 1901 an extremely tiny number of key intelligently agents in Russia – nine at first – organised *praktiki* to smuggle in and distribute *Iskra*. Most agents were relatives of the editors or had worked with them in St. Petersburg, and they monopolised contacts with the émigré 'centre', each other, and the *praktiki*, yet the intelligently not only failed to cadreise significant numbers of workers, but often substituted themselves for the working class in a similar way to earlier social revolutionaries. They kept most workers, even the most 'prepared' and 'conscious', out of the decision-making processes, and often lost their trust; so no SD organisation included more than a handful of rabochy intelligently, at best, while the Jewish and Polish socialist intelligently came to include a significant number of federalists and nationalists. In 1902 *Iskra's* émigré 'centre' worked hard to marginalise other émigré SD intelligently, and exhorted the intelligently agents in Russia to win, split or duplicate RSDRP organisations by fair means or foul, in order to form an *Iskra*-dominated organising committee to win a majority of delegates at the Second Congress. Their opponents did the same, though less successfully, but early in 1903 one *Iskra* agent's disgraceful conduct alienated at least two of *Iskra's* three main financiers. Some émigré *Iskra* intelligently exhorted the intelligently agents in Russia to help rabochy intelligently become Congress delegates, but only three arrived, and there were no delegates from several Committees, since the *Iskra*-dominated organising committee had decided, in several cases wrongly, to be inoperative or insufficiently large. At the Congress delegates and observers from SD parties who were not directly associated with the *Iskra* network insisted on their federalist or nationalist agendas, but they all lost the vote, and after they left the *Iskra* contingent split on how tightly the RSDRP's all-intelligently émigré 'centre' should control the organisation in Russia. After the Congress ended the rival émigré intelligently *fractions* exported their ideas to intelligently and *praktiki* in Russia, and succeeded by late 1904, when the 'Bolsheviks' and 'Mensheviks' *fractions* were established; so the RSDRP was in disarray when a revolution began, early in 1905, and continued to lag behind events for months.

*Building the Old Bolsheviks* has had to rely on English and French translations of autobiographies and biographies of Russian *praktiki* and intelligently, and particularly those of rabochy intelligently. It has struggled to evaluate the narratives of a few well-known intelligently, and the mediations of academics and other writers of all political persuasions, but it offers a provisional re-examination of 'common sense' views about Russian revolutionary socialists between 1881 and 1903.

The struggle continues. This analysis will continue in *Eight Hours & a Gun: Revolutionary Russia in 1904-1905*, and *The Centre Cannot Hold: The Implosion of the All-Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, 1906-1914*.



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## **1. Never have I witnessed such hideous butchery**

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<sup>53</sup> Lih 2008: 297  
<sup>54</sup> Klier & Lambroza 2004: 249, 255-6, 273-4  
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<sup>56</sup> Morrissey 1998: 71

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