

FACTIONAL STRIFE AND POLICY MAKING IN THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY

1912-APRIL 1917

(With Special Reference to the Baltic Fleet Organisations 1903-17)

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SYNOPSIS

In January 1912, the Bolsheviks became a separate Party, as opposed to being merely a faction of the RSDLP. Lenin's initial problem was to convince both the leaders of the Second International and his own middle echelon leaders inside Russia that Bolshevism was distinct from Menshevism. This proved difficult before August 1914. The War made the distinction clearer, but also gave rise to an international tendency, with support inside the Bolshevik Party, to the Left even of Lenin. Inside Russia too, joint work with SR Maximalists fostered a kind of Left Populist Bolshevism among some of the Party rank and file. After the February Revolution, the Right Bolsheviks were pushing for a reunification with the Mensheviks, the Left Populist Bolsheviks began to organise nationally and, as the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee lacked authority, the Party was on the verge of a split. Lenin was urgently recalled from abroad. His intervention in the faction fight marked the end of one period of Party history and the beginning of the next. For the first time, the Party leadership was on the spot, and this contact with the rank and file enabled Lenin to clarify and develop ideas he had been formulating in his disputes abroad. The result was a new policy for the Party, quite unmistakably distinct from Menshevism.

for Pavel Vasil'evich

and for Helen, Sean and Adam

PREFACE

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I have used the Birmingham style of transliteration throughout, except in the text, when a name has a well established Western equivalent, or in the footnotes when I have to adopt the style of the book cited. Thus Ganetskii in the footnotes is Hanecki in the text, and Milyukov in the text occasionally is referred to as Miliukov in the notes. OS/NS dating can be confusing in a work dealing with events inside and outside Russia. I have dated all events outside Russia in NS, and those inside in OS, but put the other in brackets where I thought there might be danger of confusion.

In quotations, I have used square brackets to indicate any rearrangement of word order, insertion of words, or the substitution of real names for pseudonyms.

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INTRODUCTION

In April 1917, Bolshevik policy took a new turn that was to lead to the seizure of power in October. Lenin's April Theses, first delivered to a group of leading Bolshevik Party members on the evening of the third of April, and then to the delegates to the joint Bolshevik/Menshevik Unification Conference on the fourth of April, were the first public announcement of the new policy. Historians usually agree that the Theses mark a turning point for the Party. However, they are usually unable to agree on where they are different from previous Party policy.

The problem arises principally because the April Theses are examined exclusively in terms of Lenin's own thought. At the very most, Lenin's theoretical discussions with other Marxists (most notably Bukharin) are found to be relevant. This approach ignores the fact that Lenin was not primarily a philosopher, nor even a social thinker, but a practical politician, who saw his chief contribution to the Socialist Movement as being the building of a revolutionary party. For Lenin, everything was secondary to this, and he engaged in theoretical disputes (which might or might not lead to changes in policy), in order to solve specific practical problems of party building. It is in this light that I shall examine the genesis of the April Theses here.

I shall argue that the Theses were the result of the conflict between a number of different groups in the Bolshevik Party and in the International: the leadership of the Second International (Karl Kautsky, Rosa Luxemburg and co.), the left socialists inside the Zimmerwald Left (Radek, Pannekoek and co.), those émigré Bolsheviks influenced by this left group (Bukharin, Pyatakov and co.), the Conciliator-Bolsheviks who predominated in the

Party leadership inside Russia (the editors of Pravda, the leaders of the Petersburg Committee, and part of the Central Committee), that section of the rank and file whose practical cooperation with the SRs was leading them to adopt left populist ideas, (the Vyborg District and Baltic Fleet Bolsheviks are looked at here, but this phenomenon was possibly much more widespread), and Lenin who acted throughout as a separate faction.

The normal centre-periphery problem that besets all political parties was complicated for the pre-1917 Bolshevik Party in that there were two centres, one in Russia and one abroad, and that communication between these two centres and between them and the rank and file was extremely difficult, and occasionally broke down altogether. Indeed, the Left Populist Bolshevism in the rank and file apparently developed as a result of this difficulty. It was relatively easy to communicate and work with rank and file members of other parties who worked in the same factory, or served on the same ship, difficult and sometimes impossible to establish any kind of contact with Petersburg. Thus, whichever local party managed to make contact with Petersburg tended to act as courier for all local revolutionaries, bringing back literature now of one, now of the other party. On the spot, all revolutionaries followed a line that was an amalgam of different party views, but with those of one party predominant (and for most of the period examined here, the predominant party was the PSR). By 1915, the Fleet Bolsheviks had been able to wrest this predominance (ideologically but not numerically) from the PSR because of their Party's opposition to the War. The April Theses,

widely interpreted by the SR rank and file as embodying the Left Populist tradition that their own leadership had abandoned, confirmed this Bolshevik ideological predominance.

Throughout the period from January 1912 to April 1917, Lenin was concerned with two major problems. The first was to convince the leaders of the Second International, and his own Bolshevik leadership inside Russia, that Bolshevism was sufficiently different from Menshevism to have the right to exist as a separate party. The leaders of the Second International could not accept that the split with the Mensheviks was caused by anything other than personality differences, and they were on the verge of arraigning the Bolsheviks before a Congress of the International, when the First World War intervened. Similarly, the leading Bolsheviks inside Russia, with a few exceptions, were reluctant to press the split too far, and indeed were constantly attempting to bring the two halves of the Party back together. This tendency reaches its height at the end of March/beginning of April 1917, when a Conference of Bolshevik Party workers led to a joint Bolshevik/Menshevik Conference that was to reunite the Party. It was this Conference that Lenin interrupted by reading the April Theses.

Lenin's other main concern was the maintenance of contact with and, if possible, control of the Party inside Russia, without which he could have no political influence. As his relations with the editors of Pravda had shown before the War, this was extremely difficult to achieve. During the War, contact became even more difficult. The problem became critical when a group in the Zimmerwald Left which was critical of Lenin's ideas gained support inside the Bolshevik émigré section which

controlled the illegal transport system in and out of Russia. Until that moment, Lenin had tried to minimize the differences inside the Zimmerwald Left. He now had to undertake a serious faction fight with the group of Bolsheviki concerned (Bukharin, Pyatakov and Bosh) and with those they supported in the Zimmerwald Left (Radek, Pannekoek and co.) Although this led to a tactical victory by Lenin, it also led to what he had hoped to avert. Bukharin and Shlyapnikov, who had been the chief organisers of the transport system, became demoralised. Bukharin left Sweden for the USA, Shlyapnikov returned to Russia, and Lenin was completely cut off from the Russian Party from December 1916 until after the February revolution. This political isolation forced him to look again at the criticisms raised by Bukharin, Radek and co. and this in turn led to a major revision in his thought, which becomes evident for the first time fully in the April Theses.

While Lenin was cut off from the Russian Party and engaged in rereading Marx and Engels, the February Revolution took place. The Party inside Russia became legal, and ideological differences assumed immediate importance in practical politics. The Right Conciliator Bolsheviki worked for reunification with the Mensheviki, and conditional support for the Provisional Government. Some even went so far as to support the War, now that it was being fought by a free Russia. Meanwhile, the Left Populist Bolsheviki of the Vyborg District were pressing for Soviet power, and were establishing a network of sympathetic organisations in the Baltic Fleet. By the end of March, the Bolshevik Party was on the verge of a split, and possibly of disappearing altogether.

At first, Lenin was unaware of all this. After the February Revolution, he was able to get some (but not many) of his writings into Russia, but was still unable to receive Party material from Russia. His views of the revolution were based on incomplete and inaccurate accounts in the Western press, and possibly of Russian papers like Rech'. Thus, even the material that he did get into Russia was of limited influence, as the Party Right was able to point to Lenin's obvious lack of knowledge of Russian affairs. However, once alerted to the crisis in the Party, he decided to take the major risk of returning through Germany and a possible charge of treason, to prevent the union with the Mensheviks.

Before he reached Russia, Lenin was quite unaware of the Left Populist Bolshevism of the rank and file, and of the extent to which local soviets had sprung up and assumed local power throughout the country. At some point between the frontier post at Torneo and Beloostrov, just outside Petrograd, however, he was informed of the different tendencies in the Party, given back numbers of Pravda to read, and told of the power assumed by the local soviets. The most probable source of this information were the Baltic sailors organised by Shlyapnikov to accompany Lenin from the border to Beloostrov, to prevent his arrest for treason by the Provisional Government. This constitutes the final element in the formation of the April Theses, for it enabled him to clarify the ideas he had been formulating in emigration, and make a clear and informed intervention in the faction fight that was tearing the Party apart.

The number of groups involved and their geographical and ideological isolation mean that the development of ideas in the Party cannot simply be dealt with chronologically. The three

chapters of Section One will deal with the development of the main factions before the February Revolution. The first two chapters which deal with Lenin's disputes with the leaders of the International, with the editors of Pravda and with the Zimmerwald Left are fairly straight forward. All these groups were in at least intermittent contact, and there is a clear, chronological development of ideas. However, the Left Populist Bolshevism of the rank and file developed in isolation from the leadership inside and outside Russia. Also, as it has been ignored or denied by traditional scholarship, and especially Soviet scholarship, it demands separate and lengthy treatment. Thus, after the second chapter has taken the argument up to December 1916 abroad, the third will have to return to the end of the Nineteenth Century, inside Russia, to trace the origins of the Social-Democratic Organisations in the Fleet, and their relationship with the Fleet SRs. The two chapters of Section Two will deal with the effect that these different factions inside Russia had on the course of the February Revolution in the different areas covered by this study.

The three chapters of Section Three will describe the faction fight as it developed after February and until Lenin's return in April. Chapters six and seven, which describe the efforts of the Vyborg District Bolsheviks to build sympathetic committees in Kronstadt and Helsingfors follow naturally from section Two, and present no problems of chronology. The problem in this section arises because, at this stage, it was Lenin who was isolated from the rest of the Party. Thus in order to explain why the April Theses

were delivered at all, it will be necessary to go back to the beginning of 1917 and trace Lenin's thought in emigration, the information that leads to the decision to return, and the means whereby he was able to arrive in Petrograd so well informed of Party affairs.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIFFERENT
TRADITIONS IN THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY

CHAPTER ONE

RIGHT BOLSHEVISM AND EVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM: 1912-14

Part One

Bolshevism and the Second International

On 10 March 1912, Lenin sent Camille Huysmans, the Secretary of the International Socialist Bureau, an innocent-seeming letter asking him to circulate an official statement from the Central Committee of the RSDLP to all members of the Second International. Not suspecting that anything was amiss, Huysmans did so, and the statement appeared shortly after in a number of Socialist newspapers all over the world. There was an immediate uproar, for the innocent-seeming statement was the Bolshevik justification for the Prague Conference of January 1912 which had finalised the split in the Russian Party.¹

Very quickly, Huysmans received a resolution signed in Paris by members of the Foreign Committee of the Bund, the Party Mensheviks, the Vpered Group, the Party Bolsheviks, Golos Sotsial-demokrata, and the Vienna Pravda castigating the Prague Conference as "an obvious attempt by a group of persons who have quite consciously led the party to a split, to usurp the party's banner". As requested, Huysmans circulated this statement also.² Immediately Lenin sent a reply demanding that this too should be circulated. Huysmans did so, but then declared the matter closed as "the Bureau cannot be used to transmit polemical material".³

Although he put a stop to the circulars, Huysmans was concerned about the acrimony within the RSDLP that the matter had

1. Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans 1905-14, Paris 1963, pp 103-05.
2. ibid., pp 144-46.
3. ibid., pp 105-11.

revealed, and took the trouble to consult Plekhanov. Plekhanov replied that the Prague Conference could very likely lead to a split in the Russian Party, and suggested that the ISB could write both to Lenin's faction and to the other groups about to hold a rival conference, and suggest that they take steps to restore unity, stressing that the problem was not to establish who was to blame but to preserve a balance in the party. In the event, both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks rejected the idea of a joint conference, only Plekhanov, who considered both sides to be at fault, remaining in favour.¹

Another dispute involving the Russians then broke out. The German Socialist Party decided to allot 80,000 marks to the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party to help it fight the elections to the Fourth Duma, to be held in the following Autumn. It asked the Lettish Social Democratic Party to organise a meeting of all Russian groups at which the money could be apportioned and the conditions of the gift (the most important of which was that only one Socialist candidate should stand in each constituency) explained. The meeting was called for 5 May in Brussels but was not held because of a disagreement between the Mensheviks. The German party then proposed a meeting in September of eleven Russian groups. This time the invitation was turned down by Lenin, who wrote:

...objectively, the intention of the Presidium [of the German Socialist Party] is merely an attempt to promote the split in the Party... and the formation of a new, hostile party. This, so far, is without precedent in the International.

1. Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans 1905-14, Paris 1963, pp 96-97, 111.

Plekhanov and the Social Democracy of Poland and Lithuania also refused the invitation. Martov's group, however, this time was eager to attend and in the event, despite Martov's pessimism when he heard that the other groups had refused, the Germans gave some of the money to the Menshevik Organising Committee and to the national groups. The sharpness of Lenin's reply, however, led Huysmans to drop temporarily his plans for reuniting the Russians.¹

This was not all, for Lenin was to be involved in yet a third controversy in the International. In 1911 a dispute had broken out between the Main Presidium of the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (Rosa Luxemburg and Jan Tyszka) and a group known as the Rozlamowcy, centered on the Warsaw Committee (Karl Radek, Jacob Furstenberg-Hanecki, and A. Malecki). In the early summer of 1912 the Main Presidium dissolved the Warsaw

1. O.H. Gankin and H.H. Fisher, The Bolsheviks and the World War, Stanford, 1960, pp 88-89; Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans, p 98; Pis'ma P.B. Aksel'roda i Yu. O. Martova, The Hague, 1967, pp 250-51; PSS, vol.21, pp 441-65. Lenin's hostility was possibly enhanced by the fact that despite Huysmans' announcement on 5 April that he would close discussion on the Prague Conference, he did circulate a hostile resolution from the Lettish SDs on 24 April (Correspondance entre Lénine et Huysmans, pp 146-47). I have not been able to establish whether this money was what remained of the Schmidt inheritance, which Lenin had been actively trying to get for the Bolsheviks since the Prague Conference (Schapiro, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, p 131).

Committee *and* declared it "no longer part of the RSDLP" (to which the SDKPIL was affiliated as an autonomous section.¹ On 9 June, the Rozlamowcy elected a Provisional Committee and called a conference of their supporters for 4 August. On 22 June, Lenin arrived in Cracow whence he intended to keep a firmer hand on the Russian praktiki. Almost immediately he was met by Hanecki, as the Rozlamowcy had made Cracow their centre and edited their paper Gazeta Robotnicza there. He learnt of the split and decided to support the Rozlamowcy. The immediacy of his response was probably prompted by the fact that Rosa Luxemburg's theories on the party made her a supporter on that issue of the liquidators, and an opponent of the Prague Conference.²

On 8 July, Rosa Luxemburg sent a letter to Camille Huysmans about the affair, asking him to circulate it in the International. Huysmans did so, although he must have had reservations about its content. It claimed that there were no political disagreements between the Main Presidium and the Rozlamowcy, that the split was the work of the lack of discipline and disorganising tactics of a few individuals with the collaboration of the Okhrana, to disrupt the Party's work in the forthcoming Duma elections.³

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1. PSS, vol.22, p 45; R.A. Ermolaeva, "V.I. Lenin i pol'skaya revolyutsionnaya sotsial-démokratiya v 1912-1914 godakh", NiNI, 1960, no.3, p 78.
 2. ibid., p 77; V.I. Lenin: biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, M. 1972, p 9.
 3. Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans, pp 147-48.

The defence of the Rozlamowcy was undertaken by Lenin in a document to the International which pointed out i) that the Main Presidium was not entitled to expel anyone from the RSDLP and, indeed, was not even part of the RSDLP; ii) that the split had not come suddenly before the Duma elections, as the Main Presidium had dropped Hanecki from the Party leadership two years previously and thus must have been aware of differences; and iii) that the statement about the Okhrana was hypocrisy; attached was a longer statement by the Rozlamowcy. Huysmans duly circulated this.¹

Lenin was struck by the similarity between the Main Presidium's attack on the Rozlamowcy and the attacks made on the Bolsheviki by other Russian Social Democrats. For the next five years, he was to fight against charges that there were no political differences between the Bolsheviki and other groups, that the split was the result of irresponsible individuals helped by the police. If for no other reason, here was a bond between him and the Poles.²

Rosa Luxemburg's reply was even more virulent than her original attack on the Rozlamowcy, so much so that Huysmans refused at first to pass it on. Rosa Luxemburg would only make one change, however, and that was to call Lenin 'comrade' rather than 'that individual'. This document, which described Lenin as an intriguer, a provocateur and a faction-monger, was handed out to delegates attending the International Socialist Bureau meeting on

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1. Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans, pp 112-16; PSS, vol.22, pp 45-46.
 2. PSS, vol.54, pp 361-66.

28 October 1912.¹

Lenin was not directly represented at this meeting, as the Russian delegates were Plekhanov and the Socialist Revolutionary I.A. Rubanovich. Nor were any minutes circulated. It was with some concern, then, that Lenin read in the pages of Martov's Luch about a week after the meeting that the "Russian question" had been discussed there and that Plekhanov had predicted an early unification to include not only all Social Democratic groups, but the Socialist Revolutionaries as well. His suspicions about the German party were confirmed by the report that Hugo Haase had told the Bureau that Lenin was deceiving the International.² Careful preparation was all the more necessary for the forthcoming Conference of the International, also to be held at Basel in late November.

At this Conference, Lenin was more concerned with trying to get the other members of the International to understand the differences between the Bolsheviks and the liquidators, and to present his party's work in the best possible light, than with influencing

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1. Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans, pp 101-02, 148-52. Huysmans did, however, refuse to have it translated into English and French, pointing out that Lenin's note had only been circulated in German and that, in any case, the Bureau was too busy. This might explain why interest in the Russian question was confined almost entirely to the German Party at this period (see below). Lenin sent a further reply from the Rozlamowcy on 24 October. Correspondance, pp 119-21; PSS, vol.48, pp 101-02.
 2. Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans, p 103; PSS, vol.18, pp 469-70.

the pronouncement on the Balkan Wars that the Conference had been convened to discuss. Thus he agreed without apparent difficulty to Plekhanov, and when Plekhanov fell ill, to the Socialist Revolutionary I.A. Rubanovich representing Russia on the six-man Committee set up to draft the Conference resolution.¹ On the other hand, one of his letters to Huysmans about the drafting committee has this post-script:

I have just received news of the election of deputies for the Fourth Duma in the Moscow Gubernia. I can now tell you that all deputies in the workers' curia (Arbeiterkurie) are Social Democrats! Twelve Social Democrats have already been elected despite the completely unprecedented election rigging

thereby stressing that Russian Social Democracy was not just a group of émigré cliques.²

Kamenev's instructions were that he should circulate the Bolshevik statement on the war as well as Lenin's report on the significance of the Duma elections among the delegates, but Lenin's instructions to him for his speech are very revealing. He was to prepare himself in a business-like way, as this would make a good impression on the delegates (doubtless by contrast to the kind of insults he could expect Rosa Luxemburg to be using). He was to make clear to the delegates the special conditions of Russia, and how these must affect any assessment of the strength of the Social Democrats. How, in the first place, the mere number of votes cast

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1. Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans, pp 121-24; PSS, vol.48, p 109.
 2. PSS, vol.48, pp 108-09; Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans, p 123.

for the Social Democrats was not in itself an indicator, and he was to stress the importance of the Bolshevik seats in the workers' curia. He was to explain the significance of the Socialist Press, and how much stronger Pravda was than Luch. Finally, he was to explain why the legal press could not give an adequate account of the work of the Duma deputies, as their illegal party work could not be mentioned.¹ It was a case that Lenin was to repeat again and again over the next few years.

At the Conference itself, the behaviour of the Bolsheviks followed the same theme. They voted against the inclusion of the delegate of the Menshevik Petersburg Initiative Group in the Social Democratic subsection of the Russian delegation.² Although the Plekhanovites voted with them on this, the Bolsheviks were defeated. Whereupon they withdrew to form their own subsection. This was joined by the five Rozlamowcy who were attending the Conference. The Main Presidium of the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania had refused to validate their mandates. They appealed to the Bolsheviks, who immediately included them in their delegation as consultative members. The Bureau did not object to this as it, unlike Lenin, was more concerned with the resolution on the Balkan War. Only after the Conference, when the Main Presidium made a

1. PSS, vol 48, p 112.

2. O.H. Gankin and H.H. Fisher, The Bolsheviks and the World War, p 80. The Initiative Groups had been set up by the Mensheviks in 1910 and were supposed to adjust their activities to the legally possible, thus representing the sumum of liquidationism to Lenin.

formal protest, did Huysmans decide that the RSDLP had acted illegally and that the names of the Rozlamowcy were not to be included in the official minutes. The affair of the five "Xs" as it was called was to be another stick with which to beat the Main Presidium.¹

All in all, though, Lenin was pleased with the results of the Conference. He felt that the affair of the Petersburg Initiative Group had compromised the other anti-Bolshevik groups, and he was satisfied with parity with the other Russian Social Democrats on the ISB. Here, however, he felt that the Bolsheviks should only "accept" this on condition that Hugo Haase be excluded, because of his insulting remarks about Lenin in October.² He was also delighted with the Conference resolution which threatened to respond to the outbreak of an imperialist war with revolution. "They have given us a large promissory note; let us see how they use it", he is reported as saying.³

Although the Basel Conference had been forced to accept the split in the RSDLP by giving Bolsheviks and Mensheviks parity of representation on the ISB, Huysmans stressed to Lenin that this was only expected to prevail until the next Conference,⁴

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1. Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans, p 126.
 2. PSS, vol 48, pp 114-15.
 3. Gankin and Fisher, op cit, pp 79, 84.
 4. Correspondence entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans, p 125. The Bolshevik nominee was L.B. Kamenev with the Rozlamowec A.M. Malecki as his alternate. Kamenev was, however, instructed not to allow Malecki to speak on anything but the Polish question; ibid, pp 124-25; PSS, vol 48, p 111.

and that the International Socialist Bureau had decided to intervene decisively to reunite the RSDLP.

The German Party then offered its good offices in organising a reunification conference. Lenin refused this offer, for a number of reasons. First, he believed the German Party to be biased in favour of the liquidators. Karl Kautsky was known to believe that there were no serious differences between the various Russian groups, indeed that the differences inside the German Party were more significant, and that the problem was really one of personal animosity with Lenin being most responsible. The Left Wing of the German Party, which might have been thought to support Lenin, was influenced by Rosa Luxemburg's hostility to him. Lenin found confirmation of this in the fact that the Germans had finally given money for election expenses to Martov's Organising Committee and to the Caucasian groups who returned Menshevik Deputies to the Duma,¹ and in Haase's outburst on the ISB. Haase in fact wrote to Lenin denying that he had ever said such a thing, and this letter was published in Pravda on 11 January 1913.² Kautsky's attitude was more of an obstacle, however, and Lenin confined himself to writing a polite letter declining the invitation and explaining briefly the differences between the Bolsheviks and the liquidators.³

1. Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans, pp 98-100; PSS, vol.48, pp 118-22.

2. PSS, vol.22, pp 277-78.

3. PSS, vol.23, pp 5-9; the letter claims that the matter was discussed at the Cracow meeting in December 1912 (as do the editors of KPSS v Rezolyutsiyakh, vol.1, p 369). Possibly so, but I can find no confirmatory evidence for this (e.g. Tsyavlovskii, Bol'sheviki, pp 120-23).

The rest of the year Lenin spent in improving his relations with the Rozlamowcy,¹ and the image of the Bolshevik Party in the International by activities like the collection of money, organised by the Bolshevik Duma Deputy Muranov, to aid Belgian strikers.² Also, he devoted much time to the creation of a distinct, stable, non-conciliationist Bolshevik leadership inside Russia by pushing through the split in the Duma fraction. Once this was successfully accomplished he hoped to hold a Party Congress as a show of strength to the International and to consolidate the leadership inside Russia.³

It was the split in the Duma fraction that led to the next confrontation in the International. Rosa Luxemburg demanded that the unification of the Russian party should be discussed at the December meeting of the ISB. She complained of the "frivolous" way in which the Duma split had been brought about, of Lenin's systematic incitement of splits in other Social Democratic organisations and of the irregularity of the Russian delegation to the ISB "where one of the representatives actually represents only one separate organisation, which he himself has called into being".⁴ This was followed by the resignation of Plekhanov, who declared himself

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1. R.A. Ermolaeva, "V.I. Lenin i pol'skaya revolyutsionnaya sotsial-demokratiya v 1912-1914 godakh", *NiNI*, 1960, no.3, P 83; R.C. Elwood, The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party 1898-October 1917, Toronto, 1974, p 177; *PSS*, vol.24, pp 169-72; ibid., vol.48, pp 171, 214-15.
 2. *PSS*, vol.48, pp 183-84.
 3. I am indebted to Professor R.C. Elwood for his most interesting unpublished paper, "The Congress that Never Was".
 4. Gankin and Fisher, The Bolsheviks and the World War, p 89. Presumably the last phrase refers to Malecki.

disillusioned at the split as "this last blow struck at our unity".¹

This time the Bolshevik Party was represented by M.M. Litvinov, as Kamenev did not enjoy these International wrangles. Indeed, he had tried to persuade Lenin to take his place on the ISB immediately after the Basel Conference. Lenin, however, wisely refused as he was not capable of being as calm as Kamenev when discussing ticklish questions, and thus might destroy the picture he was working so hard to create.² Kamenev's position was reconfirmed by Lenin in a letter to Huysmans in early November. However, Kamenev visited Cracow immediately after this and presumably managed to persuade Lenin to remove him, and by early December Lenin had replaced him with M.M.Litvinov,³ an equally good choice whose talent for diplomacy was to become renowned.

Yet, if the Russian question excited the Germans, Poles and Russians to the extent that Lenin feared a scene which would destroy the sober image he was trying to project, it left the other delegates to the ISB unmoved. As Litvinov was to report, the Russian business was squeezed in between five and half-past eight at the end of the meeting, giving those who were interested barely time to speak,⁴ Kautsky introduced a resolution calling for a

1. ibid., pp 92-93.

2. PSS, vol. 48, p 121.

3. ibid., vol 24, p 403; vol.48, p 221; It may well have been at this time that the decision was taken to send Kamenev into Russia to edit Pravda.

4. Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans, p 127; "Neopublikovannye pis'ma Litvinova", NiNI, 1966, no.4, pp 122-23.

conference of eleven different Russian groups, where an exchange of opinion should take place. If this was to reveal divisions too deep for the groups to deal with themselves, then the matter should be referred to the Vienna Congress in August. In deference to this milder proposal, Rosa Luxemburg withdrew her own resolution for a 'unification conference' and Kautsky's resolution was adopted unanimously.¹ The only protest came from the SR, I.A. Rubanovich, who regretted, in the light of Plekhanov's statement a year previously, that the Conference was not open to the Socialist Revolutionaries. He nonetheless voted for the resolution.²

For Lenin, it was a satisfactory result since, as he pointed out, an exchange of views which committed no-one was better than Rosa Luxemburg's proposal which would have forced him to choose between uniting with what he considered to be a lot of meaningless émigré generals-without-armies, or being expelled from the International.³

However, although he liked Kautsky's resolution, Lenin was stung by Kautsky's speech. There is nothing to be expected from the émigrés, he was reported as saying, the old Russian Social Democratic Party was dead, and unity must be made to come from the

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1. Gankin and Fisher, The Bolsheviks and the World War, pp 90-91, 93-94; Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans, p 128.
 2. Gankin and Fisher, op.cit., p 95.
 3. PSS, vol 24, pp 211-12.

working class inside Russia.¹ What was particularly galling about this, was that it was a denial of all that Lenin had stood for, and had tried to convince the International of since January 1912: that the Prague Conference marked the rebirth of the Russian Social Democracy, not because it included all tendencies but because it alone had built a base in the industrial working class of the country and was alone capable of giving sustained, socialist political leadership.

Lenin prepared carefully for the "Exchange of Views" Conference. In January he visited Belgium and France, giving lectures explaining his position. While in Brussels he took the opportunity to assure Huysmans that the Bolsheviki would participate in the Conference, and there and then wrote for Huysmans a statement of the Bolshevik position.² This is a very restrained document, stating clearly and unemotionally the basic tenets of Bolshevism: the need for illegality in Russia, the dangers to an illegal party created by a party that does not believe in illegality and wishes to expose it, the complications of the National question in Russia, and the support that the Bolsheviki had gained among the Russian workers. In Brussels, he also attended the IV Congress of the Lettish Social Democrats, who not so long before had been so hostile to the Prague

1. ibid, loc.cit and pp 230-32; "Neopublikovannye pis'ma Litvinova", NiNI, 1966, no 4, p 123.

2. Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans, pp 129, 136-40; PSS, vol 24, pp 296-303.

Conference. Certainly his speech indicates that he was still receiving some opposition, but at the end of the Congress a new Central Committee was appointed, supporting the Bolsheviks, thus gaining an ally for the forthcoming Conference.¹

During the early Summer, however, Lenin suffered a number of important setbacks. In May, Roman Malinovskii, the leader of the Bolshevik Group in the State Duma, resigned his seat suddenly and fled abroad. To lose him was bad enough for Malinovskii was, with Muranov, the hard core of the Bolshevik leadership in Russia. In 1912, Malinovskii and Muranov had been the only two members of the Duma Fraction to vote against the merger of Pravda and Luch.² He was the Deputy for one of the two major industrial areas of the country: the Moscow Guberniya and thus was of great importance to Lenin's claims for working class support. From the very first moment he met him, Lenin had been drawn to him as an excellent working class leader, to whom he gave the most confidential tasks.³ He had been the moving force inside Russia for the split in the Duma Fraction. What was worse was that his resignation was accompanied by strong rumours that he had been all along working for the Okhrana.⁴ Worse still was the fact that it came so soon after the Chernomazov affair.⁵ The Mensheviks were quick to see their chance, with the leader of the Bolshevik Duma Fraction and the former editor

1. PSS, vol.24, pp 283-92, vol.48, pp 252, 404.

2. See below p 31.

3. PSS, vol.48, pp 114, 133, 139, 153, 268.

4. PSS, vol.48, p 293.

5. See below p 41.

of Pravda suspected of being police spies. "All our affairs have become concentrated on one thing: the Malinovskii affair", wrote Martov to Akselrod in June.

So long as this abscess has not been lanced, we cannot move decisively forward...almost all of us here [i.e. Petersburg] are convinced that the whole Pravda organisation is being run by the Okhrana. ¹

Unfortunately for Lenin, the scandal broke just before Emile Vandervelde, the Chairman of the ISB, visited Russia to judge for himself the state of the underground parties. Although ostensibly maintaining neutrality, he made it clear to Martov that he found the Bolshevik claims somewhat suspect and in fact favoured the Mensheviks. He too, like Kautsky, was beginning to believe that there was nothing more than personality clashes between the different factions, noting in particular that in the Duma, the two factions invariably voted together. ²

At some time over this period, too, Lenin lost the allegiance of the Rozlamowcy. Possibly this began at the Poronin Meeting in September 1913, where the Poles disapproved of the Bolsheviks' new line on the National question, granting distinct ethnic groups the right to secede and form an independent state. ³ If so, they would have been further offended by Lenin's article, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", published in Prosveshchenie in May

1. Pis'ma Aksel'roda i Martova, pp 291-92.

2. ibid., pp 290-91.

3. Elwood, The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, p 178.

and June 1914, which apart from anything else, at one point equates Hanecki's views on this question with those of Rosa Luxemburg.¹ In any case, by mid-July, Lenin was refusing what he called "an ultimatum" from Hanecki for some finance for the Rolamowcy to attend the "Exchange of Views" Conference. "It will be even better if they don't come", he wrote to Zinoviev.² As it turned out, he was right.

Presumably for the same reason that he had not attended previous meetings of the ISB, Lenin did not attend the "Exchange of Views" which was held in Brussels on 17-18 July 1914. This time the decision was not a happy one. The leaders of the International were offended by Lenin's not choosing to turn up to such an important gathering and Inessa Armand, the leader of the Bolshevik delegation, apparently did not have Kamenev's or Litvinov's diplomatic skills. Things were made worse by the behaviour of I.F. Popov, one of the Bolshevik delegates, who managed to be rude both to Vandervelde and to Huysmans.³

Inessa Armand read a speech prepared beforehand by Lenin. This was very much along the lines of previous Bolshevik statements, if somewhat longer. It was measured, unemotional, but quite uncompromising in stating that the sine qua non for Bolshevik acceptance of unity was the recognition of the illegal party, the subordination

1. PSS, vol 25, pp 257-320, esp. pp 308-09.

2. PSS, vol 48, pp 317-18.

3. Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans, p 131.

of all émigré groups to the Central Committee, the abolition of "autonomous" groups like the Bund and the suppression of liquidationist papers like Luch.¹ It was a carefully argued case, even if an unpalatable one. Its arguments should have been reasonably familiar to all present. Indeed, the only new note was struck by the defence of Malinovskii.² Nonetheless, the delegates were shocked by its "impudence" and Plekhanov even declared that Lenin's intransigence was due to his unwillingness to give up money obtained by thievery.³

However, the two Polish Groups, the Main Presidium and the Rozlamowcy, agreed to merge and all delegates except the Bolsheviks and the Letts then signed the resolution proposed by Kantsky. Huysmans then warned the Bolsheviks that they would be reported to the Vienna Conference to be held in a month's time for not voting for the resolution.⁴

Inside Russia, intensive campaigning among the workers took place both for the Vienna Congress of the International and for the Sixth Bolshevik Congress that was to follow it.⁵ The nine parties that had signed the Kantsky resolution issued a manifesto pointing

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1. PSS, vol.25, pp 363-96. Inessa's instructions including answers to possible questions run for a further nine printed pages (pp 397-405).
 2. ibid, p 394.
 3. Tsyavlovskii, Pol'sheviki, p 147.
 4. Correspondance entre Lénine et Camille Huysmans, p 131; Gankin and Fisher, The Bolsheviks and the World War, p 106.
 5. A. Badaev, Pol'sheviki v Gosudarstvennom Dume, pp 363ff.

to the Bolshevik refusal to vote for unity.¹ Even if Lenin were to produce a large delegation in Vienna, it seemed unlikely that he could win support in the International. In the words of L.B. Schapiro, he seemed "to have overplayed his hand".

As it was, events overtook both parties. The anti-Bolshevik Manifesto could not be published because of the suppression of legal newspapers in Russia in July.² In August, the First World War broke out and neither the Vienna Congress of the International nor the Sixth Bolshevik Congress was held.

1. Gankin and Fisher, op.cit., p 107.

2. ibid, loc.cit.; It was eventually published in 1915 in the Informatsionnyi listok zagranichnoi organizatsii bunda, which cannot have given it very wide circulation.

Part Two

Lenin v the Right Bolsheviks

The Prague Conference of January 1912 is generally accepted as marking the establishment of the Bolsheviks as a separate party, as opposed to a mere faction of the RSDLP. In Lenin's terms, it was to make a decisive break between revolutionary socialists, recognising the primacy of the illegal party, and those whom he called "Liquidators" - evolutionary socialists who believed the main activity of socialists should be within the bounds of legality.¹ No Liquidators were invited to the Congress and Plekhanov, Trotsky, the Vpered Group and the national parties all refused to attend. Even so, it was far from being a well disciplined, or docile affair. Before the Conference not all Bolshevik praktiki had been in favour of a definite split with the Mensheviks.² At the Conference itself, a sizeable minority of delegates opposed Lenin's attitude to the Liquidators.³

This was compounded by the general hostility of the praktiki inside Russia towards the émigrés and their disputes: a hostility that had been a feature of the Russian Party long before the split

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1. I am not concerned here to examine whether Lenin was right in his assessment of the policies of his rivals. This would involve a study of the various Menshevik groups, which is beyond the scope of this thesis. It suffices to say that Lenin's writings are consistent in his definition of liquidationism and how it should be fought. I am here concerned with the extent to which he was able to implement this policy in the Party.
 2. A.P. Yakushina, "Parizhskoe soveshchanie bol'shevikov (Dekabr' 1911g.)", VIKPSS, 1964, no.12, p 49; D.M. Shvarts-Shvartsman, "Iz revolyutsionnogo proshlogo", VIKPSS, 1967, no.1, p 117.
 3. L.A. Slepov and S.A. Andronov, "Prazhskaya konferentsiya RSDRP i bor'ba za edinstvo partii", VIKPSS, 1965, no.2, p 33, list Zevin, Shvartsman, Zinoviev "and some other participants in the Conference"; Shvarts-Shvartsman, op.cit., p 119.

between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks had ever taken place.¹ It had emerged very sharply at the Third Congress of the RSDLP in 1905² and is possibly true of any underground party with an émigré leadership.³ At the Prague Conference even such 'hard' Bolsheviks as Ordzhonikidze and Spandaryan showed remarkable hostility to the émigrés, Ordzhonikidze describing them as "nonentities" (nuli) and Spandaryan even demanding that they be wound up altogether. "Let anyone who wants to work", he concluded, "join us inside Russia".⁴

These differences came to a head over the issue of whether or not the Party should publish a legal daily inside Russia. This was not a new idea. Lenin and Plekhanov had got together with the Duma deputy Poletaev at the Copenhagen Congress of the International in September 1910 and agreed to the publication of a legal weekly in the name of the Duma Group. The first issue of Zvezda had appeared in December of that year.⁵

Lenin's aim was that the Bolshevik-Party Menshevik⁶ alliance

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1. Allan K. Wildman, The Making of Workers' Revolution, Chicago, 1967, p 167; Iskra, no.12, 6 December 1901, p 2.
 2. Tretii S'ezd RSDRP, April'-Mai 1905, goda. Protokoly, M 1959, esp. the sixteenth session pp 276ff; N.K. Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, M 1959, pp 124-25.
 3. cf. e.g. M. Djilas, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, N.Y. 1973, p 69.
 4. Istoriya KPSS, vol.2, M 1967, p 369.
 5. PSS, vol.48, p 356.
 6. i.e. Social-Democrats who supported the Mensheviks on most issues, but agreed with the Bolsheviks on the primacy of the underground illegal party. Their main spokesman abroad was Plekhanov.

on the editorial board of Zvezda would strengthen his fight against the Liquidators. Even before the first issue appeared, however, he began to have doubts about the venture. The problem was that a legal newspaper was a powerful instrument for forming policy. However, Lenin's control over what policies the paper would put forward, was slight. The editor in St. Petersburg could refuse to publish, ignore or cut articles sent him by Lenin, and accept articles sent by ideological rivals. Even if some kind of confrontation could be arranged, the editor could claim that his actions had been dictated by the demands of the Tsarist censors. The de facto editors of Zvezda were the Party-Menshevik N.I. Iordanskii, who subsequently became a Liquidator, and the Bolshevik Duma Deputy N.G. Poletaev, who was making his distaste for émigré disputes clear to Lenin.¹ Instead of strengthening his hand against the Liquidators, Zvezda could, and did, give a mouthpiece to those Bolsheviks who wanted to reunite with them.

Inside Russia, however, Zvezda was considered a great success and in April 1911, its editors set up a commission to examine the possibility of bringing out a daily paper. The idea met with some

1. PSS, vol.47, pp 278-79; vol.48, pp 8, 22, 28-29.

enthusiasm among Zvezda's readers, with one proviso: the daily would be welcome if it were a "real workers' paper" and not a dull journal full of disputes between intellectuals, like the socialist newspapers of 1905-07.¹

This coincided with the closure by the censors of a publication which Lenin did approve of: Mysl', a thick journal published in Moscow, which carried precisely those long, disputative articles that Zvezda's readers did not want in a daily. Lenin wrote to Gorky to ask if he could help in establishing some sort of successor to Mysl', based in Petersburg.² To his dismay, Gorky's response was to write to Poletaev suggesting some sort of joint publication with Martov. Lenin's reply was categorical: there was no chance of his even attending a meeting if Martov was to be present. However, it was not clear if Gorky was referring to a successor to Mysl', or to the daily that Zvezda was currently thinking of. Lenin was far from enthusiastic about the latter. He wrote:

If you are speaking of a daily, you must bear in mind that we had constant problems with Zvezda: they have no line, they are afraid to go along with us, they are afraid to go along with the Liquidators, they hesitate, they give themselves airs, they vacillate. 3

Nonetheless, the praktiki were anxious to have their paper and brought the matter up both at the party school at Longjumeau

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1. R.C. Elwood, "Lenin and Pravda 1912-14", SR, 1972, no 2, p 356.
 2. PSS, vol 48, p 31.
 3. PSS, vol 48, p 33.

in the Summer of 1911 and at the Prague Conference.¹ Here, Lenin was outmanoeuvred by the praktiki, and had to accept when, on the third day of the Conference, eight of the praktiki, including Ordzhonikidze, wrote to Gorky inviting him to the Conference to discuss the establishment of a daily.² Confronted with the possibility of the praktiki and Gorky getting together and reviving Gorky's plan of a joint publication with Martov, Lenin gave way. Possibly he calculated that a concession on this point was necessary if he was to overcome opposition to his policies towards the Liquidators. Possibly he felt that the venture would never get off the ground anyway through lack of funds.³

His only apparent involvement in the preparations for Pravda was to attend a meeting in Leipzig, immediately after the Prague Conference, to discuss the funding of the paper. This meeting

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1. Elwood, op.cit., p 357.
 2. "O podgotovke Prazhskoi Konferentsii RSDRP", IA, 1958, no 5, p 20.
 3. Elwood, op.cit., p 357, thinks that Lenin changed his mind because he now felt that he controlled the party machinery and that a daily would help him expel non-Bolsheviks from the RSDLP. His experience with Zvezda would have given him no reason to believe this. It would seem that Elwood overlooks the significance of the letter, written after the Conference was started, by Ordzhonikidze, who had expressed contempt for the émigrés and signed by only some of the delegates, including Zevin, who also created trouble for Lenin at the Conference. Not all the delegates signed. Neither, significantly, did Lenin, nor does this proposal recur in any of his letters to Gorky after the Conference; PSS, vol 48, pp 44ff; "O podgotovke Prazhskoi Konferentsii RSDRP", IA, 1958, no 5, p 20-21; 'Savva' is Zevin, 'Viktor' is Shvartsman, 'Sergo' is Ordzhonikidze; O Piatnitsky, Memoirs of a Bolshevik, London, n.d., p 160.

estimated that some ten to twelve thousand rubles would be necessary for the venture. Lenin pledged one thousand rubles from the Central Committee and it was agreed that the editors must find the balance. As the more modest Zvezda had run into quite a lot of financial trouble, Lenin probably felt safe enough.¹

His relations with Zvezda in the early months of 1912 confirmed his doubts about the wisdom of a daily. In April, in fact, he wrote threatening to break off relations unless they sent him the proofs of any article Plekhanov should write attacking the Prague Conference, especially as he was not being allowed to publish articles in favour of it. The editors disagreed. They found that Plekhanov's letters to Zvezda were being interpreted inside Russia as support for the Bolsheviks.²

As he had expected, Lenin's position inside Russia, as far as the fight against the Liquidators was concerned, was weakened by the appearance of Pravda. The very first issue on 22 April 1912 carried a leading article, written by J.V. Stalin, calling for "unity in the proletarian class struggle, for unity at all costs... Peace and co-operation within the movement".³ One of the paper's editors was M.S. Ol'minskii, who had just joined with a number of other Conciliator-Bolsheviks in publishing a resolution in the Menshevik-Liquidator journal Zhivoe delo calling for "the united

1. Elwood, op.cit., p 358; V.I. Lenin: biograficheskaya khronika, vol 2, M 1971, pp 601, 616, 638, 639.

2. PSS, vol 48, p 61; E.D. Stasova, Vospominanii, M 1969, p 98.

3. Pravda, no 1, 22 April 1912.

action of Social Democrats of all tendencies, not excluding even the 'Liquidators'".¹ Pravda No 1 carried no article or message of greetings from Lenin. His first article did not appear until 8 May; his second not until 12 June. The paper nowhere used the word "Liquidator" and, indeed, cut it out of those articles from Lenin that they did accept.²

These points did not escape the émigré Mensheviks. In May, Martov wrote to Akselrod:

The Bolshevik daily Pravda has adopted a very moderate tone and even speaks of unification (progovarivaetsya ob'edinitel'nymi frazami). They have taken a conciliator like Ol'minskii onto the editorial board.

He drew the conclusion that Kautsky, Rosa Luxemburg and Vandervelde were also to draw:

The tone adopted by Pravda shows quite clearly that almost no-one is prepared to be Lenin's conscience inside Russia. 3

The entire raison d'etre of the Prague Conference, and Lenin's standing in the Second International were being threatened.

Lenin was very reticent about Pravda in these first months. Indeed, his first mention of it after he had seen it, came only in July when he referred to it as "tolerably well organised" and "able

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1. Pis'ma P.B. Aksel'roda i Yu. O. Martova, The Hague, 1967, n 232.
 2. Elwood. op.cit... p 365. Elwood has established that Pravda accepted 284 articles by Lenin, and rejected 47 between April 1912 and July 1914.
 3. Pis'ma Aksel'roda i Martova, pp 231, 235.

to reflect, however faintly, the views of democratic workers".¹ Nonetheless, his reticence did not mean that he was not thinking about it and how he was going to reverse so dangerous a trend in the Bolshevik Party. In March 1912, Lenin was still thinking of spending the summer in Fontenay, near Paris.² In May (NS) Pravda appeared. In early June, Krupskaya was trying to find out what it would be like to move to Cracow. On 17 June the Ul'yanovs left Paris and on 22 June they arrived in Cracow.³ The move had been made because Cracow was close to the Russian border and, from there, Lenin hoped to be able to wield some influence over the Conciliator-Bolsheviks and Pravda.⁴

During the summer, indeed, he did manage to achieve a slight change in the paper's tone. In this he was helped by the paper's falling circulation, and by the editors' problems in finding enough material to fill it every day. Lenin was quick to recommend more polemical articles (against the Liquidators) as a solution for both problems. In July, Pravda duly published its first article attacking the Liquidators.⁵

Nonetheless, the editors were not happy with the change. Ol'minskii wrote to Lenin that the change of tone towards the Liquidators was quite wrong, and generally the editors thought that

1. PSS, vol.21, p 375.

2. ibid, vol.55, p 323.

3. V.I. Lenin: biograficheskay khronika, vol.3, pp 6, 8.

4. PSS, vol.48, p 73.

5. G.V. Petryakov, 'Deyatel'nost' V.I. Lenina po rukovodstvu Pravdoi vv 1912-14 godakh', VI, 1956, no.11, p 4; cf. also PSS, vol.48, pp 137, 139.

that kind of article was more suited to the weekly Nevskaya Zvezda than to Pravda. In July, they refused to go to Cracow to discuss the "problems" of Pravda with Lenin. By August, Lenin was complaining again that they were cutting his attacks on the Liquidators out of his articles.¹

Ol'minskii's influence had in fact increased, as Poletaev and I.P. Pokrovskii withdrew from active participation in the paper once the Third Duma came to the end of its term in June 1912. Lenin tried to exercise control by sending "trusted agents of the Central Committee" to impose his line. These either proved ineffective, or were arrested.² The matter was of extreme urgency to Lenin, as the elections to the Fourth Duma were to take place in the autumn, and he wished to use these to confront the Liquidators. As he saw it, Pravda's job was to prevent Bolsheviks helping Liquidators from being elected. In the event, Pravda conducted the election campaign "like a sleepy old spinster. Pravda does not know how to fight. It does not attack, it does not persecute either the Cadets or the Liquidators".³

Things were to get even worse after the elections. Just after Lenin had managed to get the Second International to accept,

1. . Petryakov, op.cit., p 5; PSS, vol 48, pp 76-80.

2. Elwood, op.cit., pp 367-68.

3. PSS, vol 48, pp 95, 97-99. There is some irony in this, for, as L.B. Schapiro points out, three out of the six Bolsheviks elected in the Workers Curia owed their election to Liquidator votes. L.B. Schapiro, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, London, 1970, pp 135-36.

however reluctantly and temporarily, the de facto separation of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks at the Basel Congress, severe doubt was cast on Lenin's ability to speak for the Russian Party. On 11 December, the paper inserted the name of A.A. Bogdanov, the leader of the Vpered group which had opposed the Prague Conference, into its list of regular contributors. On 15 December, four of the six Bolshevik Duma Deputies voted to merge Pravda with the Menshevik-Liquidator Luch. In the interim, both Bolshevik and Menshevik Deputies would write for both papers. On 18 December, the names of the seven Menshevik Deputies were included in the list of Pravda's regular contributors.¹

The six Bolshevik Duma Deputies were summoned to Cracow along with a number of leading praktiki. Here, the first steps were taken to convince the Deputies that they needed to split from the Unified Bolshevik-Menshevik Duma Fraction and set up a separate Bolshevik Duma Fraction. They were instructed to withdraw from Luch, and measures were taken to "strengthen" Pravda's editorial board.² Sverdlov was sent into Russia to reorganise Pravda. He encountered some opposition from the Bolshevik Duma Deputies who had not been entirely convinced by Lenin in Cracow, but managed to

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1. Elwood, op.cit., pp 369-70; Schapiro, op.cit., p 136. The two Bolshevik Deputies voting against this were R.V. Malinovskii and M.K. Muranov. Bogdanov's name had been inserted without his consent and he requested its removal, although he did contribute articles to the paper.
 2. KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh s'ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK, vol 1, M 1970, pp 361-65; Petryakov, op.cit. p 7;

accomplish the necessary reforms of the board by the end of January 1913. On 10 February, he was arrested, and Stalin, who was far from convinced by Lenin's policy, took his place. Stalin was arrested four days after his arrival in St. Petersburg.¹ After this, two leading Bolsheviks, S.G. Shaumyan and I.I. Skvortsov-Stepanov were offered the editorship. Both declined.²

In May 1913, however, Miron Chernomazov, an émigré who had worked for Sotsial Demokrat in Paris, returned to Russia and became editor of Pravda. The exact circumstances of his appointment are obscure, and Soviet sources are very reticent, presumably not wishing to credit Lenin with the appointment of a police agent to the editorial chair. One modern historian places the responsibility on Kamenev.³ Nonetheless, whether or not Lenin originally proposed Chernomazov, the latter did visit him in Cracow on his way to take up the editorship.⁴

As well as placing an émigré in charge of Pravda, Chernomazov's appointment indirectly affected the balance within the party, shifting it in favour of Lenin. It was the stability of Pravda that allowed it to oust the émigré press, and hence gave authority to the praktiki. Chernomazov's editorship saw grave

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1. PSS, vol.48, p 157; Elwood, op.cit., p 371; Yu. Bernov and A. Manusevich, Lenin v Krakove, M 1972, p 83; "K 20-letiyu smerti Ya.M. Sverdlova", KA, 1939, no.1(92), p.80
 2. Petryakov, op.cit., p 9.
 3. V.T. Loginov, Leninskaya Pravda, M 1972, p 80.
 4. N.K. Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, M 1959, p 260.

disruptions of the Paper's stability. During the eight months from May 1913 to Chernomazov's dismissal in January 1914, the paper was seized and fined continually and closed down five times (only to reappear each time with a different name). Between July and September 1913, 80% of the issues were seized.¹

The paper's finances were weakened by the continual fines and by loss of revenue, and by the end of 1913 there was a deficit of 3,000 rubles. The irregular appearance also caused circulation to drop from 42,000 in April to 18,000 in the autumn, thus compounding the financial problems and decreasing its influence.²

This is not to say that Lenin actively wanted Pravda to collapse. On the contrary, in spite of all his initial reservations and of his continuous problems with Pravda, the paper was necessary to him. The fact that the Bolshevik paper, even a Conciliator one, had a much larger circulation than the Menshevik daily Luch could be used in the International to support his case that the Russian worker was Bolshevik. Also, whilst not all of his articles were being published, many were and this meant that some of his policies, at least, were reaching the Russian workers.

Nevertheless, his reaction to Chernomazov's adventurous editorial policy was markedly restrained. He made no direct response at all until late August 1913, by which time 80% of the paper's

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1. Istoriya KPSS, vol.2, M 1967, pp 407-08; PSS, vol.48, pp 398, 402. The names were Rabochaya Pravda, Severnaya Pravda, Pravda Truda, Za Pravdu and Proletarskaya Pravda.
 - 2: R.C. Elwood, op.cit., p 374; "Zhandarmy o Pravde", PR, 1923, no.2(14), p 458, PSS, vol.48, p 255.

issues were being seized by the police. His response then was not to suggest ways by which the editors should avoid police action. Instead, he suggested that Pravda should become a weekly paper, as this would be more in keeping with its finances, and, as if to reinforce this point, he complained that he had not been paid for articles he had submitted and that "this is getting to be worse than a joke".¹

It is not possible to explain Lenin's odd reaction to Pravda's precariousness, by his concern for Krupskaya's health and the move to Berne in July so that she could have an operation,² for he was taking steps to reactivate the émigré press. In June, Okhrana agents in Paris reported preparations to revive Sotsial Demokrat, and gave as the reason for this the police action against Pravda. In July, Lenin held a conference of émigré organisations in Berne, which discussed the strengthening of the illegal émigré press, and improved ways of transporting it to Russia.³ When he returned to Poland at the end of July, he held a Central Committee meeting which again discussed Sotsial Demokrat and contrasted its role with that of Pravda. No recommendations were made to Pravda

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1. PSS, vol 48, p 207. This contrasts to his letter to Gorky ten months earlier, urging him to write for Pravda, although it "usually pays two kopeks a line and more frequently pays nothing, and cannot attract anyone by its fees"; ibid., p 100.
 2. As Elwood does, op.cit., p 373.
 3. "Arkhipvnye dokumenty i biografii V.I. Lenina", KA, 1934, no 1, pp 241-43.

on how to avoid seizure.¹

On the other hand, the discussion at that meeting does reveal how Lenin saw Pravda's deleterious effect on the émigré leadership and, consequently, on Party policy:

Despite the large amount of legal workers' publications, the absence of illegal literature is strongly making itself felt and in fact brings to nought all attempts to organise underground work. The attention of the conscious masses is focussed on the legal workers' organs, as a result of which no reports from the areas are coming abroad and there is no possibility of assessing the current situation; it is even unknown where and how party groups and cells exist and function. Besides which, the legal press suffers from the disadvantage that it cannot allot space to organisational questions, in the special meaning of this term.²

The conclusion that Lenin drew from this is that discussion of organisational and Party matters should become the preserve of Sotsial Demokrat, which as an illegal paper could discuss them with more freedom. Polemics against the Liquidators should become the preserve of Pravda. In other words, he was proposing that Pravda should become the kind of paper its editors and readers had always opposed.

His attitude to Chernomazov personally was remarkable, too. In 1912, Lenin had done what he could to draw into line editors whom he described as "not men, but sad spineless creatures and wreckers of our cause" because they wanted unity with the Mensheviks.³

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1. M.A. Tsyavlovskii (ed.), Bol'sheviki: dokumenty po istorii bol'shevizma s 1903 po 1916 god, M 1918, pp 131-36.
 2. ibid, p 135.
 3. PSS, vol.48, p 157.

Furious letters were written, organisers sent into Russia, new editors found. Yet at no stage in 1913 does he suggest, or accede to any suggestion that Chernomazov be replaced even when, in July, Malinovskii came out with a strange story, hinting that Chernomazov had some kind of contact with the Okhrana.¹

Chernomazov might not be ideal but, as Lenin wrote to Gorky, it had taken him a whole year of great trouble to find a tolerable editor.² To Lenin, of course, this meant an editor who could make Pravda the mouthpiece of pro-illegal party, anti-Liquidationist policy. The only alternative to Chernomazov, after the arrests earlier in the year, was M.S. Ol'minskii who would turn the paper back into a Conciliator pro-unification paper. At present, there was simply no-one else who would do.³

The danger of Ol'minskii taking over as editor was shown in May 1913, when Pravda published an article by Bogdanov explaining the attitude of the Vpered Group towards the Duma. Lenin was furious, and his anger increased when Pravda refused to publish his reply.⁴ The affair caused bad blood between Lenin and the Russian praktiki until well into 1914.⁵ Chernomazov's role in all this is obscure. Possibly he was outmanoeuvred by Ol'minskii here. Possibly he engineered the affair

1. Tsyavlovskii (ed.), op.cit., p 131.

2. PSS, vol.48, p 211.

3. PSS, vol.31, p 80.

4. PSS, vol.48, pp 190, 201; Petryakov, op.cit., p 9.

5. PSS, vol.48, pp 262, 266.

to create more disruption between the Leninists and the Vperedists in accordance with Okhrana policy to divide the RSDLP as much as possible. This would seem to be borne out by his suppression of a letter from Aleksinskii, the one Vperedist with whom Lenin, at this stage, saw some chances of unity.¹ Most probably, he allowed the affair to develop, to bring home to Lenin what would happen to Pravda, and hence to Lenin's authority over the Party inside Russia, should he be removed and Ol'minskii replace him as editor.

Certainly, Chernomazov was aware of and took full advantage of the patronage he enjoyed. He treated his fellow editors with contempt, drove them to resign, refused to let them see before publication the contentious articles that were causing all the police attention, and insisted on receiving all correspondence from Lenin unopened.² The editors complained to Lenin, they were told that he was "satisfied with the paper and its editor, and in all this time the only bad thing I have heard about him is that he works like an ox". They complained again, and again, but were merely told "not to be awkward".³

Thus, although undoubtedly unhappy in some ways about the fall off in Pravda's circulation, (which weakened his claims to the International of a mass following for Bolshevism), and about the

1. PSS, vol 48, pp 190, 194.

2. "Deyatel'nost' TsK RSDRP po rukovodstvu gazetoi Pravda", IA, 1959, no 4, pp 45-48.

3. "Lenin i Pravda", KL, 1924, no 1 (10), p 78; "Iz peripiski TsK RSDRP s mestnymi partiinymi organizatsiyami (1912-14)", IA, 1960, no 2, p 30.

rumours surrounding Chernomazov, Lenin used them to restore his control over the Russian Party. The fall in circulation and police seizures shifted the balance somewhat back towards the émigré leaders. Chernomazov was prepared to fight the Liquidators and was a useful stick with which to beat Ol'minskii. When a good editor could be found, and Pravda firmly putting forward Lenin's policies, then would be time enough to aim for a higher circulation.¹

By the late summer of 1913, Lenin was ready to push through a complete split with the Mensheviks inside Russia, by splitting the Duma Fraction. In September, five of the Bolshevik Duma Deputies and a number of praktiki attended a conference in the Galician village of Poronin. Lenin had originally intended this to be a Party school, with lectures on Marxism etc., like that held two years before at Longjumeau.² However, with Pravda more to his liking, and with Malinovskii emerging as a more than competent leader, he decided to make the Conference a briefing session for the Duma split.³

Pravda had an important role to play in winning public opinion to the split for, as Badaev records, it was not clear that

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1. In June he called for a readership of 100,000 (PSS, vol 48, p 188) then the Bogdanov dispute worsened (ibid., p 201); this was followed by his suggestion that the paper become a weekly (ibid., p 207.)
 2. "Iz perepiski TsK...", IA, 1960, no 2, p 27.
 3. KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh... vol 1, p 386; A. Badaev, Bol'sheviki v gosudarstvennom Dume, M 1954, pp 183-84.

the workers understood that unity with the Liquidators was detrimental to their interests.¹ Now it became very important to Lenin that Pravda should not be seized by the police, and that its circulation should increase. The change in attitude is reflected in his correspondence with Chernomazov. In the five months between the end of April and the Poronin Conference, Lenin had written him only four letters.² None of these mentioned the paper's 'tone' which was getting into trouble with the censors. Three of them are concerned in one way or another with the Bogdanov affair; two of them congratulate Pravda on its improvement and three of them ask for money.

Immediately before or even during the Poronin Conference Lenin wrote to Chernomazov asking him, for the first time, to moderate the tone of the paper.³ The Duma split took place on 25 October. Over the following two months, Lenin wrote no fewer than fifteen letters to Chernomazov. In these appeals to moderate the tone of the paper alternate with instructions on how to conduct the campaign and congratulations on work well done.⁴

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1. Badaev, op.cit., p 183.
 2. PSS, vol 48, pp 182-83, 188-91, 200-01, 207.
 3. PSS, vol 48, p 212. The letter is dated by the editors of PSS as "not before 30 September 1913". It is not possible to deduce from the letter itself how they arrive at this date. Presumably, the letter could even post-date the Poronin Conference.
 4. PSS, vol 48, pp 212-23, 225, 229-30, 236-37, 241.

The creation of the independent Bolshevnik Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Fraction in the Duma was to be the culmination of Lenin's anti-Liquidationist policies. It meant that for the first time there existed in Russia an anti-Conciliationist Bolshevnik leadership, whose immunity as Duma Deputies gave them great stability and the ability to carry out illegal work with little fear of arrest. During the Christmas recess, therefore, the Central Committee met to discuss future plans and what they meant for the management of Pravda without which "all Duma work loses 99 per cent of its significance". The Deputies were now to shift their main sphere of activity outside the Duma and assume their primary role as Party organisers, propagandists and agitators. It was now more important than ever that Pravda should remain within the law. Strict rules were drawn up for Chernomazov's conduct, giving the other editors the right to refer to Lenin any article they might be worried about. Ol'minskii in particular was given the personal right to defer the publication of any article. In addition, the Duma Deputies were to keep a strict eye on all the editors. The paper was to be made more attractive so that its circulation could be enhanced.¹

Either Chernomazov did not understand the change in his status, or he was under too much pressure from the Okhrana to continue to disrupt Pravda. During December, he had been replaced as editor by M.A. Savel'ev, and the Central Committee meeting noted

1. KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh..., vol 1, pp 391-95.

that this had been followed by a marked drop in police interest in the paper.¹ However, three weeks later, Savel'ev had been arrested, and Chernomazov had to be reinstated.

In early February 1914, on returning from his tour of Europe, to prepare for the "Exchange of Views" Conference, Lenin received a very disturbing letter from K.N. Samoilova in Petersburg. Pravda had been closed yet again, and this time the Bolshevik Deputy Petrovskii, the paper's publisher, was being called to account for the claim made in an article written by Chernomazov, that all the various variants of Pravda were really one paper representing 'one ideological organisation'.² Chernomazov had gone too far and must be dismissed. The problem was how to replace him. Savel'ev had been arrested, and Ol'minskii was a conciliator. Lenin decided to risk sending Kamenev back to take charge. The fact that he was prepared to risk the arrest of so important an émigré testifies to the importance that Pravda had assumed. Ol'minskii was allowed to confront Chernomazov with his evidence and the latter was removed to other work, although not expelled from the party as the evidence was considered

1. ibid., p 393.

2. "Deyatel'nost TsK RSDRP po rukovodstvu gazetoi 'Pravda' (1912-1914)", IA, 1959, no 4, p 4g.

inconclusive.¹ The Okhrana avenged itself on 18 February by arresting E.F. Rozmirovich, the Secretary of the Duma Fraction, and K.N. Samoilova, Secretary of the editorial board, and Lenin's principal informants on Chernomazov.

Kamenev's appointment created the problem of whether the elaborate rules evolved by the Central Committee in December 1913, to control Chernomazov, remained in force, or whether they could be changed without a formal CC meeting. A letter had to be sent, presumably on Lenin's own initiative as no CC meeting is recorded, giving the new editor more leeway. In return Pravda promised "to publish everything you send, down to the last line".³ In addition to this satisfactory state of affairs, Pravda was restored to health, under Kamenev's editorship. Circulation climbed to

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1. ibid, pp 50-52. Elwood, op.cit., p 376, assumes that Lenin decided to send Kamenev only after Ol'minskii's confrontation with Chernomazov. Presumably he bases this on the fact that neither Samoilova nor Rozmirovich mention Kamenev in their letters describing the affair ('Deyatel'nost' Tsk ...', pp 50-52). This is not conclusive as there would be very good conspiratorial reasons for not doing so. On the other hand, Lenin's own account written in March 1917 clearly states that Kamenev was sent to Russia to get rid of Chernomazov (PSS, vol.31, p 80). This accords with Krupskaya's account that Lenin decided to send Kamenev "shortly after his (Lenin's) return from Paris", i.e. shortly after 24 January (OS) (Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, p 271). In any case, Kamenev was in Petersburg by 14 February as, by then, Lenin was writing to him there (PSS, vol.48, pp 262-63).
 2. V.T. Loginov, Lenin i Pravda, M 1962, p 190.
 3. V.I. Lenin: biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, pp 189-207; Petryakov, Kollektivnyi agitator, p 134; idem, 'Deyatel'nost V.I. Lenina po rukovodstvu 'Pravdoi' v 1912-14gg.', VI, 1956, no.11, p 15.

40,000 daily and on the paper's second birthday 130,000 copies were sold, 75,000 of these in Petersburg alone.¹ Lenin was, of course, delighted that "for the first time we can see the intelligent direction on the spot by an editor who understands".²

Yet any such satisfaction was likely to prove short-lived. The stability of Pravda and the joint experiences of strikes, demonstrations and barricades in the summer of 1914, had the same effect on the Party as they had in 1912. From June onwards, Okhrana agents report strong grass-roots movements towards the reunification of the Party and that the Duma Deputies themselves were anxious to reunite, but were unwilling to take the responsibility on themselves, and were awaiting the decision of the forthcoming Conference of the International.³ In the event, the outbreak of war prevented the Congress and thus the reunification from taking place. Nonetheless, the Okhrana took these reports seriously enough to issue an instruction to all controllers to ensure that their agents in the Social Democratic Party should "insistently and unswervingly stress the idea of the absolute impossibility of any kind of organisational merger...and especially of any union between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks".⁴

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1. V.T. Loginov, Leninskaya Pravda, p 354.
 2. PSS, vol.48, p 272.
 3. Tsyavlovskii, Bol'sheviki, pp 143-46.
 4. ibid, p 148.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEFT BOLSHEVISM
IN EMIGRATION 1914-17

The outbreak of the War, or rather the behaviour of his rivals on the outbreak of the War, gave Lenin a chance to recoup and to vindicate the policies he had fought for since the Prague Conference. The vote of the German Social-Democrats in the Reichstag for war credits gave him a clear issue on which to fight them, untainted by overtones of police provocation, or of greed for the Schmidt inheritance. (The rumour of German subsidy was as yet in the future.) The German Social-Democrats and the French and all the major leaders of the Second International had disregarded the resolutions of the 1907 Stuttgart Congress and of the 1912 Basel Congress of the International on war. Instead of responding by the "indignation and revolt of the working class" and the "desperate moves" threatened by the Basel Congress, the Socialist leaders had voted to finance the War, thereby ensuring that statesmen could in future afford to disregard the expressed policies of organised labour. Kautsky, Vandervelde and the others had not only disregarded a few resolutions, they had destroyed the International.

The behaviour of the leaders of the International created a good deal of confusion in the RSDLP inside Russia and in emigration. In Paris, a fair number of émigrés, including some Bolsheviki, volunteered for the French Army. Before leaving for the Front, they were addressed by Plekhanov, who told them that if he had been younger, he too would have taken up arms.¹

1. V. Antonov-Ovseenko, V semnadtsatom godu, M 1933, pp 45-47; M. Syromatnikova, "Bernskaya Konferentsiya Zagranichnykh organizatsiyakh RSDRP (b) v 1915 g", PR, 1925, no 5 (40), p 151.

Vladimir Burtsev, the Socialist Revolutionary who had exposed Malinovsky, Boris Savinkov the famous SR terrorist, and Prince Kropotkin, the Anarchist, also declared their support for the War.¹

Inside Russia, too, there was disorganisation and demoralisation. The vote of the German Social-Democrats naturally received quite a lot of publicity in the press, as did the subsequent votes of the French and Belgian Socialists. This was followed by a telegram to the Russian workers from Emile Vandervelde, now a minister in the Belgian government, calling for support for the War. Some Social-Democratic leaders declared their support for the War, most notably perhaps N.D. Sokolov (the future author of Order No 1 of the Petrograd Soviet). Even those Social Democrats who did oppose the War, felt somewhat insecure in so doing, because of the overwhelming support in other sections of the International and the absence of any news from the Bolshevik leadership abroad.²

Nonetheless, the five Bolshevik Deputies and six Menshevik Deputies issued a joint statement denouncing the War as an imperialist struggle, which they presented to the Duma and then walked out rather than vote for war credits.³

It was with some relief that the Russian Bolsheviks received

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1. A.E. Senn, The Russian Revolution in Switzerland, p 18.
 2. D. Baevskii, "Partiya v gody imperialisticheskoi voiny in M.N. Pokrovskii (ed.), Ocherki po istorii Oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii, M-L, 1927, pp 345, 349, 361; R. Arskii, "V Petrograde vo vremya voiny", KL, 1923, no 7, p 77; K. Kondrat'ev, "Vospominani o podpol'noi rabote", KL, 1923, no 5, p 232.
 3. Senn, op.cit., p 17.

Lenin's Theses on the War, brought back to Russia at the end of August by the Bolshevik Duma Deputy F.N. Samoilov. Isolation was now not so complete. What is more, they had done the right thing.¹ The Theses reiterated the view that the War was an imperialist one and that the leaders of the German, French and Belgian Socialists had betrayed the working class.² If this was all very reassuring, one section of the Theses did cause some confusion inside Russia. This was Lenin's tenet that:

...from the point of view of the working class and all the labouring masses of Russia the lesser evil would be the defeat of the Monarchy and its forces, which are oppressing Poland, the Ukraine and a whole number of the peoples of Russia, inflaming national hatred to strengthen the hold of the Great Russians over other nationalities and to stabilise the reactionary and barbarous Tsarist monarchy.³

Nonetheless, it was with much more self-assurance that in mid-October a number of leading Bolsheviks met at Kamenev's house to draw up a rejection of Vandervelde's appeal. This appeal had, in fact, had the paradoxical effect of stiffening Bolshevik opposition to the War, by bringing home the extent of the changes in

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1. A. Shlyapnikov, Kanun Sernadtsatogo goda, M-P, 1923, vol 1, p 33; Arskii, op.cit., p 78; both these sources state that they appeared in Petersburg in August in No 33 of Sotsial-Demokrat. However, this was not published until November. V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya Khronika, vol 3, M 1972, p 276, records that Lenin gave Samoilov copies of the theses to take to Russia. Shlyapnikov, loc.cit., recalls that it was Samoilov who brought the news.
 2. PSS, vol 26, pp 1-3.
 3. ibid., p 6; Shlyapnikov, op.cit., p 37; Baevskii, op.cit. p 365.

the position of the Western Socialists. Vandervelde, the Chairman of the International, was now a Minister in the Cabinet of the Belgian king. His message was delivered to Prince Kudashev, Russian Minister in Brussels, by the Belgian Ministry of War, and transmitted to Russia by the Tsarist Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where the Deputies learnt of it from the bourgeois press before it was delivered to them. For some Bolsheviks, at least, the enemy was becoming easier to identify.¹

The Vandervelde message also brought out the differences which existed between the Bolshevik and Menshevik Deputies, despite their joint declaration on the War. Unlike the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks did not reply to Vandervelde. Some indeed let it be known that they did "not in our activities in Russia oppose the War".² Here, then, was the difference that Lenin had been trying to make clear to the International and to his own party before the War. Bolsheviks and Mensheviks might say the same things and vote the same way inside the Duma, but whereas the Menshevik Deputies saw that as the full extent of their duties, the Bolsheviks saw it as only part of theirs. The Bolshevik Deputies began agitating throughout the country for support for their policies.³ In November, they and Kamenev were arrested, and after a trial, they were exiled to Siberia for life. The Menshevik Deputies

1. Gankin and Fisher, op.cit., p 157; Arskii, op.cit., p 77; Shlyapnikov, op.cit., pp 41-43.

2. Gankin and Fisher, loc.cit.

3. Baevskii, op.cit., pp 344, 352; Bol'sheviki v gody imperialisticheskoi voiny. Sbornik dokumentov, M 1939, p 185.

remained at liberty.

The outbreak of War found Lenin still in Austrian Galicia where he was interned as an enemy alien. Ironically, it was through the good offices of Viktor Adler, whose support for the War gave him the right sort of influence, that Lenin was released and allowed to move to Switzerland,¹ where he arrived on 5 September 1914 (N.S.).

Here he began the task of rallying the émigré Bolshevik groups, a task which he believed could only be done by combining the attack on the War with the attack on the Second International. As news from Russia came through, he was to add to this the attack on the Chkheidze group of Menshevik Deputies, who spoke against the War but no more.

The day after his arrival in Berne, Lenin called a meeting of the local Bolsheviks which lasted two days and finally approved his position on the War. It was the resolution from this meeting that was taken into Russia by Samoilov.² Then followed a period of intense study of current newspapers and books on war. In early October, however, he was again giving lectures on the War, culminating in a public confrontation with Plekhanov in the Maison du Peuple in Lausanne,³ on 11 October.

1. V.I. Lenin: biograficheskaya khronika, vol 3, pp 270, 273.

2. ibid., pp 275-76.

3. ibid., pp 276-84; PSS, vol 49, p 9; N.K. Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, pp 286ff.

Lenin attached particular importance to this confrontation, as Plekhanov's support for the War had had a particularly demoralising effect on anti-War Bolsheviks.¹

As well as rallying the émigrés, Lenin had to re-establish links with the Party inside Russia. At the beginning of the War, it seemed that all previous links had been broken.² In the meantime, he began reviving the émigré Central Organ Sotsial-Demokrat. This had been defunct since December 1913, when Lenin's attention had been concentrated entirely on Pravda inside Russia. Indeed, so defunct was it, that none of the Bolsheviks formerly involved in it could remember when the last issue had been, thereby earning themselves a ticking off from Lenin as "Liquidators".³ The proposal to revive the paper apparently came some time in September from V.A. Karpinskii, who was in charge of the Bolshevik archive in Geneva. He began to get this and other printing projects in hand, and by 17 October preparations for No 33 of Sotsial-Demokrat were well underway.⁴

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1. Syromatnikova, op.cit., pp 150-51.
 2. G.L. Shklovskii, "Vladimir Il'ich nakanune Bernskoi konferentsii", PR, 1925, no 5 (20), p 142.
 3. ibid., p 138; Syromatnikova, op.cit., p 151.
 4. PSS, vol 49, pp 5, 8-11. As these are Lenin's letters in response to Karpinskii's, it is not always clear what he is referring to. At first sight, the decision to revive Sotsial-Demokrat appears to be taken only on 16 or 17 October (ibid., p 11), but a footnote to an earlier letter explains that it refers to Sotsial Demokrat (ibid., pp 5, 483) although this does not seem justified by the text alone, nor from the summary of Karpinskii's letter to Lenin given in V.I. Lenin: biograficheskaya Khronika, vol.3, p 280.

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On 16 October Lenin's anxieties about contact with Russia were relieved when he received a letter from Shlyapnikov who had just reached Stockholm from Russia. Shlyapnikov's mission was to re-establish links between the Russian Party and Lenin.¹

Shlyapnikov's letter was also heartening in that it contained news of the acceptance of Lenin's thesis on the War by the Russian party, and the text of the Duma Deputies' reply to Vandervelde.² Shlyapnikov was told to stay in Stockholm and oversee the organisation of transport of letters, people and literature in and out of Russia.

In early November the first batch of Sotsial-Demokrat, no 33, arrived in Stockholm and by mid-November it was in Russia.³ Lenin also made sure that one copy was sent to the International Socialist Bureau in Brussels.⁴

The Bolshevik position was now making itself heard in

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This is only important in that Lenin received Shlyapnikov's letter between the two letters he wrote to Karpinskii (see below). If the editors of PSS are right Lenin took the decision before he knew that he could get the paper into Russia. The text of the letters themselves imply that he originally had intended to publish leaflets, but by 17 October (i.e. after he knew that he could send material regularly into Russia, he decided to revive the CO.

1. Shlyapnikov, op.cit., p 44; V.I. Lenin: biograficheskaya khronika, vol 3, p 285; Shklovskii, op.cit., p 142.
2. PSS, vol 49, p 12.
3. PSS, vol 49, p 23; V.I. Lenin: biograficheskaya khronika, vol 3, p 297.
4. PSS, vol 26, p 159.

Western Europe as well. In late November, Shlyapnikov addressed the Congress of Swedish Social Democrats, making a speech that impressed Lenin very favourably.¹ His pleasure was doubtless compounded by reports of the speech delivered to the Congress by Yu Larin, representing Martov's Organising Committee. According to Larin, the OC now represented, as well as the various national organisations and the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, the Russian organisations led by Martov, Aksel'rod and...Plekhanov. Larin thus claimed to be speaking on behalf of organisations that opposed and of organisations that supported the War! Lenin was able to make quite a lot of this and also of the fact that on their own admission, for all their supposed opposition to the War, the OC was quite happy to speak on behalf of chauvinists.²

After this auspicious beginning, however, Lenin suffered some setbacks. Immediately after the Stockholm Congress, Shlyapnikov moved to Copenhagen, and links with Russia were broken again.³ At the same time, Lenin learnt of the arrest of the

1. PSS, vol.29, p 42.

2. PSS, vol.26, pp 111-18, 126-27; this gave rise to some rather confused statements from the OC. Gankin and Fisher, op.cit., p 160; cf. Martov's reaction in Pis'ma Aksel'roda i Martova, p 307.

3. PSS, vol.49, p 42; Shlyapnikov, op.cit., p 64, claims that he was forced to leave Sweden after the Congress. However, Lenin knew of his intention to go to Denmark before 25 November, as on that date he wrote to Shlyapnikov telling him not to go (PSS, vol.49, p 35). Perhaps a clue to the mystery could be that Kollontai, with whom Shlyapnikov was then having an affair, had been deported to Copenhagen. ibid., loc.cit.; A. Kollontai, "Avtobiograficheski ocherk", PR, 1921, no.3, pp 291-92.

Bolshevik Deputies.¹ Although this could be used internationally to demonstrate that the Tsarist Government could see the difference between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, even if Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg could not, the fact remained that their arrest decapitated the Party inside Russia.² It was indeed followed by a severe decline in membership, the Petersburg Organisation numbering only between one hundred and one hundred and twenty members by the end of November.³

Things deteriorated further with the trial of the Duma Deputies in February 1915. At the trial, Kamenev disassociated himself from Lenin and the Central Committee abroad and from the slogan of the defeat of Tsarism being the lesser evil. Apart from further allowing the legal non-socialist Russian press to add to the confusion inside the Party in Russia as to what its position on the War was, it also enabled it to say that there was yet again a conflict between the Central Committee abroad and the praktiki in Russia.⁴

Yet again, it was the editor of Pravda who was responsible for highlighting this difference, and Lenin's whole position in opposing the old leadership of the International and the other tendencies in the RSDLP depended on his being able to prove precisely that he more than anyone else was in touch with the

1. PSS, vol.49, p 36.

2. ibid., pp 36-37.

3. Istoriya KPSS, vol.2, p 547.

4. PSS, vol.26, p 171; Baevskii, op.cit., p 356.

Russian working class.

But not everything that came out of the trial was bad. Deputies G.I. Petrovskii and M.K. Muranov made a very good showing, enabling Lenin to give more details about the difference between revolutionary socialists using Parliament for revolutionary purposes (i.e. the Bolshevik Deputies) and evolutionary socialists, for whom Parliament was an end in itself. Until the Deputies had been tried and condemned, he had not been able to give actual examples of what he meant. From now on, he was to make much of what he called "work of the Muranov type" (muranovskogo tipa).¹ In essence, what this came down to was that although the joint pronouncement in the Duma had been all very fine, it did not tell the workers what they should do. The Bolshevik Deputies did just that, and that is why they were exiled to Siberia for life.

Although Lenin had achieved a good deal in the first few months of the War to establish a rival centre of authority to that of the leaders of the Second International, there was still a good deal of dissension between those who opposed the War. The Petersburg Committee declaration against the War, for example, issued on 18 July 1914 (OS), called on workers to oppose the War because it was in the interests of Tsarism. The full implications of this were only to be revealed in March 1917, when a

1. PSS, vol.26, p 175; ibid., p 262, it is used in an attack on the Second International; and ibid., pp 332-35, a whole section of his major pamphlet Sotsializm i voina discusses the extra-parliamentary work of the Duma Deputies. A year later at the Kiental Conference the Bolsheviks cited Muranov's words at his trial to reinforce a point about revolutionary action to end the war. L.A. Slepov and Ya. G. Temkin, "Kintal'skaya konferentsiya", NiNI, 1966, no.3, p 27.

considerable section of the Bolshevik leadership felt that it could support the War, now that the Tsarist Government no longer existed.¹ But even in the short term, echoes of this sort of difference could be found in Kamenev's statement at his trial that he did not support defeatism. It was to sort out this kind of question that Lenin called a conference of Bolshevik groups abroad, which eventually met in Berne at the end of February 1915. Also pressing was the question of financing Sotsial-Demokrat. Lenin was anxious to make it a weekly, but this was made difficult by printing problems, lack of funds and lack of articles.² These difficulties threatened to be compounded by the decision of a group of Bolsheviks living at Baugy to publish their own newspaper. Lenin ordered them not to do so.³

The Baugy Group, as it was called, was made up of N.I. Bukharin, N.V. Krylenko and E.F. Rozmirovich (the former secretary to the Duma Fraction). Bukharin was its prime mover, and he had two main points of difference with Lenin. First, he had suspected Malinovskii of being a police agent as early as 1912.

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1. Bol'sheviki v gody mirovoi voiny, pp 1-2.
 2. PSS, vol.49, pp 46, 48, 53, 59, 66, 495; the only press they had been able to find in Switzerland with Russian type was run by a Ukranian nationalist who was sometimes drunk and usually gave precedence to Ukranian nationalist publications. Krupskaya, op.cit., p 297.
 3. V.I. Lenin: biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, pp 309-10; Gankin and Fisher, op.cit., p 173, write that the Paris Section also wished to publish its own paper. I have been unable to trace any evidence to confirm this. However, there was a strong patriotic group in the Paris Section who volunteered for the French Army. Ya. G. Temkin, Bernskaya konferentsiya zagranichnykh sektsii RSDRP(1915g.), M 1961, pp 36ff.

He and Lenin had rowed about it then, and again in the summer of 1914, and the disagreement remained as a source of friction between them.¹ Secondly, Bukharin was developing a theory (to be dubbed by Lenin as 'Imperialist Economism') according to which the development of Imperialism meant that the proletariat must now be aiming at taking power rather than aiming for a democratic revolution. Furthermore, Lenin's slogan of the transformation of the World War into a Civil War, while good, was not the sole one, and Bolsheviks should consider the revolutionary implications of the slogan 'Peace' and 'for the United States of Europe'.²

The problem for Lenin here was that Bukharin's ideas were too closely allied to those of Trotsky (i.e. Permanent Revolution and the United States of Europe) and of Kautsky ('Peace') with whom Lenin was trying to draw a clear demarcation line. Equally dangerous was the fact that these views were also being expressed by Bolsheviks inside Russia.³

At first the Baugy Group were not going to attend the Bolshevik Conference called for the end of February in Berne. They felt that Lenin would not allow their views to be aired in Sotsial Demokrat, and were still hoping to get their own paper going, with the help of money from Rozmirovich's sister, E. Bosh

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1. S. Cohen, Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution, London, 1974, pp 18, 21; E. Bosh "Bernskaya konferentsiya 1915g", PR, 1925, no.5(40), p 180.
 2. D. Baevskii, "Bor'ba Lenina protiv bukhariinykh 'shatanii mysli'", PR, 1930, no.1(96), p 44; idem., "Partiya v gody imperialisticheskoi voiny", p 366.
 3. D. Baevskii, "Bor'ba...", p 24; idem., "Partiya v gody...", p 382.

and Yurii Pyatakov who had escaped from Siberia via Japan and were now on their way to Switzerland.¹

The Conference was delayed both in the hope that the Baugy Group would change its mind, and in order to allow Pyatakov and Bosh, the only two delegates from Russia, to attend. In the event, the Conference began without them. However, the Baugy Group, with Bosh and Pyatakov, who had persuaded them to attend, did turn up towards the end of the Conference. The debate on the International situation was then held again, to allow them to contribute. Bukharin presented his Theses, but no one, not even the other members of the Baugy Group, voted for them. He was made part of the commission to draft an agreed resolution, and a compromise seemed to have been reached. The Conference also agreed not to publish any other paper except for Sotsial Demokrat for which all available resources were necessary.² Lenin had good reason to be satisfied in that E. Bosh promised the money that the Baugy Group had been hoping to get for their journal, to finance Central Committee material on the War.³

Always in the back of Lenin's mind, as he again and again returned to his attacks on the leaders of the International and of the rival Russian émigré groups, and as he tried to win support for his policies among the émigré Bolsheviks, was the problem of the party inside Russia:

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1. Bosh, op.cit., p 179; Shklovskii, op.cit., p 185; Syromatnikova, op.cit., p 150.
 2. Baevskii, "Bor'ba V.I. Lenina..", p 26; Krupskaya, op.cit., p 297; Bosh, op.cit., p 181.
 3. Tsyavlovskii, Bol'sheviki, pp 159-60.

Half a century of Russian political emigration, (and thirty years of Social Democratic emigration), have these not shown that all declarations, conferences, etc. abroad are powerless, insignificant and empty, unless they are supported by a lasting movement of some social stratum in Russia. 1

Thus the need to prevent the Baugy Group from publishing Zvezda was not motivated by a gratuitous desire to impose censorship but because the journal (i) weakened his attack on Kautsky, and on Trotsky whom he saw as softening the attack on Kautsky, and (ii) diverted funds from the Party's Central Organ.

There still remained one very serious problem to be solved if the movement abroad was to be linked to any kind of movement in Russia: the establishment of a reliable illegal transport system for people and publications in and out of Russia.

Shlyapnikov and Kollontai had now moved from Copenhagen to Christiana (Oslo), where some kind of negotiations were underway with Norwegian Socialists to set up a transport system. However Shlyapnikov was rapidly becoming demoralised. He could not get a job in Norway and began to wonder why the editors of Sotsial Demokrat could not move to Scandinavia, equally neutral and much more convenient for Russia, and give him some support. He threatened to go to America, and in the end, left for England towards the end of April 1915. The transport system was further

1. PSS, vol.26, pp 189-90.

away than ever.¹ Bukharin was sent to Sweden to take Shlyapnikov's place. He arrived there at some time during June or July.²

The transport question had arisen at the Berne Conference, where the solution proposed had been to approach all extreme left movements of the various European countries including Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, whose opposition status in Germany would be likely to make them more favourable to Lenin. They could be especially useful in the distribution of Bolshevik material to Russian prisoners-of-war in Germany.³

The first opportunity for this policy came at the International Youth Conference which was held in Berne in early April.⁴ The Bolsheviks hoped for much from this Conference, as most of the Youth Sections of the Second International had opposed the War, regardless of the actions of their senior parties. Some thirteen delegates attended from six countries, Russia being represented by a youthful Inessa Armand (aged 40) and G.I. Safarov (aged 23). Lenin had managed to persuade the

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1. Shlyapnikov, Kanun... vol.1, pp 76-77; V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, pp 328, 335; Krupskaya, Reminiscences..., p 319; G.D. Petrov, "A.M. Kollontai nakanune i v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny", NiNI, 1969, no.1, p 79.
 2. M. Futrell, Northern Underground, London, 1963, pp 90-92, 100.
 3. Tsyavlovskii, Bol'sheviki, p 160.
 4. Nothing much had come out of the International Conference of Socialist Women held one week earlier. Gankin and Fisher, op.cit., pp 288 ff.

Rozlamowcy, who were uncertain of the Conference's value, to attend, and all seemed set for an opportunity to rally Europe's socialist youth under Bolshevik slogans. The youth, however, proved tougher than expected and at one stage the Bolshevik delegates walked out, but Lenin forced them to go back. The Bolshevik resolution was duly voted down, and the Conference decided to publish a regular paper Jugend-Internationale. This was both to rally the left of the European socialist parties, as Lenin had hoped, and to prove a thorn in his flesh by giving a mouthpiece to ideas he found uncongenial.¹

On the other hand, the promise given by Pyatakov and Bosh at the Berne Conference was taking the shape of a journal called Kommunist which was to group around it left socialists from various different parties. Radek, a Rozlamowec, Pannekoek from the Dutch left, and Kollontai, still then a Menshevik, were to be among the contributors.

From the outset there was friction between Lenin on the one hand and Pyatakov and Bosh on the other who, to Lenin's fury, apparently considered that their financial contribution entitled them to some measure of control over the journal. The first major dispute arose when Pyatakov and Bosh invited Trotsky to contribute to the journal, despite some opposition from Lenin.

1. V.V. Privalov, "Bor'ba V.I. Lenina i bol'shevikov...", VLU, 1962, no.14, p 6; M.M. Mukhamedzhanov, "V.I. Lenin i mezhdunarodnaya sotsialisticheskaya molodezh...", NiNI, 1967, no.2, pp 4-5.

To Lenin's relief, Trotsky refused, but to his anger, he did so in an open letter in Nashe slovo, a paper that he and Martov were jointly publishing in Paris. In this open letter Trotsky repeated the accusation that there was really no difference between the Bolshevik and Menshevik Fractions in the Duma, and added that there were far greater differences between Lenin and his new allies in Europe than between him and the other Russian Groups.¹

However, Pyatakov and Bosh visited Lenin to smooth things over and they "agreed splendidly" and the differences on the editorial board were to remain secret.

Trouble blew up again almost immediately, however, when Pyatakov and Bosh objected to publishing Lenin's reply to Trotsky,² and reached a head when they objected to yet another of his articles. What annoyed Lenin most was the power that their money gave them:

The enclosed letter from Yurii...is stinking, stupid Kulachestvo. It was formally agreed here to publish [these articles]... 'The publishing commission is obliged to carry out this decision.' But they are being wilful!! 'Mine is the purse, I am a petty tyrant.' It is clear that we cannot work like this. 3

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1. PSS, vol.49; pp 78, 501; Gankin and Fisher, op.cit., pp 171-73.
 2. PSS, vol.49, pp 90, 504; 'Est' li svoya liniya u OK i u fraktsii Chkheidze?' was eventually published in February 1916 in Sotsial Demokrat.
 3. PSS, vol.49, p 108.

In spite of the friction that it was giving rise to inside the Bolshevik emigration, the preparation of Kommunist was allowing Lenin to develop friendly relations with the Rozlamowcy, and most notably Karl Radek. Thus, when Robert Grimm, a leading Swiss Social Democrat and editor of the Berner Tagwacht, began organising a Conference of anti-war European socialists in the early summer of 1915, it was Radek who alerted Lenin to the fact that Grimm was hoping to avoid having the Bolsheviks there.¹

Radek was a good person for Lenin to ally with in his campaign against the leaders of the Second International. As well as being a member of the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, he had been a member of the German Socialist Party and editor of its most radical paper, the Bremer Burgerzeitung. In 1912, he had become involved in a very bitter dispute with Kautsky over the nature of Imperialism and had been expelled from the German Party in that year. As well as having extensive contacts on the left of both the Polish and German parties, and

1. PSS, vol.49, p 81; W. Lerner, Karl Radek, the Last Internationalist, Stanford, 1970, p 38. Apparently, Grimm hoped to do this by inviting M. Litvinov, then living in London, who was the official Bolshevik representative on the International Socialist Bureau. Thus he would formally be doing the correct thing in the hope that Litvinov would not be able to pass the invitation back to Lenin in Switzerland in time. This manoeuvre was not without a certain irony, as Litvinov had not been officially notified at the time of the Inter-Allied Socialist Conference that had been held in London in February 1915. The reason given at the time was that his "standing as a delegate" was unclear. Gankin and Fisher, op.cit., p 274.

reasons to dislike the old leadership of both, Radek's period as editor of the Bremer Burgerzeitung had enabled him to build up wide contacts among the European Left generally, most notably perhaps, with Anton Pannekoek, the Dutch Left Socialist. In addition, of course, Radek's experience and talents as a left wing German journalist, and his ability to translate Bolshevik material into German could greatly increase Lenin's influence.¹ Nevertheless, although an alliance with Radek offered great possibilities, Lenin treated him with some caution. He had not forgotten his break with the Rozlamowcy in 1914 over the nationalities question: a question he had reason to believe that Radek was still involved in.²

In the period before the Zimmerwald Conference, however, relations remained good. Radek got material translated for Lenin, kept him informed of German affairs, put him in touch with an American publisher, and between them they tried to get Pannekoek to Zimmerwald.³

Indeed, in the last few weeks before the Conference, Lenin used his new alliance with Radek to outmanoeuvre his opponents, Martov and Trotsky. On 11 July, Lenin learnt from Lyudmilla Stal', who came to see him on her way into Russia, that Trotsky was planning to discredit Lenin at Zimmerwald. Trotsky's plan, apparently, was to get all the Russian groups at the Conference to vote

1. Lerner, op.cit., pp 22-28, 39.

2. V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, p 300.

3. ibid., pp 347, 368, 371, 378; PSS, vol.49, pp 100-01.

for a generally leftist revolution, then once the 'left' credentials of all concerned had been established, to invite all groups to a Russian Conference immediately after the main Zimmerwald one closed. Lenin, it was assumed, would refuse and thereby lose credibility in the International.¹

Lenin's counter move was very cunning. He proposed to use Radek as the centre of a Left Bloc at the Conference. This might or might not take in the Mensheviks. If it did not, then their plan completely disintegrated. If it did, at least the Bolsheviks would not be left in isolation. Over the next few weeks, Lenin negotiated with Radek over an agreed text for a resolution for the Left. He drew up two drafts of his own, which he sent to Radek, and in return made various objections and additions to Radek's own proposals. In the end, agreement was reached on a text which did not differ too much from Lenin's drafts, except that all mention of "just" wars "waged by the oppressed nations against their oppressors" and of the slogan of "defeatism" had been cut out.²

Originally Lenin had anticipated a rather small Left Group at Zimmerwald made up of the Dutch, the Left Germans, Radek and the Bolsheviks. The success of his manoeuvre against Trotsky however depended on his being able to build a credible Left Group.

1. PSS, vol.49, p 91.

2. PSS, vol.26, pp 282-85, 383-85; vol.49, pp 115-17, 125-26; Soch, vol.18, pp 416-19; V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, p 366.

Kollontai was of great value at this point in that she was able to persuade T. Nórman of the Norwegian Socialist Youth and Z. Höglund of the Swedish Socialist Youth to attend the Conference. Lenin himself in the last week before the Conference did all that he could in the way of convincing delegates to support the Left.¹

When the delegates met at Zimmerwald on 5 September 1915, Lenin's Left Group was outnumbered, but still of a respectable size. He could count on eight votes out of a total of thirty-one (Lenin, Zinoviev, J. Borchardt (Germany), Z. Höglund (Sweden), T. Nórman (Norway), F. Platten (Switzerland), K. Radek (Poland), J. Berzin (Latvia)). The Left's Manifesto was, predictably, defeated. Trotsky, Natanson, Chernov and H. Roland-Holst voted for it in addition to the eight members of the Left. Martov voted against it. Lenin had both gained a very respectable new alliance to fight against the Second International, and outmanoeuvred his Russian rivals.²

The alliance between Radek and Lenin was cemented further at the Zimmerwald Conference by an incident curiously reminiscent of the "affair of the five x's" at the 1912 Berne Conference. When it came to the signing of the Zimmerwald Manifesto, which had been passed unanimously (the Left issued a statement explaining why

1. PSS, vol.49, p 82; Mukhamedzhanov, "V.I. Lenin i mezhdunarodnaya...", NiNI; 1967, no 2, p 8; Gankin and Fisher, op.cit., p 347; A.M. Kollontai, "Avtobiograficheski ocherk", PR, 1921, no.3, pp 292 ff.

2. Gankin and Fisher, op.cit., p 348.

they voted for it and what their reservations were), the German delegation refused to allow Radek to sign, insisting on the validity of his expulsion from the German Party. Hanecki's name was substituted for Radek's, despite the fact that Hanecki was not at the Conference. Thus Radek had it brought home to him that his only hope of any kind of political future lay in identification with Lenin's Group.¹

Immediately after the Conference, the first issue of Kommunist, a fat double issue at long last appeared, containing, among others, an article by Radek. The Berner Tagwacht for 15 October carried an article by Radek in German containing a fierce attack on the Chkheidze Fraction in the Duma. In November he brought out the Internationales Flugblatt, the first of the Zimmerwald Left publications, containing the documents they had presented to the Conference.²

It was at this point, however, that the longstanding difference with Radek, which Lenin had been able to suppress in the preparation of Zimmerwald and during the Conference, erupted. On 28 and 29 October, the Berner Tagwacht carried a long, two-part article by Radek attacking the idea of the right of nations to self-determination. Lenin reacted cautiously, by writing a reply - "The Revolutionary proletariat and the right of nations

1. Lerner, op.cit., p 42.

2. ibid., pp 43-44; A.E. Senn, The Russian Revolution in Switzerland, pp 116-17.

to self-determination" - which was not published but circulated privately.¹

For some while after he had moved to Sweden in the summer of 1915 Bukharin's relations with Lenin remained ostensibly good. He had passed through London on his way to Stockholm and had met Shlyapnikov there. Perhaps as a result of this, or at least of further exhortations from Lenin, Shlyapnikov himself returned to Sweden. Pyatakov and Bosh promised some money towards the illegal transport and material began again to pass in and out of Russia.² However, both Shlyapnikov and Bukharin felt the need for more help and suggested again that Lenin and Zinoviev join them in Stockholm. Lenin did consider this, and the weird schemes suggested for his passage there, but eventually turned it down.³

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1. V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, p 403; PSS, vol.27, pp 61-68 (it was not in fact published until 1927). There is a discrepancy of editing between vols.27 and 49 of PSS on this matter. Vol.27, p 68 states that the article was written "not before 29 October 1915", i.e. after the publication of Radek's article. Vol.49, has notes on pp 111, 112 and 118 to the effect that an unnamed article in the letters on these pages is "Revolutsionnyi proletariat..." These letters were written in July and August. I have accepted the version in vol.27, especially as the article specifically refers to Radek's piece in Berner Tagwacht on 28 and 29 October 1915.
 2. PSS, vol.49, pp 88, 108; V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, pp 357, 368, 380-81, 387, 419; Shlyapnikov, Kanun..., vol.1, p 86.
 3. PSS, vol.49, pp 108, 156, 399; Krupskaya, Reminiscences... p 319.

While the matter was very much in the air, and in the course of the dispute with Lenin over what should go into Kommunist, Pyatakov and Bosh suggested that they should go to Sweden. So angry was he with them ("I do not wish even to reply to Pyatakov: his stupid, stinking letter is intolerable... 'I am the master, I shall not pay!!' No, there is a limit to everything"),¹ that Lenin agreed, overlooking the danger of placing a group of friends with known disagreements with the Central Committee at so vital a point in the party's communications. Indeed, when they took their time leaving, he got even more angry both with them and with Zinoviev, who tried to defend them.² He did, however, take the precaution of making Shlyapnikov a member of the Central Committee in September to ensure that he would be informed should anything develop, and also that he would have some way of exercising authority in Stockholm, should the need arise.³

At the end of October, Shlyapnikov left for Russia, confident that he could leave the transport work to Bukharin and

1. PSS, vol.49, p 108.

2. ibid., pp 123-24. They did not leave before the end of September, at the earliest. V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, p 386. Zinoviev evidently had trouble in assessing how to deal with them, as Lenin also took him to task for being too sharp with them and risking a split before he wanted one and on the wrong issue. Presumably, a split was to be avoided so long as they might contribute to the transport system. PSS, vol.49, p 153.

3. ibid., p 141.

Pyatakov, and feeling that at last there was some kind of agreement between Lenin, Zinoviev, Pyatakov, Bukharin and Bosh.¹ He had fairly good reason to think so. Bukharin's article, "Imperialism and the World Economy", had been accepted for no.1 of Kommunist, even though Lenin had some reservations.² Lenin and Bukharin were corresponding on many practical details of party work, and Lenin and Pyatakov were arranging the contents of no.3 of Kommunist.³

The storm broke not long after Shlyapnikov had left for Russia, and ten days after Radek's attack on the idea of the Self-Determination of Nations had appeared in the Berner Tagwacht. Lenin had got Krupskaya to translate his reply to Radek, "The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination", into Russian and send it to Bukharin and company in Stockholm.⁴ He had possibly done this because he feared that Bukharin might be influenced by the article, as presumably Swiss papers were readily available in neutral Sweden, or possibly he had sent it in response to Pyatakov's request the week before for an article by Lenin on the national question for Kommunist, no.3.⁵ Whatever his motive in sending the article, the reaction

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1. Shlyapnikov, Kanun..., vol.1, pp 86-89, 92.
 2. PSS, vol.49, pp 88, 124.
 3. PSS, vol.49, pp 131, 155; V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, pp 391, 402.
 4. V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, p 404.
 5. ibid., p 402; Lenin certainly subsequently saw the actions of the Stockholm Group as the result of the influence of Radek's articles. PSS, vol.49, p 195.

it provoked was extraordinary.

On 8 November 1915, Pyatakov sent Lenin a letter on behalf of himself, Evgeniya Bosh, Bukharin and a certain Yakov Bogrovskii, another Stockholm Bolshevik. The letter asked that the four of them be considered as a Special Commission of the Central Committee with the following functions: i) to inform the émigré section of the CC of Russian Affairs; ii) to inform the Russian Party of émigré affairs and of the affairs of the Western European Parties; iii) to publish and distribute literature; iv) to maintain contacts with the Swedish Left in the name of the Central Committee.¹ On one level, all that was being asked for was independence from the local Stockholm Bolshevik émigrés, whom Bukharin described as a "very grey lot".² But the disturbing element in the request for Lenin was that the group were obviously out to control the Party. Were the request granted, they would be able to decide just how much Lenin got to know about Russian affairs, or about the affairs of his Scandinavian allies on the Zimmerwald Left. Similarly they would be able to determine just what news of the Party's Central Committee was transmitted to the Russians and to the Swedes.

The affair became even more disturbing when it became clear that the group demanding this key position in the Party had serious political disagreements with Lenin. Pyatakov's letter

1. Baevskii, "Partiya...", p 445; V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, p 405.

2. Baevskii, loc.cit.

was followed within a few days by one from Bukharin, criticising Lenin's "The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" and promising a set of theses on the national question from all four of the group to follow. On 19 November, Lenin received the theses "On the Slogan of the Right of Nations to Self Determination" and a fifteen point political platform. Between them these documents were a combination of Radek's views on self-determination, and Bukharin's views on the State, first put forward at the Berne Conference earlier in the year. Briefly stemming from an analysis of the nature of imperialism, they concluded that the struggle for National Independence was harmful and reactionary in that it obscured the need for the class war for Socialism; also, imperialism meant that the proletarian struggle must shift outside parliaments.¹

Lenin was thus simultaneously threatened with organisational disruption, threatening to cut him off from the Party in Russia and ideological disruption threatening to associate part of the Bolshevik Party with that part of the Zimmerwald Left that appeared to be moving onto an anti-Leninist tack. This Lenin was determined to prevent .

His first move was to prevent the Bolshevik Opposition and the potential anti-Lenin group in the Zimmerwald Left from having a forum that could reach the Russian Party. He thus wrote a

1. Baevskii, op.cit., pp 514-18.

letter to Pyatakov and Bosh informing them that he and Zinoviev were withdrawing from Kommunist as they could not take Party responsibility for editors who had such a clearly non-Party attitude.¹ In its place, he and Zinoviev were now to prepare a journal firmly under Central Committee control, entitled Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata.

To Dukharin he wrote a special letter explaining the tricky relations with the Zimmerwald Left.² His attitude to the "Special Commission" is best summed up in Krupskaya's notes:

We could not give them so important a right as correspondence [with Russia]. The group was not very well suited to this kind of task, it had poor security, it was trying to take control, but was in essence rather unreliable...It was proposed to confirm the group, but as a group without the right of correspondence with Russia (each individual, of course, could write and express his own opinions, but they were not to write officially as a group). 3

As a consequence of this decision, Krupskaya continues, there was terrible anger. Business correspondence continued, but relations were strained and dissatisfaction with the Central Committee grew worse.

Lenin's suspicions that the request had not been solely about independence from the "very grey lot" of Stockholm Bolshevik emigres were confirmed when the Group dissolved itself on

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1. V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, p 414; PSS, vol.49, p 229.
 2. PSS, vol.49, pp 195, 201.
 3. Baevskii, op.cit., p 446.

3 December, rather than accept their more limited autonomy.¹

Bukharin, however, continued to correspond with Lenin through the winter of 1915-16, sending news of Russia and Scandinavia, asking Lenin to write a preface to his "Imperialism and the World Economy", which he wanted the Party to issue as a separate pamphlet, and trying to reverse Lenin's decision to withdraw from Kommunist. Whatever his differences with Lenin, Bukharin was continuing to work as a loyal Party member. On the other hand, there is no record of any correspondence from either Pyatakov or Evgeniya Bosh.²

Lenin did not change his mind about Kommunist, probably because the situation in the Zimmerwald Left became critical. A few days after the Stockholm Group had dissolved itself, Lenin read a further article by Radek attacking the idea of Self-Determination, this time in Lichtstrahlen, the paper of his ally on the Zimmerwald Left from the German Socialist Party, J. Borchardt.³ As Radek seemed to be intent on spreading his views throughout the Zimmerwald Left, Lenin felt justified in replying publicly, and consequently submitted an article, "The

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1. V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, p 414. S. Cohen (Bukharin, p 36) in his account of this says that they "dissolved themselves as a Bolshevik section", implying an official break with the Central Committee. I do not think that this can be substantiated, and certainly not from his sole source, Gankin and Fisher, op.cit., pp 215-16.
 2. V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, pp 414, 419, 420, 421, 453.
 3. ibid., p 415.

Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination", to Vorbote, which, with the help of money from Anton Pannekoek and Henriette Roland-Holst, had replaced the Internationales Flugblatt as the journal of the Zimmerwald Left. For some reason this greatly upset Radek, and at the meeting of the Bureau of the Zimmerwald Left (i.e. Lenin, Zinoviev and Radek) in mid January, he managed to persuade Lenin and Zinoviev to defer the publication of Vorbote, no.2, in which the article was to appear, until he had consulted Pannekoek and Roland-Holst.¹ What passed then between Radek and his old friends (he had known Pannekoek at least since his old days on the Bremer Burgerzeitung) is not clear. The outcome was, however, that Lenin's article did appear in Vorbote, no.2, but Lenin, Zinoviev, Trotsky and Radek, all of whom were to have been on the editorial board along with Pannekoek and Roland-Holst were now dropped, leaving Pannekoek and Roland-Holst as sole editors. There was nothing that Lenin could do. The money for the publication was, after all, theirs.²

Once again, Lenin had been deprived of ideological control of an international journal simply because he did not have the funds. Once again, as with the Kommunist affair, at the root of the dissension were his views on the National Question. What made this particularly frustrating was that at this precise

1. PSS, vol.49, pp 173, 231.

2. PSS, vol.49, p 177; Trotsky, in fact, refused to collaborate with Vorbote anyway, ibid., p 176.

moment, the Zimmerwald Left was gaining ground internationally.¹ The problem was, would it gain ground on a Leninist programme?

One of Lenin's main problems in the Zimmerwald Left, as it had been in the Second International before the War, was to convince people who might sympathise with him on all other points, that there was a real difference between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks inside Russia and that the small émigré Bolshevik groups were a real force in the Russian working class. Time and again he stressed to his fellow Bolsheviks that for them the split with Chkheidze was the "crux of the political situation".² Pyatakov and Bosh's hesitations on this score, indeed, had been one of the causes of Lenin's vehemence against them.³ Just at the time that Vorbote was slipping from his control, Lenin got news that Chkheidze was preparing to declare his support for the Zimmerwald Movement in an attempt to recoup the losses the Mensheviks were suffering in the Russian working class and, in fact, Chkheidze did make an announcement to this effect to the Duma in February 1916.⁴

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1. V.V. Privalov, "Bor'ba V.I. Lenina...", VLUJ, 1962, no.14, vyp.3, p 7.
 2. PSS, vol.49, pp 86, 88, 94, 109, 133, 141, etc.
 3. ibid., pp 88, 193; they also refused publication in Kommunist to his article "Does the Chkheidze Fraction have a Political Line?", which was eventually published in Sotsial Demokrat in February 1916. PSS, vol.49, pp 90, 504.
 4. PSS, vol.49, pp 183, 187-88; L. Schapiro, The Origin of the Communist Autocracy, London, 1977, p 22.

If he was to maintain any kind of authority in the Zimmerwald Movement, and most particularly in the Zimmerwald Left, it was now more important than ever for Lenin to clarify and win support for his differences with Chkheidze. Yet it was at this very moment on 1 February 1916 that Radek chose to publish in Gazeta Robotnicza, now edited by him in Berne, a "Resolution of a Meeting of the Editorial Board, passed on 1-2 June 1915". This, while declaring general sympathy with the Bolshevik position, criticised them for their stand on defeatism, and for their split with "less resolute elements", which Lenin at least understood as meaning with Chkheidze. In a curt note, Lenin broke off all joint work with Radek on Polish and Russian questions, saying that unless "The Polish Social-Democracy does not declare itself openly and specifically for the split in Russia", he anticipated "a new 16 July 1914" (when the Rozlamowcy voted against the Bolsheviks at the Brussels "Exchange of Views" Conference).¹

On 11 March, Shlyapnikov returned to Sweden after spending some four and a half months in Russia, re-establishing contacts,

1. PSS, vol.27, pp 275-78; vol.49, pp 181-82, 189. Radek and Lenin were reconciled only in early 1917, ibid., vol. 49, p 378. Senn, op.cit., p 125, writes that in order to please Radek, Lenin had dropped the slogan on defeatism in the draft resolution presented by the Left to the Zimmerwald Conference, and that Gazeta Robotnicza then claimed that this meant that the Bolsheviks no longer attached significance to the slogan. This was in Lenin's early draft, and it was dropped. The text of the Gazeta Robotnicza resolution of February 1916 as cited by Lenin does attack the Bolsheviks for defeatism, but there is no word about them no longer attaching significance to the slogan; on the contrary. PSS, vol.26, pp 282-85; vol.27, pp 275-78.

rebuilding committees, distributing Zimmerwald material, Sotsial Demokrat and Kommunist. On his arrival in Stockholm, he was distressed to find that relations between Bukharin, Pyatakov and Bosh on the one hand and Lenin and Zinoviev on the other were extremely strained, and that Kommunist had ceased publication. A typical praktik, Shlyapnikov disliked émigré disputes at the best of times. This one alarmed him more than ever as it appeared likely to jeopardise all his work in Russia, by interfering with the contacts between the Russian Party and the Central Committee abroad. Furthermore, he was upset by the decision on Kommunist, which had apparently been popular enough among party workers inside Russia for the newly constituted Russian Bureau of the Central Committee to have passed a resolution for its continued publication. He decided to act as a buffer between his friends in Stockholm and Lenin and Zinoviev, in an attempt to resolve the differences and get Kommunist back into publication.¹

As might be expected, Lenin was not prepared to start publishing Kommunist again, and thereby give more publicity to the views of people like Radek, at a time when he was ideologically in a very tight corner in the Zimmerwald Left. In addition to which, Radek's views on self-determination had many sympathisers in the Party. As well as the Stockholm Group, Aleksandra Kollontai, who had just returned from a propaganda trip to the United States, and who was Lenin's main spokesman in

1. Shlyapnikov, Kanun..., vol.1, p 204; V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, p 469.

the Scandinavian Parties, held similar views, and in January the Central Committee had received a letter from the Moscow Party Committee along the same lines.¹ So the dispute over Kommunist which had been dormant for four months, except in Bukharin's letters to Lenin, which apparently met with no response, flared up again. At the outset, Lenin took a very uncompromising stand. His position is admirably laid out in his first letter to Shlyapnikov, written some time after 11 March 1916. This deserves quoting in extenso. "For us in Russia," he wrote, in reply to Shlyapnikov's complaint that he was being hard with Bukharin

(and now in the New International too), the question of the split [with the Liquidators] was fundamental. Any softness here would have been a crime. I know only too well that many good comrades...[my sister, Elizarova-Ul'yanova, Ol'minskii, our Petersburg "friends" from the intelligentsia] were opposed to the split in the Duma Fraction. They were, all of them, a thousand times wrong. The split was essential, and the split with Chkheidze and co. is absolutely essential now. Anyone wavering on this account is an enemy of the proletariat, and we must be hard on him.

Who is wavering? Not just Trotsky and co. but [Pyatakov and Bosh] ... (who last summer "made a scene" about Chkheidze!!) Then the Poles (the opposition). Their resolution is in no.25 of Gazeta Robotnicza: more prevarications, like those in Brussels on 16 July 1914.

Hardness is essential with them.

Radek is the best of them; working with him was useful (for the Zimmerwald Left among other things) and we worked with him. But Radek wavers too. And

1. G.D. Petrov, "A.M. Kollontai...", ISSSR, 1968, no.3, p 90; Baevskii, "Partiya...", p 450.

our tactics here were two-fold... [and Pyatakov and Bukharin in no way either wanted or were able to understand this]: on the one hand, to help Radek move to the Left, and to unit everyone we could for the Zimmerwald Left. On the other hand not to allow the minutest wavering on the fundamental issue.

The fundamental issue was the split with Chkheidze and co.

The Poles wavered and issued the vilest of resolutions after Kommunist no.1.

Conclusion?

Either to keep the title Kommunist and open the gates to squabbles and waverings: to letters to the editor (from Radek, from Bronskii, and perhaps from Pannekoek and others), to complaints, to snivelling, to gossipping, and what have you.

Not on any account.

That would be harmful to the cause.

That would mean helping the rascals in the OC, Chkheidze and co.

Not on any account.

Kommunist was a temporary alliance to achieve specific ends. The end was achieved: the journal was issued, a rapprochement achieved (then, before Zimmerwald, this was possible). Now we need to go another way, we need to go further.

Kommunist has become harmful. We need to end it. and replace it with a different title: Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata (edited by the editors of Sotsial-Demokrat).

Only in this way will we avoid squabbles and waverings.

There is discord in Russia too? Of course there is! But it is not our job to increase it. Let Chkheidze and co., Trotsky and co. keep themselves busy at increasing the discord (that is their "profession"). Our job is to implement our line. The fruits of this are plainly to be seen: the Petersburg workers are one hundred times better than the Petersburg intelligentsia (even those who sympathise with us...)

We had to arrive at temporary compromises with the Troika... [Pyatakov, Bosh and Bukharin] because then there was no other way of publishing a journal (but now we can). More importantly, then, we had never seen [Bosh and Pyatakov] at work and we could hope that work would carry them upwards.

In fact they went downwards.

And it is now essential to dissolve the temporary alliance. Only in this way will the cause not suffer. Only in this way will they learn too.

You see, we are not opposed to discussion. We are only opposed to giving editorial rights to people who have wavered unpardonably (because of their youth, perhaps? then we can wait. In five years or so they may possibly improve).

[Bukharin] is a serious (zanimayushchii) economist, and we have always supported him in this. But he is (1) credulous of scandal and (2) devilishly unstable in politics. 1

1. PSS, vol.49, pp 193-94
(square brackets indicate passages where I have replaced pseudonyms in the original by real names).

The point about Bukharin's "credulousness of scandal" was a reference to his conviction in 1912 that Malinovskii was an Okhrana agent. Lenin had raised this again at this point because Bukharin was gaining Shlyapnikov's admiration on another spy hunt. Quite by chance, he had discovered that Yakov Bogrovskii, one of the four members of his group in Stockholm, had been accepting money from a certain A. Keskula, for which he had been issuing receipts on Party-headed notepaper stamped with the official Party stamp. On investigation, Bukharin became convinced that Keskula was working for the Germans and that there was at least one other spy at work among the Stockholm Russian émigrés. The intensity of his investigations for some reason upset the Swedish police, who arrested him and Pyatakov at the end of March. After a few days in prison, they were deported to Norway, whither they were followed by Shlyapnikov and Kollontai.¹ Shlyapnikov recalls that relations with Lenin deteriorated after the move to Norway and Lenin and Zinoviev's letters "became more and more overbearing".² If this is so, it was probably no more than a coincidence. Lenin was probably anxious to avoid another Malinovskii scandal, but there were other quite valid independent reasons why relations with

1. Shlyapnikov, Kanun... vol.1, pp 204-09; vol.2, p 88; Kollontai, "Avtobiograficheskii ocherk", PR, 1921, no.3, p 294.

2. Shlyapnikov, Kanun..., vol.1, p 208.

Bukharin and co. should deteriorate.¹

Although Lenin was determined from the beginning that there was to be no revival of Kommunist, and that Bukharin's and Pyatakov's views had to be exposed as false, he fully intended to keep the dispute secret, known only to Party members. This remained so, even after 20 March when he received Bukharin's criticisms of his "Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination", criticisms which Lenin described as "worse than swinish".² This need to keep matters within the Party indeed was one of his reasons for not wanting any more issues of Kommunist.³

But pressure on Lenin to revive Kommunist was mounting. Shlyapnikov persevered, writing letter after letter until well into June.⁴ His case had now found support from a new and

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1. I have no wish to become involved in the German money controversy. Bukharin was convinced that Bogrovskii was taking German money. Keskula worked for Parvus and Parvus had met Lenin in 1915. However, Lenin's problems with Kommunist and Vorbote were to a great extent caused by his lack of funds, and in 1916 Sotsial Demokrat ceased publication for five months apparently because of a shortage of funds (Senn, The Russian Revolution in Switzerland, p 164). Also, In July 1916, although Lenin is talking about some alternative supply of funds, it is still in the future and will give independence from Pyatakov and Bosh (PSS, vol.49, p 260). Given the critical nature of the political struggles he was engaged in, and the importance he attached to the Party press, it is hard to believe that Lenin had any readily tappable source at this time.
 2. PSS, vol.49, pp 202, 205.
 3. ibid., p 195.
 4. V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, pp 485, 499, 505, 508, 513; PSS, vol.49, pp 233-35.

unlikely source: Zinoviev. From the end of March onwards, initially apparently influenced by Shlyapnikov's letters, Zinoviev began to urge Lenin to reconsider publishing Kommunist,¹ a development which caused Lenin some annoyance. For the time being, however, Lenin remained firm, and immediately after Pyatakov and Bukharin's deportation to Norway sent them a formal notification from the Central Committee that there would be no more issues of Kommunist. This was followed by acrimonious letters from both sides.²

As a further complication it was becoming clear that Shlyapnikov was rapidly becoming demoralised by the affair: spending too much time with Kollontai in Norway, complaining about Lenin's attitude, threatening to go to America, and even refusing to tell Lenin the membership of the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee that he had established during the winter.³ Zinoviev then complicated matters by inviting Shlyapnikov to come to Switzerland to attend the Second anti-war conference which was to be held at Kiental late in April. Lenin was horrified at this especially as Shlyapnikov himself apparently welcomed the idea.⁴ Lenin wanted some way of

1. ibid., pp 205, 209, 210-11.

2. ibid., vol.27, pp 279-81; vol.49, pp 214-15; V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, p 482.

3. PSS, vol.49, pp 205, 210-12.

4. PSS, vol.49, pp 211-12; V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, p 485.

putting Shlyapnikov in storage while he sorted out the dispute with Bukharin and Pyatakov and now Zinoviev. The transport system had come to a halt, Shlyapnikov could not be sent back to Russia in the state he was in. Apart from the danger of arrest because of his demoralisation, he would have a bad effect on the Russian Party (from which, and from Lenin's sister, Elizarova-Ul'yanova, Lenin suspected that the rot had initially set in). The problem was to destroy Bukharin and Pyatakov's influence over Shlyapnikov, while avoiding conflict with the man himself. This could only be done by drawing Bukharin and Pyatakov out in the hope that they would discredit themselves. While this was going on, Shlyapnikov should go to England for a rest.¹

Meanwhile, the affair appeared to be having a bad effect on the Party's preparations for Kiental. A week before the Conference, Lenin wrote bitterly, and as it transpired, correctly, that he did not "after the events in Stockholm" expect any Scandinavian delegations at Kiental.² Whether or not their absence was the result of bad relations between Lenin and Bukharin and co. is not clear, but the fact remains that neither the Swedes nor the Norwegians, prominent in the Left at Zimmerwald, did manage to attend Kiental. Also, just before the

1. PSS, vol.49, pp 211-12, 216-17; Shlyapnikov, Kanun..., vol.1, p 208.

2. PSS, vol.49, p 217.

Conference, Vorbote, no.2 finally appeared, with Lenin's "Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination", but also with a new set of theses opposing this from the editors of Gazeta Robotnicza.¹

The Kiental Conference itself must have been particularly frustrating for Lenin. The Conference was somewhat longer than Zimmerwald, and the Left had gathered twelve delegates to Zimmerwald's eight. This was not quite the gain it appeared, however, as there were three Bolsheviks instead of two, three Poles instead of one and three Swiss instead of one. Thus in strictly comparable terms, the Left had shrunk. However, on one issue, the condemnation of the French Socialist Parliamentary Group, the Left managed to attract nineteen votes.² But it was a Left that Lenin could not control, and one that he very nearly lost. The original draft of the Conference's Theses on Peace, drawn up by Robert Grimm, the Swiss Socialist editor of the Berner Tagwacht in which Radek originally published his attack on "Self-Determination", contained an item against the "Self-Determination of Nations", which the Bolsheviks had to fight hard to have removed. On the other hand, the Bolshevik draft

1. PSS, vol.27, pp 252-66; The Polish resolution is in Gankin and Fisher, op.cit., pp 507-18. Part 1 only of it is in Soch, vol.19, pp 438-40.

2. Gankin and Fisher, The Bolsheviks and the World War, pp 407 ff.

resolution was rejected on the grounds that the Conference was not prepared to deal with the question. Whether justifiably or not, Lenin saw Radek's hand behind these episodes.¹

It was possibly a combination of these things, the feeling that the Zimmerwald Left was slipping away from him, the increased pressure from Zinoviev and others inside the Bolshevik Party, and his desire to draw Pyatakov and Bukharin out that led Lenin to accede to Zinoviev's renewed requests on Kommunist at the Kiental Conference. Lenin agreed that publication should be proposed, on condition that there was an agreement for each issue between Lenin and Zinoviev on the one hand, and Pyatakov, Bukharin and Bosh on the other, and that these latter should give up their group policies, which Lenin called "Imperialist Economism", and stop aggravating the differences between the Party and Radek. Zinoviev apparently thought these conditions too harsh and doomed to failure, and so proposed milder terms, dropping the demand that the group renounce "Imperialist Economism". Instead he proposed that no.3 of Kommunist should be published in Berne. These proposals together with an outline of proposed contacts was sent to Shlyapnikov to transmit to Pyatakov, Bukharin and Bosh.²

Shlyapnikov tried to negotiate, probably because the

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1. Gankin and Fisher, op.cit., pp 441, 450; PSS, vol.49, pp 231-32.
 2. PSS, vol.49, pp 222-23, 229.

proposed contents were so humiliating for the group. There was to be an economic article from Bukharin, an article by Pyatakov on the cost of living, but Lenin's theses and article on the "Right of Nations to Self-Determination" without anything at all from the Stockholm Group in reply. Lenin declined to negotiate: this was his last word.¹ This time Pyatakov wrote to Lenin and Shlyapnikov wrote to Zinoviev, this time proposing that the editorial board have a majority of pro-Lenin people on it, but that the journal should have a discussion section. Lenin was prepared to accept this on condition that the terms on which discussion could be started were very closely defined, and also that a very strict financial agreement was drawn up, with Pyatakov and Bosh paying one half of the transport cost. In any case the journal must have a new name. By 25 June he had achieved his first objective. Shlyapnikov was quite disenchanted by Pyatakov and Bukharin's rejection of what seemed reasonable terms.²

This first victory had had its cost, however. Shlyapnikov was now thoroughly demoralised and wanted to go to America. Attempts were made to dissuade him, and when these failed, to find someone to take his place (apparently his statement that Kollontai would look after the transport system while he was away was not considered acceptable, probably

1. ibid., loc.cit. and 224; V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, p 499.

2. PSS, vol.49, pp 233-53.

because of her known views on self determination). Lenin considered the most promising replacement to be Inessa Armand, and started trying to find ways of getting her from Switzerland to Sweden. In fact it proved impossible to negotiate, even through Germany. Also, Inessa herself was veering towards the Bukharin-Pyatakoy position on the question of the Self-Determination of Nations. Shlyapnikov left for America anyway on 25 June.¹

Lenin's second objective was both to draw Bukharin and Pyatakoy out, and to separate them. To do this he tried to encourage them to write their views down and participate in an inner-Party discussion. This, he believed, would help Bukharin at least to change his views. After some discussion with Zinoviev, it was agreed that the first issue of Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata should be given over to this and that Bukharin and Pyatakoy be formally invited to contribute discussion articles on the Self Determination of Nations.² This plan nearly broke down as a result of Lenin's fury, when he discovered that Bukharin and Pyatakoy had informed Radek that they had severe disagreements with Lenin and, even more seriously, that they

1. ibid., pp 224, 226, 227, 245-46, 323 ff, 528; V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, pp 505, 507, 511, 516, 517. Shlyapnikov himself (Kanun..., vol.1, p 209) says that he went there to raise money for the transport system. Possibly so, but he nonetheless went against the advice of the Central Committee.

2. PSS, vol.49, pp 208, 232, 252-53, 260.

were taking advantage of Shlyapnikov's absence to establish their own independent links with Russia. Nevertheless, conciliatory letters were sent, in order to get them to produce their articles and send them to Switzerland. Lenin did, however, take the precaution of informing party groups of how things stood with Bukharin and Pyatakov.¹

When Bukharin's article did arrive towards the end of August, Lenin refused to publish it. It was not, as expected, on Self Determination. Bukharin's views on this were, in fact, a consequence of his views on imperialism. He chose to expand the basis of the argument rather than the consequences, in an article entitled "Towards a Theory of the Imperialist State". Lenin waited a little while until Pyatakov's article had arrived before sending Bukharin a letter of refusal, in case it should put Pyatakov off. Bukharin was then politely told that his article was unsuitable. Pyatakov's was held over until Sbornik Sotsial Demokrata, no.3, which never appeared because the February Revolution intervened. Meanwhile, Lenin used the two articles to write three of his own in reply, which were circulated inside the Party.²

Bukharin was, understandably, upset about the rejection of his article, and wrote a very strong letter to Krupskaya on

1. PSS, vol.49 , pp 254, 264, 271, 278, 279.

2. PSS, vol.30, pp 59-67, 68-74, 77-130; vol.49, pp 283, 287, 292, 293-94.

the subject. Zinoviev was told to write calming him down, but this failed. At the end of September, Shlyapnikov returned from America, and advised Bukharin, who was obviously unhappy and bored, to go. Kollontai probably added her voice to Shlyapnikov's, to tell Bukharin that the New York Russian Social Democratic paper Novyi Mir were looking for a left winger to put some life into the editorial board. In any case, he left for the USA in October 1916, worked in New York on Novyi Mir and by January 1917 became its de facto editor, at which time Trotsky joined him on the editorial board.¹

Shlyapnikov returned to Russia. The transport system collapsed entirely.²

Although Lenin considered that "after Bukharin's departure to America and, more importantly, after [Pyatakov] had sent us his article and accepted...my reply, their affairs as a group were finished" and "...I now consider that strategically I have won in this business",³ it was an extremely costly victory. In order to free his hands for manoeuvre in the Zimmerwald Left, he had cut himself off from the party in Russia, on which his credibility and very existence as a politician depended. There

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1. ibid., pp 297, 302, 305-10; Shlyapnikov, Kanun..., vol.1, p 217; Cohen, Bukharin, p 43; "Amerikanskije dnevniki", A.M. Kollontai", IA, 1962, no.1, p 155.
 2. N.K. Krupskaya, "Iz emigratsii v Piter" in Fritz Platten (ed.), Lenin iz emigratsii v Rossiju, mart 1917, M 1925, p 111.
 3. PSS, vol.49, p 333.

was a further sting in the tail of Bukharin's departure. In December 1916, a shortened version of Bukharin's article that had been rejected for Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata appeared in Jugend-Internationale, the journal of the Left Youth International set up at the Berne Youth Conference in early 1915, and simultaneously in the Bremen Arbeiterpolitik, and in the New York Novyi-Mir. Bukharin's views were now getting a very wide hearing indeed.¹

It was characteristic of Lenin that he should write an immediate reply to Bukharin, that was published in Sotsial-Demokrat, no.2 that very month.² It was also characteristic of him that, isolated even within the Zimmerwald Left, and cut off completely from the Party in Russia, he should embark on a course of reading to get to the heart of his opponents' theories. During January and February 1917 he read and annotated practically everything that Marx and Engels had written on the state.³ This was to lead to a remarkable shift in his views.

1. PSS, vol.49, p 340.

2. PSS, vol.30, pp 225-29.

3. ibid., vol.33, pp 123ff.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEFT POPULIST

TRADITION IN THE BALTIC FLEET

The naval reforms of the 1860's and 1870's had given rise to some discontent among the officers of the Fleet. The Government was blamed, with some justification, as far as the Navy was concerned,¹ for the defeat in the Crimean War. The reforms were found to be half-hearted and slow, as was the programme for the rebuilding of the Fleet. Better education for the lower decks, and better training were also sought after.² The rights of the sailors were also very restricted: their reading was subject to the censorship of their officers and of the naval chaplains. Clubs, public lectures, evening entertainments, parks, certain streets and even churches frequented by officers were out of bounds to them and infringements of these regulations were severely punished.³ Yet what discontent there was was almost exclusively voiced by the officers and almost exclusively through official channels: in official reports, in contributions to the press, especially to the Navy's own journal Morskoi sbornik. Any unofficial protest was confined to private discussion with relatives or close friends, or to the pages of private diaries.⁴ Although some officers were influenced by reading populist and nihilist writers, populist organisations as such

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1. D.W. Mitchell: A History of Russian and Soviet Sea Power, London, 1974, pp 160ff.
 2. S.F. Naida, Revolutsionnoe dvizhenie v tsarskom flote, M-L 1948, p 57.
 3. ibid., p 54.
 4. ibid., p 59.

had very little support among the officers and even less among the men. The one exception to this was the implication of N.E. Sukhanov and a small group of officers in the assassination of Alexander II in 1881. Four of them were executed in the following year¹, and a further number from the same group were arrested in 1883.² Although this group were important in that the act they accomplished was important, they were no more than an isolated phenomenon in the Russian Fleet at the time. What protest there was remained legal. This is very much what one should expect from a period in which, whatever its shortcomings, progress was being made and a mood of optimism prevailed.

A number of Soviet historians claim that social democracy became a serious force in the Baltic Fleet from about 1901.³ According to this version, when the battleship Aleksandr II docked at Toulon in 1901, a crew member, one Ivan Korshunov, became friendly with a French workman who had lived in Odessa and spoke Russian. The Frenchman introduced Korshunov to Russian social-democratic literature, including Iskra, which Korshunov

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1. 'Moryaki v protsesse chetyrnadtsatykh,' KB, 1927, no.7, p 52.
 2. David Footman, Red Prelude, London, 1968, p 157; this gives a figure of 66 arrested in 1883, but this includes army officers.
 3. Naida, op.cit., p 67; p 2; Sivkov, Kronshtadt, Leningrad, 1972, p 12; V.V. Petrash, Moryaki Baltiiskogo flota v bor'be za pobedu oktyabrya, M - L, 1966, p 33 (this source devotes one sentence only to the period, merely noting that "social democratic circles were founded...at the beginning of the century").

took back on board. He used this to influence fellow crew members, and by the time the ship was on its way back to Kronstadt in 1902, a circle had been established. Back in Kronstadt, its influence spread thanks to further copies of Iskra obtained from workers in the Kronstadt shipyards.

Korshunov also contacted a certain Zaplatkin, who together with one Sinel'nikov had a social-democratic group in the "Dom trudolyubiya" in Kronstadt much patronised by sailors.¹

In 1902, it is asserted, a Social-Democratic Military Revolutionary Group made up of Iskra supporters had been established in the Army and Navy.² This body was reinforced by the drafting into the Navy in 1903 of workers who were already members of the RSDLP.³ Thus, by 1903 there were established social democratic organisations in both Kronstadt and Revel'.⁴ By 1904, there was a strong Kronstadt organisation of 90 members, predominantly sailors, controlled by an "Executive Committee of the all-town committee of the RSDLP(b)" composed of elected representatives from ships and naval and army shore

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1. Naida, op.cit., p 68. This appears to be inconsistent with the earlier claim that such places were out of bounds to sailors.
 2. Voennye organizatsii rossiiskogo proletariata i opyt ego vooruzhennoi bor'by 1903-1917 gg, M 1974, pp 50-51. This source gives this as the "beginning" of S-D work in the armed forces.
 3. Naida, op.cit., p 72.
 4. L.T. Senchakova, Revolutsionnoe dvizhenie russkoi armii i flote v kontse XIX-nachale XXv, M 1972, p 1975.

units.¹ This is clearly a Bolshevik organisation of some consequence. Indeed, it is credited with revolutionising the Baltic Fleet sailors in 1903,² and with revolutionary work among the sailors of Rozhdestvenskii's Second Pacific Squadron, and Nebogatov's Third Pacific Squadron in 1905.³ It was also strong enough to hold a public meeting in the Morskoi Manezh in Kronstadt in January 1904, and dangerous enough for the Fleet Commander to have to deal leniently with those involved.⁴

This account is more systematic than that of the various Soviet sources on which it is based and, so far, has not taken any notice of the provisos with which they hedge their statements. Nonetheless, it would be fair to say that they are concerned to demonstrate a) that there was a social democratic presence in the Fleet from 1901 onwards, b) that this was composed first of all of Iskra supporters, subsequently of Bolsheviks, c) that this was a well organised, disciplined group, and d) that it exercised considerable influence. There are good reasons to doubt all these points.

There is little reason to doubt that, in its outline, the story of sailor Korshunov's experiences in Toulon are true.

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1. Senchakova, op.cit., p 191; Naida, op.cit., p 91, does not go into such detail but states that the organisation was "strong" and had "a developed network of circles in the crews and units of the garrison".
 2. Voennye organizatsii..., p 51.
 3. Senchakova, op.cit., p 192.
 4. Naida, op.cit., p 90.

That the outcome was a Social Democratic, let alone Iskraite or Bolshevik organisation is more doubtful. A very early post-revolutionary source, based on trial reports, states that because of the burning of the Petersburg Law Courts in February 1917, evidence is fragmentary.¹ The only revolutionary literature connected with Zaplatkin and Sinel'nikov's groups that this source mentions is the Socialist-Revolutionary paper Revolyutsionnaya Rossiya.² Mention is made of revolutionary use of Nekrasov's poetry and of lectures on the Decembrists. None at all of Social Democratic literature or agitators. This early article's use of sources, clearly explaining what they were and what their limitations were, contrasts with the moderns: neither Sivkov nor Petrash document their claims at all.³ Naida merely gives an archival reference not available to the present writer, without either quotation or comment.⁴

The claim that the "Social Democratic military revolutionary Group" was in fact Social Democratic appears equally dubious. The source cited for this claim is Iskra which apparently reproduced one of the Group's leaflets addressed to "soldiers and

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1. "Revolyutsionnaya propaganda v Kronshtadte", KB, 1921, no.7, pp 45-48.
 2. ibid., p 46, as also does I.V. Egorov (ed.), 1905, Vosstaniya v baltiiskom flote, L 1926, p 4.
 3. Sivkov, op.cit., pp 11-13; Petrash, op.cit., p 33. It is true that Petrash deals with the affair in one sentence; nevertheless, the sentence summarises the Sivkov/Naida version.
 4. Naida, op.cit., pp 67-68.

sailors".¹ Examination of Iskra, however, led the present writer to doubt whether the leaflet was issued by a Social-Democratic Group at all: 1) although the leaflet does mention the proletariat, it does so only briefly and after mentioning the plight of the peasantry; 2) it allocates no leading role to the proletariat in any plans it puts forward; 3) indeed the word "rabochii" appears in only one of the twenty paragraphs of the leaflet, the most common word used to describe the oppressed being "narod"; 4) the leaflet is not signed "Sotsial-demokraticeskaya voenno-revolyutsionnaya gruppa" but merely "Voенno-revolyutsionnaya gruppa"; 5) the leaflet is not addressed "to soldiers and sailors" at all, but very precisely "to officers"; 6) Iskra's comment welcoming the leaflet hopes that the revolutionary work begun by the Group will bring it into agreement.² with the Social Democracy: thus implying that it was not yet either part of the Social Democracy or even fully in agreement with it.³

'Similar doubts can be cast on the claims that there were strong Social Democratic organisations in Revel' and Kronstadt during 1903.⁴ Naida gives as his source another Iskra report. Here again, examination of Iskra itself makes the case seem more

1. Voенnye organizatsii..., pp 50-51.

2. stress mine.

3. Iskra, no.35, 1 March 1903, p 6.

4. Naida, op.cit., pp 72-73.

flimsy: all that Iskra actually claims is that the Petersburg Committee (which was Iskraite/Bolshevik at the time) was in contact with¹ the sailors' organisations and supplied them with literature. This is not the same as saying that they were social democratic organisations. Of course, Iskra would not write that men who were about to stand trial were members of an illegal organisation. So the report cannot be taken as evidence that they were not members of the RSDLP. It is, at best, inconclusive.

The evidence that there was a strong organisation of some 90 Bolsheviks in Kronstadt in 1904 is equally flimsy. Senchakova cites an article by Naida, which in turn cites the memoirs of Chuzhak, which refer to 1906, not 1904 and, in any case, makes no mention of size. Naida himself cites a monograph published in 1941 which merely paraphrases Ivanov's account, without citing him. The sole foundation for the claim then appears to be the memoirs of S. Ivanov. The figure 90 apparently comes out of Naida's head.² For all its size, its influence was limited as the demands put forward by the meeting instanced as one of the

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1. stress mine. Iskra, no.42, 15 June 1905, p 5
 2. L.T. Senchakova, op.cit., p 191; S.F. Naida, "Voennaya i voenno-boevaya rabota bol'shevikov v gody pervoi russkoi revolyutsii", in Bol'sheviki vo glave pervoi russkoi revolyutsii, 1905-1907gg, M 1956, p 265; N. Chuzhak, "V Voennom podpol'e bol'shevikov 1905-1906gg in V tsarskoi kazarme", M 1929, pp 41-42; S.F. Naida, Revolyutsionnoe dvizhenie v tsarskom flote, p 91; M Akhun and A. Makovskii, Voennaya i boevaya rabota bol'shevikov v 1905-1907gg, L 1941, p 12.

high points of its activity in January 1904 show remarkably little social-democratic influence: reduction of the period of service from the present seven years; equal political rights for sailors and officers; clubs, lectures, theatres, etc. to be in-bounds for sailors.¹

Indeed, the fact that work among the troops was not discussed as such at the RSDLP's Second Congress in July/August 1903 is perhaps an indicator that it was not rated highly by the Party leadership.²

Up to 1904, in fact, there is little evidence of any major trouble in the Baltic Fleet of any kind. A circular from War Minister Kuropatkin dated August 1902 detailing trouble spots and warning commanders to watch for agitators lists the Black Sea Fleet, but not the Baltic Fleet.³

With the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war in February 1904, however, the political atmosphere in the Fleet began to change. An early source of discontent were the reservists recalled to the colours once the war began. Naida describes an incident on the Moscow Nikolaevsky Station in April where the clumsy handling of naval reservists on their way to Kronstadt, by an army officer and the station authorities, led to a riot, followed by arrests.⁴ Many formulae for trouble

1. Naida, Revolyutsionnoe dvizhenie v tsarkom flote, p 90.

2. Vtoroi s'ezd RSDRP Protokoly, M 1959, passim.

3. Iskra, no.27, 1 November 1902.

4. Naida, op.cit., p 90.

combined here: distrust of one arm of the service for another, of civilian authorities for groups of servicemen, of other ranks for 'strange' officers, of civilian reservists for military discipline. That these were widespread is perhaps confirmed by the Tsar's order of the day issued seven months later in November 1904 dealing with the disciplinary measures to be taken against troubles of this kind.¹

Such disturbances are inevitable at the beginning of a war involving conscription, unless the war is generally popular or victorious. The Russo-Japanese War was neither.

In addition to these more or less routine mobilisation troubles, the Government built up trouble for itself. First it transferred political and other undesirables to the Baltic Fleet to crew the unfortunate Admiral Nebogatov's Third Pacific Squadron.² Secondly, after Nebogatov's Squadron had sailed in February 1905, Kronstadt was used as a dumping place for undesirables from all over the Fleet.³ In addition, trained servicemen were taken out of Kronstadt and sent to the front and replaced by men whose time had expired and who were being retained for the duration of the war.⁴ another source of trouble.

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1. ibid.
 2. Naida,, op.cit., p 95, citing Proletarii, no.8, 17 July 1906, and pp 101-02 citing evidence of Captains Artshvager and Lishin at Nebogatov's trial.
 3. Sivkov, op.cit., pp 18-19; "Vosstanie 26-27 Oktyabrya 1905g v Kronshtadte", KB, 1920, no.1, pp 36-37; Yu Zubilevich, Kronshtadt: vospominaniya revolyutsionerki, 1906 god, vol.1, Kronstadt, n.d., p 5.
 4. "Vosstanie...", KB, 1920, no.1, pp 36-37.

In fact, both Rozhdestvenskii's Second Pacific Squadron and Nebogatov's Third Pacific Squadron endured incident after incident from their discontented men.¹ Naida puts this down to the presence of revolutionaries among the crews, as did Nebogatov's captains at his trial.² The presence of revolutionaries may have helped, but this cannot be asserted on the basis of the captains' evidence alone. There were other sources of discontent which would not have been so easily accepted by the Government of the day, or by the directors of the Admiralty: the low level of seaworthiness of the ships, the demoralising delays (especially the long halt at Nossi-bé), the low level of training among the men, the low morale of the officers, the demoralising news of defeats in the Far East and Revolution at home that greeted them every time they put into harbour.³ There is ample reason to expect mutiny here.

It is certain that throughout 1905 the atmosphere in Kronstadt was tense: incidents in the capital, news of defeat in war, and minor incidents on the island itself provoked disorders and riots, not all of which could be described as revolutionary. The events of Bloody Sunday in Petersburg

1. Naida, op.cit., pp 96ff.

2. ibid., pp 101-02.

3. Admiral Sir Reginald Custance, The Ship of the Line in Battle, Edinburgh and London, 1912, pp 115, 157, 167; Maurice Paleologue, The Turning Point, London, 1935, pp 109, 111, 185, 209, etc.; Captain A.T. Mahan U.S.N., Naval Administration and Warfare, Boston, 1913, pp 123, 145-46, 164; Gabriel Darrieus, La guerre sur mer, Paris, 1907, pp 273-74, etc.

(9 January 1905) for example were followed by a Black Hundreds' demonstration in Kronstadt, albeit a mild one (the worst occurrences being knocking off the hats of any students encountered by the marchers).¹ Generally, the riots were very simple in their manifestations, but complex in their nature. A police report of 4 July 1905 states that on the preceding evening a crowd mainly composed of sailors had behaved in an unruly fashion in some streets of the town and had pelted certain brothels with stones. Troops summoned to the area did not have to resort to arms as disorders soon ceased.² The police report concludes that although the immediate cause of the riots was bad food, events in the Black Sea and in Libau had had a strong effect on the Kronstadt sailors. The policeman's report is diplomatically incomplete. To the mutiny on the Potemkin (14-25 June 1905) and to the riots in Libau, then the main base of the Baltic Fleet (15 June 1905), we should add Bloody Sunday (9 January 1905) and the sinking of the Second and Third Pacific Squadrons, or in other words the great bulk of the Baltic Fleet

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1. P.S. Shuvalov, "Iz bor'by za khleb i volyu", KL, 1923, no.5, p 272.
 2. K. Zharnovetskii, "Kronshtadtskoe vosstanie v 1905-1906gg," KL, 1925, no.3, p 52.

off Tsushima (14 May 1905).¹ It is not surprising that the months of June and July saw numerous disorders in Kronstadt, ranging from anonymous letters to the Commander to clashes between soldiers and sailors, attacks on property and the brief taking over of the battleship Aleksandr II.²

The disturbances which were to develop into the October mutiny in Kronstadt followed a similar pattern. On 7 October the railwayman's union called for a nationwide railway strike, and, as this spread, food prices rose rapidly. This was followed by a General Strike and on 13 October about 30 delegates from various factories gathered in the St. Petersburg Institute of Technology to form the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. On 14 October senior boys from the Boys Gimnazium in Kronstadt held a meeting in the school attended by many outsiders.³ On 17 October the Tsar issued his manifesto promising constitutional rights in Russia. This was met with confusion both in

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1. Naida, op.cit., p 175 has a riot in Kronstadt on 9 July which sounds very similar to Zharnovetskii's. His source is Proletarii, no.12, 3(16), August 1905; thus he could be describing the same incident, and Proletarii simply had its dates wrong, which is quite conceivable as it was published in Geneva. Or he could be describing a separate incident. In any case, it is symptomatic of the modern Soviet attitude towards "working class consciousness" that episodes like the stoning of brothels are not mentioned.
 2. Naida, loc.cit., "Kak samoderzhavie raspravlyalos' s matrosami za uchastie v Kronstadtskikh besporyadkakh 26-27 oktyabrya 1905g'", KB, 1920, no.8, p 53.
 3. "Vosstanie...", KB, 1920, no.1, p 37; Sivkov, op.cit., p 25.

St. Petersburg¹ and in Kronstadt, as people wondered precisely what the Manifesto had granted them. The Government hastily issued a booklet explaining to the troops that the Manifesto had not granted them the same rights as to other citizens. They were henceforth entitled to freedom of religion, but not to freedom of assembly or of the press.² Three days later a crowd of sailors, soldiers and other Kronstadt citizens again tried to hold a meeting in either the Gimnazium or the Morskoi Manezh. They were unable to get in, and on that night and the following one, meetings were held in the open air, with orators calling for the rejection of the Manifesto, for a democratic republic and for an alliance between the people and the armed forces.³ On the afternoon of the 23rd the crowd assembled again. This time Admiral Nikonov refused to allow a meeting to take place, but stated that he would come round the units on the next day to take the men's complaints. The crowd dispersed.⁴ Late that evening crowds of servicemen filled the streets around the brothels; three houses were set on fire, stones were thrown at

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1. L.D. Trotsky, 1905, London, 1972, p 113.
 2. Sivkov, op.cit., pp 24-25; it is not clear how soon this booklet was issued, but the point being stressed here is the uncertainty and unease caused by the Manifesto.
 3. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 53.
 4. "Vosstanie...", KB, 1920, no.1, p 37; Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 54, claims that Nikonov allowed a meeting in the open air. I have preferred the "Vosstanie..." account based as it is on the documents of the trial of the sailors who took part rather than Zharnovetskii's, who was not in Kronstadt at the time.

offices and at the police, but the crowds eventually dispersed.¹ During the next two days Admiral Nikonov went round all units on the island taking complaints. On the morning of the 25th the Third Battalion of Kronstadt Fortress Artillery presented a list of complaints in an orderly manner, through a representative. Towards evening, however, the regiment became disorderly and looted a wine warehouse.² On the next morning, soldiers of the Second Fortress Infantry Battalion assembled outside the Naval Mines-Training Detachment calling on the sailors to join them in a meeting.³ Not long after, a group of gunners and sailors gathered near the brothels and began to break their windows and set fire to the curtains. Fifty-two men were arrested,⁴ and placed on a train to be locked up in one of the forts. A crowd of sailors surrounded the train, whose guard opened fire killing one man, wounding two. This incident sparked off two days of extraordinary violence. The sailors ran to the barracks, seized weapons and went round from barracks to barracks calling on other units to join them, opening fire if they were met with refusal. Somewhat surprisingly, perhaps, some units, even some naval units, remained loyal to the Government. However,

1. "Vosstanie...", loc.cit; Zharnovetskii, loc.cit.

2. Zharnovetskii, loc.cit; Naida, op.cit., p 186.

3. ibid., pp 55-57; Naida's account makes the soldiers' actions more "conscious"; however Zharnovetskii cites both Nikonov's reports and those of the police of the time.

4. Naida, loc.cit. has the men wanting a meeting arrested.

the authorities did not wish to test this loyalty by using them to put down the mutiny, so remained inactive whilst waiting for troops from Petersburg. The mutinous troops then went into the town,¹ which they pillaged. Buildings were set on fire and the fire hoses were cut to prevent them being saved;² shops were smashed and looted; wine warehouses emptied and a general drinking bout began, with drunken soldiers and sailors running through the town firing in the air. This lasted for two days, after which troops from Petrograd were landed. At the sight of them the mutineers ran away and order was restored with no difficulty.³ All in all about seventeen people had been killed, some eighty wounded.

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1. The barracks were all outside the town proper.
 2. Shuvalov, op.cit., p 272 states that the fireman joined in the riots especially the drinking bouts, emptying their water carriers to fill them with wine; Voennye vosstaniya..., pp 50-51.
 3. Many sources agree on the outlines of the affair. Naida, loc.cit.; Zharnovetskii, loc.cit.; S. Ivanov, "V. Kronshtadte...", KL, 1923, no.5, p 322; Shuvalov, loc.cit. (I am assuming his description does apply to the October meeting, as the details tally, despite his statement that it occurred "in the spring"); S. Vinogradov, Flot v revolyutsionnom dvizhenii, L 1925, pp 34-35. There are some notable differences of emphasis. Naida and Shuvalov blame the excesses on the Black Hundreds, although they have to admit that "unconscious elements" among the troops joined in. Vinogradov blames the followers of the priest Ivan Kronstadtskii, a well known divine who attracted pilgrims. There seems no good reason why either of these groups should have been so influential, although the Black Hundreds, especially, may well have had a catalytic role. Zharnovetskii ascribes the blame half to the Black Hundreds, half to the low political level of the sailors. A very early source, "Kak samoderzhavie...", KB, 1920, no.8, p 53 merely states that the affair degenerated into a drunken brawl.

Armed and violent though this undoubtedly was, it was not the armed uprising the Social Democrats envisaged.¹ What role then did the Social Democrats play? How strong were they in Kronstadt? A number of sources claim that a social democratic organization was formed in Kronstadt, sometime during 1904.² This organization had members in some six units and was directed by a committee which included representatives from the units and was at the same time "a circle of the highest type".³ The organization had developed out of the Iskra organizations of 1900-1903.⁴ Alongside this, but organized separately, was a social democratic workers' group, led by a professional working under the pseudonym "Pan-Oleg".⁵ This would indicate a fairly high level of organization, indeed one authority claims that it had 90 members.⁶ The frequent mention of the Committee being also "a circle of the highest type" is clearly meant to reinforce this picture. There are, however, reasons for doubting its accuracy.

Of the authorities consulted the words "circle of the

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1. It is less clear to what extent it fitted SR pre-conceptions.
 2. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma pri TsK KPSS, Istoriya KPSS M 1967 (henceforth Istoriya KPSS), vol.2, p 21; S. Ivanov, "Kronshtadtskoe podpole", PR, 1924, no.12, p 139; Naida, op.cit., p 250; Sivkov, op.cit., p 17.
 3. Istoriya KPSS, loc.cit.; Ivanov, loc.cit.; Sivkov, loc.cit. citing Ivanov.
 4. Naida, loc.cit.
 5. Ivanov, loc.cit.
 6. Naida, loc.cit.

highest type" are used first by Ivanov.¹ In doing so, he is indicating that, with the addition of a few representatives from other circles, it was his circle, in the mines battalion, that functioned as the co-ordinating committee for Kronstadt. The words "circle of the highest type" are an ironical reference to the circle's position in the Party's constitution. In fact he is indicating a low level of organization in Kronstadt, as his circle, the biggest, had only 10-12 members including the representatives from other units. Naida's other point that "characteristically it was sailors who always made up the main part of the organization"² is belied by Ivanov, a soldier, whose soldiers' circle was the main one and is not supported by any original memoirs.

Nonetheless, the organization Ivanov describes, though not the grandiose affair claimed by Naida, is convincing enough: he names names, describes events and is fairly specific, without being over-effusive about the role of the Social Democrats. Yet there is reason to doubt his account, too: not the events or people or organization that he describes, but his dating. It is, at first sight, odd that an account of the Kronstadt social democratic organization among the Kronstadt troops (henceforth - the Kronstadt S-D military organization) purporting to begin in

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1. Istoriya KPSS, loc.cit. uses words almost identical to Ivanov's but cites an archival reference: possibly Ivanov's manuscript?
 2. Naida, loc.cit.

1904 and ending before the 1906 mutiny should make so little mention of the biggest event of the period: the October 1905 mutiny. One's suspicions increase on further examination. It would appear from Ivanov's account that he is writing from memory and has not checked his material. Pan-Oleg, for example, whom Ivanov has as organiser of the Kronstadt workers' groups in 1904, was K. Zharnovetskii, who, according to his own memoirs, only went out to Kronstadt early in 1906.¹ Similarly, Ivanov states that soon after he joined the military organization, in 1904, the organiser I.N. Shevedrin-Maksimenko, a Menshevik, was arrested, and that the work then collapsed until new organisers, Stepan and Maks were sent from Petersburg to replace him at the end of 1904.² Sivkov repeats this. In fact, the exact date of Shevedrin's arrest is known: it was on 17 July 1905, the same day as I.S. Dubrovinskii and V.A. Antonov-Ovseenko, after they had been holding a social-democratic meeting in one of Kronstadt's parks.³ Finally, Ivanov claims that a professional called "Viktor-Leonid" was sent out to Kronstadt "after the break with the SRs".⁴ In fact, "Leonid" was the pseudonym of I.F. Dubrovinskii who visited Kronstadt both in 1905 before the

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1. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 60.
 2. Ivanov, "Kronshtadtskoe podpol'e", PR, 1924, no.12, p 139; Sivkov, op.cit., p 17.
 3. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 52 citing police report. Sivkov (!!), op.cit., p 21.
 4. Ivanov, "V Kronstadte..", KL, 1923, no.5, p 322. I shall discuss the affair with the SRs in more detail below.

break with the SRs and in 1906 after this. This is not to say that Ivanov's account is dishonest. On the contrary, it has the ring of a true story but, like many genuine memories, the chronology is a little muddled. It can be used as evidence that a social democratic organization existed in Kronstadt at some time during the period, but not that it existed in 1904. Further evidence of a negative kind comes from the official multi-volumed Istoriya KPSS. Its appendix listing RSDLP groups and organizations which emerged in 1903-04 makes no mention of a group, let alone an organization in Kronstadt.¹

Another approach to the problem gives very similar results. Social-Democratic slogans for 1905-06 centered around calls for a Constituent Assembly, for a Democratic Republic, for troops and workers to unit an an armed uprising. None of these are to be found in any of the demands of the Kronstadt sailors during 1905. Instead, we find immediate demands for improvements of service life: the removal of the ban on sailors walking in parks, more freedom during off-duty hours, more humane discipline, the provision of reading rooms, better pay, shorter terms of service, the removal of unpopular officers and above all better food: the constant and most explosive issue.²

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1. Istoriya KPSS, vol.1, pp 607-09. However, vol.2 in the text does claim that a group arose in 1904 (p 21). Perhaps this had been discovered after vol.1 was written?
 2. "Kak samoderzhavie...", KB, 1920, no.8, p 53; Zharnovetskii, op.cit., pp 52, 54; Naida, op.cit., p 175; Sivkov, op.cit., p 21; Vinogradov, op.cit., p 34; "Vosstanie...", KB, 1920, no.1, pp 37-38.

This is not to deny that there were Social Democrats in Kronstadt in 1905. There is no reason to doubt the existence of Ivanov's organization, at least by the summer of 1905. Nor is there any reason to doubt that organizers from St. Petersburg visited Kronstadt: I.F. Dubrovinskii in July and October, and possibly in between;¹ Shevedrin-Maksimenko in July;² Antcnov-Ovseenko in July;³ Krylenko in October;⁴ and possibly others.⁵ However, both these professionals and the local group had only little influence on the events of 1905. Naida insists that "...the October uprising of the Kronstadt sailors... [is a]...clear confirmation of the growing influence of the Bolsheviks over the masses of soldiers and sailors".⁶ He admits that the mutiny broke out spontaneously, so presumably

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1. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., pp 52, 54 identifies the "neizvestnyi Kievskii meshchanin A.A. Nikitenko" arrested on 17 July 1905 as Dubrovinskii; Sivkov, op.cit., p 25-27 has him in Kronstadt during the uprising, as does Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 54.
 2. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 52.
 3. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 52; Sivkov, op.cit. identifies the "Austrian citizen S.K. Dal'nitskii" of the police report as Antonov-Ovseenko.
 4. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 54.
 5. All the sources cite others, but by pseudonym only, which it has not proved possible to identify, with the possible exception of Tat'yana (Ivanov, "V Kronshtadte...", KL, 1923, no.5, p 322) who could be D.M. Pozner, who worked in the Petersburg military organization at the time and used that pseudonym.
 6. Naida, op.cit., p 183.

Bolshevik influence cannot be detected there. "But", he continues, "once [the uprising] had begun, the Bolsheviks stood at the head of the movement (vosstavshikh) and selflessly led the struggle to the end".¹ This seems strange. Is one to assume that the stoning of brothels, the burning of houses, the looting of liquor stores, the internecine battles between soldiers and sailors were led by Bolsheviks, however selfless? It simply is not convincing, for Naida himself, after these pompous affirmations presents no evidence to back them.

Other authors have been more cautious. Vinogradov, writing in the early 1920's, states that the mutiny broke out before revolutionary cadres from Petersburg had time to organise anything and this made it vulnerable to the hooligan elements.² A contemporary "bourgeois journalist" visiting Kronstadt immediately after the mutiny reports,

It is generally held that this mutiny was not revolutionary in its origin, but arose from chronic discontent with the command, with the food, with discipline (porvadok), with the whole existence. The best proof of this is that the workers, among whom intensive propaganda was being carried out, did not support the mutiny 3

a point overlooked by many more recent Soviet commentators. Nor is Zharnovetskii's reply that the arrest of revolutionaries shows that they were influential, was very convincing. The arrest of

1. ibid.

2. Vinogradov, op.cit., pp 33-34.

3. cited by Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 57.

revolutionaries proves nothing, save that they were active. The problem is, were they influential? Police reports that they were influential are, in themselves, no more convincing. As Richard Cobb has so brilliantly pointed out,¹ policeman like to find a villain, even when pursuing a revolution. Also, a revolutionary troublemaker is far more acceptable to the authorities as a cause for unrest than the blunders of their own policy. Nor is the enthusiastic reception given to revolutionary speakers necessarily an indication. The enthusiasm could indicate no more than fellow feeling for the speakers' anger at the authorities. Real sympathy would have been shown by the adoption of policies - and this was not the case. However, some of the points that Zharnovetskii makes are valid and worth repeating. The Kronstadt meeting did transcend the bounds of the naval base in that the temper of the sailors was influenced by the political events in the country generally. One can also argue that the attack on the officers had a dual nature: as enforcers of the hated discipline and as representatives of the hated regime. Nonetheless, more evidence would be required for this to be utterly convincing.

All in all the cause of the mutiny would tend to validate Zharnovetskii's explicit conclusion, also hinted at by Vinogradov,²

1. Richard Cobb, Police and People, London, 1970.

2. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 59; Vinogradov, loc.cit.; so does Sivkov, op.cit., p 23, but from his own glowing accounts of previous work it is hard to see why.

that the Kronstadt organization at the time, especially among the troops, was extremely weak indeed; that what work was done, was done by professionals coming in from Petrograd, as conditions in Kronstadt had made it impossible to establish resident professionals. The very fact that the professionals could only make flying visits, combined with the difficulties imposed by military discipline and the fact that Kronstadt was an island, meant that their influence could be at the best marginal. This analysis is reinforced by other sources. The police report on Shevedrin-Maksimenko's arrest states that he had arrived in Kronstadt on that day together with Antonov-Ovseenko.¹ Ivanov states that after Shevedrin-Maksimenko's arrest (in July, after all) 'work practically ceased. There was no one of sufficient revolutionary understanding among the soldiers. We simply kept in touch with one another'.² Most convincing of all are the simple words of Zemlyachka's report on work in Kronstadt, given to the Petersburg Committee on 26 September 1905: "The Petersburg Committee³ Military Organisation is in touch with the Fleet units and eight regiments. The organization is not yet set up in its final form, but there are already two propaganda circles and literature is being distributed".⁴ This literature was

1. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 52.
2. Ivanov, "Kronshtadtskoe podpol'e", PR, 1924, no.12, p 139.
3. stress mind, i.e. this was the origin of work, not Kronstadt itself.
4. P.K. (udelli) "Protokoly PK RSDRP za 1905-07gg", KL, 1930, no.4, p 8.

apparently all from Petersburg, some of it even explicitly. addressed "to the workers of St. Petersburg".¹ This is a far cry from Naida's organization of 90.

In mid-September 1905, the Petersburg Committee of the RSDLP established an okruzhnoi raion to organise work in the area around the City.² This, however, was not established in time to have much influence on the mutiny of October 1905. After the mutiny, as Social Democratic work ceased in Kronstadt, the establishment of contacts there was made a task of the okruzhnoi raion. Zharnovetskii, N. Krylenko and Manuil'skii were assigned to this.³ The fact that Zharnovetskii, the one organiser who had not been involved in work there, was given the task of specifically re-establishing links with Kronstadt rather than Krylenko and Manuil'skii who had worked there before, could indicate the Petersburg Committee's attitude to the quality of the work before the uprising. On the other hand this could simply have been for conspiratorial reasons, in that he would not be likely to be recognised by the police there.

At first work was extremely difficult. All contacts with Kronstadt had been lost and the town had been placed under a state

1. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 60.
2. T.P. Bondarevskaya, Peterburgskii komitet RSDRP v revolyutsii 1905-1907gg, L 1975, p 127.
3. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 51; Naida, op.cit., p 280; Sivkov, op.cit., p 30. It has not proved possible to find evidence supporting Vinogradov's more optimistic view that the Government transferred revolutionary sailors to Kronstadt, and that these re-established links with Petersburg. op.cit., p 33.

of siege after the mutiny. Early in 1906, however, the okruzhnoi raion got an additional party worker - a student named Sergei Tokmachev - who had joined the Party just before the uprising in Moscow in December 1905. He was assigned to Kolpino. Zharnovetskii soon discovered that Tokmachev actually came from Kronstadt and that his mother still lived there. It was agreed that Tokmachev should work with Zharnovetskii and that his mother's house should become the Party's base on the island.¹

Tokmachev had been in Kronstadt during the October mutiny, and had supported the Social Democrats, although he had not then been a Party member. After the mutiny, he and some Gimmazium pupils, together with two workers' circles, having lost touch with the Social Democrats had formed a Non-Party Committee.² This turned out to be still in existence. Zharnovetskii and Tokmachev contacted them, informed them that a real Social Democratic organization was now going to be built and proposed that the Committee dissolve and become a circle for the formation of Party agitators. This they agreed to do. Zharnovetskii then separated the two workers' circles from the rest, making them a temporary Kronstadt Committee.³ This was fortunate as all the former members of the Non-Party Committee

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1. ibid., pp 60-61. It is perhaps indicative of how completely links with Kronstadt had been severed that no one apparently knew of Tokmachev's background when he arrived in Petersburg, although he had been in touch with the Kronstadt Social Democrats before the October mutiny and had addressed a meeting on their policy.
 2. ibid.
 3. ibid.

were soon arrested, except for the now separate workers' circles.¹ During the Spring of 1906 the Kronstadt organisers managed to establish eight workers' circles. These attracted some older workers who had had contact with Social Democrats before and it is through them that contacts with the troops were re-established. All work with members of the armed forces was carried out through workers resident in Kronstadt, as it was too dangerous for the professional revolutionaries to have direct contact.² The organisation also received help from an autonomous Estonian S-D group which had survived the mutiny. Soon contacts were sufficient for the Social Democrats to be able to hold occasional meetings for Kronstadters at convenient places on the mainland. Lisii Nos near Sestroretsk, was a favourite place for these.³ In May the Kronstadt organisers were reinforced by Manuil'skii who 'was particularly successful at the meetings at Lisii Nos. His

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1. ibid., Zharnovetskii does not date this accurately, so it has not proved possible to establish whether this is what Naida is referring to (op.cit., p 280) when he writes that the Kronstadt Social-Democratic leadership was arrested on 6 January 1906. As he says that those arrested included Petersburg Committee members, this would seem unlikely. However, he is not specific and cites no sources.
 2. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 61.
 3. ibid.; Naida, op.cit., p 280; both these sources in their enthusiasm apparently overestimate the size of the Kronstadt attendance at these meetings. Both claim that meetings of "up to 500" were held at Lisii Nos. However, the Okhrana report apparently referring to the same meeting, that of 14 May 1906, states that although 500 people were at the meeting only 180 came by boat from Kronstadt and the remainder were workers, students, etc. from Sestroretsk ("Kronshtadtskoe vosstanie...", KA, 1936, no.77, p 94).

particular kind of Little-Russian humour went down extraordinarily well with the sailors".¹ Flying meetings were also held in the barracks "almost every day" according to a police report² and activity had become so brazen that notices were posted up around barracks "in daylight under the noses of the officers".³

The success of the work led to two worries: first, that the authorities must arrest the organisers before long; secondly, that the sailors might start an uprising before the Social Democrats were ready for it. In order to minimise the effect of any possible arrests, it had been agreed during April that two Kronstadt Social Democrats should be on the Petersburg Committee.⁴ Kronstadt was removed from the okruzhnoi raion and given raion status of its own. Once military contacts had built up, they were handed over to the Petersburg Military Organisation, which had autonomous status under the Petersburg Committee but, because of the special conditions of work in Kronstadt, contacts were still maintained through the intermediacy of Kronstadt workers.⁵ With this multiplicity of links, it was hoped that police action

1. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 72.

2. ibid., p 69.

3. ibid.

4. ibid., p 72; Naida, op.cit., p 280 for some reason only claims one; Bondarevskaya, op.cit., pp 294ff in her tables of Petersburg Committee members for 1905-07 lists the Kronstadt workers, P.A. Artem'ev and E. Kanopul.

5. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 62.

would not be able to break contact.

The Social Democrats attempted to prevent what they considered a premature uprising but playing down the sort of issue that had proved so explosive in 1905. However, feeling was running high among the troops. The "explanation" of the October Manifesto to the armed forces was eagerly awaited after the October mutiny, and caused disappointment when it was eventually published.¹ There was resentment at the sentences meted out after October, combined with the belief that for all the casualties it had been worthwhile as the term of service had been reduced to five years. Some officers apparently behaved stupidly after the mutiny, increasing resentment rather than trying to patch things up. The increased restrictions imposed to try to prevent agitators merely made life more irksome and the early summer of 1906 saw a number of incidents on the pattern of 1905, also culminating in attacks on brothels.²

The continuing tension alarmed the Social Democrats to the extent that they asked the Duma Fraction of the Party to send some of their members to Kronstadt to persuade the troops of the

1. ibid., pp 59, 69; Sivkov, op.cit., pp 24-25.

2. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., pp 76, 76-80; V. Amosov, "V 1905 godu v Kronshtadte", KL, 1925, no.3, pp 109-10; "Posle vosstaniya v Kronshtadte, 26-27 oktyabrya 1905g", KL, 1925, no.3, p 103; "Revolyutsionnye vystupleniya v Baltiiskom flote za 1906-1908gg.", KB, 1921, no.6, p 49.

dangers of a premature uprising.¹ They also agreed that in the event of an unplanned or premature mutiny two members of the Petersburg Committee and one member of the Central Committee should immediately go to Kronstadt to try to take charge of events.²

An additional reason for fearing a premature uprising was the activities and attitudes of the SRs. Modern Soviet authorities are predictably coy about the SRs and Mensheviks. While not denying the existence of these groups, or even the fact that joint work was carried out, they usually are quick to point out that this was done as part of a "bitter struggle with the SRs",³ and that SR proposals for alliances were refused, except for short-term tactical agreements and then only with the permission of higher Party bodies.⁴

Earlier Soviet accounts tell quite a different story; one that is confirmed from Socialist-Revolutionary, and from Okhrana sources. According to these sources, the Social Democrats managed to establish organizations among the Kronstadt workers and among the soldiers of the Mines Company, but had not been able to establish any direct contacts with the sailors or

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1. P.K(udelli) "Protokoly Petersburgskogo Komiteta...", KL, 1930, no.4, p 20.
 2. Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 72.
 3. Sivkov, op.cit., p 35.
 4. Naida, op.cit., p 247.

with the mass of the Kronstadt soldiery.¹ On 23 April, under pressure from the rank and file members of both organizations, who did not care too much for the finer distinctions of policy, a meeting of both parties decided to begin joint work. The first step was the establishment of a Provisional Technical Bureau. This was i) to prevent disputes and slanging matches between SRs and SDs at political meetings; ii) to distribute the literature of both parties around the ships and barracks; iii) on rest days to set up patrols which would restrain soldiers and sailors from pointless rioting, and a joint committee to sit on these days at a known place, ready to intervene should the patrols prove incapable of restraining the soldiers and sailors.² Very soon after this, the Provisional Technical Bureau held a further joint meeting, where the rank and file of both parties wanted the parties to merge. One Social Democratic professional was in favour of this, but all other SD and SR professionals opposed it. In the end, a compromise was reached. Both parties

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1. Ivanov, "Kronstadtskoe podpol'e", PR, 1924, no.12, p 139; further confirmation of Ivanov's error in dating is that henceforward, if one adds one year to his dates, they coincide with other sources; Zharnovetskii, "Kronshtadtskoe..."; KL, 1925, no.3, p 61; V.M. Mitrofanov, V Pamyat' Zhizni, L 1930, p 17.
 2. Yu Zubilevich, Kronshtadt: Vospominaniya revolyutsionerki, vol.1; Kronstadt n.d., pp 42-44; S.V. Ivanov, "V Kronshtadte, v Arkhangel'ske, v Libave", KL, 1923, no.5, pp 319-20; idem. "Kronshtadtskoe podpol'e", PR, 1924, no.12, p 140; Zubilevich (an SR) says that the initiative for the joint work came from the SDs. Ivanov (an SD) says that the initiative came from the SRs.

were to remain, but a United Garrison Assembly was to meet a few times a month and its decisions were to be binding on both parties. Meanwhile, an Executive Committee was elected to work out a plan to go into immediate effect should an uprising begin spontaneously.¹

At some stage after this the Petersburg Committee of the RSDLP ordered the Kronstadt SDs to withdraw from the Assembly. (Just when this occurred is unclear, as Ivanov's (SD) account has it that the order came immediately after the setting up of the Assembly, whereas Zubilevich's (SR) account implies that the Assembly functioned for some time.) Two SD professionals were sent to Kronstadt where they attempted to enforce this decision at a meeting of the Assembly. The Assembly agreed to dissolve itself as it was usurping party rights. However, and again this proposal came from the rank and file, it decided, despite strong opposition from the SD professionals, to create a "Non-Party Organization" to co-ordinate the work of preparing the uprising. The Petersburg Committee of the RSDLP then withdrew all its professionals from Kronstadt. The local Social Democrats, undaunted, decided to carry on without help from the capital.²

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1. Zubilevich, op.cit., vol.1, pp 45-46; Ivanov, "Kronshtadtskoe podpol'e", PR, 1924, no.12, p 140; Zharnovetskii, "Kronshtadtskoe...", KL, 1925, no.3, pp 69, 72; Voennye vosstaniya v Baltike v 1905-1906gg, M 1933, p 59; N. Egorov, "Kronshtadtskoe vozstanie", Byloe, 1917, no.4(26), p 90.
 2. Zubilevich, op.cit., vol.2, pp 24, 95-102; Ivanov, "Kronshtadtskoe podpol'e", PR, 1924, no.12, p 141; idem. "V Kronshtadte...", KL, 1923, no.5, pp 319-20.

During this period, co-operation between the parties was close. A common four point agitational programme was agreed: i) to call for a Constituent Assembly; ii) for the eight hour day; iii) for the army to be replaced by a militia; iv) for the confiscation of land. Members of both parties helped smuggle the literature of the other party into Kronstadt and, although each party maintained its separate sphere of influence (the workers, the Mines Company and the Artillery for the SDs, the Fleet and the Infantry for the SRs), each party distributed the literature of both parties in its own particular sphere. Joint meetings were arranged, mostly at Lisii Nos, the nearest point on the mainland, near Sestroretsk but sometimes in Kronstadt itself, where the most popular speaker was F.M. Onipko, Trudovik Deputy in the First State Duma. Both SDs and SRs saw as their main task the prevention of any premature outbreaks that would jeopardise the general uprising that both were preparing for. Both the Kronstadt SDs and the Kronstadt SRs earned hostility from their respective Petersburg leaderships for the alliance, although the Kronstadt SRs were able to persuade their leaders to accept it, unlike the SDs.¹

The "Non-Party Organization" did break down, however. According to Ivanov, this was because the SRs broke the agreement

1. Ivanov, loc.cit.; Zubilevich, op.cit., vol.1, pp 63, 84; Zharnovetskii, op.cit., p 69; Mitrofanov, V Pamyat' Zhizni, pp 58, 61; A. Piskarev, "Kronshtadtskoe vosstanie 20 iyulya 1906 goda", KB, 1920, no.4, p 37; L.S. "Krasnyi ostrov", KiS, 1929, no.56, p 34.

by calling for the socialization of the land at a public meeting, thus breaching the agreement on limiting agitation to four issues. This may have happened, but in itself is unlikely to have broken an alliance that was working well. One can possibly accept Zubilevich's view that the local SDs had been badly worried by being cut off by their Petersburg Committee. According to Zubilevich, the Social Democratic Petersburg Committee then set out to convince its Kronstadt branch that the basic approach of the SRs was wrong. The SRs believed that a successful uprising in the Fleet would give the revolutionaries military command of the Capital, and would also inspire other revolutions all over Russia, and this was the prime objective. The SDs, on the other hand, saw a general strike as the first objective, with a Fleet uprising playing a supporting role. This difference was crucial, as for the SRs it meant that the mutiny in the Fleet must come first, whereas the SDs were concerned to contain the Fleet from any outbreaks until a general strike had begun. Eventually the Kronstadt SDs were convinced and withdrew from the "Non-Party Organization".¹

Even so, joint work of a looser kind for the preparation of an uprising continued and, according to Zubilevich, the local SDS

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1. Ivanov, loc.cit.; Zubilevich, op.cit., vol.3, pp 17-25. Zubilevich's version also accords more with the Social Democratic attitude to work in the armed forces, which I shall discuss below. For a contrasting view of the whole affair cf. Naida, Revolyutsionnoe dvizhenie v tsarskom flote, pp 247, 282, who has the initiative for united work firmly coming from the SRs, who moves the "Non-Party Committee" back to 23 April, thereby obliterating the United Garrison Assembly, but who has the "Bolsheviks" (in fact a united Bolshevik-Menshevik Committee at this time) reject the whole thing from the beginning anyway.

encouraged the SRs to take over what had previously been accepted as SD spheres of interest.¹

The uprising they were preparing for was to take place simultaneously at the three major bases of the Fleet: Kronstadt, Helsingfors² and Revel'. In Helsingfors, the Social Democrats had managed to create a much stronger organization than they had in Kronstadt. This was largely because of the difference between the two bases. Since Kronstadt was an island, where everything centred on the naval base, the sole reason why the island was populated at all, it was fairly easy to watch people coming and going and to spot those with no obvious business there.³

Helsingfors was capital of Finland, which enjoyed semi-autonomous status in the Russian Empire. Most importantly at this time (i.e. since October 1905), the Finnish Social Democratic Party was legal and able to give a good deal of help to their Russian comrades. In addition to which, Helsingfors was a large town, with a good rail connection with Petersburg, with a population on the whole hostile to Russian rule. It was far more difficult for the police to pursue revolutionaries there.⁴

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1. Zubilevich, op.cit., vol.3, pp 26-28; Ivanov, "Kronshtadt-skoe podpol'e", PR, 1924, no.12, p 141; idem; "V Kronshtadte...", KL, 1923, no.5, p 319.
 2. the naval base at Helsingfors is situated on the Sveaborg archipelago in Helsingfors harbour. This is where the mutiny began and thus it is known as the Sveaborg mutiny or uprising.
 3. L.S. "Krasnyi ostrov", KiS, 1929, no.56, pp 26-28.
 4. I. Egorov, Vosstaniya v Baltiiskom flote 1905-06gg, L 1926, p 55; N. Chuzhak, "V voennom podpol'e bol'shevikov 1905-1906gg" in V tsarskoi kazarme, M 1929, pp 56-57.

Towards the end of June, the Helsingfors SRs and an emissary from the Kronstadt SRs suggested to the Helsingfors SDs that they should set up a joint Information Bureau to coordinate work for an uprising. The SDs at first refused, as they were not sure what their Central Committee's attitude would be to this. However, as they continued to get no direction from the Central Committee, they accepted and a plan for a simultaneous uprising in the three bases was established.¹ A key man in this joint venture was an officer, staff-captain S.A. Tsion, who at this very time moved from the RSDLP, where he had been on the editorial board of the SD paper Vestnik kazarmy, to the PSR. This apparently did not prevent the SDs from working with him.²

In the event the plan miscarried. The mutiny in Sveaborg broke out before it was supposed to. M.A. Trilisser, the main Social Democratic professional in Helsingfors blamed the SRs for this at the Conference of SD Military Organizations held later in the year. In his memoirs, however, he writes that the mutiny was entirely spontaneous.³ This meant that the proper signals were not sent to Kronstadt or Revel'. In Kronstadt the uprising was

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1. Egorov, op.cit., pp 56, 115; Chuzhak, op.cit., pp 57-58; Zubilevich, op.cit., vol.3, p 15; Piskarev, "Kronshtadtskoe vosstanie...", KB, 1920, no.4, p 37.
 2. Chuzhak, loc.cit.; N. Fedorovskii, "Sveaborgskoe vosstanie", Krasnaya Nov', 1926, no.3, p 159.
 3. Chuzhak, loc.cit.; Fedorovskii, op.cit., p 162 agrees. At this conference, Trilisser also attacked the Central Committee of the RSDLP for not being any help, perhaps the attack on the SRs was to balance this.

hurriedly put into operation by the local SRs, once they read of the Sveaborg events in the paper. The SDs somewhat reluctantly joined them. In both places, after some bloodshed, the mutinies were quelled, in Kronstadt by the army, in Helsingfors by the navy.¹

The Revel' mutiny did not come off at all. One ship, the Pamyat' Azova, mutinied at sea under the influence of a Social Democratic student, one A. Koptyukh, who had got aboard disguised as a sailor. Some officers were killed, some put off in a ship's boat, some were locked into their cabins. By the time the ship reached Revel', the mutiny had been quelled by the petty officers. Although it coincided with the Kronstadt mutiny, those involved were unaware of this, or of the Sveaborg mutiny.²

There are a number of interesting parallels between the Sveaborg and Kronstadt mutinies that ought to be stressed. In both places, the rank and file of the parties and non-party people were impatient with the differences between the SDs and the SRs. Indeed, in Helsingfors, where the parties were organizationally less close than in Kronstadt, they were nonetheless

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1. Zubilevich, op.cit., vol.3, pp 33ff; A. Piskarev, "Kronshtadtskoe vosstanie 20 iyula 1906 goda", KB, 1920, no.4, pp 39-40; P.S. Shuvalov, "Iz bor'by za khleb i volyu", KL, 1923, no.5, pp 272-73; Fedorovskii, op.cit., p 168; Pyatyi (Londonskii) s'ezd RSDRP, Protokoly, M 1963, p 773; S. Vinogradov, Flot v revoliutsionnom dvizhenii, L 1925, pp 37-41.
 2. "Vooruzhennoe myatezh na Kreisere 'Pamyat' Azova'", KB, 1920, no.2, pp 30-35; Piskarev, op.cit., p 38.

lumped together in the popular mind as the Trudovaya Partiya.¹ In fact, the attitude of non-party people and of the party rank and file towards the differences between the SRs and the SDs, which earned them the disapproval of the higher echelons of the Party inside Russia, was similar to the attitude of the higher Party Committees inside Russia to the émigré disputes we have discussed in Chapters One and Two.

In both places the local SRs and SDs worked together to prepare an uprising. In both places, when the mutinies broke out before either party was ready, they both joined in and continued to co-operate until the mutinies were over. In both places, joint work with the SRs was accompanied for the SDs by poor relations with their own party leaders. This was also apparently accompanied by a failure in SD propaganda. In Kronstadt, the SDs could, and did, claim that things got out of hand because the SRs were much more numerous than they were.² In Helsingfors, on the other hand, they claimed to be the stronger party, yet Trilisser in his report to the November 1906 Conference, put the blame on the SRs' influence here too.

To a great extent this can be attributed to a certain ideological confusion inside the newly reunited Social Democratic Party. At the Fourth Party Congress, in May 1906, a dispute had

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1. Zubilevich, op.cit., vol.1, pp 46, 57; Piskarev, op.cit., p 38; Egorov, op.cit., p 79; Mitrofanov, V pamyat' zhizni, p 17.
 2. Zharnovetskii, "Kronshtadtskoe...", KL, 1925, no.3; p 101; Egorov, op.cit., pp 139-42.

broken out over the importance of work among the armed forces. Lenin and Krasin argued for barricade fighting where the example of the armed workers would inspire the troops to change sides once the uprising had begun, rather than beginning the revolution once the troops were won over.¹ And this attitude is evident in the way in which the Petersburg Committee treated Kronstadt and Helsingfors later in the year. Also, significantly at the Fourth Congress, Yaroslavskii, the one delegate actively involved in work among the troops denounced the kind of work the Party was conducting there as "not serious...extremely careless...disorganised...".² The Military Organization of the Petersburg Committee sent a message of protest to the Congress as it had practically no delegates competent to discuss military matters.³ At the Fifth Congress, held in 1907, after the Kronstadt and Sveaborg mutinies, the Military Organization again complained that work among the troops had never been properly discussed at a Party Congress "through lack of time".⁴ Ironically, at this Congress too, the question was not discussed "through lack of time", although four sessions (i.e. two days) were devoted to discussing the agenda.

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1. Chetvert'yi (ob'edinitel'nyi) s'ezd RSDRP, Protokoly, M 1959, pp 363ff.
 2. ibid., p 373; he told the (apocryphal?) story of a CC member who went out to the Potemkin in a boat merely to give the mutineers a slogan post hoc.
 3. ibid., p 387.
 4. Pyatyi (Londonskii) s'ezd RSDRP, Protokoly, passim.

Social Democratic propaganda was also hindered by the Party's divisions over the State Duma. One eye witness in Sveaborg describes the extraordinary effect of the announcement of the dispersal of the State Duma by Duma Deputy, Mikhailichenko. He had finished speaking and the meeting was drawing to a close, when he suddenly got up again:

Comrades, he said, I have just received a telegram informing me of the dispersal of the State Duma. Here it is. It is a new appeal to the Russian people and the people will not leave it unanswered. Perhaps today, perhaps tomorrow, revolution will break out in Russia. Today I am leaving you. Each one of us must be at his post. I appeal to you, Finnish citizens and Russian soldiers, to support those who were elected by the people in their struggle against the Tsarist Government. 1

Other participants confirm that the dissolution of the Duma after only two months did much to radicalise feelings.² The Bolsheviks, at least, could not hope to have much impact here, as they were boycotting the Duma at the time.

For whatever reasons, the propaganda of the Socialist Revolutionaries predominated in both bases. A Government Commission, established to discover the causes of the Kronstadt mutiny, found it was launched with the slogan "Land and Freedom".³ Subsequent Bolshevik memoirs, when recounting the last words or prison letters of the executed, record only "Land and Freedom",

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1. Fedorovskii, "Sveaborgskoe vosstanie", Krasnaya Nov', 1926, no.3, p 161.
 2. Piskarev, "Kronshtadtskoe vosstanie", KB, 1920, no.4, p 38; Zubilevich, Kronshtadt, vol.3, p 13.
 3. Voennye vosstaniya v Baltiiskom flote, p 63.

"for sacred freedom, for land, for power to the people" and "Down with the tyrants. Long live freedom". None of which have Social Democratic overtones.¹

After the July mutinies and the arrests which followed them, very little was left of the Social Democratic organization in Kronstadt. In October the Petersburg Committee sent an organiser, A. Khrennikov, to the island to see if he could find out why the organization had collapsed and if there was any chance of any new work there. He was unable to find out why the organization had collapsed and concluded that, for the time being, Social Democratic work in Kronstadt was "unthinkable".²

The Socialist Revolutionaries, on the other hand, were able to re-establish an organization which developed rapidly. In February 1907 they sent three professionals to Kronstadt, who set up a secret Party Headquarters, organized meetings, and were even able to make contact with some of their comrades inside Kronstadt prison.³ By March the Social Democrats, too, had managed to re-establish contact with some fourteen people: six sailors and eight workers.⁴

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1. Egorov, op.cit., p 133; Fedorovskii, op.cit., pp 172-73. True to form, Naida writes that the Petersburg Committee of the RSDLP prepared and led the July uprising in Kronstadt. Naida, Revolutsionnoe dvizhenie..., p 251.
 2. M. Akhun and V. Petrov, "Voennaya organizatsiya pri PK RSDRP v 1906 godu", KL, 1926, no.1, p 138
 3. A. Drezen, "Baltiiskii flot v gody reaktsii", KL, 1929, no.4(31), p 59.
 4. ibid., p 58.

Here again, though, it was the SRs who predominated. Their main achievement in the first half of 1907 was to try and rectify the chaotic organization that they felt had led to the failure of July 1906. They began to build a network of ship-board committees, linked to each other by a Naval Assembly of delegates from each committee. The Committees were given very specific tasks. They were in charge of all aspects of life aboard ship, they were to organize strikes, demonstrations and go-slows (obstruktsii) and they were to decide on reactions to current political events. Each committee was to have its own funds made up from a compulsory levy from all its members. These members, too, had very specific tasks: to find out the political opinions of every man on board, to track down police spies, to distribute literature, and to prevent fruitless premature outbreaks. The whole venture was geared towards a new mutiny, which the SRs thought would spark off revolution throughout Russia. Even though the tasks of each committee and its revenue were very specifically laid down, this new SR organization had one feature which was important in distinguishing it from Social Democratic-dominated organizations. Each committee had very great autonomy in deciding how to react to political events, and in how to dispose of its income.¹

In a series of arrests, beginning in May and lasting until August 1907, the police wound up this new Fleet Organiz-

1. ibid., pp 64-66.

ation, and with it the remaining Fleet SRs and the SDs who had worked with them. This relationship, too, is worth noting. The Fleet Organization was entirely SR in concept. Its aim was to launch an armed mutiny that the RSDLP leadership, at least did not believe in unless it was in a secondary, support role to a workers' strike or revolution. Yet the Fleet SDs co-operated with the SRs in building their organization rather than the kind of organization more suitable to the aims of their own Party leadership. It is perhaps this subordinate role of the Social Democrats that leads one modern Soviet historian to speak of this period with uncharacteristic evasiveness.¹

By August 1907, on the eve of the police action against it, the Fleet Organisation was well established. Committees had been set up on a good number of ships and some of these had got as far as getting their finances going. There had not been time to start meetings of the Fleet Assembly.²

Some activity continued until the end of 1907 but, in general, the next three years were quiet ones for the Fleet revolutionaries: the "Period of Reaction", as Soviet historians call it..

By late 1910 or early 1911, however, there was a revival of revolutionary activity.. From the Autumn of 1911, Okhrana agents were reporting the establishment of committees very

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1. P.Z. Sivkov, Kronshtadt, L 1972, pp 53-54; Drezen, op.cit., p 67
 2. Drezen, op.cit., p 67.

similar to those that had had a brief existence in 1907. On 19 April 1912 representatives from a number of ships moored off Helsingfors met secretly and adopted a plan of action for a possible general mutiny.¹

Three days later representatives from some thirty-five ships met and decided to start the mutiny on 24 April. This was the day the Fleet was to put to sea, after spending the winter frozen into the ice. It was deemed to be a good day, as the Fleet would still be together, before dispersing to various duties, and the ships armed. The plan was that the crew of the Tsesarevich and Slava were to take over their ships on the night after sailing. They should then go to Revel' and join with the Ryurik. All three ships would then return to Helsingfors, where a mutiny was to break out on the fortress. At this point the destroyers were to go to Kronstadt and take it over. The news of the successful mutiny would then set off uprisings among the workers and part of the army.²

It is unmistakably an SR plan. The mutiny in the Fleet is the spark that will set alight the whole of Russia. There is no question of it being subordinate to any proletarian action. On the contrary, the proletariat was to move in support of the movement begun in the Fleet.

1. K.S. Ereneeov, Sbornik vospominanii i rasskazov starogo bol'shevika, M 1931, p 42; A. Drezen, "Baltiiskii flot v gody pod'ema", KL, 1930, no.3, pp 132ff.

2. Ereneeov, op.cit., p 46; Egorov, Baltflot v gody reaktsii, M 1928, p 81; "Delo o revolyutsionnoi organizatsii sredi matrosov", ZZh, 1912, no.29, pp 1682-83.

As for the Social Democrats, their part in all this was very similar to that of 1905, 1906 and 1907. From 1910 onwards there are signs of Social Democratic contacts being re-established among the port workers in both bases, as well as some of the ships.¹ In December 1910 sailors from the Slava then refitting in Toulon, wrote to Lenin in Paris asking for organizational help. A certain "comrade Aleksei" was sent to Toulon to give them what help they needed.² Again, in 1912, a "representative" of the Baltic Fleet called on Lenin in Cracow.³

Once again, the Fleet Bolsheviks were active participants in preparing an uprising that was contrary to the beliefs of their Party leaders. When the Okhrana swooped on the very evening that the mutiny was to have begun, a large number of Social Democrats, including some that were to become fairly prominent in 1917, were arrested along with the Socialist Revolutionaries. The battleship Slava was one of the two ships at the very centre of the mutiny.⁴ Yet, to the contemporary "bourgeois" press, to Pravda and to Lenin himself, the affair was

1. A. Drezen, "Baltiiskii flot v gody pod'ema", KL, 1930, no.3, p 142; Ereemeev, op.cit., p 44; P. Mal'kov, Zapiski komendanta Moskovskogo Kremlya, M 1959, p 9.

2. Krupskaya, Reminiscences of Lenin, p 202; M. Stolyarenko, "V.I. Lenin i bol'sheviki linkora Slava", VIZh, 1969, no.4, p 99.

3. PSS, vol.48, p 84.

4. Ereemeev, op.cit., pp 46-47.

thought of entirely in terms of the Socialist Revolutionaries.¹

It was only in the early Spring of 1915 that revolutionary activity began to pick up again in the Fleet. Revolutionary cells, containing members of both the SDs and the SRs began to form on board the ships. Some kind of liaison was established with Petrograd by the Socialist Revolutionary sailor, S.G. Lysenkov, who managed to contact the Bolshevik, I.G. Dudin, at that time working as an electrician in the Petrograd Naval Prison. Through Dudin, Lysenkov received both SR and SD literature, which he distributed to the Fleet organizations.² On 4 May, Lysenkov had to run away to Moscow to escape arrest, but before leaving, he had time to hand over his contacts to another SR, S.G. Pelikhov, who maintained them until he was arrested on 15 October 1915.³

Pelikhov's arrest coincided with the mutiny which broke out on the battleship Gangut over bad food after a heavy day's coaling. The mutiny which was quite spontaneous and independent of party activity, was followed by the arrest of 123 sailors, and

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1. Pravda, 18 June 1913; PSS, vol.22, pp 1-2; "Delo o revolyutsionnoi organizatsii sredi matrosov", ZZh, 1912, no.29, pp 1682-83.
 2. I. Solov'ev and T. Fedorova, "K istorii vozniknoveniya bol'shevistskikh organizatsii na Baltiiskom flote", VIZh, 1966, no.11, pp 12-13; A.L. Sidorov (ed.), Revolyutsionnoe dvizhenie v armii i na flote v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny Sbornik dokumentov, M 1966, p 314; I. Egorov, "Matrosy bol'sheviki nakanune 1917 goda", KL, 1926, no.3, p 18.
 3. Solov'ev and Fedorova, op.cit., p 13; Sidorov (ed.), op.cit., pp 319, 348-49, 355.

this brought home to the Fleet revolutionaries the danger of such outbursts to their painfully constructed organizations.¹ The solution was seen to be an organization which would encompass Kronstadt and Helsingfors and which would make contact with the revolutionary parties in Petrograd for political guidance.²

Contact between Kronstadt and Helsingfors was established when the Imperator Pavel I came to Kronstadt for a refit towards the end of November. This initial contact was developed when N.V. Brendin, a Kronstadt sailor who had been granted six months sick leave, was persuaded to take it in Helsingfors rather than to go home.³

At about the same time, contact was made with the Vyborg District Committee of the Bolshevik Party, who sent one of their members, the former Potemkin mutineer, Ivan Egorov, to help the

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1. Solov'ev and Fedorova, op.cit., pp 13ff in their very remarkable article effectively demolish previous Soviet claims that the Gangut affair was an "uprising" led by Bolsheviks: a story which they find was introduced into historical literature in the memoirs of P. Dybenko who, as they point out, was serving on another ship. At the trial that followed the State prosecutor claimed that the mutiny was the work of revolutionary parties (and some of the accused were members, whether or not they had started the mutiny) in order to facilitate a verdict of guilty, cf. also E. Samoilov, "Besporyadki na Gangute v oktyabre 1915 goda", KB, 1921, no.8, pp 31-36; M. Kuznetsov, "Vosstanie na linkore Gangut v 1915g", KB, 1921, no.5, pp 47-50; "Volneniya vo flote v 1915 godu", KA, 1925, no.9, pp 94-103.
 2. N.A. Khovrin, Baltiitsy idut na shturm, M 1966, p 13.
 3. Khovrin, loc.cit.; "Delo o revolyutsionnoi organizatsii sredi matrosov...", KB, 1920, no.5, p 29.

Fleet organizations.¹ At the end of December, however, the Okhrana moved in. Over the next two months they arrested Egorov, his wife, a third member of the Vyborg District Bolshevik Organization and seventeen sailors including I.D. Sladkov (Kronstadt) and N.A. Khovrin (Imperator Pavel I) who had originally made contact between the two bases, and N.V. Brendin, who had given up his sick leave to develop it.²

One of the main aims of the organization had been to restrain the sailors from useless outbursts and at the same time to protect its members from the Okhrana by using all the techniques of conspiracy developed by both the PSR and the RSDLP. A tribute to the success of this venture is the fact that contact was not broken. A new Main Committee was elected in May 1916, again containing members of both parties.³ Contact was retained with the Vyborg District Committee of the Bolshevik Party after Egorov's arrest, through P.M. Kimen, a worker in the Aivaz works, until his arrest

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1. I refer here to the Bolshevik Committee of the Vyborg District of Petrograd, not the Finnish town of Vyborg. I. Egorov, 'Matrosy-bol'sheviki nakanune 1917g'', in P.F. Kudelli and I.F. Egorov (eds.), Oktyabr'skii shkval, L 1927, p 12; Shlyapnikov, Kanun semnadtsatogo goda, vol.1, p 245; Solov'ev and Fedorova, op.cit., p 17; Sidorov, op.cit., p 347.
 2. Egorov, op.cit., p 15; V. Zalezhskii, Bor'ba za Baltiiskii flot, M-L 1925, p 9; I. Egorov, Zhizn' rabocheho revolyutsionera, L 1925, pp 30-31.
 3. P.Z. Sivkov, Kronshtadt, p 75; 'Delo o revolyutsionnoi organizatsii'', KB, 1920, no.5, p 29; Egorov, op.cit., pp 12, 16.

in July 1916.¹

What was new about the Fleet Organization of 1915 was that the Social Democrats, or rather now, the Bolsheviks, were in the ascendant. The literature of both parties was distributed. Both parties worked in the Organization, but where the joint organizations of 1907 and 1912 had seemed overwhelmingly SR, that of 1915 is overwhelmingly Bolshevik in political orientation.² There are traces of SR policies, as for example in the Okhrana report that the organization was preparing to make certain demands on the Government which would be forced to make concessions because of the Fleet's military importance, but not many.³

Of course, this view of the Organization may be the result of the selective Soviet publication of documents and memoir material. Except for the remarkable article of Solov'ev and Fedorova, so frequently cited over the last few pages, and the collection of documents published by Sidorov, Soviet sources pass over the SR presence in silence.⁴ One is just supposed, presu-

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1. Solov'ev and Fedorova, op.cit., p 18; Sivkov, op.cit., p 74. On p 77 Sivkov claims that contact was maintained by B.A. Zhemchuzhin after Kimen's arrest. I have not been able to confirm this. In any case, Zhemchuzhin was himself arrested in October 1916. Geroi oktyabrya, vol.1, L 1967, pp 19-21.
 2. So much so that most Soviet sources attempt to portray it as an exclusively Bolshevik organization, e.g. Sivkov, op.cit., pp 67ff, etc. But see below, Appendix p 350.
 3. Sidorov, Revolyutsionnoe dvizhenie, p 345.
 4. I. Solov'ev and T. Fedorova, "K istorii vzniknoveniya bol'shevistskikh organizatsii na Baltiiskom flote", VIZh, 1966, no.11, pp 10-19; A.O. Sidorov (ed.), Revolyutsionnoe dvizhenie v armii i na flote v gody pervoi miravoi voiny, M 1966, passim.

ably, to believe that they disappeared between their predominance in 1912 and their overwhelming majority in the Kronstadt and Helsingfors soviets of March 1917.

Numerically, as the March 1917 Soviet elections would tend to indicate, the SRs remained the majority. However, by 1915 the Bolsheviki had gained a moral authority based on their Party's opposition to the War, unlike much of the PSR.¹ It is perhaps significant, in this respect, that a Zimmerwald Manifesto was among the documents seized by the Okhrana in their arrests in February 1916.² Also, the Social Democrats' record of opposition to spontaneous outbursts, like that on the Gangut, was probably winning respect among sailors who were tired of continuous arrests.

What we are probably justified in concluding is that by 1915, instead of the Fleet Social Democrats being completely swamped by the Fleet Socialist Revolutionaries, they had managed to assert themselves as a political force, and that an interchange of political ideas and methods involving the Fleet SDs, the Fleet SRs and the Vyborg District Committee of the Bolshevik Party was underway. What this was to lead to will be examined in the following chapters.

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1. for SR disillusionment with the PSR leaders on this, cf. Svyatitskii, "Voina i predfevral'e", KiS, 1931, no.2(75), pp 7-50.
 2. "Delo o revolyutsionnoi organizatsii...", KB, 1920, no.7, pp 53-54; of course, SRs participated in the Zimmerwald movement too.

THE TRADITIONS EMERGE AND COME INTO CONFLICT DURING
THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DIVISIONS IN THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY IN PETROGRAD
IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH 1917

The Origins of the Differences

The differences inside the Bolshevik Party in Petrograd, which became acute during and immediately after the February Revolution, reflected differences of long standing in the Russian revolutionary movement concerning the form of Government that should succeed Tsarism.

Although the Bolsheviks saw the coming revolution as a democratic, or capitalist one, they feared that a liberal Government would lack both the inclination and the determination to carry through the revolution and implement the fundamental liberal reforms. The experience of 1905-06 had made this point one of general concern to both sections of the RSDLP and to the PSR. In both parties some sections revived Marx's theory of the "Permanent Revolution".¹

The original Bolshevik response to the problem was the slogan for a "Provisional Revolutionary Government". This body was to be composed of members of all revolutionary parties, and would hold power temporarily while preparing the elections to a Constituent Assembly. It would guard against counter-revolution and pass provisional laws to implement the Socialist Minimum Programme, i.e. the eight-hour day, the establishment of minimum wage-rates; the confiscation of large estates, etc. These were regarded as democratic or capitalist and not socialist reforms.

1. L.D. Trotsky, "Results and Prospects" in idem. The Permanent Revolution, London, 1962, pp 161ff; M. Perrie, "The Socialist Revolutionaries on Permanent Revolution", SS, 1973, no.3, pp 411-13.

Similarly, the call for a Provisional Revolutionary Government was not a call for a socialist state. It was simply a measure to be taken to prevent a Government of capitalists and landlords coming to terms with the old regime at the expense of the working class and peasantry.¹ The form of the future Russian state would be decided not by the Provisional Revolutionary Government, but by the Constituent Assembly.

The formation of the St. Petersburg Soviet in October 1905 gave rise to further differences between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. The Mensheviks had played a far greater part in the formation and leadership of the Soviet than had the Bolsheviks. Indeed, the latter's role had been almost negligible, whereas to the Mensheviks the Soviet appeared as the culmination of their theories on the political education of the working class in the arts of Government, administering funds, etc. When the Soviet was disbanded by the Government in December 1905, with very little protest from the workers, Lenin was able to use this experience to resume his offensive on the Mensheviks. The Soviet, he argued, only made sense as part of a struggle for power, perhaps as the nucleus of the Provisional Revolutionary Government. As merely an organ for workers' self-administration, it was without value, even dangerous.²

. Social Democratic and Right Socialist Revolutionary thought dealt almost exclusively in terms of a central Soviet. Lenin does

1. Tretii s'ezd RSDRP Protokoly, M 1959, pp 198-202.

2. PSS, vol.12, pp 62-70, 375-76.

on one occasion in 1906 examine the implications of a plethora of local Soviets as well as a Central Soviet. However, he is concerned here with them solely as secondary rudimentary bodies, easily dispersed and dependent for their very existence on a strong Central Soviet.¹ Even this view was formulated during the extreme left phase of Bolshevik politics immediately after 1905. In the years that followed, until the dispute with Bukharin in 1915, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party generally in its official pronouncements virtually ignored the Soviets.

The Mensheviks and Right Socialist Revolutionaries continued to think in terms of a Central Soviet as a body expressing working class opinion, educating the workers politically and exerting pressure on a central Government. This was what they had in mind when they set up the Petrograd Soviet on 27 February 1917,² and this is how it functioned initially. Like the Bolsheviks, they thought in terms of a centralised state, and had no clear policy about the role of local Soviets. Indeed, one modern historian considered this to be their major weakness in 1917.³

On the other hand, the Socialist Revolutionary Maximalists, who were opposed to any form of centralised state, placed all

1. PSS, vol.12, pp 229-30.
2. E.N. Burdzhakov, Vtoraya russkaya revolyutsiya, M 1967, pp 211-12; N.N. Sukhanov, Zapiski orevolyutsii, vol.1, Pbg, 1919, pp 66ff.
3. O. Anweiler, The Soviets: The Russian Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Councils 1905-21, NY 1974, p 125.

their emphasis on the local Soviet as the basic unit in the future Republic of Communes. To them, the overthrow of the Tsarist state must not be followed by a centralised capitalist state. This would be much stronger and more destructive of local initiative than the relatively inefficient Tsarist state. It would thus be a retrograde step, hindering rather than accelerating the Republic of Communes. In the event of the overthrow of Tsarism, the role of the local Soviets would be to undermine central authority to prevent the growth of a new central state. If this were established, an uninterrupted civil war must be unleashed against it, including the killing of those in authority. In this, they were very close to anarchist thought.¹

The Maximalists disappeared as an organised party in 1906 but their ideas remained important among the Party's rank and file, resurfacing on the eve of the First World War in a wave of resentment against the moderate leaders of the PSR. Defensism during the War itself made the division between leaders and led even wider.² The radical, or Maximalist wing of the Party was not predominantly intellectual, but made up of proletarian and peasant elements, and over 70 per cent of SR terrorists were

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1. B. Gorev, "Maksimalisty" in L. Martov, P. Maslov and A. Potresov (eds.), Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v Rossii v nachale XX veka, vol. 3, St. Pbg, 1910, pp 511-23.
 2. M. Hildermaier, "Neopopulism and Modernisation: The Debate on Theory and Tactics in the PSR, 1905-14", RR, 1975, no.4, pp 453-75.

workers, peasants, / soldiers or sailors.¹ It is the more radical or Maximalist brand of Socialist Revolutionism that worker Bolsheviks on the Vyborg Side, or in the Baltic Fleet, would be more likely to encounter.

The Positions Adopted by the Different Factions in Petrograd

The various policies were associated with different party organizations, and so it is convenient to describe them by the name of the organization concerned. It must be stressed, however, that the policies represented a majority opinion in the organization, and that they all contained dissenting minorities for at least part of this period.

The four organizations concerned are: the Vyborg District Committee of the Bolshevik Party, the Petersburg Committee, the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee and what, in this

thesis will be called the Pravda group. This is somewhat of a misnomer as the group gained only very temporary control of Pravda, but it has been chosen because the episode is both well known and caused considerable disturbance at the time.

1. O.H. Radkey, The Agrarian Foes of Bolshevism, NY, 1958, p 69.

The Vyborg District Committee¹

The question of the role of the soviets was reintroduced into discussions inside the Bolshevik Party by a member of the Vyborg District Committee in September 1915. This was, of course, the period at which the Vyborg District Committee was working with both Socialist Revolutionary and Social Democratic organizations in the Baltic Fleet.² It was also the period in which the Party had to decide what to do about the War Industries Committees, which had just been established or, more specifically, what the Party should do in the election of workers' representatives to these Committees. The problem gave rise to considerable differences of view inside the Petrograd Party, and for a long time no decision could be reached. Eventually two policies emerged, neither of which could obtain an absolute majority. The more radical one proposed using the electoral campaign to put forward Bolshevik policy, but to boycott all elections. The other proposed to go one step further in the electoral process, by participating in the election of electors, so that Bolshevik policies could be put forward at the All-City Conference of Electors, where the actual representatives to the

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1. The Vyborg District (or Vyborg Side) of Petrograd is a working class area of the city, to the north east of the fork of the Greater Nevka and the Neva, joined to the centre of the city by the Liteinyi bridge. It was in this area that the Bolsheviks had the greatest support up to and including 1917, and its committee was the best organised of all the Petrograd district parties.
 2. see above pp 137ff.

War Industries Committees were to be chosen.¹ Presumably the advocates of the first policy felt that participation in the Conference of Electors would associate the Bolsheviks too closely with the War Industries Committees, while Party policy was, in fact, to oppose the election of Worker Representatives. The deadlock was broken by an amendment proposed by V.N. Zalezhskii, a moderate Conciliator, but also a member of the Vyborg District Committee. He proposed that the second course be adopted on condition that, should the electoral campaign arouse the working class sufficiently, the Bolshevik electors should use their position to delay the final vote and declare the Conference a Soviet of Workers' Deputies.²

There are a number of things to note about this incident. The proposal was made by a moderate. It concerned one central Soviet. It was something between the 1905 Bolshevik concept of the Soviet as the embryo of a Provisional Revolutionary Government and the Menshevik concept of the Soviet as an organ of workers' self-expression. In all these ways it is a moderate, rightist proposal and on one level it was attacked as such by Lenin in a set of "theses" and in an accompanying letter to Shlyapnikov.³

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1. The electoral process was indirect, like that used to elect deputies to the State Duma.
 2. A. Kondrat'ev, "Vospominaniya o podpol'noi rabote...", KL, 1923, no.7, p 37; for Zalezhskii's position as a moderate, see pp 174-75.
 3. PSS, vol.27, pp 48-51; vol.49, p 160.

On the other hand, we should remember that this amendment was a compromise which broke a deadlock that had lasted for several days of discussion. We do not know what policies had been previously discussed and found unacceptable. Presumably they would include more moderate and more radical proposals. Also, we cannot dismiss entirely the fact that the discussion on the role of soviets, after some nine years dormancy, was re-introduced by a member of the Vyborg District Committee at a time when that Committee was in close contact with the Fleet revolutionary organizations, and hence with Maximalist ideas, to which the soviets were central.

This is not to say that one would expect the Vyborg Bolsheviks to accept Maximalist ideas wholesale, but that the discussions one would imagine them to have with the Maximalists would dispose them to think again about their Party's attitude, or lack of it, towards the soviets. Those of a more radical disposition might be inclined towards adapting Maximalist ideas to fit Bolshevik conceptions, the moderates might incline towards a more Menshevik view. Furthermore, Lenin's attack on the proposal for contemplating forming soviets outside the context of an uprising, would further encourage the radicals to pursue their train of thought in the contacts with the Fleet that followed this incident. These, as we have seen, lasted until December 1915.

Indeed, there are hints both in Lenin's "Theses" and in his letter to Shlyapnikov of the existence of a more radical position

on the soviets. In the "Theses", for example, he writes about soviets, in the plural, rather than the Soviet proposed by Zalezhskii.¹ This could be dismissed as mere looseness of expression, were it not for the fact that in his letter to Shlyapnikov he says that the "Theses" are partly in answer to questions raised by the dispute with Bukharin,² who, of course, was far from being a moderate.

Nonetheless, the evidence thus far probably does not allow us to do more than note the fact that the question of the role of soviets was raised in the Party in Russia by a member of the Vyborg District Committee at a time when this Committee was engaged in work with the Baltic Fleet Revolutionary Organisations.

The trial of the Baltic sailors arrested as members of the Glavnyi Kollektiv, and their contacts in the Vyborg District Committee took place in October 1916. The Petrograd Bolsheviki, and probably other parties too, organised a strike to coincide with the trial. This was very successful, and about 130,000 workers participated, some factories being out for a week. Rightly or wrongly, the Bolsheviki believed that the size of the strike impressed the Court into awarding relatively short

1. PSS, vol.27, p 49.

2. ibid., vol.49, p 160.

sentences of hard labour, rather than the death penalty. At the same time, the hostility of the radicals in the Party towards the Workers' Representatives on the War Industries Committees increased when the latter condemned the strike.¹

On the other hand, if the plight of the Baltic sailors had evoked a response in the Petrograd working class, Party issues left it unmoved. Demonstrations organized for 9 January 1917 to commemorate Bloody Sunday were very poorly attended, as were the Bolshevik demonstration on the anniversary of the trial of their Duma Fraction and the Menshevik demonstration to protest against the arrest of the Workers' Representatives on the War Industries Committees.²

It was probably these recent disappointments that led the Vyborg District Committee to react cautiously to the proposed strike to mark International Women's Day, on 23 February 1917. Here was an issue much more remote than Bloody Sunday, the Bolshevik Deputies, or the arrest of the Workers' Representatives to the War Industries Committees, and the Vyborg District Committee instructed its members not to join the strike, and to dissuade others. It would fail, and lead only to reprisals. Energy should be conserved for a big strike on a real issue. This cautious reply led to a revolt in the Bolshevik rank and

1. A. Shlyapnikov, 'Fevral'skie dni v Peterburge', PR, 1923, no.1(13), pp 71-72.

2. ibid., p 79; Kondrat'ev, op.cit., pp 237-38.

file who, together with the local Menshevik and SR rank and file, decided to ignore Party instructions and go ahead with the strike. The success of the strike astonished the Vyborg District Committee, which immediately changed its policy to support it. It was, of course, the first day of the February Revolution.¹

Initially, no one suspected that this was more than a strike against the high cost of living, and the bread shortage. On the third day of the strike, however, things began to take a more radical turn. That morning, demonstrators leaving the Vyborg side had carried banners with the same slogans that had been carried on many demonstrations since the war began: "Down with the Autocracy!" and "Down with the War!"² During the day, Bolshevik demonstrators from the Vyborg Side heard two slogans from non-Bolshevik agitators that were to win support from the crowds. The first, presumably from a Menshevik or Right SR source, called for the crowds to support the Duma.³ The second was a call for the election of local workers' soviets which was to incorporate representatives of the soldiers.⁴ This has all the marks of emanating from the radical or Maximalist

1. V. Kayurov, "Shest' dnei fevral' skoi revolyutsii", PR, 1923, no.1(13), p 158.

2. ibid., p 162.

3. ibid.

4. I. Gordienko, Iz boevogo proshlogo, M 1957, p 58.

wing of the SRs.¹ In the evening of that same day, the Vyborg District Committee noted that the factories wished to begin electing deputies to a soviet. Once again, this did not originate with the Bolsheviks, although the Vyborg District Committee decided to try to take control of it.²

The Vyborg District Committee felt the tide running away from under them, and over the next two days badgered Shlyapnikov to allow them to have access to a Party cache of arms, so that they could transform the movement into an armed uprising. Not surprisingly, Shlyapnikov rejected this request, itself also oddly Maximalist in flavour, pointing out that the Bolsheviks' few revolvers would not make much impact on the

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1. T. Hasegawa, "The Bolsheviks and the Formation of the Petrograd Soviet in the February Revolution", SS, 1977, no.1, pp 89-90, believes this to be possibly Menshevik in origin, as "it is known that the Mensheviks adopted the slogan to establish district soviets". This he presumably infers from the meeting of 25 February of Menshevik activists who decided to set up a central soviet as a kind of information bureau to co-ordinate the strike. I cannot accept this. First he has quite unjustifiably rendered the Russian "raiony" as "local soviets" thus inserting what he sought to prove (Hasegawa, loc.cit.; Burdzhaliyov, Vtoraya Russkaya Revolyutsiya, vol.1, p 209). Secondly the words Gordienko heard clearly refer to a means of uniting the striking workers with the mutinous soldiery, not merely an information bureau for co-ordinating the strike. Further in the article, without fully explaining why, Hasegawa rejects the argument of the Japanese historian Wada Haruki that the manifesto of the Vyborg District Committee of 27 February was written by SR Maximalists (Hasegawa, op.cit., p 99). However, like most historians in the West and in the Soviet Union, Hasegawa ignores the SRs altogether (except for this peremptory rejection of Wada). I can only regret that Wada's article is in Japanese and thus not available to me.
 2. N. Sveshnikov, "Otryvki iz vospominanii", PP, no.57, 14 March 1923.

Petrograd garrison. In fact, were agitators in the crowd to shoot at the soldiers, this could cause the soldiers to turn against the crowd and any chance of a revolution would be over. The way to obtain arms, Shlyapnikov argued, was to win over the soldiers.¹

The problem was that Shlyapnikov could give no clear directive as to how this could be done. One obvious solution was through the creation of local soviets, and one can imagine that the Vyborgers pressed for this as an alternative to the distribution of arms. However, Shlyapnikov's last experience of Party policy on the soviets was Lenin's attack on Bukharin's programme in 1915-16 as "semi-anarchistic".² As a member of the Central Committee, Shlyapnikov presumably felt it his duty to keep as close to Lenin's line as he could. His rejection of the proposal to create soviets, on the grounds that the uprising must be guided by Bolshevik cadres rather than non-party organizations, was impeccably in the Leninist tradition.³ Unfortunately it was a position that Lenin himself was abandoning. What is more, by failing to solve the problems of the Vyborg District Committee, it further alienated them, driving them towards the Left, away from the Central Committee, and towards the Maximalist policies, whither they were in any case being pulled

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1. A. Shlyapnikov, *Semnadtsatyi god*, vol.1, (2nd edition), M n.d., pp 86, 100, 103-04; idem. "Fevral's kie dni..." *PR*, 1923, no.1(13), p 81.
 2. see above Chapter Two, and below Chapter Eight.
 3. Shlyapnikov, *Semnadtsatyi god*, vol.1, p 97.

by their own rank and file.

On 26 February, Shlyapnikov learned that the Petersburg Committee of the Party had been arrested. It must have been with some misgivings that he had, perforce, to charge the largest and best organized of the Petrograd District Committees to take over the leadership of the entire City. The new leadership was, of course, the Vyborg District Committee.¹

Very early on the morning of 27 February, before seven o'clock and much to his landlady's indignation, Shlyapnikov was woken up by I.D. Chugurin, a member of the Vyborg District Committee, demanding a leaflet to be issued all over the city, to help win over the soldiers. They drew one up together, then and there. It was entirely consistent with Central Committee policy and ended with the following slogans:

Down with the Tsarist monarchy!
Long live the People's republic!
All landlords' land to the people!
An eight-hour day to the workers
Long live the RSDLP!
Long live the Provisional Revolutionary Government!
Down with the slaughter²

It contained no mention of any kind of soviet.

On the same day, a leaflet was issued on the Vyborg Side which was quite different in tone. This one read:

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1. Shlyapnikov, "Fevral'skie dni...", PR, 1923, no.1(13), p 96.
 2. Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.1, pp 107-08.

Comrades! The hour we have longed for has come. The people are taking power into their own hands. The revolution has begun. Do not waste a moment, create a Provisional Revolutionary Government today!

Only organization can strengthen our force. First of all elect deputies; let them make contact with each other.

Let a Soviet of deputies be created under the protection of the troops. You will bind the remaining soldiers to you with a firm bond. Go to the barracks. Call out the remainder.

Let the Finland Station be the centre for the revolutionary headquarters to assemble.

Seize all buildings which could aid your struggle.

Comrade soldiers and workers! Elect deputies. Get in touch with each other.

Organize a Soviet of Workers' Deputies.¹

The leaflet is unsigned and its authorship has given rise to some controversy. Hasegawa states that "Soviet historians unanimously agree that [it] was issued by the Vyborg District Committee", and he accepts this verdict.² However, there are grounds to believe that this is not the whole story. Soviet historians are intent on demonstrating that the call for a Soviet in February 1917 originated with the Bolsheviks. Theirs is a somewhat flimsy case, contradicted as far as the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee is concerned, by Shlyapnikov himself. As it is axiomatic to modern Soviet scholarship that the Bolshevik Party was

1. KPSS v bor'be za pobedu sotsialisticheskoi revolyutsii v period dvoevlastii Sbornik dokumentov, M 1957, p 171.

2. Hasegawa, op.cit., pp 98-99.

united,¹ evidence from any sector of the Party, ex post facto commits the whole Party.

On the other hand, the Japanese historian Wada Haruki believes that the leaflet was the work of some Bolsheviks acting independently, or the Mezhraiontsy, or the SR Maximalists. Hasegawa dismisses this.² But the argument deserves more attention.

We know already that the rank and file Bolsheviks on the Vyborg Side disregarded the advice of their Committee on 23 February, when they joined SRs and Mensheviks on strike. We know that there was pressure from some sections of the Vyborg Committee (but not from the whole Committee) to distribute arms to the workers to turn the strike into an armed uprising.³ We know also that Bolshevik memoirists speak of the call for soviets coming from outside the Party. This is confirmed by a Socialist Revolutionary worker from the Vyborg Side, who was told by a more senior member of his Party that on Sunday, 26 February, "we on the Vyborg Side had a meeting. A Soviet of Workers' Deputies was formed. There were some representatives from the soldiers there."⁴

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1. there are honourable exceptions to this rule, Burdzhalov among them.
 2. Hasegawa, loc.cit.
 3. Shlyapnikov, Sennadtsatyi god, vol.1, pp 103-04, makes it clear that Chugurin was the main advocate of this view, which had some, but not unanimous support.
 4. I. Markov, "Kak proizoshla revolyutsiya", VR, 1927, no.5/6, p 70.

In addition, there is something odd about the most commonly cited secondary source. This reads:

In the morning of 27 February, an initiative group for the elections to a Soviet of Workers' Deputies was formed at a meeting of the Vyborg District Committee. This group issued an appeal organizing the Soviet of Workers' Deputies". 1

The question arises, why an initiative group? Why should the appeal for a soviet not simply be made in the name of the Vyborg District Committee? One answer could be that the entire Committee was not in favour of the move. This could also explain why the leaflet was not signed.

There are further indications that the Committee was divided. On the evening of 26 February it had held a meeting in the open air on the outskirts of Petrograd to discuss what to do next: call off the strike, or proceed to a revolution? It was very cold, and the comrades were tired out, and the meeting dispersed before coming to any conclusion, promising to meet next morning to continue the discussion.² Chugurin, a known extremist, hence presumably in favour of pursuing the revolution, turned up at Shlyapnikov's lodgings the next morning clamouring for a leaflet to help win over the troops. Shlyapnikov found his views much moderated.³

1. E.N. Burdzhhalov, op.cit., p 210; Hasegawa, op.cit., p 99.

2. Kayurov, op.cit., p 166.

3. Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.1, p 107.

Some time later that morning other Vyborgers called on Shlyapnikov to tell him that it had been decided to pursue the revolution.¹ They were followed by Chugurin who rushed in, once more demanding arms, having abandoned his moderate position of a few hours before.²

Would it be too much to assume that Chugurin had come round early, got Shlyapnikov out of bed, and obtained a leaflet, and with it the implied blessing of the Central Committee to continue the revolution, in order to influence the Vyborg District Committee meeting, which was to meet at eight o'clock?³ Once the decision to continue was assured, he could safely revert to his original position, to try in turn to press the Central Committee into more radical action.

There is a further oddity about the leaflet: the designation of the Finland Station as the venue for the Soviet. Burdzhhalov explains this in terms of the Vyborg District Committee being overtaken by events; the decision to hold the Soviet in the Finland Station, on the Vyborg Side, making sense to the Committee in charge of the city's Bolshevik organization, but abandoned once the movement to the Duma began.⁴ There is much

1. ibid., pp 108-09. Shlyapnikov who apparently knew nothing of the Vyborg vacillations thought they were speaking of factory committees.

2. ibid.

3. Kayurov, loc.cit.

4. Burdzhhalov, op.cit., p 211.

sense in this explanation, and it receives negative confirmation from Kayurov's statement that he heard of the existence of the Petrograd Soviet in the Tauride Palace for the first time late in the night of 27-28 February. He had been looking for Shlyapnikov, who was attending the Soviet, but had not thought of looking in the Tauride.¹

On the other hand, Kayurov admits that he was out of touch with the Vyborg and Petersburg Committees for long periods during the revolution, at one stage (24 and 25 February) for two whole days.² How typical is he? Can one really believe that no one on the Vyborg Side knew of the Soviet in the Tauride? What happened at the Finland Station? Either one must believe the call to have been completely ineffectual, or were there scores of delegates sitting there wondering why no one else came?

Furthermore, elections of Soviet deputies in the Vyborg Side factories had begun as early as 24 February.³

By 27 February the movement was well underway. Why were none of these delegates either aware of, or seeking the Soviet in the Tauride Palace? Were they all waiting at the Finland Station? Or if they knew of the meeting in the Tauride, why did the authors of the leaflet, supposedly the best organized

1. Kayurov, op.cit., p 169; Shlyapnikov, op.cit., p 130.

2. Kayurov, op.cit., p 162.

3. A.M. Andreev, Sovety rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov nakanune oktyabrya, M 1967, p 39.

Committee in the Petrograd Bolshevik Party, not know of it? In any case, Shlyapnikov writes in his memoirs that he first learnt of the meeting of the Soviet in the Tauride Palace by a telephone call from the Vyborg District! When he got there, however, there were no workers or Bolsheviks present.¹ One can assume, then, that their absence was intentional.

Many of these puzzles appear to be solved if we suppose i) that the leaflet did not refer to a Central Soviet somewhere in the heart of the city, but to a local soviet there, on the spot on the Vyborg Side. A local soviet, after all, would be more useful in winning over the troops actually stationed on the Vyborg Side (and this was the explicit aim, according to the leaflet) than would a more remote Central Soviet, necessarily concerned with wider issues; ii) that the election of delegates in the factories from 24 February onwards was to the local soviet rather than to the Petrograd Soviet; iii) that the prime movers in this were Socialist Revolutionary Maximalists and possibly Mensheviks, rather than the Bolsheviks; iv) that part of the rank and file and possibly part of the Vyborg District Committee leadership wished to join this movement, as neither the District Committee nor the Central Committee could offer any viable alternative policy to continue the revolution; v) that on 27 February this radical section formed an initiative group and issued the

1. Shlyapnikov, 'Fevral'skie dni...', PR, 1923, no.1(13) pp 106, 108.

leaflet,¹ which although it has a Bolshevik flavour is also by its call for a local soviet (or indeed a soviet at all) out of line with Vyborg Committee or Central Committee pronouncements immediately before or immediately after it; and vii) that all three of Wada Haruki's surmises probably contain some truth.

The events of 27 February certainly had Vyborg Committee men like Kayurov rattled. A half dozen or so of them spent the evening looking everywhere for Shlyapnikov, except the Tauride Palace. At midnight, after the first session of the Petrograd Soviet had ended, he returned home, and they presented him with a leaflet which they wanted issued in the name of the Central Committee "to prevent other parties taking over the masses".² Shlyapnikov agreed to do so, giving it to Molotov to polish up stylistically. It was issued on 28 March, and published in the Izvestiya of the Petrograd Soviet. It calls for a Provisional Revolutionary Government, but makes no mention of soviets, local or central.³

From 28 February onwards, the Vyborg District Committee

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1. This would not have been an isolated occurrence. Burdzhhalov, op.cit., p 210, gives the text of another leaflet, issued on 27 February, calling for a soviet which he says was not issued by any official committee of the RSDRP, although recognisably Bolshevik.
 2. Kayurov, op.cit., p 167.
 3. Shlyapnikov, op.cit., p 130; N. Avdeev, Revolyutsiya 1917 goda Khronika sobytii, vol.1, M 1923, pp 185-86; Izvestiya Petrogradskogo Soveta Rabochikh Deputatov, Pribavlenie k no.1, 28 February 1917.

swung further to the left. Bolshevik memoirists, with some justification, attribute this to the extremely militant mood of the working class at the time, which wanted to press on and seize full power.¹ Another element was that, now that the Party was legal, the rank and file had a chance to impose their views on the leadership. On 28 February, the first full Assembly of Vyborg Side Bolsheviks was held. According to one estimate some two to three thousand members were present.² Even if this is an over-estimation, it indicates something considerably larger than the half dozen or so Committee members who determined policy when the Party was illegal. The Assembly adopted a policy document, which contained the following words:

3. The existing Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which is constantly attracting new revolutionary cadres from the revolutionary people and army, must proclaim itself the Provisional Revolutionary Government and must urgently carry out the following measures: make the Provisional Committee, composed of twelve members of the State Duma, subordinate to the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

4. Remove from the State Duma the power to represent the people, as it was elected on the basis of a law which served to support the former Tsarist regime. 3

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1. F.N. Dingel'stedt, "Vesna proletarskoi revolyutsii", KL, 1925, no.1(12), p 192; V.N. Zalezhskii, "Pervyi legal'nyi pe-ka", PR, 1923, no.1(13), pp 142ff.
 2. Zalezhskii, loc.cit.
 3. KPSS v Bor'be za pobedu Sotsialisticheskoi revolyutsii v period dvoevlastii, pp 172-73. This dates it 1 March, but the difference either way is of no significance.

This is the first time since 1905-06 that this policy can be clearly attributed to any official Bolshevik organization. Its adoption placed the Vyborg District Committee in a special place on the left of the Party. It should be noted, however, that this was still not a call for Socialism, but remained within the framework of traditional Social Democratic thought on the Bourgeois, or Democratic Revolution.

At about the same time, a leaflet aimed at the Petrograd soldiers, was issued jointly by the Mezhrainontsy and a group of Socialist Revolutionaries led by P. Aleksandrovich (P.A. Dmitrievskii). Although written in far more picturesque language than the Vyborg District policy statement, its central message was the same:

Soldiers! The fox's tail frightens us more than the wolf's tooth. Your real friend and brother can only be the worker and peasant. Unite closely with them! Send your Representative Delegates to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which in Petersburg alone is supported by 250,000 workers. Your Representatives and the Workers' Deputies must become the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the people, from which you will receive land and freedom. 1

Aimed as it is at the soldiers, where the SRs would expect to have more support than the SDs, it complements the SD appeal to the workers. There is good reason to believe that this was not just a coincidence. Aleksandrovich had corresponded with

1. Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.1, p 262.

Lenin in emigration, proposing a unification of the Left SRs and Bolsheviks, a unification consistent with Lenin's statement that the real divide was now one's attitude to the War.¹ Lenin's reply, indeed, encouraged informal co-operation between Left SRs and Bolsheviks,²

During 1915 and 1916 Aleksandrovich was in Scandinavia, where he was in touch with Kollontai and Shlyapnikov, and probably with Bukharin and Pyatakov as well.³ Shlyapnikov organized the transport of Aleksandrovich's SR anti-war literature into Russia, and in late 1916 Aleksandrovich himself returned to Russia using Shlyapnikov's contacts.⁴ Once back in Petrograd, Aleksandrovich devoted most of his time to reactivating the SR Petersburg Committee, and reviving work in the factories. He immediately fell out with the leading SR intellectuals, but maintained his contacts with the Bolsheviks, and presumably with the Mezhraiontsy.⁵ Here then was another source for interaction of political ideas between the Petrograd SDs and SRs. As Aleksandrovich worked almost exclusively with worker SRs after

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1. V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya Khronika, vol.3, p 383.
 2. PSS, vol.49, pp 150-52.
 3. ibid.; Shlyapnikov, Kanun..., vol.1, pp 208-09.
 4. Shlyapnikov, loc.cit.; one should note that this was about the time that Shlyapnikov also returned to Russia.
 5. Svyatitskii, "Voina i predfevral'e", KiS, 1931, no.2(75), pp 40ff; Shlyapnikov, op.cit., pp 294-95.

his row with the Party's intellectuals, it would be natural to expect any such interplay to be most manifest on the Vyborg Side.

After their new policy document had been passed, Vyborg District agitators, together with their SR and Menshevik equivalents, addressed numerous meetings, calling for the Soviet to be made the Provisional Revolutionary Government.¹ On 3 March the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee ordered the Vyborg District Committee to withdraw a leaflet that it was circulating as it did not correspond to Central Committee Policy or to "the needs of the time".² This leaflet had contained a major innovation in policy. It called for power to be in the hands of the soviets, in the plural, who should be responsible for calling the Constituent Assembly.³

Rebuffed by the Central Committee, for breaking Party discipline, the Vyborg District Committee began to try to change Party policy. On 5 March, a Vyborg representative, O.G. Lifshits, presented a resolution to the Petersburg Committee. This stated:

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1. Zalèzhskii, op.cit., p 142; Dingel'stedt, op.cit., pp 193, 195; E.N. Burdzhhalov, "O taktike bol'shevikov v marte-aprele 1917 goda", VI, 1956, no.4, p 41.
 2. Shlyapnikov, "Fevral'skie dni...", PR, 1923, no.1(13), p 129.
 3. Burdzhhalov, loc.cit.

1. The task of the moment is the creation of a Provisional Revolutionary Government from the unification of local soviets of workers', peasants' and soldiers' deputies from the whole of Russia.
2. In order to prepare for the seizure of full central power, it is necessary:
 - a) to strengthen the power of the soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies;
 - b) to proceed in the local areas to partial seizures of power, by means of the overthrow of the organs of the old power and their replacement by soviets of workers', peasants' and soldiers' deputies, whose task would be: to arm the people, to democratise the army, to confiscate the land and to implement all the other demands of the Minimum Programme without preliminary permission.
3. The power of the Provisional Government formed by the Provisional Committee of the Fourth State Duma, will be recognised and supported only until the formation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government from the soviets of workers', peasants' and soldiers' deputies, and only insofar as its activities correspond to the interests of the proletariat and the broad popular masses.

All counter-revolutionary moves of the Provisional Government must be ruthlessly exposed. 1

The emphasis had now shifted entirely to the local soviets and the taking of local power. It was not, of course, identical to the Maximalist vision of the Republic of Communes, but came very close to it. It was, in fact, a fusion of Maximalist and Bòlshevik ideas. Not surprisingly the Petersburg Committee

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1. P.F. Kudelli (ed.), Pervyi legal'nyi Peterburgskii komitet bol'shevikov v 1917g. Sbornik materialov i protokolov zasedanii..., M-L 1927, p 19.

rejected the resolution. It received only one vote, that of K. Shutko, from the Vyborg District; Lifshits herself could not vote, having only a consultative voice.¹ However, the Vyborg District Committee continued to fight to get its policies adopted both in Petrograd and, as we shall see, in the Baltic Fleet.

The Petersburg Committee

This was the leadership of the Bolshevik Petrograd party organization made up of representatives from all the Petrograd District Committees. It opposed the war and had refused to change its name in 1914 to the Petrograd Committee, as a protest against chauvinism. It had been heavily infiltrated by police agents. Three of its members were Okhrana agents in 1914.² In March 1917, after the revolution, the reconstituted Petersburg Committee still contained one Okhrana agent, Yan Martynovich Ozol', who was unmasked only in June of that year.³ As a consequence, it was ravaged by police raids throughout the war. In late 1915 almost all its members were arrested. In January 1916 the rest were picked up.⁴ At the time, V.N. Zalezhskii, the last

1. Kudelli (ed.), loc.cit.
2. L. Haimson, "The Problem of Social Stability in Urban Russia, 1905-1917," SR, 1964, no.4, p 637.
3. P.F. Kudelli (ed.), op.cit., p 8.
4. Zalezhsky, op.cit., p 135.

to be arrested, was seriously worried lest the entire Petrograd organization should collapse.¹ The Committee was reconstructed with new people, however, but on 26 February 1917, in the middle of the revolution, almost all of this new committee was again arrested by the police.²

At its first meeting after the revolution, there was some wrangling as to who should be on the new Committee. The old members had been released from prison and there was some doubt about the representativeness of a number of the new delegates from the city areas. A compromise solution was agreed that, during the period whilst the Party was regathering its forces, the Committee should consist of both all people who had been elected to it before February 1917 and new members delegated from the District Committees.³ This meant that the majority of the Petersburg Committee was made up of people, none of whom had actually participated in the victory of the revolution and a good number of whom had also been cut off from the labour movement for over a year. This latter group were in the very odd position of having gone into prison at a very low moment in the Party's fortunes, having had virtually no contact with the outside world,⁴

1. ibid., p 136.

2. Shlyapnikov, "Fevral'skie dni...", PR, 1923, no.1(13), p 95.

3. Kudelli, op.cit., p 28.

4. Zalezhsy, op.cit., p 136.

and having come out to find the revolution over. As one of them admitted, he was not "psychologically prepared" for it.¹ In addition, the "old" members were overwhelmingly those Conciliator praktiki of 1912-14, longing for a reunion with the Mensheviks.

The experience of the Petersburg Committee's members was reflected in its policy. On 25 February the Petersburg Committee decided to create "a committee for determining the question of the best and most expedient form of organization to control the already excited but not yet sufficiently organized masses of striking workers."² It also decided:

...to form immediately in the factories, a series of factory committees, the members of which must elect their own representatives from their composition to the "Information Bureau", which will serve as a connecting link between the organizations and the factory committees, and will guide the latter, giving them directives of the Petersburg Committee.

This "Information Bureau"...will eventually be transformed into the "Soviet of Workers' Deputies" in (sic) the type which functioned in 1905. 3

This resolution has in common with those of the Vyborg District Committee the proposal to create a Soviet. However, in

1. ibid.

2. Birdzhalov, Vtoraya russkaya revolyutsiya, vol.1, p 153.

3. Hasegawa, op.cit., p 92. Hasegawa inserts [Party] before the word "organizations" in the first sentence. I do not know with what justification.

all other respects it is quite different. It contains no reference to a Provisional Revolutionary Government. The Soviet's role is to be the co-ordination of striking workers, not the vehicle for bringing these together with the mutinous soldiery. Indeed, the soldiers are not mentioned.

In fact, the Petersburg's Committee's resolution is very much in the Menshevik tradition of thought about the role of the Soviet. Furthermore, on the same day, 25 February, a group of "representatives of workers' organizations" met and decided to form a Soviet of Workers' Deputies. News of those elected was to be transmitted through the Social Insurance Boards and Workers' Co-operatives. The all-city centre, which would amass information from all areas was to be the Council of the Petrograd Workers' Co-operatives.¹ Hasegawa has decided, it is not clear on what evidence, that this was a Menshevik meeting.² The Mensheviks may have dominated it intellectually, but it is much more likely to have been a joint Bolshevik-Menshevik-Right SR venture. All three were active in the co-operatives and in the Social Insurance Boards, and the Rightists from all three parties had been in constant touch throughout the February Days.³ Indeed, Sukhanov specifically says that the decision to form a Soviet was taken at one of these inter-party meetings on or before 24 February

1. Burdzhakov, Vtoraya russkaya revolyutsiya, vol.1, p 209.

2. Hasegawa, op.cit., pp 89-90.

3. V.M. Zenzinov, "Fevral'skie dni", NZh, 1953, no.34, pp 194-95, 207; N. Sukhanov, Zapiski o revolyutsii, vol.1, p 27.

"at the suggestion of the old liquidator and defensist, F.A. Cherevanin".¹ In the event none of these early meetings came to anything as most of the Petersburg Committee and of "the representatives of workers' organizations" were arrested on 25 and 26 February.² However, the eventual founding of the Soviet on 27 February was carried out by a group of Right Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, mainly ex-members of the War Industries Committees.³

After the revolution, the Petersburg Committee continued to be the centre of Right Conciliationist Bolshevism. On 3 March it voted that it would

...not oppose the power of the Provisional Government insofar as its activities correspond to the interests of the proletariat and of the broad democratic masses of the people...⁴

Except for the subtle insertion of "not oppose" for "support" this was identical to the Menshevik and Right SR position adopted in the Petrograd Soviet.

On 5 March, as well as rejecting the Lifshits resolution, it rejected one from V.M. Molotov that would have aligned it with

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1. Sukhanov, loc.cit.
 2. Burdzhakov, loc.cit.; Shlyapnikov, 'Fevral'skie dni...', PR, 1923, no.1(13), p 95.
 3. Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.1, pp 119ff; Sukhanov, Zapiski..., vol.1, pp 66ff. N.D. Sokolov had been considered a Bolshevik up to this time, although he immediately joined the Mensheviks.
 4. Kudelli (ed.), op.cit., pp 9-10.

the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee.¹ In his memoirs, V.N. Zalezhskii recalls that the Petersburg Committee's main objection to the Russian Bureau's position was that it was too "academic" and did not take into account the realities of the day, like the actual, existing Soviet, which did not figure in the Bureau's resolution.² Their objection was similar to that of the Vyborg District Committee; their standpoint was quite different.

The vote on this issue is not without interest. The two main sources for this name nine of the people voting, six for the Petersburg Committee policy, three against it (the other voters are not named).³ All three of those named as voting against the Petersburg Committee came from the Vyborg District (K.I. Shutko, M.I. Kalinin, N.G. Tolmachev), whereas three of the six members voting for the Committee policy had been in prison for at least a year before the February revolution (M.I. Antipov, V.V. Shmidt and V.N. Zalezhskii).⁴ Two of the remaining three named as supporting the Petersburg Committee line (G.F. Fedorov and L.M. Mikhailov) were "old" members. Thus, although it has not been possible so far to produce any evidence as to whether

1. ibid., p 19.

2. Zalezhskii, "Pervyi legal'nyi Pe-ka", PR, 1923, no.1(13), pp 146-47.

3. Kudelli, op.cit., p 11: A. Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.1, M n.d., p 209.

4. Zalezhsky, op.cit., p 135; Shlyapnikov, "Fevral'skie dni dni...", PR, 1923, no.1(13), p 95.

they were arrested or not during the February revolution, there is a strong possibility that they were. Only the last person (P.I. Stuchka) was not an "old" member of the Petersburg Committee.

These "old" members continued to dominate the Petersburg Committee throughout March and April. So long as they remained dominant the Committee maintained its position, even moving from the policy of no opposition to the Provisional Government "insofar as", to one of conditional support for it on 18 March.¹ One of the main preoccupations of the Petersburg Committee during March was the convocation of an All-Russian Conference of Party workers. On 4 March the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee approved the proposal and Zalezhskii, as Petersburg Committee representative, was appointed to set up an organizing committee to call the Conference and work out an agenda.² The Conference was called to coincide with the All-Russian Assembly of Soviets at the end of the month, so that delegates could attend both. It represented the high point of Conciliationism since 1912, as it was to reunite Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. It was interrupted by the return of Lenin, and the April Theses.

On 8 April, the Petersburg Committee rejected the April theses by 13 votes to two. By mid April, the composition of the Committee had changed considerably and its policy changed to

1. Kudelli (ed.), op.cit., pp 49-52.

2. Zalezhskii, "Pervyi legal'nyi Pe-ka", PR, 1923, no.1(13), p 145.

support for Lenin's position. When the new Executive Committee of the Petersburg Committee was elected in early May, the only "old" members that it contained had all opposed its majority policy during March.¹

The Russian Bureau of the Central Committee²

This was composed initially of three men: A. Shlyapnikov, V.M. Molotov and P. Zalutskij. The main body of the Central Committee elected at the Prague Conference in 1912 was in exile, either abroad or in Siberia. The Russian Bureau represented the exiled Committee on the spot, and had been set up by Shlyapnikov on his trips into Russia.

All three of its members had escaped arrest during the war. All three were active during the February Revolution. Their Manifesto, "To All Citizens of Russia", published on the front page of a special supplement to the first issue of the Izvestiya of the Petrograd Soviet, stated that a Provisional Government, composed of the representatives of the big bourgeoisie and landowners could not be supported and that the Party must call for a Provisional Revolutionary Government. This was to be composed of members of the parties represented in the Executive Committee of

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1. They were: P.A. Zalutsky, M.I. Kalinin, V.M. Molotov, all elected from the Vyborg District and N.I. Podvoisky from the Military Commission (Voenka) of the Petersburg Committee. The other five members of the Executive Committee were newly elected (Kudelli, op.cit., pp 99-100, 103.
 2. Hereafter referred to as Russian Bureau.

the Petrograd Soviet and was to implement, provisionally, the Minimum Socialist Programme and prepare for the Constituent Assembly. This policy was confirmed at the meeting of the Russian Bureau of 1 March,¹ but soon came to grief as the members of the Russian Bureau realized that the leaders of the other parties in the Executive Committee of the Soviet were not interested in forming a Revolutionary Provisional Government but in checking the activities of the existing government. The Russian Bureau was then confronted with the dilemma that, although they could not support the Provisional Government, they could not oppose it either "as it was not possible to undertake the responsibility of government ourselves."²

It will have already become clear that Shlyapnikov was not the greatest of revolutionary leaders. However, we should not underestimate the difficulties of his position. On the one hand, the Petersburg Committee was continuing the Conciliationist trend towards reunion with the Mensheviks, whereas Lenin had stressed over and over again in his letters to Shlyapnikov, the split with the Mensheviks was the main question confronting the Party.³ On the other hand, the Vyborg District Committee was

1. Shlyapnikov, "Fevral'skie dni...", PR, 1923, no.1(13), p 129.

2. "Protokoly i Rezolyutsii Byuro TsK RSDRP(b) (Mart 1917g)" VIKPSS, 1962, no.3, p 141.

3. see Chapter Two, p 78.

putting forward views that were similar to those of Bukharin, Pyatakov, Radek and Pannekoek and the Left SRs. He could hardly forget the vehemence of Lenin's attack on Bukharin and co. Also, although Lenin might have been prepared to allow informal co-operation with the Left SRs, he could hardly be expected to condone the acceptance of their programme.

In the first half of March the Russian Bureau co-opted a number of new members. By 12 March, when this process was completed, the balance of power inside the Bureau still lay just in favour of those strongly opposed to the Provisional Government. Of the fifteen full members, only two (V.N. Zalezhskii and M.K. Muranov) are known to have been in favour of support for the Provisional Government, six (A.G. Shlyapnikov, V.M. Molotov, P. Zalutskii¹, M.I. Kalinin, K.I. Shutko² and K.M. Shvedchikov³) are known to have been opposed to it. The position of the other seven is more difficult to define. Three, M.S. Ol'minskii, A.I. Elizarova-Ul'yanova and K.S. Ereemeev, may be presumed to be Conciliators. We have already come across M.S. Ol'minskii on the editorial board of the pre-war Pravda.⁴ K.S. Ereemeev was also on Pravda in its extremely conciliationist

1. See above in text.

2. See above p 174.

3. He was in contact with the Kronstadt organization which took a "Vyborg" line.

4. See p 27.

phase, and A.I. Elizarova-Ul'yanova, Lenin's sister, was attacked by Lenin for being a conciliator in 1915.¹ M.I. Khakharev, as a member of the Vyborg District Committee,² and G.I. Bokii, a Left Communist in 1918,³ may be presumed to be against the Provisional Government. The position of the other two, Elena Stasova and M.I. Ul'yanova is uncertain.

There was one more member of the Central Committee - J.V. Stalin. On 12 March he had been admitted to membership, but because of certain "personal characteristics" was given a voice in discussions but no vote (s soveshchatel'nym golosom).⁴ The existence of such a large number of Bureau members whose precise position is unknown means that Shlyapnikov's group may have been confronted with a sizeable minority in opposition. What can be definitely ascertained from the policies of the Russian Bureau, though, is that this opposition remained a minority.

On 22 March the Russian Bureau adopted a resolution on the Provisional Government which was to be presented to the March Conference of Bolshevik Party Workers. The language of this resolution is somewhat more mild than that of the resolutions passed at the beginning of the month. This has misled some

1. PSS, vol.49, p 193.

2. Kayurov, op.cit., p 167.

3. Sed'maya (aprel'skaya) vserossiiskaya konferentsiya RSDRP, (b) Protokoly, M 1958, p 375.

4. "Protokoly i rezolyutsii Byuro TsK...", p 143.

scholars into believing that it is a milder resolution. Close examination of the content reveals that it is not milder, but more revolutionary. It says: i) that the Provisional Government cannot solve the tasks of the revolution; ii) that the soviets are the embryos of the new power,¹ which at a given moment in the development of the revolution will implement the demands of the people in revolt; iii) in the meantime the Petrograd Soviet should keep a careful check of the government's actions; and iv) consolidate the soviets and deepen the revolution by arming the whole people and creating a red guard.² It makes no mention at all of the Constituent Assembly.

In fact, the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee had taken into account the sharp criticism of the Petersburg Committee that its programme was "academic". In working out the practical implications of its first reactions to the Provisional Government, it actually devised a programme that was far closer to the one Lenin was to propose early in April than was the apparently more radical platform of the Vyborg District Committee. The Vyborg District Committee wished to strengthen the soviets to make them into a Provisional Revolutionary Government, which would give way to the Constituent Assembly. By the end of March the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee was already proposing the soviets themselves, not as a temporary holding arrangement

1. emphasis added

2. "Protokoly i rezolyutsii Byuro TsK...", pp 152-53.

but as the new power.

One thing that may have misled scholars is the fact that Stalin presented the resolution to the conference on 29 March. His speech is certainly ambiguous in its attitude towards the Provisional Government, and Trotsky, later, did not omit to point this out.¹ However, Stalin's speech was not the resolution, and he admitted at the end of it that he preferred the resolution of the Krasnoyarsk Soviet, which contained the "insofar as" formula, to the one which he was proposing.² This need not surprise us. It was not unknown in the Bolshevik Party for a member of a dissenting minority on a party committee, or even a member of the majority thought to have doubts, to be entrusted with presenting the official resolution at a general party meeting. This was both good for discipline and a way of trying to convince the minority of the correctness of the majority's view. It may not be too much to assume that this is what was happening at the March conference.

This Chapter does not seek to prove that the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee anticipated Lenin's full programme but merely that they were moving towards a similar position before he returned. They were confronted with opposition in the Party in particular from the middle-range Party leaders of the kind who

1. Trotsky, Stalin, pp 190-92.

2. "Protokoly Vserossiiskogo (martovskogo) soveshchaniya partiinykh rabotnikov", VIKPSS, 1962, no.5, pp 111-12.

dominated the Petersburg Committee and who were represented at the March Conference. Shlyapnikov, Molotov and the others had taken the criticisms of the Petersburg Committee that were valid into account, and whatever the weaknesses of the Bureau's policy at the end of March it did present an immediate concrete programme for action. Where they still failed was that none of the Bureau majority had the authority to curtail the mischief¹ of the Pravda Group, and neither were they able to stem the movement for unification with the Mensheviks which came from the Pravda Group, and from the Petersburg Committee.

The Pravda Group

The origin of this was not in Pravda at all, but with a small group on the Petersburg Committee. These voted with the majority in opposition to the Vyborg District members or to the Russian Bureau, but in their speeches urged a more wholehearted support for the Provisional Government. Their argument was that the revolution was a bourgeois capitalist one, power therefore belonged to the capitalists, not to the proletariat and, as B.V. Avilov put it, the Provisional Government therefore should be obeyed "not from fear, but from conscience".² These words came from the passage in the Constitution of the Russian Empire

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1. I use this word advisedly. It included flagrant breaches of party discipline. See below.
 2. Raskol'nikov, Na boevykh postakh, M 1910, p 2, para 4.

which laid down the way in which the Tsar's subjects should obey him, and consequently implied rather more than conditional support.¹

The Pravda Group received powerful allies with the return of Muranov, Stalin and Kamenev from exile on 12 March. Muranov and Kamenev were politically in agreement with this group. Stalin does not appear to have been, as his speech at the March conference would seem to place him more with the "insofar as" majority of the Petersburg Committee. However, there is evidence that Stalin worked with them during the second half of March, as will be shown below. One can perhaps assume, with reference to Stalin's future behaviour, that he was less concerned with policy than with power in the Party. He had been denied a full place on the Central Committee on 12 March, he sensed the particular disruptive nature of the Muranov-Kamenev alliance and decided to join them, perhaps to benefit from the attendant chaos.

If Stalin was denied a full place on the Russian Bureau, Kamenev was rejected by them completely.² He had disgraced himself by his behaviour at the trial of the Bolshevik Duma Deputies in 1915, when he had testified whereas the other Bolsheviks had refused to do so. He had also tried to ingratiate himself with the court, for which he had been openly attacked by Lenin in the

1. Svod Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii, Kniga 1, M 1910, p 2, para 4.

2. "Protokoly i rezolyutsii Byuro TsK...", p 143.

émigré press.¹ Kamenev had also been the subject of complaints from Bolsheviks in both Siberia and Russia. The Russian Bureau did, however, decide to allow him to work for Pravda, but ruled that his name should not appear in the paper.²

The strength and influence that the group wielded, however, came from Muranov. Whereas both Stalin and Kamenev were suspect, Muranov had a spotless record. One of the two really hard Leninists in the Duma Fraction, Muranov had made a very brave showing at his trial. In his writings during the war, Lenin had used his name to indicate the best kind of Bolshevik work: work of the Muranov type.³ His prestige was probably higher than that of any other Bolshevik in Russia at the time. As long as he was in it the Pravda Group could not be squashed, at least until someone with higher prestige than Muranov returned to Petrograd. At the time that could mean only Lenin.

Shlyapnikov, in his history of 1917, alleges that Stalin, Kamenev and Muranov introduced "into the leading bodies of the party disagreements and deep organizational frictions" and that, in particular, they launched an attack on Pravda and its editors.⁴ Some echoes of this can be caught in the rather reticent text of the Protocols of the Russian Bureau. On 12 March, at the meeting

1. PSS, vol.26, p 168.

2. "Protokoly i rezolyutsii Byuro TsK...", p 143.

3. See p 54.

4. Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.2, M-L 1925, pp 179-80.

when the membership of Stalin, Muranov and Kamenev was considered some members of the Petersburg Committee were somewhat critical of Pravda.¹ Between then and the afternoon of the next day something happened to one of Pravda's editors, V.M. Molotov, for the afternoon session of the Russian Bureau begins with an unexpected announcement from him that he was resigning as "he did not consider himself sufficiently experienced".² Later in the same session Pravda was again severely criticized, although the Protocols do not state by whom, and the editorial board was changed and enlarged. Molotov's resignation was accepted, and Stalin became a member of the board.³

The next morning's edition of Pravda⁴ carried an article by Muranov declaring that "as in the past" the paper was to be published by the Party's Duma Fraction. The article explained that this was because the Duma Deputies were well known to the people as "they were exiled because, at the very beginning of the war, when nobody raised their voice against Tsarism, they called for a revolutionary struggle to overthrow the old order..."⁵ This was a bid by Muranov to take over the paper, as he was the only member of the former Duma Fraction in Petrograd at the time. The

1. "Protokoly i rezolyutsii Byuro TsK...", p 144.

2. ibid., p 146.

3. ibid.

4. Pravda, no.8, 14 March 1917.

5. Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.2, p 180.

argument that this was merely restoring past practice was specious. The illegal status of the party under Tsarism had made necessary the fiction that Pravda was not the organ of the Party's Central Committee, but the publication of a group of Duma Deputies. The need for this fiction ended when the Party became legal after the February revolution. Muranov's reasons indicated the direction of his thought, for he completely omitted to point out that the main prosecution evidence against the Bolshevik Deputies was that they opposed the war. This omission did not escape the anti-war members of the Russian Bureau and of the Petersburg Committee.¹ Pravda no.8 also carried an article by Kamenev calling for conditional support for the Provisional Government. This was the policy of no Petrograd organization at the time. Even the Petersburg Committee's policy merely stated that it would refrain from opposing the Government "insofar as".

On the afternoon of the same day, 14 March, the Russian Bureau held a preparatory meeting for that evening's Soviet session. It agreed to oppose the official resolution of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, "To all the Peoples of the World", as it found this to be defensist. It also rejected a resolution that Stalin wanted to propose in opposition to the official Executive Committee on that evening, as it found this

1. ibid.

defensist also.¹ At the Soviet session that evening Muranov disregarded the decisions of the afternoon's meeting. He spoke before any other Bolshevik, welcomed the official Executive Committee resolution and called on everyone to vote for it. According to Shlyapnikov, the other Bolsheviks scrapped their speeches and kept quiet as they did not want to drag inner party differences into the open. The motion was passed unopposed.²

This extraordinary breach of discipline was followed the next morning, 15 March, by a leader in Pravda, signed by Kamenev, advocating support for the war. This in fact constituted two further breaches in discipline, as the article was directly in opposition to official Party policy and Kamenev's name had been specifically banned from the paper.

Once again the Protocols give us slight echoes of the uproar on the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee that evening. V.P. Nogin, who was over from Moscow, wanted to know why Kamenev's name had appeared in the paper at all, and was presumably somewhat surprised to learn that this was against the instructions of the Russian Bureau.³ Ol'minskii, who opposed Kamenev, then resigned from the editorial board "because of his health".⁴ At the end of

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1. There is no protocol for a meeting of the Russian Bureau on 14 March in the collection published in VIKPSS, 1962, no.3, pp 134-57. The information here is taken from Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.2, M-L 1925, p 180.
 2. Shlyapnikov, op.cit., pp 181-82.
 3. "Protokoly i rezolyutsii Byuro TsK...", p 148.
 4. ibid.

a somewhat stormy debate, during which Kamenev's article of that morning was voted to be totally unacceptable, yet another editorial board was elected. This time it was composed of Molotov, whose rapid return gives a clue to the reasons for his resignation, Kamenev and Eremeev. Stalin was to be on it temporarily as Eremeev was out of town.¹ Pravda then returned to its former line, more or less. Kamenev now officially had a voice in its policy but could be outvoted by the other two editors.² This was apparently not the end of the matter, for two days later the Russian Bureau passed a resolution³ proposed by Ol'minskii, protesting at the method of Kamenev's inclusion on the editorial board and referring the matter to the next Party Conference.⁴ Kamenev then changed his tack. His article on the war had caused discontent in the Party outside the Russian Bureau too. It had upset the Petersburg Committee as, whatever the disagreements the latter had with the Russian Bureau, they were both opposed to the War.⁵ Rank and file Bolsheviks in the factories were demanding the expulsion of Pravda's editors from the Party.⁶

1. ibid.

2. Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god., vol.2, p 185.

3. Very decisively: eight for, one abstention.

4. "Protokoly i rezolyutsii Byuro TsK...", p 150. This is somewhat mysterious, as he had been apparently quite properly elected by the Russian Bureau two days before (ibid., p 148). I can offer no explanation for this.

5. Shlyapnikov, op.cit., p 187.

6. ibid., p 185.

On 18 March Kamenev proposed to the Petersburg Committee that it change its policy towards the Provisional Government, from its present refusal to oppose the Government "insofar as", to actual support.¹ With some opposition, notably from Zalezhskii, the Committee adopted Kamenev's proposal.² This was a major victory for the Pravda Group, but it did not mean that they had any wide support in the Petrograd party. As has been shown above, the Petersburg Committee at this time was dominated by its "old" members, who had not been elected by the present party membership and whose removal during April was to show just how much out of step they were. It did allow the group to continue its opposition. Thwarted in their attempt to take over the Russian Bureau and Pravda, they could still block policies they did not like, with the support of the Petersburg Committee. Thus, although Shlyapnikov claims that Pravda returned to its former line, it did not publish Lenin's Letters from Afar in full, although these generally supported the Russian Bureau's position. Indeed, only the first of the five letters was published, and that with about one-fifth of it cut out.³ The Pravda Group also continued activity of another sort, as Shlyapnikov sadly records:

1. . Kudelli, op.cit., p 49.

2. ibid., p 52.

3. Pravda, no.14, 21 March 1917; no.15, 22 March 1917.

Disorder continued inside the Party.
Breaches of Bolshevik policy were
committed in many areas and the example
for all this was given by comrades whom
we had grown accustomed to regard as
leaders in Tsarist times. 1

1. Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.2, p 187.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION IN
THE BALTIC FLEET AT HELSINGFORS:
Vosstanie or Bunt?

Although the February Revolution of 1917 was generally free of bloodshed, in Helsingfors, the main base of the Baltic Fleet, it was a very bloody affair in which a significant number of officers and petty officers lost their lives.¹ The standard Soviet explanation for the violence in February and March is simple. Although the revolution reached its climax in Petrograd with the mutiny of the garrison and the formation of the Soviet on 27 February, they argue that news of these events and of the abdication of the Tsar was withheld from the Fleet by its commander, Admiral A.I. Nepenin. The motives attributed to him vary from an attempt to maintain discipline in the Fleet by isolating it from civil turmoil, to a manoeuvre to keep the fleet available for a possible counter-revolution.² A few Soviet historians offer different versions, but still accuse

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1. The further one gets from the events, the smaller are the casualties admitted by Soviet sources. On 15 March 1917, Admiral A.S. Maksimov reported that 120 had been killed and wounded in Helsingfors (cited in V.V. Petrash, Moryaki Baltiiskogo Flota v bor'be za pobedu Oktyabrya, M 1966, p 52); an account published in the early 1920's estimates 90 officers killed (S. Lukashevich, 'Materialy po istorii russkogo flota: kratkaia khronologiiia revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya v russkom voennom flote', MS, 1920, nos.6/7, p 40); Petrash himself gives 45 officers killed and eleven missing (Petrash, op.cit., p 52); an even more recent source gives the total killed as nine (I.I. Mints, Istoriya velikogo Oktyabrya, vol.1, M 1967, p 692).
 2. M. Kh. Kiuru, Boevoi rezerv revolyutsionnogo Petrograda, p 7; R.N. Mordvinov (ed.), Baltiiskie moryaki..., p 322; S.S. Khesin, Oktyabr'skaya revolyutsiya i flot, pp 40-41; N.A. Khovrin, Baltiitsy idut na shturm, p 68; S.F. Naida, Revolutsionnoe dvizhenie v tsarskom flote, p 580.

Nepenin of manoeuvring.¹ E.N. Burdzhhalov is alone in stating rather more cautiously, that the bloodshed occurred because the sailors had decided their commanders were concealing the news of the abdication from them in order to lead them in defence of tsarism, but Burdzhhalov himself refrains from speculating about Nepenin's motives.²

The version accepted by most Soviet historians was given currency during 1917 by Admiral D.N. Verderevskii, one of Nepenin's successors as Fleet Commander and subsequently Minister for the Navy in A.F. Kerenskii's cabinet.³ This may account for its persistence.⁴ However, Tsuyoshi Hasegawa's revealing account of M.V. Rodzyanko's manipulation of information to the High Command, as part of his bid for the premiership, forces one to look again at events in Helsingfors.⁵ A careful re-reading of the Stavka documents⁶ produces a very different picture.

On 26 February 1917 (OS) Rodzyanko, as President of the

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1. Mints, op.cit., vol.1, p 692; Petrash, op.cit., pp 48-53.
 2. E.N. Burdzhhalov, Vtoraya russkaya revolyutsiya, vol.2, M 1971, p 122.
 3. R.P. Browder and A.F. Kerensky, The Russian Provisional Government, 1917, vol.3, Stanford, 1961, p 1631.
 4. See for example D.A. Longley, "Officers and Men: A Study of the Development of Political Attitudes among the Sailors of the Baltic Fleet in 1917", SS, 1973, no.1, p 30.
 5. T. Hasegawa, "Rodzyanko and the Grand Dukes' Manifesto of 1 March 1917", CSP, 1976, no.2, pp 154-67.
 6. "Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya 1917 goda", KA, 1927, no.2(21), pp 3-78; and 1927, no.3(22), pp 3-70.

State Duma, sent a telegram to the various front commanders. In it, among other things, he asked for their support for a "Government of Confidence",¹ The Naval Command had, of course, been receiving information of the rioting in the capital since it began on 23 February.² Nepenin and his staff were familiar with the call for a "Government of Confidence", which had been one of the main planks of the liberal platform throughout the War. Indeed, a group of Nepenin's staff was very much in sympathy with this demand.³

There is no reason to believe that Nepenin was surprised or suspicious when, during the evening of 27 February, he received a further telegram from Rodzyanko telling him (untruthfully) that a "Provisional Government" had been formed under Rodzyanko and asking him to urge the Tsar to recognise it. After some discussion with Captain Prince M.B. Cherkasskii, one of his liberal staff officers, Nepenin decided to comply. Consequently, on the morning of 28 February, he issued an order to the Fleet stating that disorders, caused by food shortages and

1. "Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya", KA, 1927, no.2(21), pp 5-8. This collection does not include a telegram to Nepenin. Since Generals M.V. Alekseev, N.V. Ruzskii, A.E. Evert and A.A. Brusilov reported receiving Rodzyanko's telegram, it is reasonable to assume that it was sent to all front commanders, and that Nepenin received it, as he did all subsequent ones (see below).
2. "Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya v Baltiiskom flote (iz dnevnika I.I. Rengartena)", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 98 (hereafter cited as "Dnevnik Rengartena").
3. ibid., p 119.

suspicious of treason, had broken out in the capital, and that this had led to a change in the composition of the Government. The order called for greater vigilance against the enemy, who might attempt to use the disorders to his advantage. The Fleet was put on battle alert and shore leave was curtailed. All ships' commanders were ordered to inform their crews, and Nepenin himself toured the major ships to explain events in Petrograd in this vein.¹

By this time, in Petrograd, a preliminary meeting of the Workers and Soldiers Soviet had taken place and elections to the Soviet were going ahead in the factories and military units. Nepenin, however, did not know this. His belief that Rodzyanko had formed a government was shared by a number of observers in Petrograd; General M.V. Alekseev, the chief of staff had telegraphed all fronts to this effect.² Isolated in Helsingfors, with the Hughes telegraph as his sole source of official news since railway links with the capital had been cut off on 27 February,³ Nepenin had no way of verifying the news he received. In fact, Rodzyanko himself was responsible for the misconception. Up to 27 February, he had considered his own premiership as

1. ibid., p 99; Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., p 17.

2. "Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya", KA, 1927, no.1(21), pp 30-33; 1927, no.3(22), pp 4-5; David R. Jones (ed.), "Documents on British Relations with Russia, 1917-18", CASS, no.3, p 357.

3. Mints, op.cit., vol.1, p 536.

inevitable. The news that the Tsar had instructed General N.I. Ivanov to march on Petrograd, however, made Rodzyanko fear that he might be imprisoned as a rebel. In addition, he was being edged out of the leadership of the Duma Committee by a group led by P.N. Milyukov, who was pushing the candidacy of Prince G.E. L'vov. On the evening of 27 February, Rodzyanko began to send false information to the military commanders to persuade them that he was firmly in charge of a government which alone could deal with the disorders. Thereby, he hoped to get Alekseev to call off the Ivanov expedition, as likely to cause further civil strife, and at the same time persuade the Duma liberals that as he alone could control the armed forces, he must be made premier.¹

On 28 February, events as seen from Nepenin's flagship, the Krechet, became progressively more confused. On the one hand, no instructions were received from Stavka or from the new Government. On the other hand, information from Naval Intelligence spoke only of a "Committee for the Restoration of Order and for Contacts with Persons and Institutions" and not of a government. Fearing that he might have stuck his neck out, Nepenin watered down the order issued that morning, using the traditional term "Council of Ministers" instead of "Government". He summoned a

1. Hasegawa, "Rodzyanko and the Grand Dukes...", CSP, 1976, no.2, pp 161-62; G. Katkov, Russia 1917: The February Revolution, L 1967, pp 301-05.

meeting of his staff officers and told them that, in the absence of any direction from the Minister or from Stavka, he would act as necessary. As there was the risk that he might miscalculate, he relieved them of all responsibility by ordering them formally to obey him without discussion. He stated that his policy was one of non-intervention in the revolution, and ordered all ships' commanders to be on the alert for trouble, to keep all agitators from the shore away from the lower deck, to report any 'misunderstandings' between officers and men immediately, and to maintain contact with other officers and ships.¹

The picture of Nepenin which emerges from these early events is thus one of an officer who was scrupulous in keeping his subordinates informed and in shielding his officers from possible reprisals; energetic in taking all measures to keep the Fleet on a war footing; and anxious not to intervene against the uprising.² That the information he was conveying to his officers and men was wrong, was not Nepenin's fault, but the product of Rodzyanko's actions. All in all, this picture is very much more consistent with Nepenin's previous record as a successful, energetic, popular officer (a record to which he owed his early

1. 'Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya', KA, 1927, no.2(21), p 14; 'Dnevnik Rengartena', KA, 1929, no.1(32), pp 99-100; Mordvinov, op.cit., pp 17-18.

2. On 27 February he ordered the captain of the Aurora, which was being refitted in Petrograd, not to use arms against the crowds invading his ship, if he could possibly avoid doing so. Captain M.I. Nikol'skii obeyed this order and forfeited his life as a consequence. Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., p 16.

promotion to Fleet Commander) than with the subsequent Soviet portrayal. Captain I.I. Rengarten, Nepenin's staff officer whose diary is a very valuable source for these events, notes that most fleet officers received the news of the "formation" of the new "Rodzyanko Government" with favour; which again contrasts with the normal picture of dyed-in-the-wool reactionaries.¹

During the night of 28 February/1 March, all news reaching the Krechet appeared to confirm that Rodzyanko had taken power and was taking steps to restore order. Nepenin learned that a mutiny had begun among the army units in Kronstadt, that naval units were so far not affected, and that the Duma Committee had intervened to restore order.² This was followed by news of the murder of the captain of the Aurora, with information that here too, order was being re-established by "the commission presided over by Rodzyanko".³ Further telegrams from the Naval Staff in Petrograd confirmed that the effective government was the Duma Presidium under Rodzyanko, and that Admiral I.K. Grigorovich, the Tsar's Minister for the Navy, was either still in office or co-operating with Rodzyanko.⁴

At 4 a.m. on 1 March, communication by Hughes telegraph

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1. "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 100.
 2. Mordinov, op.cit., p 18.
 3. ibid., p 19.
 4. ibid.; "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 101.

with the capital was cut on Duma instructions.¹ Since the railway line to Petrograd was also still cut, this meant that Nepenin's sole official means of communication was by Morse code over the ship's radio receiver. During the night, Rodzyanko sent Nepenin two telegrams telling him that the Duma had taken power, and urging him to recognize the new Government. After a discussion with his liberal staff officers, Nepenin decided to do so, for the reasons that Rodzyanko had gambled on: that recognition of a competent government, enjoying popular support, would bring political turmoil to an end, thus enabling the maintenance of discipline in the armed forces. Nepenin acted most correctly, informing Rodzyanko (whom he believed to be the Prime Minister), Stavka, the commanders of neighbouring units, and the Tsar of his decision, and of the reasons for it.² The Hughes connection was immediately restored.

During the morning, the officers and men were informed. Insofar as the officers are concerned, Nepenin's briefing was straight-forward. He read them Rodzyanko's telegrams, told them of his decision and that he had informed the Tsar, and dismissed them without allowing any discussion.³ It is not clear whether his order to the men merely stated that there was a new government,

1. Mordvinov, p 22; 'Dnevnik Rengartena', KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 101.

2. 'Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya', KA, 1927, no.2(21), pp 45-46; 'Dnevnik Rengartena', KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 102.

3. 'Dnevnik Rengartena', KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 102.

or whether it included the information that Nepenin had recognised it.¹ Nor is it clear whether the officers who attended the morning briefing were instructed to inform their crews, or indeed did so. Available sources for this matter are simply inadequate. The most comprehensive collection of naval documents, published in the Soviet Union, for example, does not contain any ships' logs for the critical days of 1 and 2 March, although it does have them for 28 February, 3, 4 and 5 March.²

It was not until the early afternoon of 1 March that Nepenin learned the full extent of the mutiny in Kronstadt. He immediately contacted Rodzyanko to ask for help.³

Late that night, Nicholas II decided to accept a "Government of Confidence" under Rodzyanko, General N.V. Ruzskii was instructed to contact Rodzyanko by Hughes and inform him of the Tsar's decision. To Ruzskii's surprise, however, Rodzyanko temporised. In fact, events in Petrograd had progressed very rapidly and Rodzyanko had virtually been eased out of the new Government. His order to the troops to obey their officers, instead of calming

1. ibid., pp 101 and 121,

2. Mordvinov, op.cit., pp 17-18, 30-32, 36-37, 38-39, 43-44.

3. ibid., p 22; "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 103. Later in the day as well as subsequently, Nepenin's support for Rodzyanko is evident in telegrams between various front commanders and is usually explained as his reaction to the Kronstadt mutiny. It is clear, however, that when he recognised Rodzyanko, Nepenin was not yet aware of the extent of the Kronstadt mutiny. See "Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya", KA, 1927, no.2(21), pp 40, 51, 61.

them down, had given rise to the suspicions that led to Order No.1 of the Petrograd Soviet. His manoeuvrings with the generals had led some of his Duma colleagues to believe that he was part of a reactionary plot involving Nicholas II and General Ivanov. Milyukov, now in conference with the representatives of the Soviet, was urging that the new government be independent of the Duma, which had discredited itself by accepting prorogation. Moreover, most Constitutional Democrats now believed that the monarchy itself "factually did not exist". Milyukov, however, had just managed to persuade them and the Soviet representatives that acceptance of Aleksei Nikolaevich as constitutional monarch, with Mikhail Aleksandrovich as regent, would be a useful way of legitimising the Government and of making a right-wing coup, like that of General Ivanov, more difficult. In any event, Nicholas II was now unacceptable to everyone.

Thus, when Ruzskii's message came through, Rodzyanko was caught out by his own plan. To accept the Tsar's proposal meant certain hostility from the Duma Committee and from the Soviet, and possible civil war between the Duma and the generals. To refuse and to demand abdication was to risk running afoul of the High Command himself. Yet he did refuse, telling Ruzskii that the Duma could only hope to contain the disorders if Nicholas were to abdicate in favour of his son. But he still gave the impression that he was in charge, in the hope that Milyukov and the others might yet be forced to accept his candidacy for the premiership, if this were the price both the Tsar and the generals demanded for

abdication.¹

In fact, Rodzyanko's standing with Stavka remained so high that, as soon as he had received a summary of the conversation with Ruzskii, Alekseev incorporated its main points into a message to all front commanders, pointing out that abdication in favour of Aleksei Nikolaevich, with Mikhail Aleksandrovich as regent, now seemed the only hope for Russia. Three commanders - General A.E. Evert, General A.A. Brusilov, and Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich - responded immediately. By two-thirty that afternoon, Alekseev had combined these three replies into a telegram to Nicholas II urging abdication.² Admiral Nepenin, who had been the first member of the High Command to recognise the Provisional Government, was not one of those now pressing for abdication.

Just as General Ruzskii, in Pskov and General Alekseev at Stavka in Mogilev were unaware of the state of affairs in

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1. For most of this argument, I am indebted to Hasegawa, "Rodzyanko and the Grand Dukes'...", CSP, 1976, no.2, pp 165-67, with some additional points from W. Rosenberg, Liberals in the Russian Revolution, Princeton, 1974, pp 52ff. Although Hasegawa's argument is generally impressive, he does not present a really satisfying reason for Rodzyanko to press for abdication, only reasons to explain why he ceased pressing for a "Government of Confidence" and no longer opposed abdication. Hasegawa is not concerned with events after the Ruzskiyi-Rodzyanko conversation by Hughes telegraph on the morning of 2 March. This may account for his not realising that Rodzyanko did not opt out at this point, but actively continued his campaign on a different tack for another thirty-six hours. My interpretation of his motives is admittedly speculative; I am concerned primarily with the fact that he continued to misinform the armed forces, not his reasons for so doing.
 2. 'Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya', KA, 1927, no.2(21), pp 67-73.

Petrograd, so also Admiral Nepenin was unaware both of affairs in the capital and, for most of the morning of 2 March, of those in Pskov and Mogilev. The day began with a request from the naval Commander in Revel' for permission to make some kind of political statement, in light of the deteriorating situation. Nepenin instructed him to announce that he, Nepenin, was working in full agreement with the Duma Committee; should it prove necessary, he could also announce that the Commander of the Baltic Fleet and the Commander of Revel' had recognised the Provisional Government. At the same time he cabled Rodzyanko, asking him to send Duma Deputies to Revel' to confirm this announcement.¹

Nepenin's briefing of his staff officers and ships' commanders followed much the same pattern as that of the day before, except that he was able to tell them of the full extent of the mutiny in Kronstadt, of the beginnings of trouble in Revel', and of the role of the Duma Committee in both places. He re-asserted his support for the Duma, and stated that he would announce this publicly if necessary. As before, he forbade public discussion of this by his officers, but invited anyone to come to his cabin for a private conversation. The Soviet historian V.V. Petrash interprets this as indicating some kind of monarchist

1. This request implies that, although the Fleet had been informed of events in the capital, no explicit announcement about the political allegiance of the naval command had been made. Mordvinov, p 24; "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), pp 103,122,fn.23; "Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya", KA, 1927, no.3(22), p 13.

plot.¹ This seems unlikely. If officers were opposed to the Duma and favoured maintaining the monarchy, why should they need to discuss it privately with Nepenin? Such sentiments would have been consistent with their oath of loyalty, and could have been properly expressed in public. Nepenin is more likely to have been shielding them against the possibility of their being arraigned for breaking their oath to Nicholas II, should he have miscalculated. Furthermore, Petrash's account is based exclusively (and at first sight rather oddly) on the emigre memoirs of an ex-naval officer, G. Graf, who was not at the briefing.² Rengarten was at the briefing, and his diary shows that news had not yet come in about the proposal that Nicholas should abdicate.³ As far as Nepenin and his staff knew, the question was whether to recognise a government that was apparently behaving patriotically and was capable of restoring order, in the hope that by so doing, they might persuade Nicholas to accept it also. The briefing ended with the reading of telegrams from Rodzyanko and A.I. Guchkov, and of the day's order to the lower deck of the Fleet, informing them of recent events. It was only after the meeting had dispersed that Alekseev's telegram calling for abdication came through, and caused consternation among Nepenin's staff.⁴

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1. Petrash, op.cit., pp 48-49.
 2. Graf, Na Novike (Baltyiskyi flot v voynu i revolyutsiyu), M 1922, p 356.
 3. "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 104.
 4. ibid.

It was not until evening when it had become clear that the announcement of support for Rodzyanko's Government had not calmed things down in Revel,¹ that Nepenin sent a telegram to Stavka supporting the proposal that Nicholas II should abdicate.¹ It was delivered to the Tsar in Pskov at 10 p.m., that is, at about the same time that Guchkov and V.V. Shul'gin arrived there from Petrograd. Later that night, the Krechet learned of Nicholas' abdication and of Prince G.E. L'vov's appointment as Prime Minister. The first orders the new Government issued to Nepenin were that he arrest F.A.A. Zein, the Governor of Finland, and Borovitnikov, the vice-President of the Finnish Senate. They were duly interned on board the battleship Slava.²

The staff officers were assembled very early next morning (at 7.20 a.m.) and informed of the abdication. They cheered the new Tsar. The news was then sent out to all bases, starting with Revel,¹ which was considered to be the most critical. At the same

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1. Mordvinov, op.cit., p 27. Graf's account, op.cit., p 257 suggests that Rodzyanko may have sent Nepenin a further message urging him to take this step. Graf is very indignant that Rodzyanko tricked Nepenin into supporting abdication, by telling him falsely that other commanders and Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich had agreed. In fact, they had agreed, and had done so on Alekseev's prompting that morning ("Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya", KA, 1927, no.2(21), pp 67-71). Rodzyanko was practising deception, but not this particular one.
 2. "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), pp 104-05; Mordvinov, op.cit., p 31. Kiuru, p.8 claims that this was only done on 4 March, thus giving the impression that Nepenin had refused to arrest "reactionaries". However, the evidence from the other two sources is conclusive.

time, the staff began tidying and filing the telegrams of the past four days. All of them believed the revolution to be over, now that the new Government had been installed and recognised.¹ Hardly had this begun when another telegram was received from Rodzyanko at 7.30 ordering that the announcement of the abdication be withheld.² It was too late to prevent the announcement going to Revel', but Nepenin promised to try to prevent it in Helsingfors, Abo and Moonsund. Even so, he was too late to stop the abdication manifesto being read to some of the Helsingfors units.

This was Rodzyanko's gravest disservice to the Fleet. He had been frightened by the reaction of the Petrograd garrison to his order of 28 February, and again by their reaction to Milyukov's premature public announcement of the constitutional monarchy during the afternoon of 2 March.³ His fears were increased when Guchkov and Shul'gin returned from Pskov to announce that Nicholas had

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1. Similar scenes were taking place at the front. 'Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya', KA, 1927, no.3(22), p 31; 'Dnevnik Rengartena', KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 105.
 2. 'Dnevnik Rengartena', KA, 1929, no.1(32), pp 105, 122 fn.30; 'Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya', KA, 1927, no.3(22), pp 30-31; Graf, p 258. Here too, Rodzyanko appears to have contacted Nepenin directly, as well as through Stavka, in his desperation to have the abdication manifesto withheld. Nepenin, clearly beginning to lose patience, concurred but warned that "any delay will be disastrous (gubitel'no)."
Petrash, op.cit., p 49, fn.23.
 3. P.N. Milyukov, Political Memoirs, 1905-17, Ann Arbor, 1967, pp 406-07; Katkov, op.cit., pp 398-400.

abdicated, not in favour of his son, Aleksei, who might just have been acceptable, but in favour of his brother, Mikhail. In addition to his concern lest the announcement of Mikhail's accession provoke another popular uprising, Rodzyanko now had a personal score to settle with Milyukov. The abdication manifesto had nominated L'vov, not Rodzyanko, as Prime Minister. Far from bargaining, the Tsar and the generals had been ready for abdication. Ironically, this was largely because of Rodzyanko's conversation with Ruzskii the day before. Rodzyanko felt that Milyukov had deprived him of the office that was his by rights. Milyukov was the main, almost the only, advocate of a constitutional monarchy. Rodzyanko now swung from the idea of a "Government of Confidence" under Nicholas II to opposition to any monarchy at all. He was determined that Nicholas' abdication should not be announced until Mikhail's could be joined to it. To make sure that the generals were not tempted to go ahead with the announcement, he once again misinformed Stavka, telling them that new riots had broken out in Petrograd and that soldiers were killing their officers.¹

The delay was fatal for the Baltic Fleet. Rumours swept Helsingfors that Nepenin was concealing something of importance from the lower deck, that the Fleet was about to steam to Petrograd to put down the revolution, that Zein and Borovitnikov had been moved on board the Slava to form a reactionary headquarters, and so on.² A moment's thought would have shown how baseless these rumours were. It is not possible to prepare a battleship for sea without the

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1. "Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya", KA, 1927, no.3(22), pp 27ff.
 2. Khovrin, "V 1917g vo flote", KL, 1926, no.5, p 56; Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., p 31.

knowledge of its crew. It was equally impossible to steam to Petrograd because of the ice (as Nepenin had pointed out to a general who had proposed this to him two days before).¹ Such was the atmosphere of tension and excitement, that rational considerations did not apply.

To make matters worse for Nepenin, Naval Intelligence reported during the morning that the problem in Petrograd was not so much the abdication, as some kind of party struggle inside the new Government. This appeared to have been cleared up, however, as a radio message was received from the Government, addressed to all citizens, announcing its formation. Nepenin's staff immediately set to work to print this for distribution to the ships.² Before this could take place, a mutiny broke out in the minelaying division. Nepenin rushed over and, together with the division's commander, Admiral A.S. Maksimov, managed to persuade the mutineers to disperse.³

On his return to the Krechet, Nepenin sent a further message to Rodzyanko, informing him of the mutiny, and asking him to send Kerenskii to Revel', as things there had not settled down.⁴ He also decided to take matters into his own hands. He had his

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1. "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 121, fn.21.
 2. ibid., p 105.
 3. ibid., p 106; "Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya", KA, 1927, no.3 (22), p 35. Some Soviet writers state that this mutiny took place on 2 March (Kiuru, op.cit., p 8; Velikaya oktyabr'skaya sotsialisticheskaya revolyutsiya: Khronika sobytyi, vol.1, M 1957, p 39). This conclusion, however, is based on secondary sources whereas the evidence cited above is conclusive.
 4. "Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya", KA, 1927, no.3(22), p 35.

staff officers draw up an order informing the Fleet of events, and summoned all ships' commanders to the Krechet. They were not to disobey Rodzyanko's order, merely to circumvent it. All telegrams and orders were to be read to the men, except the abdication order which the captains were to explain in their own words. They were to stress that Admiral Nepenin supported the new Government, and that the government demanded that discipline be maintained.¹ The men were informed accordingly at around 6 p.m. on 3 March. Eye-witnesses report that they took the news quietly and orderly and that, in fact, they appeared to know about the abdication already.²

Less than an hour later, the mutiny began. Just after seven o'clock, the sailors of the battleship Imperator Pavel I began to kill their officers. The Pavel hoisted a red flag and turned its guns on the battleship lying alongside it, the Andrei Pervozvannyi, which hastily raised its own red flag. The movement spread rapidly. One after the other, the ships hoisted red flags and, after nightfall, lit red riding lights.³

Nepenin was dining when the news was brought to him.

"Khorosho", he said, and then added somewhat imprudently, in front

1. Mordvinov, op.cit., pp 29-30; 'Dnevnik Rengartena', KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 106.
2. Graf, op.cit., p 258; D.A., 'Den' 4-go marta na kreisere', Voennaya byl' (le passé militaire), no.32, September 1958, p 5.
3. Graf, op.cit., p 283; Khovrin, KL, 1926, no.5(20), p 56; Mordvinov, op.cit., pp 30-31.

of the wardroom stewards, "which of the dreadnoughts is in a position to fire on the Pavel?" He lapsed into silence for a while, then said, "No, I shall not shed blood. That would be pointless."¹

At about this time, a message came in from Alekseev. His suspicions had been aroused the day before, and certain aspects of Rodzyanko's conversation calling for abdication had also seemed odd. Naval Intelligence had checked some of his statements, and found that there had been no massacre of officers in Petrograd on 2 March. Rodzyanko was, therefore, lying. Alekseev then telegraphed all fronts that there was disunity within the Duma, that the workers' parties were exerting much influence, and that Rodzyanko was unreliable and not to be trusted.²

Alekseev moved cautiously, perhaps because he at last realised the danger in acting on inadequate information, or perhaps because despite all that he had learned, he still trusted Rodzyanko, an ex-guards officer, more than he did the other politicians. Despite growing pressure from front commanders, he refused to countermand Rodzyanko's order forbidding the announcement of the abdication. Throughout the afternoon, he was unable to contact Rodzyanko. It was only at 6 p.m., when he managed to get through to the new Minister of War Guchkov, that he learned

1. "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 123, fn.34. Petrash, op.cit., p 50, omits the last remarks, thus giving quite a different impression.

2. "Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya", KA, 1927, no.3(22), pp 22-24, 32.

of Mikhail's abdication. Even at this late stage, the misinformation reaching the armed forces did not end. When Alekseev tried to contact Guchkov again, ten minutes later, the Hughes machine in Petrograd was answered by Colonel B.A. Engel'gart, a Rodzyanko appointee, who told him that Guchkov had resigned.¹ It was 10 p.m. before Alekseev finally contacted Rodzyanko and received permission to announce the abdications to the troops. This news was relayed to the various fronts at 1.30 a.m. on 4 March.²

The message from Alekseev that Rodzyanko was unreliable was the last straw for Nepenin. All day, he had withheld the official announcement of the abdication, against his better judgment. The mutiny that he had warned against, and had done so much to prevent, had now broken out. The laconism of his report to Rodzyanko and Alekseev was an implicit reproach for the policy of delay of which he was now the victim. It contained no appeals for help from the Duma (and is notable as the first message that he sent not to do this). It was a simple report, consisting of two telegrams:

19.30. Urgent. Mutiny on Andrei, Pavel and Slava. Admiral Nebol'sin killed. The Baltic Fleet no longer exists as a fighting force. I shall do what I can. Nepenin.

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1. ibid., pp 33-39. When pressed by Alekseev. Engel'gart changed his mind about Guchkov's resignation.
 2. ibid., pp 40ff.

Further to No.286/op. Mutiny on nearly all ships. Nepenin. 1.

The report was received at Stavka with alarm. Rodzyanko did not find the time even to read it.²

Now that the mutiny had begun, Nepenin acted with his customary energy. A message was sent to all ships, inviting them to send delegates to the Krechet to present their demands.³ During the night, the ships' representatives assembled, and were addressed by Nepenin who, pale and exhausted, restrained himself with difficulty. Only towards the end of his speech did he lose control, when he described those who had killed officers as scum (svolochi) and cowards, adding that he despised cowardice and feared nothing. Nonetheless, the ships' delegates then presented him with a list of demands, which seemed both interminable and ludicrously petty compared to the violence unleashed in their name. Officers should address other ranks as vy and generally show more respect toward other ranks; sailors should have more freedom, and be allowed to smoke in the street, and so forth.⁴

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1. ibid., p 36; Mordvinov, op.cit., p 29; "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 107.
 2. "Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya", KA, 1927, no.3(22), pp 40ff.
 3. "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 123, fn.34; Mordvinov, op.cit., p 31.
 4. "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 107. The importance of minor irritants in major upheavals should not be underestimated. See for example Shklovskii's insistence on the importance of the ban on riding in trams in causing the mutiny of the Petrograd garrison. V. Shklovsky, A Sentimental Journey: Memoirs, 1917-22, Ithaca, 1970, p 7.

Agreement seemed eventually to have been reached.

Nepenin, worn out, withdrew and the delegates stood at attention and said goodbye to him in a friendly fashion. No sooner had he left the room, than one delegate said, "He won't do anything he promised", and debate began all over again. Finally, however, they did reach agreement, helped somewhat by a conversation with Kerenskii over the Hughes telegraph. Kerenskii confirmed that Nepenin had recognised the Provisional Government, and urged the men to obey their officers. It was during this conversation that Nepenin and the ships' delegates learned for the first time of the abdication of Mikhail Aleksandrovich.¹ When the delegates dispersed in the early hours of the morning, after Nepenin had promised to allow ship-board meetings later that day to be followed by an assembly of ships' representatives on shore, the Fleet Commander felt confident enough to send a reasonably optimistic telegram to Stavka.²

On the morning of 4 March, the delegates returned to the Krechet to arrange the details of the promised assembly. Nepenin confirmed his support and ordered refreshments to be provided. A little after 9 a.m. some infantry regiments marched down to the port to discover what was going on. Nepenin met their officers, and arranged for ships' delegates to help them elect delegates

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1. "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 108;
"Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya", KA, 1927, no.3(22), p 47.
 2. "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 108;
Mordvinov, op.cit., p 32; "Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya",
KA, 1927, no.3(22), p 48.

to the meeting. On some of the ships, officers who had been arrested were set free.¹ At 11 a.m. Nepenin issued an order announcing the impending arrival of Duma Deputies, F.I. Rodichev and M.E. Skobelev, who were to address the assembly of ships' representatives. He recommended that officers should join their men in the welcome demonstrations. A significant number of officers did indeed go ashore, bearing both red and St. Andrew's flags.²

Despite this apparent accord, however, the suspicions of at least part of the lower deck had not been appeased. When the representatives returned to their ships after the meeting with Nepenin during the night, some of them had been unable to persuade their messmates to accept his bona fides or to release their officers. Indeed, some of the representatives must have been disturbed when Nepenin told them to pass on to all who had taken part in the killings that although he refused to spill any blood himself, he could not allow mutineers to remain in the crews where the crimes had been committed and would hand them over to the new Government for justice.³

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1. "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 108; Mordvinov, op.cit., p 36.
 2. Mordvinov, op.cit., p 36.
 3. ibid., p 32; Burdzhhalov, op.cit., vol.2, p 123 cites a letter from the Provisional Government's Assistant Naval Minister, B.P. Dudorov (to whom he quaintly refers as "an officer") to Admiral A.V. Kolchak, stating that Nepenin had "lost his temper and was unable to refrain from smiling bitterly and speaking sarcastically". He concludes that this had caused the representatives to feel

For these sailors, Nepenin's continued exercise of power as Fleet Commander was a threat which had only been increased by Kerenskii's supposedly soothing words over the Hughes telegraph. Kerenskii had confirmed that Nepenin had recognised the new government and that this recognition was known and accepted in Petrograd, thereby removing the mutineers' last defence against reprisals. He had inadvertently made it clear that the Government would not accept the mutiny as an uprising against defenders of the old regime, but would see it as murder. From the time they stepped out of that meeting, it would be very important to some of those delegates to have Nepenin's authority destroyed.

The first attempt to break the agreement reached on the Krechet came at 5.30 in the morning on 4 March. A radio message went out from the Slava:

Comrade sailors! Do not believe the tyrant. Remember the order on saluting. No, we shall not get liberty from the vampires of the old regime. We were waiting for a deputation, but when delegates from the crowd were sent to him, the Krechet suddenly started to send out signals "send a disciplined regiment". No, death to the tyrant, and no confidence.

United Fleet Democratic Organisation¹

(contd' from (3) overleaf)

that they were being treated with contempt. Possibly so. Nepenin was certainly tired and strained by the time this meeting took place. Dudorov was not at the meeting, however, and there is no other evidence that Nepenin had contempt for the men under his command. The Provisional Government, moreover, would have been anxious to place the blame for the mutiny firmly in Helsingfors rather than in Petrograd. In any case, there is no need to assume hauteur in Nepenin's manner in order to explain the desire by part of the lower deck to destroy his authority.

1. Mordvinov, op.cit., p 33.

Although this message caused some surprise and distress on board the Krechet, it did not interrupt arrangements for the meeting to be held later that morning.¹ A few hours later, a second attempt was made, this time in a message from the Pavel, addressed directly to Nepenin:

The entire lower deck has lost faith in you, and demands that you temporarily cease to issue orders, which only duplicate and make matters worse. The lower deck is organising a provisional committee, which will be in charge until order has been fully restored... (indecipherable)...ships' delegates. 2

This did not stop Nepenin either; not long after the receipt of this message, he issued his order to officers to participate in the demonstrations for the Duma Deputies.

Half an hour later, news reached the Krechet that Admiral Maksimov had been elected Commander of the Fleet. Ten minutes later, Maksimov arrived decorated with red ribbons, and riding in a car flying a red flag.³ Even at this point, Nepenin did not lose his composure. He informed Maksimov that he was unable to hand over his command without authority from the Government and from the Supreme Commander. Until these bodies had pronounced, however, he would agree to have all his orders countersigned by Maksimov. The latter was forced to accept this, and left, his car now sporting the Fleet Commander's ensign as well as the red flag.

1. "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 108.

2. Mordvinov, op.cit., p 34.

3. "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), pp 108-09; Graf; op.cit., p 265.

On board the Krechet, the work of restoring order continued. Nepenin's statements and Kerenskii's message over the Hughes telegraph were printed and sent out for distribution. At 12.15 Nepenin's persistence seemed to have borne fruit. A body calling itself the Central Committee of Ships' Delegates on board the Pavel issued a statement recognising Nepenin's actions as correct and accepting his command.¹

Less than an hour later, a group of armed sailors arrived, ostensibly to escort Nepenin to the Station Square, where crowds of sailors and officers were awaiting the arrival of the Duma Deputies. On the way there, he was shot in the back and killed by an unidentified sailor. Ironically at about the same time, the Provisional Government appointed Nepenin Assistant Minister for the Navy.²

The Mutiny of 3 March 1917 in Helsingfors cannot be seen as a vosstanie - an uprising against defenders of the old regime. It occurred only after all ships had been informed of the end of the old order and of the Fleet Commander's acceptance of the new government. It was much more of a bunt - an elemental blood-letting, a settling of scores, the boiling over of hatreds and resentments brought to a head by the revolution in the capital.

It would follow from this that the vilification of Nepenin by Soviet historians must be rejected. There was a delay in

1. 'Dnevnik Rengartena', KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 109; Mordvinov, op.cit., p 34.

2. Pravda, 4 June 1917, p 3; Mordvinov, op.cit., pp 35-37; Graf, op.cit., p 266.

announcing accurate news about events in Petrograd. But this was not because Nepenin was ambiguous about his allegiance to the new regime. Indeed, at one point he specifically told his staff officers that he would disregard any order from Nicholas II to take action against the revolution.¹ He behaved honourably toward his men, his officers and his Tsar. There was nothing underhanded about his change of allegiance. He kept the Tsar, the Duma and his officers informed of his actions and of the reasons for these actions. He kept the men informed of events without, as far as one can make out, telling them of his own political allegiance. It should be noted that to announce a new government without comment is tantamount to accepting it; and that personal statements of political creed were not in the tradition of the Russian Imperial Navy. Here too, it would be a mistake to see duplicity. Nor can Nepenin be accused of being bloodthirsty: even at the height of the mutiny, he ordered his commanders to refrain from spilling blood and refused to do so himself.

What then accounts for the extraordinary violence? Soviet historians are fond of stressing the harsh and often petty discipline of the tsarist navy.² This theory finds some support in the demands of the ships' delegates to Nepenin while the mutiny was going on. Discipline, however, was presumably hard in Revël', where there was little bloodshed, and in the Black Sea Fleet, where

1. 'Dnevnik Rengartena', KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 102.

2. Petrash, op.cit., p 53; Burdzhhalov, op.cit., vol.2, p 107.

there was none. Also, the harshness and pettiness of discipline in the Royal Navy of that time was not significantly different from that in the Russian Navy.¹ Discipline may have been a factor, but it cannot have been the only one.

The men on board the big ships in Helsingfors were demoralised by the War. Russian naval strategy did not allow the battleships and cruisers to be much used, so frightened were the strategists of the consequences of losing them. The winter of 1916-17 had been very hard, and the ships had remained frozen into the harbour for months on end with nothing for the sailors to do except polish brass and salute officers. The war had reduced the number of times the big ships put to sea, the winter reduced it to nothing. The small ships - destroyers, minelayers and submarines - which were mostly based at Revel', were active throughout the war and thus had higher morale. This would certainly explain the differences between the revolutions in Revel' and Helsingfors.²

Yet even if one accepts demoralisation as a factor, or even as the main factor, doubts remain. Was there not a persistence in the course of the mutiny that needs explaining, particularly in the hunting down of Nepekin? Does this indicate some political leadership at work?

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1. Henry Baynham, Men from the Dreadnoughts, London, 1976, passim.
 2. Longley, op.cit., Soviet Studies, 1973, no.1, pp 34-35; Graf, op.cit., pp 248-49, 253, 290, 366.

Many Soviet historians claim that the uprising was led by Bolsheviks.¹ This claim is supported by Graf and George Katkov, both émigrés and both anxious to blame the Bolsheviks for the massacre.² Graf's claim is based on an unsubstantiated accusation made by a Bolshevik at a public meeting in 1917, and cannot be taken as conclusive by itself. Katkov attempts to show that the massacre was consistent with Bolshevik theory, citing a speech made by Lenin in Zurich in February 1917. In it, Lenin states that the 1905 mutineers made the mistake of

...liberating the officers whom they had arrested; they allowed themselves to be taken in by promises and arguments from their superiors; this is how the commanding officers gained valuable time, obtained reinforcements, broke up the forces of the mutineers and followed this up with the most cruel suppressions and executions of the ringleaders. 3

This would be convincing only if the mutiny had broken out before the Naval Command had recognised the Provisional Government, as in Kronstadt. But in Helsingfors, the mutiny broke out after the

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1. Kiuru, op.cit., p 8, claims that the Bolsheviks led the uprising, but later (pp 23-24) explains Bolshevik weakness in the Soviet by the fact that most fleet Bolsheviks had been arrested during the war. See also Khovrin, Baltiitsy idut na shturm, M 1966, p 69; Naida, op.cit., p 580; S.S. Khesin, "Russkyi flot i sverzhenie samoderzhaviya", in Sverzhenie samoderzhaviya: Sbornik statei, M 1970, p 187.
 2. Graf, op.cit., p 289; G. Katkov, "The Russian Navy and the Revolution", in M.G. Saunders (ed.), The Soviet Navy, London, 1958, p 86.
 3. Katkov, in Saunders (ed.), The Soviet Navy, pp 85-86, citing V.I. Lenin, PSS, vol.30, p 318.

recognition of the Provisional Government. Not to kill the officers would not have been to invite reprisals, for there was nothing to suppress, the rank and file of the Fleet having played no part in the revolution.

Further factors make one doubt any significant Bolshevik presence. None of the memoirs published in the 1920's claim Bolshevik leadership.¹ Secondly, had this major mutiny been led by the Bolsheviks, one would expect to find this reflected in the composition of the Helsingfors Soviet elected immediately after the mutiny, either in numbers or in powerful Bolshevik personalities. Neither is to be found.

One Soviet historian, V.V. Petrash, while rejecting Graf's claim (and thereby implicitly rejecting that of most of his own colleagues) that the Bolsheviks led the mutiny, does state that it was led by a "centre", the composition of which "it has not been possible to establish". Interestingly enough, the only vague point about this claim is the political composition of the centre since Petrash cites membership figures, names ships and supports his data with otherwise inaccessible archival sources.²

The existence of such a centre is given some support by published sources. Eye-witness accounts insist that groups of

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1. See especially Khovrin, KL, 1926, no.5(20), p 59. Forty years later, Khovrin changed his mind about Bolshevik leadership during the mutiny; see his Baltiitsy idut, p 69.
 2. Petrash, op.cit., pp 49-50 and 50, fn.24. The archive cited is the Leningrad Party Archive.

sailors went from ship to ship organising the mutiny,¹ and that political agitators from the shore were also active. One important Bolshevik source, published in the 1920's, speaks of the mutiny being prepared by unspecified "active groups", weakly linked to organisations in Petrograd.² The log of the First Battle Squadron for 3 March records that "on board the Gangut alone officers have not been arrested."³ At first sight this seems odd: the Gangut was a big ship, with a revolutionary past. Why was it the exception? Not much more than a year before the Gangut had had a mutiny after which all political suspects on board had been rounded up, Thus the Gangut was likely to be the one battleship without a revolutionary nucleus.

It should also be noted that the first radio message to Nepenin on the morning of 4 March is signed by "The United Fleet Democratic Organisation". This title suggests a group of activists from diverse revolutionary parties. This would accord well with the revolutionary traditions of the Baltic Fleet. Also, after February 1917, the Socialist Revolutionaries held the majority of seats in the three fleet soviets at Kronstadt,

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1. Mordvinov, op.cit., p 31; Graf, op.cit., pp 256, 260, 266, 267, 274, 276, 280, 284, 287 (rejection of Graf's identification of these groups as Bolsheviks does not imply rejection of the existence of the groups themselves.) D.A. Voennaya byl', no.32, September 1958, pp 4, 7.
 2. P. Dybenko, Myatezhniki, M 1923, p 14.
 3. Mordvinov, op.cit., p 32.

Helsingfors and Revel'. Thus, in March 1917, a revolutionary body comprising Socialist Revolutionaries, Bolsheviks and anarchists, with the SRs dominant, accords with both tradition and the immediate post-revolutionary balance of power in the soviets.

Moreover, the kind of bunt that erupted on 3 March: a mutiny after the recognition of the Provisional Government, which was nonsense in terms of Social Democratic theory, makes very good sense in terms of radical SR theory as an attempt to prevent the establishment of the much-feared capitalist state.

To a certain extent, and largely because of Nepein's courage and determination, the mutiny failed in the short run. The United Fleet Democratic Organisation got their massacre, but the fact that the officers had recognised the Provisional Government and had not used violence against the lower deck, made part of the men opposed to the mutiny. This becomes apparent if one examines the two anti-Nepein messages issued on 4 March. The first one, from the Slava, signed by the United Fleet Democratic Organisation, is couched in the language of anarchism and the extreme left of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. There are no Social Democratic overtones in the references to "vampires of the old regime", or in the call for "death to the tyrant". The second message, from the Pavel and signed simply by "...ships representatives", despite the threat that it contains, is in much more moderate language.

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1. Shestoi s'ezd RSDRP(b): Stenograficheskyi otchet, M 1958, p 75; E. Yarchuk, Kronshtadt v russkoi revolyutsyi, NY 1923, p 6; Petrash, op.cit., p 106; Mordvinov, op.cit., p 333, fn.16.

Indeed, it can be interpreted in two ways: in the same vein as the first message, or as an appeal to Nepenin to keep out of things until support for him and his officers could be organised on the lower deck. This second message speaks of a committee being organised. Perhaps we can assume that it is this committee which issued the third, and pro-Nepenin message once the moderate movement being organised on the Pavel was underway.

Writing of the mutiny in the Petrograd garrison, V.B. Stankevich stressed the importance of the fatal "five minutes".

If what [the soldiers] had achieved was a great deed, and if the officers now recognised this, why had they not led the soldiers into the street?...Now after victory was an established fact, they had joined the great deed. But how genuinely, and for how long?... Admittedly, all of the officers had joined the revolution by the next day...Admittedly, some of the officers had run to join in five minutes after the soldiers went out. Nevertheless, here the soldiers had led the officers and not vice versa, and these five minutes constituted an uncrossable abyss... 1

In the Petrograd garrison there had been relatively little bloodshed, but there had been those five minutes which undermined the authority of the officers. In Helsingfors (and Revel'), despite the bloodshed, there had not been those five minutes. The officers had recognised the new government before the men, and even in the wildest moments of the bunt a significant sector of the lower deck were favourably impressed by this. Once the bloodshed was over, the fever purged, this element of the lower deck,

1. V.B. Stankevich, Vospominaniya 1914-18gg, Berlin, 1970, p 72.

now in the ascendant, accorded respect to their officers, symbolised in the fact that when they returned to their ships, some crews asked forgiveness of their officers.¹ Officers were immediately elected to the Soviet and its executive committee contained one of Nepenin's staff captains.

This moderate element in both Helsingfors and Revel' was to make the politics of these bases significantly different from the politics of Kronstadt, where the officers had not recognised the Provisional Government. Throughout 1917, the moderate and buntar' trends can be traced among the Helsingfors sailors. As late as July, for example, the moderate tendency was still able, briefly, to associate three battleships - the Respublika (formerly Imperator Pavel I), the Slava and the Petropavlosk - with a resolution supporting the Provisional Government and demanding that those responsible for the July demonstrations be handed over to the authorities.² Of course, the buntar' tendency was eventually to predominate. It is perhaps worth noting that here too, the traditions established in 1905 and reasserted so dramatically on 3 March 1917, continued up to the October Revolution. Neither the "Kronstadt Republic" in May nor the Petrograd demonstrations in July were initiated by Bolsheviks, but rather by the left wing of the Socialist Revolutionaries and by the anarchists. The new

1. "Fevral'skaya revolyutsiya", KA, 1927, no.3(22), p 56.

2. I.M. Ludri, "Sudovye komitety", in P.F. Kudelli and I.V. Egorov (eds.), Oktyabr'skyi shkval: moryaki Baltiiskogo flota v 1917g, L 1927, p 80.

factor after February was that these rank and file SR actions, which dragged the local Bolsheviks along with them and were aimed against the national SR leadership that had betrayed the populist tradition (hence the fury of the sailors against Victor Chernov in July), received national support from the Bolshevik Central Committee. Thus, to the rank and file Socialist Revolutionaries and anarchists in the Fleet, the Bolshevik national leadership became identified with the disruption of capitalism, the smashing of the central state and the establishment of the populist Republic of Communes. Bolshevik strategy and populism coincided in the slogan "All power to the Soviets" in October; when the sailors fought for it, they were fighting for the Republic of Communes and not for a centralised Bolshevik state. In this sense, we could perhaps say that the mutiny in Helsingfors was not so much the last bloody act of the February Revolution, but the first blow leading to October.

THE FACTION FIGHT AND ITS RESOLUTION BY
THE APRIL THESES

CHAPTER SIX

THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS
A LEFT FACTION: KRONSTADT

THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION IN KRONSTADT

The course of the February Revolution in Kronstadt can be explained in terms of the SD-SR interchange of ideas and co-operation that had been established by the Glavnyi Kollektiv.

On one level, the Kronstadt uprising can be seen as a near perfect "classical" Social Democratic uprising: a mutiny in the armed forces, following and supporting a prior uprising by workers, thus protecting this latter from any counter-revolutionary attempt by the Tsarist Government, and this is how it is portrayed by all Soviet memoirists and historians.¹ This version runs as follows:

On 23 February news reached Kronstadt that all was not quiet in Petrograd, and leaflets, presumably from Petrograd, appeared. This coincided with the exams in the various training establishments in Kronstadt. Sailors taking these were then due to be sent forward to the active Fleet, and it was thus with some relief that all work stopped on the arrival of the disturbing news from the capital. On 26 February, news reached Kronstadt that the disturbances had become a revolution in Petrograd. This caused much excitement and about half the sailors failed to turn up for afternoon duties. On 27 February, V.M. Zaitsev, the leader of the

1. V.V. Petrash, Moryaki baltiiskogo flota v bor'be za pobedu oktyabrya, M-L 1966, pp 46ff; P.Z. Sivkov, Kronshtadt, L 1972, pp 83ff; A.V. Bogdanov, Moryaki-baltiitsy v 1917g, M 1955, pp 18ff, etc. These accounts are apparently based on I.N. Kolbin's memoirs: "Kronshtadt ot fevralya do Kornilovskikh dnei", KL, 1927, no.2(23), pp 134-38; and "Kronshtadt organizuetsya, gotovitsya k boyu", in P.N. Kudelli and I.V. Egorov (eds.), Oktyabr'skii shkval, L 1927, pp 26-27.

Bolshevik Military Organisation, went to Petrograd to consult with members of the Vyborg District Committee of the Bolshevik Party. During that day tension in Kronstadt rose, as the sound of cannon fire was heard from the direction of Oranienbaum. That evening the Bolshevik Military Organisation met and decided to begin agitation for an uprising the following day.¹

On 28 February news of the mutiny in the Petrograd Garrison reached Kronstadt. Under Bolshevik leadership, workers in the Naval Dockyard went on strike and demanded that Admiral R.N. Viren, the Military Governor of Kronstadt come and discuss their demands. He did go to the Dockyard, received their demands, but declined to discuss them until the next day, at a meeting on Anchor Square.² At some time during the day, the Kronstadt Bolsheviks received the Manifesto issued by the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee of their Party, calling for the formation of a Provisional Revolutionary Government. Another meeting of local leaders confirmed the plans for the uprising that night.

1. Kolbin, "Kronshtadt ot fevralya..", KL, 1927, no.2(23), p 134, idem. "Kronshtadt organizuetsya...", p 26; Sivkov, op.cit., p 24 has Zaitsev go to Petrograd on 23 February. This seems too early for any decision to be made for an uprising, as this was not yet on the cards in Petrograd. On the other hand, if a revolution was already foreseen in Petrograd, why delay the supporting Kronstadt mutiny until 28 February? I have decided that the visit took place on 27 as all memoirists recall a meeting on 27. Kolbin, loc.cit.; M. Yu "Fevral' v Kronshtadte", LP, 12 March 1927 (he also records 27 as the day news arrived of the course of events on the Vyborg Side)
2. Kolbin, loc.cit.; Bogdanov, op.cit., pp 19-20; M.A. Stolyarenko, Syny partii-baltiitsy, L 1969, p 168.

It was to begin at some time after 9 o'clock and the signal for a simultaneous mutiny all over Kronstadt was to be a burst of machine gun fire from the barracks of the Kronstadt Fortress Infantry Regiment.¹

All was to go very much as planned. Some semblance of order was maintained until the evening. Then some units refused to sing "God save the Tsar" at evening prayers,² which more or less coincided with the time the mutiny was due to begin. The signal was given, and armed troops all over the island poured out into the streets, with their regimental bands playing the Marseillaise. Wherever officers tried to organise resistance to the mutiny, they were killed. In addition, officers who had earned especial hatred because of exceptional cruelty were hunted down, culminating in the killing of Admiral R.N. Viren on Anchor Square.³

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1. Kolbin, "Kronshtadt ot fevralya...", KL, 1927, no.2(23), p 135, idem. "Kronshtadt organizuetsya...", p 27; R.N. Mordvinov (ed.), Baltiiskie moryaki v podgotovke i provedenie velikoi oktyabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revolyutsii, M-L 1957, p 20; N. Tochenyi, "Kronshtadttsy i vremennoe pravitel'stvo", in S.F. Naida (ed.), Voennye moryaki v bor'be za pobedu oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii, M 1958, p 313, writes that the signal was to come from the training ship Okean, but he is alone in this.
 2. This is written of as one incident, but attributed to various people by different writers, so that I can only conclude that it occurred in more than one unit, or that the story was apocryphal: Kolbin, loc.cit., Vinogradov, Flot v revolyutsionnom dvizhenie, L 1925, p 59; Geroi oktyabrya vol.2, L 1967, pp 92, 287.
 3. Kolbin, "Kronshtadt ot Fevralya...", pp 135ff, idem.; "Kronshtadt organizuetsya...", pp 28ff. The death of Viren is described vividly, but quite differently by different authors, whose versions include his being shot in the back on the way to Anchor Square, his being shot in Anchor

(continued on next page)

This account may be quite reasonable as far as it goes. However, a number of questions arise. Modern Soviet historians agree that the Kronstadt uprising began with the strike of workers at the Kronstadt Dockyard.¹ But this in itself must cast doubt on its Bolshevik leadership. The first Kronstadt Committee of the Bolshevik Party, formed on 4 March 1917, contained not a single worker.² This is somewhat singular, as the Social Democratic Party would strive above all to have workers on its committees. An absence of workers could mean either that there were no workers of sufficient calibre to be members of the Bolshevik Committee, or that these workers were not Bolsheviks. F. Dingel'stedt, a Bolshevik agitator from the Vyborg District of Petrograd who was in Kronstadt in March 1917, opts for the first alternative, and refers to the "backwardness" of the Kronstadt working class at the time. Indeed, in his account, the February Revolution in Kronstadt originated with the sailors and artillerymen and was only subsequently joined by the workers.³

(contd' from overleaf - 3)

3. Square, his being stabbed to death in Anchor Square, his body being soaked in petrol and burned in Anchor Square. Kolbin, loc.cit.; E. Yarchuk, Kronshtadt v russkoi revolyutsii, NY 1923, p 5; N. Tochenyi, op.cit., pp 316-17; Pöshekhov, 'Noch' pod 1-e marta 1917g v Kronshtadte', KB, 1920, no.1, p 34; D. Fedotov, "The Russian Navy and the Revolution", USNIP, 1922, no.48, p 908; A.P. Lukin, Flot, Paris, n.d., pp 188-89.
1. See above p 229.
2. See Tables, pp 353-55..
3. F.N. Dingel'stedt, 'Vesna proletarskoi revolyutsii', KL, 1925, no.1(12), pp 196, 198-99.

This is odd, given the unanimity of other authors on the strike in the Dockyard and as the beginning of the uprising. In Bolshevik terms, can workers who begin a revolution be backward? These same modern Soviet historians normally list a number of Bolsheviks who led the Kronstadt workers in the February Revolution. One name is common to all lists: M.M. Martynov.¹ One Soviet historian, P.Z. Sivkov, tells us that Martynov was already an active Social Democrat in 1910, when he organised a factory group in Kronstadt.² On the other hand, a modern biographer of Martynov writes that he joined the Bolshevik Party in March 1917.³ This apparently conflicting evidence makes sense only if we assume that in 1910, and until after the February Revolution, Martynov and his factory group were Menshevik, and thus "backward" in the eyes of the Vyborger Dingel'stedt, and unacceptable as members of the Kronstadt Bolshevik Committee in March 1917.

It is, of course, almost compulsory for Soviet authors to describe any "revolutionary" action as being "led by the Bolsheviks" and so it is for the Kronstadt uprising, even leaving aside the

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1. Bogdanov, op.cit., pp 19-20; Stolyarenko, op.cit., p 168; Sivkov, op.cit., p 85; Petrash, op.cit., p 46.
 2. Sivkov, op.cit., p 33.
 3. Geroi oktyabrya, vol.2, p 96.

activities of the Dockyard workers.¹ No-one mentions the Socialist Revolutionaries, except A.V. Bogdanov, who claims that they attempted to "hold the masses back from the uprising"²: an extraordinary statement, given the accepted Soviet views of the past record of the SRs in the Fleet. Although we may probably disregard this statement of Bogdanov's, there are other clues, even in Soviet writings, to the presence of SRs in the leadership of the February Revolution in Kronstadt.

Kolbin, the most commonly cited source for the authorised Bolshevik version, for example, writes at some length of a "comrade" with whom he worked in early February. This "comrade" went to Petrograd to fetch "leaflets and our Party literature". This in itself is odd. Why are the leaflets, distinguished from our Party literature? Could it be because the "comrade" was acting very much in the traditions of 1915 and collecting material from more than one party? The "comrade" was arrested just before the February Revolution. Kolbin describes his arrest in some detail, as the "comrade" had the bunk next to his in barracks. Yet he at no stage tells us his full name. Why not? All Bolsheviks that he meets, however glancingly, are given full names. It cannot be because he has forgotten it, as at one stage he refers to the

1. Bogdanov, op.cit., p 18; Stolyarenko, op.cit., p 168; Sivkov, op.cit., p 85; Petrash, op.cit., p 46; D. Kondakov, "V revolyutsionnom Kronshtadte" in S.F. Naida (ed.), Voennye moryaki..., p 289.

2. Bogdanov, loc.cit.

"comrade" as "Fedya".¹ If we assume Fedya to be an SR, on the other hand, Kolbin's reticence becomes quite comprehensible.

The authorised version refers to two meetings to prepare the uprising: one on the evening of 27 February, which was followed by intensive Bolshevik agitation, and one on the evening of 28 February, which actually drew up the plans for the uprising. The terms in which memoirists refer to this second meeting are interesting. Kolbin refers to it as a "group of activists", Tochenyi as a "Revolutionary Committee" and Pronin as "Soveshchanie partiinoi gruppy, rukovodyashchei vosstaniem",² all of which are ambiguous as to whether the meeting was attended by one party, or more than one.

It may not be unreasonable to assume, then, that the first meeting was in fact a Bolshevik meeting (just as other parties may have been holding similar meetings on the same day), but the second meeting was of representatives of all parties involved in preparing the uprising. This view is consistent with the decision taken at the second meeting to begin the uprising with a burst of machine gun fire from the Fortress Infantry Regiment: a unit that no memoirist and no Soviet historian mentions as being pro-Bolshevik. An all-Bolshevik meeting would be unlikely to entrust something as important as the signal to begin the uprising to a non Bolshevik unit.

1. Kolbin, "Kronshtadt organizuetsya...", pp 23-24.

2. Kolbin, op.cit., p 27; Tochenyi, "Kronshtadty...", p 315; Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., p 20.

The violence of the mutiny in Kronstadt is more difficult to interpret. First of all, it is by no means clear quite how many officers were killed. Most memoirists stress the violence, as did contemporary report. However, a week after the mutiny, Naval General Staff in Petrograd informed the Fleet Commander's staff in Helsingfors that casualties had been fewer than originally thought.¹ One memoirist, who was a naval cadet at the time, records that they were unaware of the mutiny, and indeed slept through the whole affair.² Also, estimates of the numbers killed vary between the modern Soviet figure of twenty-four and an anarchist claim to one hundred and eighty, with the most common figure being thirty-nine.³

The most common explanation and justification, for the violence, whatever it was, is in terms of the special harshness of the pre-revolutionary regime in Kronstadt,⁴ and the hunting down of the most hated officers for vengeance. There is good reason to believe that officer-men relations were worse in Kronstadt than in the rest of the Imperial Navy. Apart from being a dumping-ground

1. Mordvinov, op.cit., p 48.
2. Bakhmetev, "Oktyabr' v fevrale", KB, 1920, no.6, p 37.
3. Petrash, op.cit., p 24; I.". Flerovskii, "Kronshtadtskaya respublika", PR, 1926, no.11(58), p 38; Tochenyi, op.cit., p 318; Izvestiya gel'singforsskogo soveta, 9 April 1917; Mordvinov, op.cit., p 21; Graf, The Russian Navy..., p 143; Lukashevich, "Materialy po istorii russkogo flota", MS, 1920, nos.6/7, p 40; Yarchuk, op.cit., p 5.
4. Yarchuk, loc.cit.; Birzheviya vedomosti, no.16250, 26 May 1917 (morning edition); Novaya zhizn', no.30, 24 May 1917.

for all men considered undesirable for whatever reason,¹ it was also short of officers, and especially short of officers of good calibre, most of whom were naturally to be found in the active Fleet.²

But even if vengeance played some part in the Kronstadt killings, it cannot explain everything. Admiral A.P. Kurosh, for example, who was specially disliked for his role in the "pacification" of Sveaborg after 1906,³ was not killed, although he was arrested and humiliated.

On the other hand, unlike their colleagues in Helsingfors,⁴ the Kronstadt officers did not support the Provisional Government. On 27 February, Colonel B.A. Engel'gart, the Duma Deputy whom M.V. Rodzyanko had entrusted with winning the armed forces to the Duma cause, phoned Admiral A.P. Kurosh, Commander of Kronstadt Fortress. Engel'gart's attempts to sound Kurosh out, and to get him to come to Petrograd for discussions, got nowhere.⁵ On 28

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1. This is something that Admiral R.N. Viren had found alarming in September 1916. Sivkov, op.cit., pp 81-82.
 2. Graf, Na "Novike"; Munich, 1922, pp 291-92; Admiral Kolchak hinted at the unsatisfactory officer-men relations in the Baltic Fleet at the time, although this is somewhat unsatisfactory evidence, as he was attempting to show how good these were in the Fleet under his command (Browder and Kerensky, The Russian Provisional Government, vol.2, p 871).
 3. Graf, The Russian Navy, pp 143-44; "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 122.
 4. See next chapter
 5. Graf, The Russian Navy, p 137; Lukin, Flot, p 182.

February, Admiral Viren summoned a meeting of the senior officers under his command, to see whether Kronstadt forces could be used to put down the revolution in Petrograd. He was dissuaded, not because his officers were sympathetic to the Duma (or if they were, no record of this survives), but because they, realistically, argued that there was no unit in Kronstadt that could be relied on to do the job.¹

During the course of the mutiny itself, some officers supported the mutineers.² This, too, was different from Helsingfors, where, except for Admiral A.S. Maksimov who saw the bunt as a way of furthering his career, the officers could have no common ground with the mutineers. In Kronstadt, however, where a substantial section of the officer corps still remained loyal to the Tsar, or at least declined to switch their allegiance to the Duma, officers of liberal political sentiments could find common cause with the mutiny.

Unlike Helsingfors, where the violence is not explicable in terms of Social Democratic theory, in Kronstadt it is. The mutiny was in support of a larger proletarian and liberal uprising in the capital, and against an officer corps who were at least thinking in terms of using military force in support of the old regime. This is not to deny the presence of SR buntar'

1. Kolbin, "Kronshtadt ot fevralya...", p 135; idem. "Kronshtadt organizuetsya...", pp 26-27; Lukin, Flot pp 181-82.

2. Kolbin, loc.cit.

elements in the uprising. On the contrary, they were most certainly present.¹ However, here in Kronstadt, they found common cause with the Social Democratic and even liberal revolutionaries.

Here again, and in distinction to Helsingfors, the precedent established in 1915 in Kronstadt with the Glavnyi Kollektiv reasserted itself: an SR-SD alliance with the SDs achieving some sort of ideological ascendancy.

THE PRECARIOUS ASCENDANCY OF THE MODERATE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

The relationship between the parties during the mutiny is best seen in the body formed immediately it was over. This was not a soviet, but a seven-man body called the Committee of the Social Movement. It was elected, or more probably acclaimed, on Anchor Square on the morning of 1 March, and it is probably reasonable to assume that its composition was similar, and possibly the same as the "Group of Activists" or "Revolutionary Committee" that had met the day before to plan the uprising. Its composition is interesting: it contained three Bolsheviki, three Socialist Revolutionaries, and one officer of unknown politics.²

The very fact that it was not a Soviet would argue for strong Bolshevik influence inside the Committee. Its first measures were also very much in the Right Bolshevik - Right SR traditions. It took steps to restore public order, banning the

1. Poshekov, op.cit., pp 33-34.

2. See p 351.

sale of spirits, ordering shops to resume trading, ordering the arrest of certain officers but forbidding arrests without its authority, and establishing a guard rota.¹

That evening, in Petrograd, P.N. Milyukov phoned a fellow Kadet Duma Deputy V.N. Pepelyaev and asked him to go to Kronstadt to find out what was going on. Accordingly, Pepelyaev left early next morning, taking another Deputy, Taskin, with him. On their arrival, they were questioned by an armed patrol, but when it was learned that they were Duma Deputies, they were invited to go everywhere, see what they could, and speak to whom they wished. They addressed a number of meetings in various units and were everywhere well received. That evening, they returned to Petrograd accompanied by two members of the Committee of the Social Movement.²

The four of them went straight to the Tauride Palace for talks with the new Minister of War, A.I. Guchkov. The two members of the Committee of the Social Movement asked Guchkov to appoint a new commander of Kronstadt, now that Admiral R.N. Viren was dead. This request was confirmed by a telegram from the remainder of the Committee in Kronstadt, which also confirmed their recognition of the New Government.³ The delegates to Guchkov explained

1. Velikaya oktyabr'skaya sotsialisticheskaya revolyutsiya khronika sobytii, vol.1, M 1957, p 26.

2. A.K. Drezen (ed.), Burzhuziia i pomeshchiki v 1917 godu, M-L 1932, p 74.

3. In fact not yet formed.

that a new commander would have more chance of being accepted in Kronstadt if he were clearly appointed by the Duma, that a military man would not be acceptable, and that a Duma Deputy would be the best choice. Guchkov asked Pepelyaev if he would do it, and after consulting with Milyukov, Pepelyaev agreed.¹ On the next day, Pepelyaev was appointed "Commissar of the Provisional Government and Commander of Kronstadt Port", a nomination that left him free to negotiate the appointment of a military commander of the Garrison when he could.

The Committee of the Social Movement, however, was not the only body set up in Kronstadt after the mutiny. Army units, naval barracks and ships' companies all set about electing unit committees, as well as a new officer corps. On 2 March, the Committee of the Social Movement tried to take this under its wing by calling an Assembly of Representatives of Units of the Garrison, to which each unit was to send one delegate. This met on 3 March, and a new body, called the Council of Ten, elected from the Assembly and from the Committee, was created as an Executive Committee to the Assembly.²

Pepelyaev returned to Kronstadt on 3 March, accompanied by a certain Vikker, representing the Executive Committee of the

1. Drezen (ed.), op.cit., p 75; A. Blinov, "Pervye revolyutsionnye organy vlasti v Kronshtadte v 1917 godu", in S.F. Naida (ed.), Voennye moryaki v bor'be za pobedu oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii, M 1958, p 135.
2. Blinov, op.cit., pp 136-38.

Petrograd Soviet. They went straight to the Committee of the Social Movement, where Pepelyaev asked for confidence in the Provisional Government which had been set up that day. He then took the chair at a meeting of the Council of Ten. It was here that he received his first setback, for Vikker, to Pepelyaev's horror, proposed that commanders in Kronstadt should all be elected and that "relations between commanders and the Commissar of the Provisional Government should be based on agreement".¹

This was, of course, very much in the spirit of Order No.1 of the Petrograd Soviet, if a little more extreme, and Vikker had presumably come to Kronstadt to prevent the Provisional Government from being able to use the Kronstadt Garrison to disperse the Petrograd Soviet. Not unnaturally, though, Pepelyaev objected to this formulation, as it meant that he could not act without the agreement of the Kronstadt elected commanders and that conversely they need only carry out those Government instructions that they happened to agree with. After some discussion, a compromise formula was found that the Kronstadt commanders would be guided by the orders of the Commissar, and Pepelyaev had to be content with that.²

In fact, the Committee of the Social Movement was quite unrepresentative of feeling in Kronstadt as a whole. One of the reasons for this was the strong Bolshevik representation on it.

1. Drezen (ed.), *op.cit.*, p 75.

2. ibid.; Blinov, op.cit., p 138.

This was most probably the result of the ideological ascendancy that the Bolsheviks had managed to establish in 1915 in the Glavnyi Kollektiv and in the course of the February mutiny itself. Their capacity for organisation, for producing literature, and in the actual mechanics of the mutiny had given them an importance far greater than their numbers warranted. The overwhelming mass of the Kronstadt sailors were Socialist Revolutionary in sentiment (as was to be revealed when the Kronstadt Soviet was eventually elected and the Bolsheviks had only eleven delegates as opposed to one hundred and eight SRs, seventy-two Mensheviks and seventy-seven non-Party).¹ Once the parties became legal, the Bolshevik capacity for illegal organisation was no longer an advantage (although it was to reassert itself before too long) compared to sheer weight of numbers. The cautious Social Democratic policies of recognition of the revolution as bourgeois, the ignoring of the soviets, were not satisfactory to the mass Socialist Revolutionary following who thought in terms of the devolution of power into the Republic of Communes. A conflict of authority began between the Committee of the Social Movement and the Assembly of Representatives of the Garrison.²

1. Petrash, op.cit., p 73.

2. Drezen (ed.), op.cit., p 77. It is somewhat ironic that modern Soviet historians treat the Committee of the Social Movement as "in the hands of the SRs" (Blinov, op.cit., p 135) or that the "Mensheviks and SRs had a significant numerical preponderance" on it (Sivkov, op.cit., p 88). It is not clear whether there were any Mensheviks on it at all. It was the SRs who objected to the Committee as "undemocratic" (Delo naroda, no.2, 16 March 1917), as well they might given the Bolshevik presence out of all proportion to the size of the Party in Kronstadt.

On the other hand, the policies of the Committee were not satisfactory to the largely Menshevik Kronstadt working class (presumably their's were the 72 Menshevik Deputies subsequently elected to the Kronstadt Soviet), who also wanted a soviet of a different kind. In fact, the workers acted first, and on 2 March before Pepelyaev's appointment even, they began electing delegates to a Workers' Soviet. This met for the first time on 5 March.¹ Despite modern Soviet claims to the contrary, there is no evidence of any Bolshevik influence at work here. No Soviet authority can document any Bolshevik office holder in this soviet, whose first chairman, Serov, is of unknown Partiinost' (and therefore certainly not a Bolshevik).² Its second chairman, elected on 13 March, was A.N. Lamanov, a member of the "Non-Party Party", which was the Kronstadt name for the Maximalist SRs.³ This is very much as one should expect, given that the Kronstadt Bolshevik leadership, as expressed in the Committee of the Social Movement, was at best indifferent to the soviets.

The Workers' Soviet's first steps were to regulate conditions of work: on its first day, it raised wages, made foremen elective and introduced the eight-hour working day. It also

1. Blinov, op.cit., pp 136-37.

2. ibid., p 137.

3. Sivkov, op.cit., p 93; the Kronstadt report to the Bolshevik Party's Sixth Congress in August 1917 contains no mention at all of the Kronstadt working class.
Shestoi s'ezd RSDRP(B). Protokoly, M 1958, pp 76-78.

announced that it was "waiting for the formation of a Soviet of Military Deputies for comradely joint work".¹ Within a few days it declared itself responsible for all questions relating to working conditions in the city, and that its decrees were binding to all workers.

Pepelyaev and the Committee of the Social Movement evidently appreciated the threat to their authority that a Workers' and Soldiers' Soviet would represent. Consequently, on 6 March, they announced a project for a three-fold Soviet: a Workers' Soviet, a Military Soviet and a "City Group", under a united Executive Committee.²

The "City Group" was presumably to include the middle class, who were now excluded from the Workers' and Military Soviets, thereby ensuring that at least one third of the Executive Committee would support the Provisional Government's Commissar. Elections to the City Group were called for 9 March. However, as these were by the indirect, complex system of curiae, used in the elections to the pre-revolutionary Duma, the City Group could not wield the authority of the two Soviets, and encountered much hostility from them.³

Elections to the Military Soviet were held on 7 March and this met four days later. One Bolshevnik memoirist describes it

1. Sivkov, op.cit., p 93; Blinov, op.cit., p 137.

2. Drezen (ed.), op.cit., p 77.

3. ibid., p 79; Sivkov, op.cit., p 96

as being "in the hands of zealous defensists and covert Black-Hundreds".¹ In fact, its chairman was a young Socialist-Revolutionary officer, called Krasovskii, and its vice chairman was the non-party Lieutenant Glasko, both of whom had been members of the Committee of the Social Movement. Its secretary was an artilleryman called Zhivotovskii, who was a Menshevik.² There were probably about eleven Bolsheviks in over two hundred delegates.³

However, and again as further evidence that the Bolsheviks had won respect, if not a large membership, on 8 March, two Bolsheviks, neither of whom were Soviet deputies, were appointed to important Soviet posts. The Bolshevik soldier A.M. Lyubovich was made chairman of the Executive Committee of the Military Soviet, and the Bolshevik sailor I.D. Sladkov, just released from

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1. F.N. Dingel'stedt, "Vesna proletarskoi revolyutsii", KL, 1925, no.1(12), p 203.
 2. ibid., p 207; Mordvinov, op.cit., p 389; Drezen (ed.), op.cit., p 297 has Krasovskii as a Menshevik and Zhivotovskii as an SR; Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 207 has them both as Mensheviks.
 3. The memoirs of sailor A.G. Pronin (Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., p 21) list eleven deputies who were elected to the "Revolutionary Committee of the Movement". This is corrected by the editor (ibid., p 331) to "the soviet". Petrash considers this figure to be at least representative (op.cit., p 73). All the names listed by Pronin are from military units, further confirming Bolshevik lack of support among the Kronstadt workers. There were 280 delegates in the joint workers' and military soviet. (ibid., p 72). I have not been able to establish the size of the military soviet by itself. This is not important, as the Bolsheviks apparently had no delegates in the Workers' Soviet.

prison where he was serving sentence for his part in the Glavnyi Kollektiv, was made chairman of the Committee to investigate the officers who had been arrested during the mutiny.¹

The Committee of the Social Movement and the Assembly of Representatives of the Garrison were dissolved on 9 and 10 March.² On 10 March, the new Joint Soviet Executive Committee assumed its functions. The new Joint Soviet Executive Committee met on 11 March.³ This first meeting marked a definite swing away from the Right Bolshevik - Right SR policies of the Committee of the Social Movement and towards Left Populism. It declared that Kronstadt was prepared to come to the aid of the Petrograd Soviet instantly, "on receiving information of any divergence between the Provisional Government and the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies".⁴

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1. Sivkov, op.cit., pp 94-95. Lyubovich's case is not clear. Soviet sources always refer to him as a Bolshevik in this context. His biography in Geroi oktyabrya (vol.2, pp 64-66) states that he joined the RSDLP in 1907. However, the index to the minutes of the April Conference gives the date of his joining the Bolshevik Party as March 1917 (Sed'maya (aprel'skaya) konferentsiya RSDRP (b), M 1958, p 387). Presumably he was a Menshevik from 1907 until March 1917. He may well, then, have been made chairman of the Soviet EC as a Menshevik, not a Bolshevik. This would explain why he was not made a member of the Kronstadt Committee until April, despite his prominence (Mordvinov, op.cit., p 391). Be that as it may, Sladkov was a Bolshevik, and was apparently co-opted, as his name does not appear on Pronin's list (ibid., p 21). It was quite common for soviets to co-opt people who had not been elected. (J.L.Keep, The Russian Revolution, London, 1976, p 121)
 2. Blinov, op.cit., p 139.
 3. Drezen (ed.), op.cit., p 297.
 4. Petrash, op.cit., p 118.

On 12 March, the Kronstadt Military Soviet refused to allow Kronstadt units to take the oath of allegiance to the new Government. Its statement has an unmistakable Maximalist ring:

A free people does not need an oath.
It is not the people who should swear
allegiance to the Provisional Government,
but the Provisional Government to the
people. 1

On the same day, Pepelyaev was asked to acknowledge in writing the receipt of a letter informing him that henceforward the Kronstadt Soviet was the "ruling body" in the town.²

A mere twelve days after its election by acclaim for its leadership of the mutiny, the Committee of the Social Movement was disbanded and its policies reversed. Support for the Provisional Government and acceptance of its Commissar as chairman had been replaced by a complete rejection of the Government and a recognition only of Soviet power. Moderate Bolshevik/Right SR policies had been replaced by Maximalist Populism, and Bolshevik influence was at a very low ebb.

THE VYBORG INTERVENTION

The accepted Soviet version of the relations between the Petrograd and Kronstadt Bolsheviks runs like this: on 3 March, the Petersburg Committee decided to send some organisers to Kronstadt. These arrived there the next day and established the

1. Kolbin, "Kronshtadt ot fevralya...", KL, 1927, no.2(23), p 139; Blinov, op.cit., p 143.
2. Petrash, op.cit., p 118; I.P. Flerovskii, "Kronshtadt-skaya respublika", PR, 1926, no.12(59), p 120.

Kronstadt Committee, with one of the Petersburg Committee-men, Semen Roshal', as its first chairman. This Committee then carried out a Leninist policy, despite the opposition of the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries.¹

A slight variant to this version has appeared in three recently published Soviet histories.² Two of these note that the first group of organisers was sent to Kronstadt by the Vyborg District Committee. However, this is passed over as a point of little significance, and the Vyborg District Bolsheviks are not credited with any major role in creating the legal Kronstadt Organisation. Burdzhhalov, who otherwise follows the traditional approach, also notes the presence of emissaries from the Vyborg District, but makes this a non-party affair, referring to it as "help from the workers of Petrograd". Sivkov also dates the formation of the Kronstadt Committee differently, making it four days later, on 8 March. None of these changes, however, are seen as altering the basic story. It is a most polished account, and, at first sight, there seems no reason to doubt it. Neither, as the books are all solidly footnoted, does there seem reason to doubt the research that produced it. Yet it was this very perfection, the smoothness of the process described that led the

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1. . Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.1, p 145; I.I. Mints, Istoriya velikogo oktyabrya, vol.2, M 1968, p 19; Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., p 334 etc.
 2. Burdzhhalov, Vtoraya russkaya revolyutsiya, vol.2, p 116; S.S. Khesin, Oktyabr'skaya revolyutsiya i flot, pp 57-59, 76; Sivkov, op.cit., pp 100-03.

present writer to look at it again.

Two main sources are used to back this version. The first is the report of V.V. Shmidt to the Seventh Party Conference in April 1917. Shmidt states that "in the very first days of the revolution" the Petersburg Committee paid "especially great attention to Kronstadt".¹ This is somewhat vague, but would certainly seem to be corroborative evidence. However, in the very next breath, Shmidt says "similar attention was paid to Helsingfors". Now this is simply not true, as we shall see in the next chapter. Here we may merely counterpose Shmidt's statement with that of a fellow member of the Petersburg Committee, V.N. Zalezhskii, who wrote that the Petersburg Committee did not give the work in Finland any serious consideration during March and, even forgot about it.² If we look more closely at the context of Shmidt's remarks, they seem far less convincing. He was giving the report on behalf of the Petersburg Committee, in reply to the attacks made on it for its Conciliationist policies during March. He was pleading a case: that the Committee did some good work in spite of its mistaken policies. As his comment on Helsingfors demonstrates, he was carried away by his own argument. His testimony, therefore, tells us nothing about Kronstadt unless supported by other evidence.

1. Sed'maya (aprel'skaya) vserossiiskaya konferentsiya RSDRP(b). Protokoly, p 203.
2. V.N. Zalezhskii, Bor'ba za Baltiiskii flot, M-L 1925, p 11.

The other, and major source is the collection of Minutes of the Petersburg Committee for 1917, edited by P.F. Kudelli.¹ S.S. Khesin, for example, writes that the Petersburg Committee discussed Kronstadt on five occasions during March: on 3, 7, 15, 18 and 20 March. In support of this he cites pages 26-28, 43-47, 52-53, 57 and 58 of Kudelli's book.² This looks convincing: five dates and five references. We are further reassured to find that Mordvinov also cites page 27 of Kudelli's book to support his claim that the Petersburg Committee sent organisers to Kronstadt on 3 March.³

From these two references, we should conclude that pages 26-28 refer to the Petersburg Committee Session of 3 March. In fact, they refer to the session of 7 March, when Kronstadt was indeed discussed. The Minutes for 3 March appear on pages 9-10, which are not cited by any historian in connection with this affair: not surprisingly, as they contain no reference to Kronstadt. Oddly enough, the source for the story that the Petersburg Committee discussed Kronstadt on 3 March and decided to send organisers, comes much later in the book, on page 57. Here, it occurs not in the text, but in Kudelli's notes to the session of 18 March. At this session, the Petersburg Committee

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1. P.F. Kudelli (ed.), Pervyi legal'nyi Peterburgskii komitet bol'shevikov v 1917 godu, L 1927
 2. Khesin, Oktyabr'skaya revolyutsiya i flot, p 58; idem. "Russkii flot i sverzhenie samoderzhaviya" in Sverzhenie samoderzhaviya. Sbornik statei, M 1970, p 192.
 3. Mordvinov, op.cit., p 333.

did decide to send organisers to Kronstadt. Kudelli notes that a similar decision had been made on 3 March. She vaguely gives her source as the writings of Zalezhskii, but gives no specific reference.¹ Nor does she explain why neither discussion nor decision appear in the Minutes for 3 March. She does, however, list the organisers sent out on 3 March: Roshal', Orlov, Raskol'nikov and Zhemchuzhin. All of these are contradicted elsewhere.² She contradicts herself about Raskol'nikov on another page in her own book, where she notes that he was sent out on 8 March in response to a Petersburg Committee decision of 7 March.³ That this is also false need not detain us here. All that we need to note is that the evidence for the early intervention of the Petersburg Committee seems less conclusive than it did.

Our suspicions are raised further if we consider the history of the book itself. It was published in 1927, at the height of the struggle against the Left Opposition. At the time, Trotsky attacked it as having been edited to suit the Party line. He accused Kudelli of omitting one whole session, that of 1 November 1917, because it contained material embarrassing to the Party majority in 1927. His article, complete with photographs of the galley proofs and containing the text of the missing minutes, is convincing.⁴

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1. See above p249 where Zalezhskii says the opposite.
 2. Dingel'stedt, op.cit., pp 200, 202; Geroi oktyabrya, vol.1, p 149.
 3. Kudelli (ed.), op.cit., p 28.
 4. L.D. Trotsky, "The Lost Document", passim.

This does not mean that the book should be rejected completely. There is much valuable material in the text of the minutes, whatever has been cut out. It does mean, however, that the footnotes should be treated with caution, as they are directly subject to Party editorial policy.

One book we have cited does not use either source. This is Shlyapnikov's, which antedates Kudelli by some five years. It is probably much more honest than Kudelli's, but is subject to many of the same provisos. It was written at the time when Shlyapnikov was leader of the Workers' Opposition, just after the Tenth Party Congress. What is remarkable about the book, considering the fact that Shlyapnikov was one of the major participants in the faction fight in March 1917, is how uninformative it is. There are a few hints, a few complaints about particularly loathed opponents, but no systematic study. It is an altogether coy book by the leader of a faction written at the time when factions had just been banned.

A closer look at the evidence suggests quite a different story.

On 1 March, two sailors who had been imprisoned in Petrograd for their part on the Glavnyi Kollektiv, returned to Kronstadt. One, T.I. Ul'yantsev, was a Bolshevik; the other, S.G. Pelikhov, a Socialist Revolutionary, but they had worked together during the War and had been in prison together. Not liking what they saw in Kronstadt, they returned to Petrograd on

2 March to look for help.¹

In Petrograd, they went first of all to the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, which suggests that their dissatisfaction had been about the lack of a soviet in Kronstadt. However, they got no satisfaction there (at least, they thought so, but Vikker's trip to Kronstadt on 3 March may have been provoked by their visit).² They then went round to the offices of the Vyborg District Committee where they were warmly received. That evening, they were taken to a meeting of the Vyborg District Soviet, where a delegation of some five or six people was chosen to go over to Kronstadt.³ The only available memoirs of this delegation are both written by Bolsheviks, who both speak of it as a Bolshevik Party delegation. This seems unlikely. Pelikhov, after all, one of the two sailors from Kronstadt was not a Bolshevik, but an SR, although shortly to join the Bolshevik Party. He would, surely, have been on the look-out for suitable SRs. Also, if it were a Party delegation, why the need to go to the Soviet? Could it not have been chosen at the offices of the Party Committee? Finally, both Dingel'stedt and Gordienko agree that there were five or six people in the delegation, but only name four, only three of whom are clearly Bolsheviks. Possibly then, this was a mixed Bolshevik-SR delegation, and this may be what Burdzhalov is hinting at when, unlike all other Soviet historians, he refers to it not as

1. I.M. Gordienko, "Pis'mo v redaktsiyu", KL, 1926, no.6(21), p 188.
2. See above p 240; Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 195.
3. Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 195; Gordienko, "V Kronshtadte v 1917 godu", KL, 1926, no.1(16), pp 44-46.

a Bolshevik group but as "help from the workers of Petrograd".¹

On arrival in Kronstadt, on 3 March, the delegation was taken to one of the Naval Shore Establishments (Flotskii poluekipazh) where they were received somewhat coldly. One of the delegation interpreted this as resentment by the Kronstadt sailors of the criticism of the way they were conducting their affairs implied in the arrival of the delegation.²

The Vyborgers began to explain their view of the revolution. Not surprisingly, in a place where there was a long tradition of Maximalist politics, they immediately found a response among members of the unit. Some, however, were alarmed and rushed off to inform Pepelyaev (at three o'clock in the morning, as he recalled!)³

The next day the Vyborgers spent some seven hours in discussion with Pepelyaev. Gordienko and Dingel'stedt had been quite happy to do this, but had some difficulty in persuading some of the anonymous members of their group who refused to go unless armed with revolvers (a touch which would further tend to indicate a Maximalist presence).⁴ As might have been expected, the

1. See above p 248.

2. Gordienko, "Pis'mo v redaktsiyu", KL, 1926, no.6(21), p 188.

3. Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 197; Gordienko, "V Kronshtadte v 1917 godu", KL, 1926, no.1(16), p 47; Drezen (ed.), op.cit., pp 75-76.

4. Dingel'stedt, op.cit., pp 197-98; Gordienko, op.cit., pp 50-51; Drezen (ed.), op.cit., p 76.

discussions were satisfactory to neither party. The Vyborg Group eventually left Pepelyaev, saying that they could spend their time more fruitfully elsewhere, and continued to agitate around Kronstadt. Pepelyaev sent a member of the Council of Ten over to the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, where he reported:

...that the situation [in Kronstadt] was very serious, because of clashes between naval and land forces. The arrival of representatives of the Soviet of Deputies of the Vyborg Side, criticising the Provisional Government and the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies had made matters much worse. It was decided to send over a number of Soviet members. 1

That same evening, 4 March, the Kronstadt Bolsheviks, with the help of the Bolsheviks in the Vyborg Delegation, elected a new Committee. This was immediately recognised as legitimate by the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee.² Without access to archives, it is not possible to be certain about the composition of the Kronstadt Committees in these early days. Soviet sources are somewhat vague, making great use of that save-all term "and others" ("i drugie"). As far as one can make out, however, a preliminary committee had been set up on 1 March. This had included, Sladkov, Pelikhov and Ul'yantsev, all members of the Glavnyi Kollektiv, and Zinchenko, also recently released from prison. It

1. Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, in Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.2, p 297. The clashes had possibly been between the crowds demanding the Vyborgers' blood and those who defended them. Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 197; Gordienko, 'V Kronshtadte v 1917 godu', KL, 1926, no.1, p 47.
2. Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., p 334.

was chaired by V.I. Zaitsev, of the Committee of the Social Movement, and it might be reasonable to believe that "the other younger comrades" were the other two members of the Committee of the Social Movement, S.S. Gredyushko and F.V. Gromov. The Committee was not elected, but apparently nominated by Zaitsev.¹ The lists of those appointed on 4 March are also incomplete, but strikingly the most reliable of them, although it maintains Gredyushko, omits the names of Zaitsev and Gromov.²

The next two days were eventful ones for the Vyborg delegation. Their views were warmly received in some places, but in others met with such hostility that one of their number lost his wits.³ On 5 March, they attended a meeting of the Assembly of Representatives of Units of the Garrison. Here, Dingel'stedt's speech insisting on the building of soviets, and contrasting Rodzyanko's abortive order that the troops obey their officers with Order No.1 of the Petrograd Soviet, met with great favour, despite an initially cold reception. While they were in there, however, the Assembly had to put them into protective custody, to

1. Sivkov, op.cit., p 100.

2. These names are on lists given by many Soviet historians, but these also list Roshal', who did not go to Kronstadt until 7 March. I have therefore discounted them for reasons that should become obvious. Mordvinov, loc.cit., omits their names. By subtly phrasing he manages to convey the impression that Roshal' was there, but on closer examination it can be seen that he does not actually say so. I have consequently accepted his list.

3. Gordienko, "Pis'mo v redaktsiyu", KL, 1926, no.6(21), p 188.

save them from a hostile crowd outside. Crowds also gathered outside the Poluekipazh barracks demanding that the Vyborgers be handed over, apparently for a lynching.¹

That afternoon, Glaskov, the chairman of the Assembly, organised a mass meeting so that 'misunderstandings' about the Vyborgers could be cleared up. With the Assembly behind them, the Vyborgers were overwhelmingly well received:

The crowd listened to us, recalled Dingel'stedt, with approval, showing disapproval only when Rodzyanko or Milyukov were mentioned, and interrupted us with shouts of agreement when we spoke of the need for active support for the Soviet, not merely expressions of faith in it. 2

By way of contrast, the two delegates sent over by the Petrograd Soviet, M.I. Broido and F. Yudin, both Mensheviks, addressed another meeting together with Commissar Pepelyaev. As Pepelyaev told the Duma Committee:

...with intelligence and great goodwill towards the Provisional Government, they explained the agreement which existed between the Duma Committee and the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. They appealed to their audience not to listen to provocatory rumours and appeals.

The meeting ended with the three of them symbolically embracing on the platform. "Suspicious towards the Provisional Government",

1. Gordienko, "V Kronshtadte v 1917 godu", KL, 1926, no.1(16), pp 53-54; Dingel'stedt, op.cit., pp 199-200; Drezen (ed.), op.cit., p 77.

2. Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 199.

Pepelyaev subsequently said rather sadly, were allayed, "but not for long".¹

THE FACTIONS FIGHT TO CONTROL KRONSTADT

After their good reception at the meeting organised by the Assembly, the Vyborg Group felt that they had achieved what they wanted. Most of them returned to Petrograd that evening, leaving Pelikhov and Ul'yantsev in Kronstadt to maintain contact.

Dingel'stedt left on the morning of the next day, 6 March, accompanied by Vladimir Zaitsev, one of the Bolshevik members of the Committee of the Social Movement, who had just been appointed as Kronstadt's representative to the Petrograd Soviet.² On the evening of the next day, 7 March, Zaitsev addressed the Petersburg Committee, asking it to nominate one of its members to be an adviser (rukovoditel') to the Kronstadt Committee.³ This is the first time that there is any mention of Kronstadt in the minutes of the Petersburg Committee.

A number of questions arise here. Zaitsev left Kronstadt on the morning of 6 March. The journey to Petrograd would have taken around two hours, so he would have been in the capital by the early afternoon at the latest. Yet some thirty hours elapsed

1. Drezen (ed.), op.cit., p 77; Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 200.

2. Dingel'stedt, loc.cit.

3. Kudelli (ed.), op.cit., p 71.

before he turned up at the Petersburg Committee, although this latter was in session during the evening of the day on which he arrived.¹ This delay might be explained if we assume that, despite some personal reservations, Zaitsev had accepted the policies of the Vyborg District as representative of thought in the capital. On his arrival in Petrograd, he realised for the first time the extent of the divisions between the different groups there. It was in talking to him, that individual members of the Petersburg Committee realised also for the first time that Vyborg District Bolsheviki were organising support for their policies outside their own territorial limits. At the very least, the Petersburg Committee should insist that its views were heard in Kronstadt, and Zaitsev, who had personally lost influence there since the Vyborg intervention, was asked to make a formal request to the Petersburg Committee for help. Two members of the Petersburg Committee were ordered to go to Kronstadt so that "its opinions might be clearly expressed there".² They were Semen Roshal', who was to be the Kronstadt Committee's "leader" and Kirill Orlov, who was to liaise between Kronstadt and the Petersburg Committee.³

The two men were well chosen. Orlov knew Kronstadt well, and had just emerged from prison where he had been serving sentence

1. ibid., pp 20-23.

2. ibid., p 26.

3. Sivkov, op.cit., pp 102-03; Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 200.

for his liaison work with the Glavnyi Kollektiv. Unlike his fellow prisoners Ul'yantsev and Pelikhov, however, his views did not incline towards Maximalist Populism. In fact, he was on the extreme right of the Petersburg Committee, holding views very close to those of Kamenev.¹ It was possibly for this reason that Pelikhov and Ul'yantsev had avoided him, their natural contact, when they came over to Petrograd on 2 March. Roshal' was quite different. He was just 21, Jewish and middle class, a student in neuro-physiology, not, at first sight, the ideal choice for organising sailors. However, in his three years in the Bolshevik Party, this ex-Menshevik had gained very varied experience of political work in the Putilov Works Social Insurance Board, where he had won the grudging respect of some worker Bolsheviks, and among the troops at the front and in Petrograd, for which he had been imprisoned in Kresty from December 1915 until the February Revolution.² His political views were those of the majority of the Petersburg Committee.³

The two men left for Kronstadt that night. On the next day, 8 March, the Kronstadt Bolsheviks held their first general assembly.

1. A.F. Il'in-Zhenevskii, "Gel'singfors vesnoyu 1917 goda", KL, 1925, no.2(13), p 223.
2. G.G. Roshal', "Iz zhizni 'Doktora'", KL, 1923, no.5, pp 313-16; "Podpol'naya rabota v Petrograde v gody imperialisticheskoi voiny (1914-1917gg) Rasskazy rabochikh", KL, 1922, nos.2/3, p 124; E.V. Gorbetskii, Kronshtadtskii tribun Roshal', L 1927, pp 10ff.
3. S.G. Roshal', "Nashi tseli", Golos pravdy, no.10, 26 March 1917.

This was the first opportunity they had had, as a body, to discuss their attitude to the Provisional Government. We may assume that Orlov and Roshal' expressed the views of the Petersburg Committee forcefully and convinced the Kronstadters that their acceptance of the Vyborg line had been somewhat hasty, for they re-elected the Committee, with Roshal' and Orlov as members. Vladimir Zaitsev, who had been dropped on 4 March, presumably for his moderate views, was brought back onto the Committee.¹

The Kronstadt Committee now contained spokesmen for the policies of both the Vyborg District Committee and of the Petersburg Committee. The formation of this compromise Committee had not been a smooth process, but had taken some eight days of chopping and changing to complete, a long period for the election of ten men. It is from 8 March that the Kronstadt delegate to the April Conference dated the formation of the Kronstadt Committee, not 4 March, the date of its recognition by the Central Committee.²

Meanwhile, Pepelyaev, already worried by the impact of Vyborg-type agitation, was further alarmed by the arrival of the two Bolshevik organisers on 7 March. Wrongly believing these to be reinforcements to the Vyborg delegation, he sent a panicky cable to Petrograd asking for permission to use force against the poluekipazh, which the Vyborgers had used as their base, as it was

1. See Tables 2-4, in Appendix pp 353-55.

2. Sed'maya (aprel'skaya)vserossiiskaya konferentsiya RSDRP(b). Protokoly, p 125.

"completely under the influence of anti-state revolutionaries".¹

This was refused him despite his trip to Petrograd the next day where he reported to the Provisional Government and to the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, of

...the beating of officers, their arrest in large numbers, the complete absence of officers in positions of command, ships' commanders elected from among the sailors themselves. The Fleet has ceased to exist as a fighting force. 2

Quite a different interpretation of the significance of the sending of Petersburg Committee members to Kronstadt, was made on the Vyborg Side. On 10 March, Dingel'stedt returned to Kronstadt, bringing with him Boris Zhemchuzhin.³ Zhemchuzhin was a member of the Petersburg Committee, but there is reason to believe that he was part of its radical minority. It has not been possible to establish exactly what his views were in early March and he is described as being rather quiet at Party meetings.⁴ However, later in the month, he went to Helsingfors where he is reported to have been thrown overboard the battleship Petropavlovsk for the radicalness of his views.⁵ Also, the fact that Dingel'stedt brought him to Kronstadt is in itself suggestive.

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1. Drezen (ed.), op.cit., p 77; Mordvinov (ed), op.cit., p 48.
 2. Khesin, Oktyabr'skaya revolyutsiya i flot, p 70; Mordvinov (ed.), loc.cit.; Drezen (ed.), op.cit., pp 77-78.
 3. Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 202.
 4. F.F. Raskol'nikov, Na boevykh postakh, M 1964, p 27.
 5. Zalezhskii, Bor'ba za Baltiiskii flot, p 13.

His arrival was timely. On 7 March, the Kronstadt Bolsheviks, presumably worried at the rapid loss of their Party's influence since 1 March, decided that they needed a printed newspaper. Initially, they thought in terms of reprinting Pravda in Kronstadt, and adding an extra page for local news.¹ On the same day, the Petersburg Committee agreed to send them regular shipments of Pravda.² Zhenchuzhin, an intellectual, would be of great value in writing this extra page, and on 10 March, the day of his arrival, the Bolsheviks proposed to the Soviet that the printing works of the local Naval gazette, Kronshtadtskii vestnik, be requisitioned for them.³

Here, they ran into some trouble as, although the Soviet at first approved the plan, later on in the same day, perturbed at the thought of a one-party monopoly of the press, it decided to use the printing works for its own Izvestiya, in which all parties would get a hearing. One of the chief spokesmen for using the printing works for the Izvestiya was A.M. Lyubovich, at that time either still a Menshevik or newly recruited to the right wing of the Kronstadt Bolshevik Party. He was, in fact, to become the first editor of the Izvestiya of the Kronstadt Soviet.⁴

The prospect of a local edition of Pravda alarmed Pepelyaev

1. Blinov, op.cit., p 140. .
2. Kudelli (ed.), op.cit., p 27.
3. Geroi oktyabrya, vol.1, p 419; Sivkov, op.cit., pp 108-09.
4. Sivkov, loc.cit.

even more than he was before. On 11 March he went to Petrograd, and again addressed the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet.¹ This latter decided to send its most powerful delegation yet: M.I. Skobelev, the Menshevik Deputy to the Fourth State Duma, and his entourage of Right SR sailors and soldiers, whose recent mission to Helsingfors had been so successful.² On 12 March, the delegation was made yet stronger when the Bolshevik Duma Deputy, M.K. Muranov, probably the most influential Bolshevik inside Russia at the time, returned to Petrograd from his Siberian exile and agreed to accompany Skobelev to Kronstadt.³ On 13 March the delegation left for Kronstadt, where it stayed for three days.

The Skobelev-Muranov mission to Kronstadt was not a great success. They addressed meetings, stressing the need to strengthen relations between the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government. They read the Petrograd Soviet's Manifesto "To the Peoples of the Whole World". They were everywhere backed by Pepelyaev. In their report back to Petrograd they tried to smooth things over by explaining the political excitement in Kronstadt in terms of its being "badly informed" about relations between the Petrograd

1. Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.2, p 309.

2. See pp 273ff.

3. Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 206; IPS, no.17, 17 March 1917. Modern Soviet sources are remarkably reticent about this delegation. Khesin, Oktyabr'skaya revolyutsiya i flot, p 49, for example, omits it from his long list of what he contemptuously calls "strolling players" (gastroli).

Soviet and the Provisional Government. The "excesses" in February were put down to the "bad organisation" of the revolutionary movement in Kronstadt.¹

On the other hand, the implications of Muranov's presence in the delegation, combined as it was with Kamenev and Stalin's re-emergence on Pravda, were not lost on the Party leaders in Petrograd.² The Central Committee acted first. On 10 March, as we have seen, the Kronstadt Bolsheviks were speaking of issuing a local reprint of Pravda. On 14 March, the day after the Muranov-Skobelev mission arrived in Kronstadt, the Central Committee sent P.I. Smirnov there.³ On 15 March, while the mission was still there, the Kronstadt Bolsheviks bought out the first issue of their paper. It was not just a reprint of Pravda, but a completely new and separate paper Golos pravdy, written and published in Kronstadt, although it did contain some material from Pravda.

This decision cannot be seen as a normal part of events. The Party was short of money and of people with the literary skills necessary to publish newspapers. Only ten days earlier, the Petersburg Committee had had to put up with having a representative on Pravda's editorial board rather than publish its own paper.⁴

1. IPS, no.17, 17 March 1917.

2. Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.2, pp 187-88.

3. I.N. Kolbin, "Kronshtadt ot fevralya...", KL, 1927, no.2 (23), p 138.

4. "Protokoly i rezolyutsii Byuro TsK...", VIKPSS, 1962, no.3, p 136. The inclusion of the Petersburg Committee's name on Pravda's masthead upset some members of the Russian Bureau who were worried about being associated with "Liquidators". ibid., p 138.

On the other hand, Muranov's presence on the right of the Party was making itself felt in all manner of ways. He did not spend the whole three days, 13-15 March, in Kronstadt, but travelled back and forth, attending Central Committee and Soviet meetings. On 14 March he had broken Party discipline in the Petrograd Soviet by welcoming the official resolution of the Executive Committee, despite a Central Committee decision to oppose it. Pravda of 15 March contained Kamenev's article supporting the War. This must have been written at least by 14 March, and if its contents were then known to Shlyapnikov, could by itself have led him to act. In fact, No.1 of Golos pravdy contained an article attacking the War. The Central Committee had temporarily allied with the Vyborg District Committee and with Kronstadt. Golos pravdy was aptly named. It was the voice that Pravda was in danger of losing.

The Muranov-Kamenev group's reaction was to send their own man, F.F. Raskol'nikov, to take over Golos pravdy. He arrived in Kronstadt on 17 March.¹

1. Raskol'nikov himself claims that he went at Molotov's request in response to urgent pleas from Kronstadt itself (F.F. Raskol'nikov, Kronshtadt i Piter v 1917 godu, L 1925, p.20). However, by his own account, he reported to Kamenev weekly (ibid., p 48). Also, on 3 April the Bolsheviks went to meet Lenin in Beloostrov in two groups, one led by Shlyapnikov, one led by Kamenev. Raskol'nikov was in Kamenev's group (idem. "Priezd tov.Lenina v Rossiyu" PR, 1923, no.1, p 220). He also praises Kamenev in this same article (p 226). I have concluded from this that, despite his subsequent record as a Party Left, Raskol'nikov was a rightist at this time. Also, he was secretary of Pravda in 1912 when it was at its most conciliatory.

On the next day, the disputes inside the Bolshevik Party took a new turn, breaking into the non-party press. The Izvestiya of the Petrograd Soviet was edited by a Right Bolshevik, V.D. Bonch-Bruevich. Encouraged perhaps by Muranov, who must have been outraged by the appearance of Golos pravdy while he was in Kronstadt, and especially by the fact that its first issue called for opposition to the War and to the new oath of allegiance,¹ Bonch-Bruevich published an attack on Golos pravdy in the Izvestiya. It was a report, supposedly from the Kronstadt Soviet, saying that it had found the publication of Golos pravdy to be harmful, that it received no support from either section of the armed forces in Kronstadt, and that it had requisitioned for Party ends the editorial offices and print works intended for the Kronstadt Soviet's own Izvestiya.² It was a shrewd attack: given the Bolshevik reputation for placing the Party before all else, the average reader of Izvestiya would be likely to believe it, and nothing would be more likely to drive a wedge between the Left Bolsheviks and their Maximalist allies than the belief that the former were diverting Soviet property to Party ends.

That evening, Kirill Orlov, also sympathetic to Kamenev, attacked from a different angle. He complained to the Petersburg Committee that an article of Dingel'stedt's published a week prev-

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1. It called the new oath of allegiance a "criminal attack by the Provisional Government on the rights of the people, and on the freedom won by the revolution". Golos pravdy, no.1, 15 March 1917.
 2. IPS, no.18, 18 March 1917.

iously in Pravda had distorted the facts about the situation there.¹ Ol'minskii who now had reasons of his own to dislike the Kamenev-Muranov-Stalin group, for all his conciliationism,² summoned Dingel'stedt, accepted his assurances that he had written the truth, and told him to write a reply to the article in the Petrograd Izvestiya. Bonch-Bruevich published this in the next issue, but with it a further "statement from the Kronstadt Soviet". This one accused "Pravda representatives of holding up Soviet proceedings with demagogic speeches", and of "deceiving the editors of Pravda itself with reports that distorted the facts". This drew a further indignant letter from Dingel'stedt.³

Four days later, on 27 March, Kronstadt Soviet deputy Kuranin reported on a strange incident that had occurred during a trip to Petrograd on Soviet business. He had called on General Potapov, only to discover there a rival delegation from Kronstadt headed by Zhivotovskii, the former secretary to the Kronstadt Soviet. Zhivotovskii had denounced Kuranin as an imposter, but fortunately Potapov cabled Kronstadt, and Kuranin's bona fides was established.⁴ It transpired that the authors of the reports to the Petrograd Izvestiya and the leaders of the fictitious delegation were the same people: Zhivotovskii and Krasovskii,

1. Kudelli (ed.), op.cit., p 52.

2. See p 187.

3. Dingel'stedt, op.cit., pp 206-07; IPS, no.20, 21 March 1917.

4. IKS, no.9, 29 March 1917.

who were disgruntled at having been so speedily removed from their Soviet offices. The matter was now fairly easily and swiftly cleared up by a further letter from Dingel'stedt to the Petrograd Izvestiya.¹ It is nonetheless indicative of the sharpness of the divisions in the Party at the time that a Bolshevik editor should publish so fraudulent an attack on another section of his own Party, either without checking it first, or else knowing it to be false.

Meanwhile, as the factions battled for control over Golos pravdy, the procession of litterateurs from the Capital to Kronstadt continued. On 18 March, Orlov had asked for help from the Petersburg Committee. The Petersburg Committee responded by sending two more men: Ivar Smilga and Viktor Deshevoi.²

In one respect, the Party's rights won this battle. Although it did not adopt, quite, the policies advocated by the Pravda Group in Petrograd, Golos pravdy became much milder in its attitude towards the Provisional Government, and censored Lenin's "Letters from Afar" in the same way as did Pravda, although Raskol'nikov had read the original of No.1 in full.³

On the other hand, those Bolsheviks who were sent to Kronstadt were becoming infected with the Maximalist Populism that

1. IPS, no.30, 1 April 1917.
2. Kudelli (ed.), op.cit., p 57.
3. Raskol'nikov, Kronshtadt i Piter v 1917 godu, p 43; Golos pravdy, no.11, 28 March 1917; no.12, 29 March 1917.

predominated there. It became clear to them fairly quickly that the Kronstadt Soviet had already assumed de facto power on the island,¹ that this was immensely popular, and that no policy that omitted support for local Soviet power stood a chance of being accepted. Similarly the only acceptable policy on war was one that opposed it utterly.

On the latter issue the Kronstadt Bolsheviks had never wavered. Golos pravdy may have adopted a mild policy towards the Government, but it was firmly opposed to the War throughout this period. It is no accident that the first resolution that the Kronstadt Bolsheviks were able to get passed by the Kronstadt Soviet was one against the War.² This occurred on 14 March, at the time of the Skobelev-Muranov mission.

On 23 March, demonstrations and meetings were held in Kronstadt to mark the burial of the "Victims of the Revolution".³ Some fifty to sixty thousand people are reported to have turned out in Kronstadt, and this was followed by further demonstrations and meetings on 24, 25 and 26 March. Carried away by the atmosphere and by the other orators, and intoxicated by the response they got, even the more right-wing Bolsheviks like Roshal' and Raskol'nikov began adopting the Vyborg line. Likewise,

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1. Sed'maya (aprel'skaya) vserossiiskaya konferentsiya. RSDRP(b). Protokoly, p 135
 2. Khesin, Oktyabr'skaya revolyutsiya i flot, p 75.
 3. Not the Kronstadt officers, of course, but the people killed in Petrograd by the half-hearted attempts to put down the Revolution.

Golos pravdy denounced the war, associating Milyukov and Guchkov with the expansionist policy of the former Tsarist Government, and asserting the Petrograd Soviet's right to take power.¹

The excitement of those four days of meetings brought home to the Kronstadt Bolsheviks that only if they adopted the policies of the Vyborg District Committee could they hope to regain the influence they had lost since the disbanding of the Committee of the Social Movement. From this time on the Kronstadt Committee could be counted on as a firm ally of the Vyborg District Committee. Together, they were to take the campaign for their policies further: this time to Helsingfors.

1. Dingel'stedt, op.cit., pp 208-09; Golos pravdy, no.9, 25 March 1917; ibid., no.11, 28 March 1917.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SECOND STEP TOWARDS

A LEFT FACTION: HELSINGFORS

THE TEMPORARY SUBMERGENCE OF MAXIMALIST POPULISM

Admiral Nepenin was not the last victim of the mutiny. For some hours after his death, the Petropavlovsk continued to send signals to other ships, demanding the arrest or execution of certain officers, and could still inspire enough fear or allegiance to have those orders obeyed. Also, apparently spontaneous killings of officers occurred over the next few days.¹ However, these were merely the sporadic twitchings of the tail-end of Maximalist predominance. Moderate policies were reasserting themselves, either because the sailors were revolted by the murders, especially the murder of officers who had welcomed the new Government, or simply because the main body of them had never really been as extreme as the leaders of the mutiny, and now felt able to assert themselves.

Two hours after Nepenin's death, the Duma Mission, headed by the Kadet Deputy F.I. Rodichev, who had just been appointed Minister for Finland, and the Menshevik Deputy M.I. Skobelev, arrived in Helsingfors. The huge crowd which had been awaiting their arrival on Station Square since morning frequently interrupted their speeches with cheering, and then carried them shoulder-high to their cars.² They addressed the newly elected members to

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1. "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), pp 110-13;
Graf, Na "Novike", p 287; D.A., "Den' 4 marta na kreisere",
VB, 1959, no.34, p 6.
 2. IPS, no.9, 8 March 1917; Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., pp 39-40.

the local Soviet who had assembled on board the flag-ship Krechet, before going ashore to the Morskoe Sobranie for the Soviet's inaugural meeting. Accompanied by Admiral A.S. Maksimov, they visited all ships, urging the men to be reconciled with their officers. Everywhere, they were overwhelmingly well met.¹

In the short run, the assassination of Admiral Nepenin was convenient for the Provisional Government, as it enabled it to side-step the problems raised by Maksimov's election by the sailors to be Commander of the Baltic Fleet. With Nepenin dead, there was no obstacle to a Government Order appointing Maksimov as his successor. This was duly issued.² In the short run, too, this measure, which apparently confirmed the men's right to elect their commanders, enhanced the authority of the Provisional Government, and of its representatives, Skobelev and Rodichev.

Maksimov himself, and the new Soviet, did what they could to re-establish discipline and moderation. The Soviet cancelled all shore leave, ordered that signals from individual ships be disregarded, that only orders issued by the Executive Committee of the Soviet should be obeyed, and that anyone disregarding these should be arrested. Maksimov, meanwhile, lifted the state of siege, banned the carrying of weapons in the streets, ordered

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1. Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., pp 37, 39-40; 'Dnevnik Rengartena', KA, 1929, no.1(32), pp 110-11.
 2. Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., p 34.

that the officers be released and normal duties resumed, and announced that a Committee of Enquiry would be established to investigate both the officers and the reasons for their arrest. A statement signed by the Soviet leaders, and by Rodichev and Skobelev, promised that a list of reforms would soon be presented to the Petrograd Soviet and that, in the meantime, all demands for reforms to the economy or to the conditions of service life should cease. The statement also announced that the only Naval authorities in Helsingfors were the Executive Committee of the Soviet, and the Fleet Commander.¹

At midnight on 4 March, all ships extinguished their red lights, and in the morning, battle ensigns were not raised. The Andrei Pervozvannyi alone refused to comply until its demands be met. However, this threat and an attempt to revive the sentiments of the previous day's mutiny with a leaflet, supposedly issued by the Tsar and calling for an uprising to restore his throne, were dealt with without too much difficulty. As 5 March was a Sunday, religious services were held on board all ships as normal. Armed patrols, commanded by officers, maintained order ashore over the next few days.²

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1. IGS, no.1, 9 March 1917; no.2, 11 March 1917; IPS, no.9, 8 March 1917; Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., pp 37, 41-42, 44.
 2. Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., pp 40, 43; IPS, no.9, 8 March 1917; Graf, op.cit., pp 278ff; 'Dnevnik Rengartena', KA, 1929, no.1(32), pp 111-13. Is it too much to see the hands of the Maximalists behind this leaflet, with its echoes of the famous Populist appeal in 1877 to the peasants of Chigirin Uezd, Kiev Guberniya, that the Tsar wanted them to seize the Gentry's lands? (David Field, Rebels in the Name of the Tsar, Boston, 1976, pp 172-74)

On 5 March, the Executive Committee of the Soviet was able to thank all units for restoring order. On 6 March, the Soviet plenary session declared that it was

...necessary to allow officers back to their units immediately, to reach agreement with them and to establish new relations with them based on mutual confidence and rights. 1

That same day, four officers, one of whom was Captain Rengarten, a former member of Admiral Nepenin's staff, were elected to the Executive Committee of the Soviet, and the regulations governing soviet elections were drawn up specifically to provide for officer representation. On 8 March, Rodichev reprimanded the Executive Committee of the Soviet for its treatment of officers, and on 9 March, the EC decided to ask Maksimov to propose that officers be returned their weapons. Three days later, the Commission to investigate officers and their arrest began work. Initially, at least, the Executive Committee of the Soviet was chaired by an officer, mostly by Captain Rengarten, and from 23 March, the Soviet Plenary sessions were chaired by a Social Democratic officer, Sergei Garin. On one occasion, at least, it was chaired by a general.²

The Soviet was also moderate in its statements of general policy. One of its first acts was to send a telegram to Rodzyanko

1. IGS, no.1, 9 March 1917.

2. IGS, no.1, 9 March 1917; no.2, 11 March 1917; no.3, 12 March 1917; no.4, 14 March 1917; no.6, 17 March 1917; no.10, 23 March 1917; "Dnevnik Rengartena", KA, 1929, no.1(32), p 114.

and Prince G.E. L'vov, expressing full support for the "new Popular Government". Four days later, Admiral Maksimov and the Soviet's chairman, N. Khil'vani, asked the Soviet to support the Provisional Government and help win the War, sentiments that were greeted with great enthusiasm by the Soviet deputies. This was followed by a telegram addressed "to the workers of Petrograd", urging them to work harder to win the War. At the request of Maksimov, a Soviet delegation was sent to Kronstadt, to see how the war effort was proceeding there. Even the Andrei Pervozvannyi, the last ship to lower its battle ensign after the mutiny, issued an appeal of this nature.¹

The Helsingfors Soviet supported the Petrograd Soviet's statement "To the Peoples of the Whole World", the very statement that Muranov had read to a mass meeting in Kronstadt, and which coined the concept of "Revolutionary Defensism". After some hesitation, it authorised a collection of funds to build a new destroyer, to be called the Svoboda. Its Izvestiya warned against "German provocation", taking up a common theme of speeches made in the Soviet itself.²

The moderation of the Helsingfors Soviet, its willingness to support both the Provisional Government and the War, was the

1. IGS, no.1, 9 March 1917; no.4, 14 March 1917; no.5, 16 March 1917; no.10, 23 March 1917; no.13, 28 March 1917.
2. IGS, no.3, 12 March 1917; no.5, 16 March 1917; no.13, 28 March 1917; Velikaya oktyabr'skaya sotsialisticheskaya revolyutsiya. Khronika sobytii, vol.1, p 238.

result of two things: revulsion at the violence of the mutiny, and uncertainty of the limits of Central Government and local soviet power. As long as the Helsingfors Soviet and the Provisional Government did not clash on questions of prerogative, the blood shed on 4 March seemed to have been a pointless act of butchery. As soon as the Helsingfors Soviet and the Provisional Government did begin to dispute each other's powers, then the slogans of the mutineers would begin to regain meaning and popularity. In addition, the more time elapsed since the mutiny, the easier it was to forget the horror of the killings.

The limits of Soviet and Central Government power had been obscured by the appointment of Maksimov as Commander of the Baltic Fleet in the afternoon of 4 March. This act had seemed politically opportune, but was in fact a mistake. Maksimov was not highly regarded either by his fellow officers or by his men, which was one reason why, although the senior of the two, he had been passed over in 1916 in favour of Nepenin.¹ He would in any case have had to be replaced before long. In the shock that followed the assassination of Nepenin, when the moderates in the Fleet were reasserting themselves, and when Government reprisals for the mutiny seemed a possibility, it might have been possible to assert

1. A. Bubnov, V tsarskom stavke, NY, 1955, p 334; Graf, Na "Novike", p 265; D. Fedotoff-White, Survival: through War and Revolution in Russia, Philadelphia, 1939, p 102; S.N. Timirev, Vospominaniya morskogo ofitsera, NY, 1961, p 28; I.N. Kolbin, "Kronshtadt ot fevralya...", KL, 1926, no.5(20), pp 59-60.

governmental prerogative and appoint an admiral of known competence. By appointing Maksimov, the Government appeared to be recognising the right of the lower deck to elect its officers, up to and including the Commander of the Fleet. This misunderstanding was to cost the Provisional Government dear.

The ambiguities in the Helsingfors Soviet's allegiance to the Government were there from the beginning. All decisions of the Executive Committee of the Soviet had to be countersigned by the Fleet and Army Commanders before they could be transmitted to the men.¹ On the other hand, whatever the views of the Government, the Soviet saw both the Fleet and the Army Commanders as their own appointees, who could presumably be replaced if they gave trouble.

The issue did not arise in the first few days after the mutiny, as Maksimov's actions were very much in line with the Soviet's desires. On 5 March, he anticipated the Provisional Government's decree by one day in introducing measures "democratising Fleet life". He abolished saluting off duty. He set up a Committee to work out new ways of organising life on board ship. His decisions were apparently ratified by the Central Government when it agreed that ships' committees should determine off-duty conditions on board ship. He also implicitly recognised the Soviet's right to appoint officers, when he asked it not to appoint specialists in short supply away from their specialist jobs.²

1. IGS, no.1, 9 March 1917.

2. IGS, no.1, 9 March 1917; no.5, 16 March 1917; no.15, 30 March 1917; Khesin, "Russkii flot i sverzhenie samoderzhavie", p 191.

Indeed, the Helsingfors Soviet found itself assuming powers that went far beyond local administration, or lower deck welfare. It pronounced on policies of War, Peace and Government. It arrested some people, and set others free. It appointed, promoted and demoted officers and men, dealt with disputes between officers and men and between the officers themselves. It decided what was or was not politically acceptable behaviour by all ranks.¹

The first issue to bring out the different assumptions held by the Provisional Government and the Helsingfors Soviet about the limits of their power, was the swearing of the new Oath of Allegiance. The Helsingfors Soviet's refusal was different in style from the Kronstadt Soviet's defiant message, but was in the long run just as absolute. The new Oath was seen as an infringement of the Soviet's prerogatives, and was held in abeyance while more information was sought from the Petrograd Soviet. The issue was raised a number of times over the month of March, but remained unsolved, and the Oath as unsworn as it was in the more flamboyant Kronstadt.²

The dispute was dangerous for the Provisional Government as it affected every sailor and soldier directly, and made him attempt

1. IGS, no.16, 31 March 1917; no.18, 6 April 1917; no.19, 7 April 1917; no.21, 9 April 1917.
2. IGS, no.6, 17 March 1917; no.11, 24 March 1917; no.15, 30 March 1917. It was perhaps not entirely coincidental that Captain Rengarten resigned as chairman of the Executive Committee on the day that the Soviet first discussed the Oath. IGS, no.8, 21 March 1917.

to clarify his attitude towards Central Government. This enabled the Maximalists, who had lost ground since the mutiny, to regain influence: the issues on which they had led the mutiny were again becoming the subject of discussion.

On 21 March, the crew of the Imperator Pavel I, the ship which had started the bloodshed on 3 March, formally asked their Captain and the Helsingfors Soviet for permission to change the ship's name to Respublika. On that same day, the Sailors' Section of the Soviet demanded new elections, as neither the Soviet nor its Executive Committee enjoyed the full confidence of the lower deck. Two days later, the Soviet Plenary Session decided to organise new elections, on a more democratic basis.¹

At the same time, pressure was coming from the other direction. On 22 March, a group of officers decided to form a "Union of Republican Officers". Although its declared aim was to demonstrate the officers' support for the Revolution, its immediate effect was to cause disquiet on the lower deck.²

On 23 March the Soviet Plenary Session declared itself

...the sole and highest leadership of the political organisations of the Helsingfors District, and of Finland

and that

all ship-board, company, battalion, regimental and other committees are its local organs. 3

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1. IGS, no.13, 28 March 1917; no.14, 29 March 1917; no.15, 30 March 1917. These took place only one month later.
 2. IGS, no.16, 30 March 1917.
 3. IGS, no.14, 29 March 1917.

The next day, the Soviet Executive Committee were told by their delegate to Petrograd that a campaign against the Petrograd Soviet was underway in the Capital. The EC immediately drafted a telegram, promising the Petrograd Soviet that "your enemies will only reach you over our dead bodies".¹ As if in answer to this, and seemingly announcing that the campaign had reached Helsingfors, the Union of Republican Officers, on 25 March, announced its conditional support for the Petrograd Soviet and complete support for the Provisional Government and for the War. One day later, with a representative of the Petrograd Soviet in attendance, the Soviet expressed its complete faith and support in the Petrograd Soviet. It revised its former unconditional support for the Provisional Government to conditional support insofar as it carried out its obligations and acted in agreement with the Petrograd Soviet.²

In fact, the formation of the Union of Republican Officers could not have come at a more inopportune time. Its resolutions, however well-intentioned, had the effect of hastening the Helsingfors Soviet's shift towards Maximalist policies, in that they seemed to be aimed at undermining the Soviet's authority. Indeed, the very fact that the officers were issuing separate resolutions at all at the time that the Soviet was being forced by Central Government to define the limits of its prerogatives,

1. IGS, no.16, 31 March 1917.

2. IGS, no.16, 31 March 1917; no.21, 9 April 1917.

sharpened issues that were probably better left vague, and increased the suspicion that Government and Soviet, Officers and Men, were increasingly getting out of step. This impression was further strengthened, when it was discovered that officers on Admiral Maksimov's staff were circulating a political manifesto issued by Duma Deputy V.M. Purishkevich, notorious for his support for the Black-hundreds.¹

The Helsingfors Soviet had not adopted a particularly radical position by the end of March. Nonetheless, the important thing to note is that the basis of the Moderate Ascendancy, the union of officers and men and of Provisional Government and Soviet was being rapidly undermined. Its policies were in a state of flux, but moving towards Maximalism. Symbolic, perhaps, of the balance of forces in the Helsingfors Soviet at this time, was the difference in character between the two delegates elected to represent it at the All Russian Conference of Soviets. One was Sergei Garin, a Bolshevik Conciliator, a spokesman of moderation and conditional support for the Provisional Government. The other was Pavel Shishko, future leader of the Left SR Party. The same session that mandated them to "inform the Petrograd Soviet that the Fleet is in full fighting order", also gave a delegate from a Petrograd factory permission to take machine guns and revolvers to arm the workers' militia.²

1. IGS, no.18, 6 April 1917.

2. IGS, no.14, 29 March 1917; no.16, 31 March 1917.

THE ASCENDANCY OF THE RIGHT BOLSHEVIK CONCILIATORS

For two weeks after the mutiny, there was no formal RSDLP organisation in Helsingfors. There was a Finnish Social Democratic Party which had been legal even before the Revolution, thanks to Finland's semi-autonomous status, and which had held the majority of seats in the Finnish Sejm since 1916. The Party contained Social Democrats of various hues, and was officially at this stage réformist. However, it had close links with the Bolsheviks, whom it had helped with the illegal transport of materials in and out of Russia. After the February Revolution, its Left Wing gained strength and the Finnish Social Democratic Party left the Second International in May 1917. Russian workers in Finland could and did belong to it. Russian servicemen did not.¹

It was the Petersburg Committee that first made contact with the Finnish Social Democratic Party. As a legal party with a majority in the Sejm, this latter's finances must have been in a much better state than those of the Bolshevik Party. The Petersburg Committee was first to realise the possibilities in this and sent one of its members, a Finn, I.A. Rakh'ya, to Helsingfors on 3 March. Rakh'ya was successful, returning a week later with

1. M.Kh. Kiuru, Boevoi rezerv revolyutsionnogo Petrograda, p 16; Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.1, p 50; A.M. Kollontai, "Avtobiograficheskiï ocherk", PR, 1921, no.3, p 296; M.S. Sverchikov, Revolyutsiya i grazhdanskaya voina v Finlyandii, M 1923, pp 8-9.

10,000 rubles.¹

Somehow or other, the Central Committee got to hear of this and took possession of the entire sum. The next meeting of the Central Committee on 12 March was the one which discussed Muranov, Stalin and Kamenev's return from Siberia. It was also the scene of a wrangle over the differences between the Petersburg Committee and the Central Committee. For once the Petersburg Committee spokesman, unnamed, was being relatively polite about the Central Committee, and minimising the differences between them. The reason for this was the 10,000 rubles, half of which the Petersburg Committee demanded, pointing out, with some justification that they had got hold of the money. The Central Committee replied that:

The Bureau of the Central Committee is constantly in close touch with Finland, and consequently the claims of the Petersburg Committee are irrelevant. It was decided to give material aid to the Petersburg Committee and proposed that a current account for 1,000 rubles be opened.
(passed unanimously)

and with that the Petersburg Committee had to be satisfied.²

The Central Committee, however, was taking no chances.

With the factional struggle in the Party reaching the point where

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1. P.F. Kudelli (ed.), Pervyi legal'nyi Pe-Ka..., pp 9, 37. This source, in a footnote, gives the sum as 7,000 rubles. However, the Central Committee minutes of the Debate discussed below speak of 10,000 rubles.
 2. Protokoly i rezolyutsii Byuro TsK...", VIKPSS, 1962, no.3, pp 143-44.

a split seemed possible,¹ control over sums of money of the size of the Finnish Social Democrats were handing out would be crucial. Rakh'ya had reported that the Finnish Party were going to organise a special collection in aid of the RSDLP.² It was important that it should go to the right place. Accordingly, M.I. Ul'yanova, Lenin's sister and a member of the Central Committee, was sent to Helsingfors,³ presumably to ensure that constant and close touch be maintained.

Ul'yanova's trip partially rebounded on the Central Committee. It was followed by a visitation to the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party of Finnish Social Democrats who, after lauding the work of the RSDLP, and regretting that Pravda was not able to devote more space to Finnish affairs, pointed out that 3,000 of the 10,000 rubles given to Rakh'ya had been destined for the Mensheviks! However, they did promise to carry out the special collection to help the RSDLP.⁴ This time, the Russian Bureau simply took administrative measures to prevent the Petersburg Committee getting at the Finnish money. On 20 March, once the Finns had left, it ordered the Petersburg Committee to

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1. Shylapnikov, op.cit., vol2, p 188.
 2. Kudelli (ed.), op.cit., p 37.
 3. V.V. Anikeev (ed.), Deyatel'nost TsK RSDRP(b) v 1917 godu. Khronika sobytii, M 1969, p 32.
 4. "Protokoly i Rezolyutsii Byuro TsK", VIKPSS, 1962, no.3, p 155.

confine its activities to Petrograd and its immediate surroundings.¹

Rakh'ya had also brought back a request from the Finnish Social Democrats to send speakers and organisers to Finland to help organise the Russian workers there.² No more was heard of this after the Petersburg Committee decided to refer the matter to the Executive Committee. In fact, the Petersburg Committee's attitude to Finland at the time is best summed up in the words of one of its members, V.N. Zalezhskii:

...we somehow completely forgot about Helsingfors. I remember that at one Petersburg Committee meeting, comrade Okulov raised the question of the need to do work in Finland and asked it to send him there. The Petersburg Committee did not attach any particular significance to this. Somehow, in one way or another, it was agreed to send comrade Okulov. He left, I believe, for Vyborg, and the Petersburg Committee forgot about it.³

One of the reasons for the forgetfulness of the Petersburg Committee was that Social Democrats of whom they approved, were operating there, and apparently were coping very well. Again, according to Zalezhskii, the good news of pro-Bolshevik feelings and revolutionary discipline that they were receiving from Helsingfors, contrasted strangely with the turmoil in Kronstadt.⁴

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1. I.I. Mints, Istoriya velikogo oktyabrya, vol.2, p 20.
 2. Kudelli (ed.), loc.cit.
 3. V.N. Zalezhskii, Bor'ba za Baltiiskii flot, M-L 1925, p 11.
 4. Zalezhskii, op.cit., p 12.

With or without the help of the Finnish and Russian Parties, a number of Helsingfors Social Democrats had attained prominent positions in the local Soviet. On 7 March, a Social Democratic worker, N. Khil'yani, was elected chairman of the Soviet, and a Social Democratic sailor, N. Khovrin, was made chairman of the Committee to investigate officers and their arrest. On 12 March, another Social Democrat, S.A. Garin, was made editor of the Soviet Izvestiya. When Khil'yani resigned as Soviet chairman on 23 March, Garin was appointed to be his successor too.¹

In some ways, the set-up in Helsingfors in early March 1917 was not unlike that in immediately post-revolutionary Kronstadt: a weak or non-existent Social Democratic organisation containing a few Social Democrats of talent or character who had managed to attain influential positions. Unlike the Kronstadt Bolsheviks, however, the Helsingfors Social Democrats were not exposed to the agitation of the Vyborg District Committee early in their legal existence, and so their development was, initially, a more leisurely affair.

1. IGS, no.3, 12 March 1917; no.15, 30 March 1917; Dingel'stedt, "Vesna proletarskoi revolyutsii", KL, 1925, no.1(12), p 211. A.F. Il'in-Zhenevskii, "Neskol'ko popravok", KL, 1925, no.1(12), p 215, "corrects" Dingel'stedt on Khil'yani's appointment, and this "correction" is accepted by some modern Soviet sources (e.g. Velikaya oktyabr'skaya sotsialisticheskaya revolyutsiya khronika sobytii, vol.1, p 119). However, IGS confirms Dingel'stedt's account, which is the one followed here.

On 21 March, about 100 people attended a meeting "for all citizens accepting even minimally the programme of the Social Democratic Party". The meeting elected a committee of thirteen Russian sailors, soldiers, workers and intellectuals, and the Helsingfors Section of the RSDLP was formed.¹ The new committee was a "United" one, comprising both Bolsheviki and Mensheviki. Of its thirteen members, at least four (S.A. Garin, V. Smirnov, A. Sidorov, and P.E. Dybenko) were Bolsheviki, or Bolshevik sympathisers.

Even the Bolsheviki on the Committee were very much under the influence of their chairman, Sergei Garin. Garin, a temporary wartime naval officer, and a playwright in civilian life, had been a Bolshevik since 1903. Not only did he write well, and was well known for his successful play "Sailors", but "he was, perhaps, the only one of us who could speak well, with tears in his voice".² Garin was politically on the right of the Party, with views that coincided with those of the Stalin-Kamenev-Muranov Pravda Group. On the day that he became its editor, the Izvestiya of the Helsingfors Soviet carried an article by him, asking his "dear brother citizens" to believe him as "a Russian writer, who has suffered for these freedoms in prison and exile, and with blood and tears", and calling for a united front of all Russian citizens against their "two enemies: the Germans and the

1. IGS, no.10, 23 March 1917; Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 212; for the composition of the Committee, see p 358.
2. N.A. Khovrin, Baltiitsy idut na shturm, p 77.

Old Regime."¹

There were three members of the Helsingfors section of the RSDLP whose experience of the February Revolution had been different from that of their comrades. V.M. Marusev and A.N. Khovrin were shipmates from the battleship Imperator Pavel I. Both had been members of the Glavnyi Kollektiv in 1915 and, although both had been acquitted at the trial in 1916, through lack of evidence, both had been sent to a penal battalion at the Front. On the way there, Khovrin had escaped and made his way back, first to Kronstadt, then to Petrograd. In February 1917 he was working in a factory on the Vyborg Side, and it was here that he participated in the February Revolution.²

The third was P.E. Dybenko, a naval storekeeper on the troopship Schcha. A Bolshevik since 1912, Dybenko had just happened to be in Petrograd in February 1917, in the course of his naval duties, and participated in the February Revolution on the Vyborg Side.³ Thus, none of them had witnessed the bloodbath in Helsingfors, all of them had had contact with Kronstadt or the Vyborg Side, where two of them had participated in the February Revolution.

1. IGS, no.3, 12 March 1917.

2. Geroi oktyabrya, vol.2, pp 100-02; A.L. Sidorov (ed.), Revolyutsionnoe dvizhenie..., p 398; A.N. Khovrin, Baltiitsy idut na shturm, pp 54ff.

3. P.E. Dybenko, Myatezhniki, M 1923, pp 19-22.

Although these three felt that their view of the Revolution was not the same as Garin's they found that "it was difficult to deal with him",¹ both because of his forcefulness and of their inexperience. Help was not forthcoming from outside Helsingfors, as Dybenko, bewildered by the diversity of the new democracy, recalls:

Newspapers would arrive from Petrograd. Each one told a different story, and in some way or other would attack the others. All this reading made the ordinary Party member so muddled that the poor fellow found it hard to sort things out. No Bolshevik papers arrived at all. 2

He does not add, as he might have done, that had Pravda arrived, it would only have muddled the poor fellow even more, especially after 12 March. Garin, on the other hand, if he read Pravda, must have felt himself to be very much in the mainstream of Bolshevik policy.

The three discontents recruited a fourth, G.A. Svetlichnyi, another shipmate of Marusev and Khovrin's, and between them they decided to contact the Central Committee for help.³ Nevertheless, however strong his reservations, Dybenko still agreed to be a member of the Committee of the Helsingfors section of the RSDLP,

1. N.A. Khovrin, op.cit., pp 77-78.

2. Dybenko, op.cit., p 31.

3. P.E. Dybenko, "Vospominaniya", in Or fevralya k oktyabryu, M 1957, p 153. Dybenko also states here that they issued leaflets on "Bolshevik" policy, published on a duplicator on board the Imperator Pavel I. This is not in his earlier memoirs, nor is it mentioned by anyone else.

elected one week after the meetings when he, Khovrin, Marusev and Svetlichnyi had decided to seek help from the Central Committee.¹

On 21 March, the day that the Helsingfors Section of the RSDLP was formed, the Central Committee informed it of the impending Conference of Party Workers to be held to coincide with the All-Russian Conference of Soviets.² On 22 March, the Helsingfors Soviet elected Garin as one of their representatives to the All-Russian Conference of Soviets. On 23 March, he was made chairman of the Soviet. On 24 March, the Committee of the Helsingfors Section of the RSDLP passed the following resolution:

To support the Provisional Government, in so far as it fulfils its obligations as proclaimed to the whole nation, and as long as the Provisional Government is prepared to follow the path of the revolutionary conquests for the benefit of Free Russia. While so doing, we Social Democrats must use all means to eliminate among the people

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1. Dybenko, "Vospominaniya", loc.cit.
 2. Anikeev (ed.), Deyatel'nost' TsK..., p 43. There is something odd about this telegram from the Central Committee. Anikeev, op.cit., p 42 lists the organisations sent invitations, but does not include Helsingfors. However, he records (p 43) that on the same date a telegram was sent to Helsingfors, the text of which has not been found. The Helsingfors section of the RSDLP causes some embarrassment to Soviet historians because of its policies. Some insist that it was not recognised by the Central Committee (Kiuru, op.cit., p 24; Khesin, Oktyabr'skaya revolyutsiya i flot, p 60). However, Garin attended and even spoke at the March Conference of Party Workers, so we must assume at least de facto recognition of the Helsingfors section. It is possible that the telegram sent on 21 March contained both recognition of the Helsingfors section, and an invitation to send a representative to the Conference.

those trivial demands which, prior to the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, might form a barrier between the people and the Provisional Government. 1

On 26 March, Garin left Helsingfors for Petrograd, where he was to attend both the Soviet and the Bolshevik Party Conferences.² He was at the height of his influence: holding high office in the local Soviet, chairman of the local Social Democratic Organisation, which had just adopted his policy statement, and very much in the main stream of the Conciliationist thought which predominated at the March Conference. His hopes at this latter affair for a national reunion with the Mensheviks were shattered by Lenin's return from abroad and the presentation of the April Theses. When he returned to Helsingfors, it was to discover that his influence had been challenged there too by a diabolus ex machina.

THE KRONSTADT DELEGATION

Dingel'stedt records that on 24 March, the second day of mass meetings and demonstrations in Kronstadt, Pelikhov suggested that they should move on, as Kronstadt was now theirs. Pelikhov's character, Dingel'stedt writes, 'was such that he could no longer bear to stay in Kronstadt, now that it had been

1. IGS, no.13, 28 March 1917; no.14, 29 March 1917; no.15, 30 March 1917.

2. "The March 1917 Party Conference", in L.D. Trotsky, The Stalin School of Falsification, NY 1937, pp 232, 246-47.

reduced to order". He proposed that they should "go to Finland where he had heard that things were not going too well".¹

The next morning, Pelikhov and Dingel'stedt left for Petrograd, accompanied by E.F. Zinchenko and B.A. Zhemchuzhin. The group was well chosen: a successful agitator (Dingel'stedt), an experienced journalist (Zhemchuzhin), a sailor who had just left the SRs to become a Bolshevik (Pelikhov), and a soldier (Zinchenko). In fact, the group appears too well balanced and too well suited to its purpose, to introduce the Vyborg District/Kronstadt Committee policies into Helsingfors, and to establish a newspaper propagating these policies, to merit the apparent casualness of its formation that Dingel'stedt would have us believe.

The group spent two days in Petrograd trying to get permission from the Central Committee for its venture. Here, too, Dingel'stedt's account is misleading, perhaps deliberately so, in view of the political pressures on him at the time he was writing his memoirs.² He tells us that the group "had to comply with certain formalities and obtain mandates from the Petersburg Committee. This was done with some difficulty, as the Petersburg Committee viewed us Kronstadt Bolsheviks with some disquiet,

1. Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 210.

2. He was a leading Trotskyist who in 1936 was "to follow... [the round of camps and prisons, finally to disappear]... without giving in". Victor Serge, Memoirs of a Revolutionary, London 1963, p 208.

because of our extremism".¹ Indeed so, and by contrast, it viewed the Helsingfors Section with favour. However, the sentiments of the Petersburg Committee were neither here nor there, as five days previously the Central Committee had removed Helsingfors (and possibly Kronstadt too) from its sphere of competence.² One of its reasons for doing so may well have been to prevent any kind of ideological link-up between the moderates on the Petersburg Committee and the Helsingfors Conciliators.

Possibly Dingel'stedt included this reference to the Petersburg Committee merely to remind his readers in the 1920's what that body's policies had been before Lenin's return. In any case, his account does not go on to make any specific mention of any meeting with the Petersburg Committee. Instead, he describes a meeting with "the most 'Maximalist' (note the word - D.L.) of the Petersburg Committee members",³ N.I. Podvoiskii, who was also chairman of the Bolshevik Military Commission, a body whose policies were also inclining towards Maximalism. Podvoiskii "did not entirely approve of our new enterprise, and in any case asked us to be cautious".⁴ Nonetheless, he did not prevent A.F. Il'in-Zhenevskii, a young member of the Military Commission, from

1. Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 211.

2. See pp 286-87.

3. Dingel'stedt, loc.cit.

4. ibid.

deserting his regiment to join the Kronstadt Party.

Zhenevskii himself tells us that Podvoiskii was doubtful about the venture because he felt that the group was not experienced enough, and would have preferred a member of the Central Committee to go.¹

His objection was pertinent, for the Kronstadters were proposing to go to an area that already had a section of the RSDLP, without an official invitation from that section's Committee, in order to advocate policies to which that Committee would be opposed. However, for the Central Committee to be seen to be involved in such a venture would be dangerous at a time when it was facing strong opposition in Petrograd, even within its own ranks. Zhemchuzhin's reply to Podvoiskii, on the other hand, expresses well the impatience the Party's young Maximalists felt at what they saw as Shlyapnikov's dilly-dallying:

Well, we shall be one up on our Party
generals, if we are able to found an
organisation in Helsingfors and launch
a newspaper. 2

The group, now including Zhenevskii, took the night train to Helsingfors on 26 March. If no one had actually stopped them from going, no one had officially backed them either, a fact that expressed itself somewhat forcibly by their having to pay their own fares.

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1. A.F. Il'in-Zhenevskii, "Gel'singfors vesnoyu 1917 goda", KL, 1925, no.2(13), pp 209-10.
 2. ibid.

Despite the ostentatious lack of official backing from the Central Committee, one can detect a series of attendant events that might have been coincidences, or might indicate covert support in high places. On 26 March, the Central Committee did pay the fare to Helsingfors "on Party business" to F.M. Dmitriev, sailor, from the battleship Imperator Pavel I.¹ This, of course, was the ship that Marusev, Khovrin and Svetlichnyi served on, and Dmitriev himself was to become a prominent supporter of the Kronstadt delegation, and a member of the (Bolshevik) Helsingfors Committee.² Could his presence in Petrograd at this time "on Party business" really have been a coincidence? Could he not have been the emissary sent by Marusev and co., to ask for help from the Central Committee?

Or again, the Kronstadt Group left Petrograd for Helsingfors at about the same time as Sergei Garin, the influential Conciliator, who was so hard to deal with, was leaving Helsingfors for Petrograd. The Kronstadt Group could thus be sure of some eight to ten days agitation before Garin returned from his conferences. If this was a coincidence, it was indeed a fortunate one. Finally on 27 March, their first day of activity in Helsingfors, the Kronstadters found their ideas receiving strong support from Aleksandra Kollontai, whom Dingel'stedt describes casually as passing through on her way back to Russia.³

1. Anikeev (ed.), Deyatel'nost TsK..., p 47.

2. Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., p 385.

3. Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 213; IGS, no.15, 30 March 1917.

A number of points arise here. First, Kollontai had returned to Russia a week earlier, on 19 March, when she delivered Lenin's first "Letter from Afar" to the Central Committee in Petrograd.¹ Secondly, Helsingfors is not "on the way" back to Petrograd coming from abroad. One has to make a special trip, changing trains at Riihimaki. Thirdly, Kollontai, at that time on the extreme left of the Party, although not on the Central Committee herself, was closely connected with one of its members: Shlyapnikov. Her presence in Helsingfors on 27 March could have been a coincidence. She did, after all, have extensive Finnish connections. If it was a coincidence, once again, it was a fortunate one.

On their arrival in Helsingfors, in the morning of 27 March, the Kronstadt Group immediately contacted Marusev, with whom they drew up a plan of campaign.² This in itself suggests that there was more to the Group than meets the eye. It certainly belies Zhenevskii's statement that the Group had "no contacts, no knowledge of Helsingfors, no money", except on the last point.³ Pelikhov had had contacts on the Glavnyi Kollektiv in 1915, but these were all with its Kronstadt members, and there is no suggestion anywhere in the available evidence that he even

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1. Anikeev (ed.), op.cit., pp 19-20; Kollontai, "Avtobiograficheskiĭ ocherk", PR, 1921, no.3, p 295.
 2. Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 212.
 3. Zhenevskii, op.cit., p 210.

knew about Marusev.¹ He was in prison with Ul'yantsev, who did have contacts with Helsingfors. But Ul'yantsev's special friends on the Glavnyi Kollektiv were Varyukhin, Khrulev, Peshkov and Brendin, not Marusev.² As Ul'yantsev was now in Kronstadt, one should expect the Group to have gone to any one of his four friends before going to see the unknown Marusev. Unless, of course, there had been some contact in Petrograd between them and F.M. Dmitriev, who was a shipmate of Marusev and whose fare, as we know, was paid by the Central Committee.

After their meeting with Marusev, the Group went round to the Soviet offices to introduce themselves to the members of the Presidium of its Executive Committee. Here, they aroused some suspicion. Only one member of the Group was able to produce any kind of credentials at all, and even those did not show him to be "the representative of the Executive Committee of the Kronstadt Soviet" that all five of them claimed to be!³ Undeterred by so unpromising a start, the Kronstadt Group declared that they were so shocked at the state of affairs in Helsingfors that they intended to act in quite a different way to the Executive Committee of the Helsingfors Soviet. Despite all this, the EC offered them premises so that they had somewhere to sleep and somewhere whence

1. Sidorov (ed.), Revolyutsionnoe dvizhenie..., pp 319, 320, 349, 355, 435-36.

2. "Delo o revolyutsionnoi organizatsii sredi matrosov...", KB, 1920, no.7, pp 57-58.

3. IGS, no.19, 7 April 1917.

to conduct their agitation. They were invited to attend the next full meeting of the Executive Committee to explain themselves.¹

Two days later, Dingel'stedt had to confess to a plenary meeting of the Executive Committee of the Soviet that they were not in fact delegated by the Kronstadt Soviet, but were in Helsingfors to found a Party newspaper. He must have been somewhat surprised at the response. The Kronstadt Group were welcomed as "ideological workers" (ideinye rabotniki) and invited to carry on with their work.²

One of the striking features of the visit of the Kronstadt Group to Helsingfors is how generously they were received by the local Social Democrats, which is indicative of the state of inter-party relations at the time. They came to change the policies and methods of the local Soviet and of the local Social Democratic Organisation, and to publish a newspaper in the name of Social Democracy, advocating policies that the local Social Democrats would not support. Yet the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Soviet, five of whose nine members were Social Democrats,

1. ibid.; Zhenevskii, op.cit., p 211 writes that they were initially well received, but that friendliness turned to hostility once their views were known, thereby making it appear that opposition to them was politically motivated. This is not borne out by the EC Minutes as published in IGS, loc.cit. Similarly, Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 213 writes that they got their premises illegally the next day.
2. IGS, no.19, 7 April 1917.

offered them premises from which to conduct their agitation. Khil'iani, who was temporarily in charge of the Helsingfors Social Democrats while Garin was away, and whose views were, if anything, further to the right than Garin's, invited them to speak at a public meeting, together with Kollontai. On 29 March it was Brilliantov, another member of the Committee of the Helsingfors Section, who welcomed them as "ideological workers".¹ Their generosity may have been helped or prompted by Kollontai, with a valid mandate from the Central Committee, putting in a good word for the Kronstadters. Indeed, this may be what lay behind the coincidence of her visit. But generosity it was, for all that.

Needless to say, they received little thanks for this in the memoirs of the members of the Kronstadt Group. Writing in the less tolerant days of the 1920s, they were doubtless anxious to prove that they had won a great victory for Bolshevism in the face of determined Menshevik and SR hostility. If such hostility existed, it is not echoed in contemporary sources. Quite the contrary.

On 28 March, Marusev brought a group of dissident Social Democratic sailors round to the premises occupied by the Kronstadt Group. After some discussion, it was decided that those present should call themselves the Sveaborg Sailors' Collective of the

1. IGS, no.15, 30 March 1917; no.16, 31 March 1917; no.19, 7 April 1917; Zhenevskii, op.cit., p 214; Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 213.

RSDLP, and that the new paper should be issued in their name. This would enable it to appear as the organ of a local Social Democratic Organisation without immediately confronting the existing Helsingfors Section.¹

1. It has proved difficult to date the formation of the Sveaborg Collective with any certainty. Zhenevskii, op.cit., p 212 gives 28 March, but then adds "the day after the meeting on the Imperator Pavell". However, the meeting on the Pavel took place on 28 or 29 March (see below). Zhenevskii's chronology is unreliable throughout. For example, he places the Kollontai meeting on 29 March (ibid., p 214), whereas it is clearly documented in IGS, no.15, 30 March 1917, as having taken place on 27 March. Soviet sources give a variety of dates. Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., in a note on p 363 gives 27 March, but cites no source, as does Khesin, Oktyabr'skaya revolyutsiya i flot, p 61. This seems early in the Kronstadters' visit. Kiuru, op.cit., p 26 gives 25 March but then lists Zhemchuzhin and co., who were still in Petrograd at that time, as members. A table in Sed'maya (aprel'skaya) Konferentsiya RSDRP(b). Protokoly, p 279, also gives 25 March. However, this table is not really a conference document, but was compiled in 1934, supposedly from information in the speeches on pages 125-27, where no dates are given. One may suppose that some Soviet historians are anxious to push the date of the formation of the Sveaborg Sailors' Collective forward, so that Dybenko rather than Dingel'stedt may take the credit for it. The reasons for this would be (i) that Dingel'stedt became a prominent Trotskyist who still has not been rehabilitated. His name, for example, does not appear once in Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit.: an editorial tour de force; (ii) to enhance the view that everywhere the masses were striving for a true Leninist position and were only held back by the Mensheviks and SRs. If we follow Zhenenskii, we can either accept his date, or his statement that it was the day after the meeting on the Pavel. This would mean 28, 29 or 30 March. 30 March is too late, as the paper was issued then, in the name of the Collective. That leaves 28 or 29 March. It does not seem to matter which one picks, until further evidence comes to light. The only important factors are (i) it happened after the arrival of the Kronstadt Group, and (ii) it happened before the publication of Volna. For the membership of the Collective, see p 358..

The name would also, with its echoes of the Glavnyi Kollektiv show the non-Social Democrat sailors the tradition it intended to continue. The new Collective then offered the Kronstadt Group board and lodging on the Shcha, an offer that must have been welcome, given their impoverished state.

That afternoon the Collective held a meeting on board the Imperator Pavel I. Their speeches aroused much enthusiasm and the meeting decided to allocate 1,000 rubles from mess funds to launch the new paper.¹

All that was now needed was a press to print the new paper on. Here, it was the local Socialist Revolutionaries who came to their help, offering the Sveaborg Collective the use of their press.² It is not clear whether this was a new agreement reached, possibly, through the good offices of Pelikhov, or indeed any of them as their ideas would have been welcome to at least the Maximalists among the local SRs, or whether they were merely continuing an agreement that had been operating before the arrival of the Kronstadters. Dybenko³ claims the latter, stating that the paper he had published earlier in the month had been printed on

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1. Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 213; Khovrin, "V 1917g vo flote", KL, 1926, no.5(20), p 60; Zalezhskii, Bor'ba za Baltiiskii flot, p 24; IGS, no.22, 11 April 1917 gives the date as 29 March, but this was probably the date the Ship's Committee ratified the decision. Volna, no.1, 30 March 1917 gives the date as 28 March.
 2. Zhenevskii, op.cit., p 211; Dybenko, Myatezhniki, p 32.
 3. loc.cit.

the SR press. Shitov confirms this.¹ It is possible, and very much in the tradition of Left Bolshevnik - Left SR co-operation that we know existed in the Fleet. Khovrin, on the other hand, in the version of his memoirs published in the 1920s² writes quite categorically:

Of course, without the help of the comrades... [from Kronstadt] we should not have been able even to consider a luxury like publishing our own Party paper. There was very little literary talent...

which seems plausible enough. Also, it is hard to rid oneself of the suspicion of arrière pensée in an event that no one seems to have noticed at the time cropping up at a politically opportune moment in memoirs written some twenty years later. Why do neither of them mention the name of this paper? In any case, the first issue of Volna was published by the Gorshkov Printing Works, the imprint that appears on Helsingfors SR papers. It appeared on 30 March, on the third day after the arrival of the Kronstadt Group in Helsingfors. Despite a certain aridity of subject matter, due to the fact that it had mostly been written on the train before their arrival, it was a remarkable performance.³

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1. M. Shitov, "Bol'shevistskaya Volna", in S.F. Naida (ed.), Voennye moryaki v bor'be za pobedu oktyabrya, p 348.
 2. Khovrin, "V 1917g vo flote", KL, 1926, no.5(20), p 61; idem.; Baltiitsy idut na shturm, M 1966, p 79 does not mention the affair, unless this is what is intended with the words: "Volna...quickly became popular with its readers. But the SR paper Niva soon ceased publication. Incidentally, almost all of its print workers came over to work for Volna".
 3. Zhenevskii, op.cit., p 213 is very critical of the first issue.

ZhENCHUZHIN immediately sent a copy back to Petrograd, laughing at how "the eyes of our Petrograd generals will bulge when they see that we have produced a paper in three days, as we promised."¹

More help was on its way. Two members of the Finnish Social Democracy, one of whom, A. Sidorov, was also on the Committee of the Helsingfors Section of the RSDLP, came round to the premises of the Sveaborg Sailors' Collective holding a copy of Volna, no.1. They had read it, and liked it, and proposed that in future it be printed on the press of the Finnish Senate, which was more modern than Gorshkov's and, anyway, controlled by Social Democrats.² A further advantage was that it would give the Sveaborg Collective premises for editorial work. At present, the only place where Zhenevskii could get peace was in the lavatory of the premises given them by the Soviet, and this is

1. ibid., p 214.

2. On this issue too, Zhenevskii's memoirs show the political pressures of the time he was writing. Dingel'stedt (op.cit., p 213) writes that the Bolsheviks approached the Finnish Social Democratic Senator Tokoi, who immediately gave his permission. Zhenevskii in his "corrections" to Dingel'stedt's article (idem. "Neskol'ko popravok", KL, 1925, no.1(12), p 215) says that the use of the Finnish Senatorial Press was only obtained "with great difficulty" and that, in the interim, Volna had to be published at a third printers, the Rybakov Works. Presumably it was not politically wise to mention help to the Bolsheviks from the Finnish Senate after the Finnish Civil War, and Finland's independence from Soviet Russia. However, the evidence is on Volna itself. No.1 was printed at Gorshkov's. No.2, which appeared the next day, at the Finnish Senatorial Press. cf. also Zhenevskii, "Gel'sing-
"Gel'singfors vesnoyu 1917 goda", KL, 1925, no.2(13), p 215.

where he had edited the first issue"¹

Not all went smoothly, however. Although agitation went well on some ships, there was marked hostility on others. Sailors selling Volna were chased off some ships and even beaten up. Zhemchuzhin was thrown overboard by an unsympathetic group of sailors on the Petropavlovsk.² In some cases, too, collectives formed on board ships in the first flush of enthusiasm after a fiery meeting, dwindled and dissolved after a short existence.³ The Moderate Ascendancy in Helsingfors might have been on the wane, but it was still strong and could call on considerable support. The Sveaborg Sailors' Collective had to take this into account in its agitation. Volna is notably milder in tone than Golos pravdy, despite the overlap in editorial staff. The first few issues (which alone concern us here) do not contain appeals for Soviet power, but calls for "a democratic republic", the confiscation of land, the eight-hour day".⁴

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1. Zhenevskii, "Gel'singfors vesnoyu 1917 goda", KL, 1925, no.2(13), p 217.
 2. Zalezhskii. Bor'ba za Baltiiskii flot, pp 13, 28; idem.; "Gel'singfors vesnoi i letom 1917 goda", PR, 1923, no.5(17), p 118; Zhenevskii, op.cit., p 224.
 3. I base this on the statement by Dingel'stedt that collectives were formed on the Gangut and the Andrei Peruozevannyi. He is not mistaken about the second ship, as he goes on to say that they had not expected any success there, as Captain Lodyzhevskii still had great influence over his men (Dingel'stedt, op.cit., p 214). Lodyzhevskii was captain of the ship, and chairman of the ship's committee (Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., p 390). The Andrei Peruozevannyi is not in the list of ships with Bolshevik organisations drawn up in April 1917 by the Helsingfors Committee of the RSDLP(b) (ibid., pp 64-65).
 4. Volna, no.3, 1 April 1917.

They also had to take into account the dislike of the average rank and file Party member, and Party sympathiser for inner-Party or even inter-Party disputes. Volna, consequently, did not call for a split with the Mensheviks, but for "all Social Democrats, who do not merely recognise the Party's programme on paper", to unite.¹

Even so, the activities of the Sveaborg Sailors' Collective had caused enough concern among the Helsingfors moderates for Petrograd to be alerted, and Kirill Orlov was sent to Helsingfors to sort things out. He arrived there on 2 March to find himself confronted with a very delicate situation: two rival Social Democratic Committees, both enjoying Central Committee recognition, were competing against each other for members.²

He was limited in what he could do by the speed with which the Kronstadt Group had moved before his arrival. However,

1. ibid., stress mine.

2. Zalezhskii, Bor'ba za Baltiiskii flot, p 24 is exaggerating when he writes of "two Bolshevik Centres". Only one was Bolshevik, the other was United Bolshevik-Menshevik. But it was not Menshevik, and neither was Garin a Menshevik, as some modern Soviet historians would have us believe (Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., p 335; A.V. Bogdanov, Moryaki-baltiitsy v 1917g, M 1955, p 33; Petrash, op.cit., pp 58-59). Central Committee recognition of the Helsingfors Section can be assumed from Garin's presence at the March Party Conference (see p 293). Central Committee recognition of the Sveaborg Sailors' Collective can be assumed from the fact that they were asked to send a delegation to Tereo, on the Finno-Swedish border to meet Lenin (see p335). For the date of Orlov's arrival, cf. Sivkov, op.cit., p 107; Zalezhskii, loc.cit.; Zhenevskii, "Gel'singfors vesnoyu 1917 goda", KL, 1925, no.2(13), p 216, predictably has a different date: 31 March.

he had one very strong card: his personal popularity in the Fleet as a former Potenkin mutineer and as liaison man for the Glavnyi Kollektiv. He used this to good advantage, touring the ships. On board the Andrei Pervozvannyi, whose crew not long before had thrown Zhenchuzhin into the sea, he was carried on the men's shoulders round the deck.¹ He was thus able to force a compromise on the Sveaborg Sailors' Committee. He and Zhenevskii met Garin and Trofimov on the day of Garin's return from Petrograd. On 6 April, a meeting of all Helsingfors Social Democrats was held, both former organisations were dissolved and a new committee elected. Although the Presidium of the new Committee was mostly made up of members of the Sveaborg Sailors' Collective, it did contain one member of the former Helsingfors Section. That this was not just a token representation is indicated by the fact that the meeting then passed a resolution of conditional support for the Provisional Government. Orlov had done much to rally the Party Right.²

This balance was not to be maintained for long. On 4 April, Lenin presented his April Theses in Petrograd. The Helsingfors Committee elected three delegates to the April Conference:

1. Zalezhskii, Bor'ba za Baltiiskii flot, p 24.
2. Volna, no.8, 8 April 1917; Zhenevskii, op.cit., pp 220-24; Zalezhskii, op.cit., p 24; both these latter sources try to make out that the Helsingfors section was routed. The resolution on the Provisional Government shows otherwise. For composition of presidium, see p 359. Unfortunately, it has not proved possible to establish the membership of the Committee itself.

N.K. Antipov and N.A. Khovrin, representing those who welcomed the April Theses, and Kirill Orlov, representing those who opposed them.¹ By then, however, Orlov and those he represented were becoming seriously out of step with the Party leadership. Shortly after the April Conference, he was recalled to Petrograd.²

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1. Zhenevskii, op.cit., p 223; Khovrin, "V 1917g vo flote", KL, 1926, no.5(20), p 62.
 2. Khovrin, loc.cit.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE RETURN OF LENIN:

THE TRIUMPH OF THE LEFT

Lenin, chto tam ni boltai?
Soglasna s nim lish' Kollontai.

(rhyme circulating in the
Bolshevik Party, April 1917)

LENIN CHANGES HIS MIND

In the Summer of 1916, the main emphasis of the dispute between Lenin and Bukharin shifted from the issue of the Self-Determination of Nations, to that of the socialist attitude to the State. In August 1916, Lenin found Bukharin's article "Towards a Theory of the Imperialist State" to be incomplete, unthought out, good for nothing.¹ His reply, for internal Party circulation only, traced the roots of Bukharin's "errors" back to the Theses he had presented to the Berne Conference of Bolsheviki in the Spring of 1915, when he had argued that, in the epoch of imperialism, democratic demands were inappropriate and the working class must concentrate on purely socialist ones.²

In Lenin's eyes, Bukharin's error stemmed from his inability to understand the part played by the struggle for partial reforms and for democracy in the struggle against Imperialism. This same error lay behind the inappropriate demand for the immediate expropriation of the banks put forward by Pannekoek and the Dutch Left, and the refusal of Radek and the Rozlamowcy to admit any validity in the claims of small nations to national independence. All three, Bukharin, the Dutch and the Poles advanced extreme demands because they believed that the

1. PSS, vol.49, p 287.

2. PSS, vol.30, p 59; cf. above pp 55ff; for the distinction between democratic and socialist demands cf. pp 143ff; Bukharin's theses are in D. Bævskii, "Eor'ba Lenina protiv bukharinykh 'shatanii mysli'", PR, 1930, no.1, p 44; and Gankin and Fisher (eds.), op.cit., pp 187-89.

advent of Imperialism had made partial, or democratic demands obsolete. Their rigidity in this laid them open to attack by Kautsky and, with them, the validity of the entire stand of the Zimmerwald Left. But Kautsky, after all, was the real enemy, not Bukharin, Pannekoek, or Radek. Thus, in order to defend his stand against the War and against the Second International, Lenin had to bring about the extirpation of this error from within. On the other hand, Lenin wished to keep the matter within the Zimmerwald Left as low-key as possible, in case hurt, pride and personal injury should split the alliance even if theoretical purity were attained. This is why he had refused to publish Bukharin's article in August 1916, even though he had commissioned it, and why his reply to it had itself not been published. This is why he was so furious when Bukharin ignored his advice to "let his ideas mature" and went ahead and published the article in three different journals.¹

Lenin then felt obliged to give Bukharin an immediate public answer, which was published in Sbornik Sotsial-demokrata in December 1916. Here, Lenin takes up Bukharin's statement that

it is absolutely wrong to seek the difference between socialists and anarchists in the fact that the former are in favour of the State while the latter are against it.

No, Lenin, replies,

1. PSS, vol.30, pp 45ff, 60; vol.33, p 173.

Socialists are in favour of using the present state and its institutions in the struggle for the emancipation of the working class, maintaining also that the state should be used for a specific form of transition from capitalism to socialism. This transitional form is the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is also a state.

The anarchists want to "abolish" the state, to "blow it up" (sprengen) as [Bukharin] expresses it in one place, erroneously ascribing this view to the socialists. 1

He makes a similar point in a letter to Inessa Armand, written at about the same time:

It is inaccurate to write, as you do, that the "Economists" "renounced" the political struggle. They defined it wrongly. The "Imperialist Economists" do the same.

You write, "Would even the complete rejection of democratic demands mean the rejection of the political struggle? Is the direct struggle for the conquest of power not a political struggle?"

The whole point is that this is just the sort of thing that you get from Bukharin (and partly from Radek as well), and it is wrong. "The direct struggle for the conquest of power "while completely rejecting democratic demands" is something unclear, unthought out and confused. This is precisely what Bukharin is confused about...

...One should know how to combine the struggle for democracy and the struggle for the socialist revolution, subordinating the first to the second. In this lies the whole difficulty; in this is the whole essence.

1. PSS, vol.30, pp 227-28.

The Tolstoyans and anarchists throw out the first. Bukharin and Radek are confused, not knowing how to combine the first with the second. 1

Bukharin, Radek and Pannekoek's view tended to lump Lenin and Kautsky's attitude towards the State together. In his reply Lenin was trying to establish that there was a difference between the "opportunist, reformist, bourgeois attitude to the State" adopted by Kautsky, and the "revolutionary Social-Democratic attitude towards the State and towards utilising it against the bourgeoisie". Conscious of having done so inadequately, he hoped "to return to this very important subject in a separate article".²

In January 1917, with Bukharin in America and Shlyapnikov in Russia, completely cut off from the Party in Russia and more isolated in the emigration than he had ever been before, Lenin began reading for this article.³

In the course of this reading, Lenin was to change his ideas quite markedly. The precise nature of this change has given rise to considerable controversy. Some authors find his views afterwards "different - indeed opposite" to his previous position,⁴

1. PSS, vol.49, pp 346-47.

2. PSS, vol.30, p 228.

3. N.K. Krupskaya, "Iz emigratsii v Piter", in F. Platten (ed.), Lenin iz emigratsii v Rossiyu M 1925, p 111; Lenin wrote 56 letters between 1 January and 15 March 1917 (the date he learnt of the February Revolution), 26 of these were to Inessa Armand, PSS, vol.49, pp 351-99, 478-79

4. R. Conquest, Lenin, London, 1974, p 83.

"a repudiation, not only of the previous Bolshevik position but, it appeared, of Marxism itself".¹ On the other hand, another finds that there was "little, if anything" in Lenin's views in April 1917, "which differed fundamentally from Lenin's policy for years past". It had merely "never before been stated so baldly". This author defines the main issue as "the demand for an immediate socialist revolution, ... in the form of the passing of all power to the soviets", which had been implicit in Lenin's thought since 1905.²

Those who do find a difference assert, variously, that it lies in his attitude towards the Provisional Government,³ his "tacit acceptance of the Permanent Revolution,"⁴ his characterisation of the Russian Revolution as the prelude to world revolution,⁵ or in his suggestion "that the Soviet, as opposed to the armed proletariat should seize power."⁶

Confronted by this diversity of scholarly opinion it would seem worth examining the change, if any, in detail. Fortunately

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1. A.B. Ulam, Lenin and the Bolsheviks, London 1969, p 432.
 2. L.B. Schapiro, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, London 1970, p 165.
 3. D. Shub, Lenin, London 1966, pp 216-17.
 4. P. Broue, Le parti bolchévique, Paris 1963, p 83; A. Rabinowitch, Prelude to Revolution, Bloomington 1968, pp 37-38.
 5. R.R. Abramovitch, The Soviet Revolution, London 1962, p 30.
 6. L.B. Schapiro, The Origin of the Communist Autocracy, London 1955, pp 31-33; R.H. McNeal, Bride of the Revolution, London 1973, p 171.

for the historian, Lenin's notes taken during the course of this reading in February and March 1917, are all in one notebook, which has been published. The format of these notes is long chunks, copied from the particular book Lenin was reading, interspersed with his own comments and marginal notes.¹ It is therefore possible to follow, stage by stage, any transformations of thought, as they occur. Before doing so, however, anticipating the conclusion that the difference will be concerned with Lenin's attitude to the soviets, we should examine his previously expressed views on them and on the Paris Commune of 1871, often regarded as the first soviet.

For Lenin, as for all Marxists, the Commune was one of the great landmarks of history: the first real bid for power by the proletariat. Yet, although he had always regarded it as a heroic event, admiration was always subordinate to an awareness of its shortcomings. Before March 1917, the lessons of the Commune, for Lenin, lay in its mistaken desire to maintain a clear conscience and thus allow Thiers to take the initiative in the Civil War, and in the weakness resulting from its Central Committee's decision to give up power too soon.²

Unlike some Bolsheviki, Lenin had welcomed the Soviets in 1905. He considered them to be of great value, in the context

1. PSS, vol.33, pp 123-307.

2. PSS, vol.9, p 330; vol.11, pp 70, 132; vol.14, pp 376-78; vol.16, pp 451-54; vol.20, pp 217-22.

of an armed uprising, as bodies that would broaden the movement against tsarism, constantly drawing new layers of the population into the struggle. In the soviets, the Social Democrats would have the opportunity of propagandising people whom they otherwise could not hope to reach. As the movement towards revolution accelerated, the soviets would form the embryo of the Provisional Revolutionary Government.¹

However, although he was in favour of the creation of soviets in the course of a revolutionary upsurge, he was very much opposed to what he called "soviet fetishism". This was the belief that the creation of soviets was in itself desirable at all times, a tendency which led to Aksel'rod's belief that the soviets should replace the Party as the main focus of Social Democratic activity.²

Whatever else was new in Lenin's thought in March-April 1917, it was not the concept of the soviets as the bodies that should seize power, or as the embryos of the Provisional Revolutionary Government. Both are present in his writings in 1905-07 and, indeed, at the time, Lenin was attacked by Plekhanov as having a Socialist Revolutionary attitude towards the soviets and

1. PSS, vol.12, pp 61, 127, 231, 317.

2. PSS, vol.13, pp 320-24; Pyatyi (Londonskii) s'ezd RSDRP Protokoly, M 1963, pp 723-24. I am, of course, concerned only with Lenin's understanding of Aksel'rod's views here. For an examination of these from a different perspective cf. A. Ascher, Pavel Akselrod and the Development of Menshevism, Cambridge, Mass. 1972, pp 235ff.

taking power.¹

After 1907, Lenin rarely referred to the soviets, and when he did it was to stress that they made sense only in the context of an armed uprising.² With the onset of the First World War, references to the Paris Commune began to occur in his writings very frequently. This time, however, he was concerned with it simply as the originator of the slogan of the transformation of the war between nations into a civil war. He is still dealing with it in these terms as late as January 1917.³

Lenin's first entries in his notebook of February-March 1917 are very much in keeping with his previous thought.⁴ Quite early in his reading, however, a new note is introduced:

N.B. theoretically especially the combination of the dictatorship of the proletariat and complete local self-government.

The Bourgeoisie adopted the "bureaucratic-military" state machine of the feudal and absolute monarchies and developed it. The opportunists (especially 1914-17) have put down roots in it. (Imperialism, as an epoch in the advanced countries has greatly strengthened it.) The task of the prolet-

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1. Chetvertyi (ob'edinitel'nyi) s'ezd RSDRP. Protokoly, M 1959, pp 58-60, 141-42.
 2. PSS, vol.16, p 454; vol.17, pp 374-76; vol.19, p 214; vol.27, p 49; vol.49, p 160.
 3. PSS, vol.26, pp 22-23, 163, 185, 204, 218, 287, 319-20, 325; vol.27, pp 2, 102, 117; vol.30, pp 136-37, 155, 279-80, 319-20.
 4. PSS, vol.33, p 131.

arin revolution: to smash, to destroy this machine and put in its place complete self-government from below, in the regions, and the direct power of the armed proletariat, its dictatorship, from above. 1

The idea of smashing the existing state was, of course, one of those that he had previously attacked in Bukharin's writings, but was now to adopt. Indeed, not long afterwards, Lenin notes: "in essence, Bukharin is closer to the truth than Kautsky is".² There is another new idea here which, however, does not come from Bukharin. This is the idea of "complete self-government from below". As he reads on, Lenin begins to formulate more clearly the implications of this for Russia:

The Russian Revolution [of 1905] approached this position [of the new form of state]. On the one hand it was weaker (i.e. more timid) than the Paris Commune. On the other hand, it was more widespread: "soviets of workers' deputies", "railwaymen's deputies", "soldiers' and sailors' deputies", "peasants' deputies"...Have there been changes since 1871? All of them, their general character, add up to this fact, that everywhere bureaucratism has grown wildly...that is the first thing. Secondly, the "socialist" workers' parties have mostly grown into that very bureaucratism. The split between social-patriots and internationalists, between reformists and revolutionaries, consequently, has an even deeper significance: the reformists and the social-patriots "perfect" the bureaucratic state machine...and the revolutionaries must smash it, this bureaucratic-military machine, smash it and replace it with a "commune", a new "semi-state".

1. ibid., p 155.

2. ibid., p 173.

One could concisely and accurately express the entire matter thus: the substitution of soviets of workers' deputies and their trusted agents for the old (ready made) state machine and Parliaments. 1

Thus, Lenin had moved from seeing the aim of a revolution as being the capture of the state, albeit in a "revolutionary" as opposed to an "opportunist" way, to seeing the aim of the revolution as the destruction of the state. As a corollary to this he had also moved from seeing the soviets as merely revolutionary organisations, the embryos of a Provisional Revolutionary Government, to seeing them as something much more important: the embryos of the new state that would replace the smashed bourgeois state. Both these differences emerge clearly if we juxtapose a statement of Lenin's on the role of the soviets, written in 1907, with one written in April 1917, immediately after his return to Russia:

In 1907, he wrote:

The soviets of workers' deputies...were in fact organs of the insurrection. Only when the revolution developed, was their emergence not a farce, but a major achievement of the proletariat. In the event of a new upturn in the struggle...of course, such institutions would be inevitable and desirable. But their historical development must consist, not in a schematic development of local soviets of workers' deputies up to an All-Russian Labour Congress, but in the conversion of the embryonic organs of revolutionary power,

1. PSS, vol.33, pp 229-30.

(and this is what the soviets of workers' deputies were), into central organs of victorious revolutionary power, into a Provisional Revolutionary Government.

Soviets of workers' deputies are essential for the victory of the insurrection. A victorious insurrection will inevitably create other kinds of organs. 1

The soviets here are clearly envisaged to be temporary bodies, at best co-terminate with the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

In April 1917, however, he wrote:

The soviets of workers', soldiers', peasants' and other deputies...constitute a new form, or rather a new type of state.

The most perfect, the most advanced type of bourgeois state is the parliamentary, democratic republic: power is vested in parliament; the state machine, the apparatus and organ of administration, is of the usual kind: a standing army, a police force, and a bureaucracy, which is, in practice irremovable and privileged, standing above the people.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, however, revolutionary epochs have advanced a higher type of state, a state which, as Engels put it, in certain ways ceases to be a state in the strict sense of the word. This is a state of the type of the Paris Commune, one in which the standing army and police, normally separated from the people are replaced by the direct arming of the people themselves. It is this feature that constitutes the very essence of the Commune, which has been so misrepresented by bourgeois writers, and to which has been erroneously ascribed, among other things, the intention of immediately introducing socialism.

This is the type of state that the Russian revolution began to create in 1905 and in 1917. A Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers',

1. PSS, vol.15, p 187.

Peasants' and Other Deputies, united in an All-Russian Constituent Assembly of people's representatives, or in a Council of Soviets, is what is already being realised now, in our country, at this juncture... 1

The soviets here have a more important, permanent role as the basis of the new state. Three further points are worth noting: i) Lenin now looks at the Paris Commune with new eyes; its lessons lie not so much in what it failed to do, as in the fact that it first of all advanced this new form of state; ii) already in April, Lenin sees the Constituent Assembly merging into the Central Council of Soviets: a fact that makes his subsequent actions towards the Constituent Assembly appear slightly less cynical; iii) he quite explicitly asserts that the creation of a soviet state does not mean the immediate introduction of socialism.

The implications of this shift in views, for Bolshevik policy were far-reaching. It enabled Lenin to redefine his position vis-a-vis- Kautsky, Chkheidze, Kerensky and Milyukov. What united all these, despite incidental differences, and what separated them from Lenin, was their attitude to the state. They all believed in maintaining the existing state, Lenin now believed in smashing it. This meant that in the event of a revolutionary upsurge, any and every centrifugal, anti-authoritarian act and movement should be encouraged, as part of the effort to smash the

1. PSS, vol.31, p 162.

state machine. It meant that the creation of soviets, as the new state to replace the bourgeois state, should be encouraged, irrespective of whether or not the Bolsheviks had a majority in them. All these can be inferred from the shifts in Lenin's thought, brought about as a result of his dispute with Bukharin and Radek, without having to resort to any external factors like financial encouragement from the German General staff.¹

It must be stressed, however, that Lenin had not fully developed these views, but was still in the process of forming them when he heard the news of the February Revolution on 15 March 1917. Some indication of this can be derived from his notebook. Lenin's entries are not dated, but one can make at least a rough dating by using certain clues. The first page of the notebook contains the following quotation from Marx's Civil War in France:

One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz. that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machine and wield it for its own purposes". 2

This is the only note on the Civil War in France at this point.

The rest of the book is heavily annotated about a third of the way through the notebook.³ This quotation, however, appears in

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1. For a recent, somewhat extreme version of this view, cf. M. Pearson, The Sealed Train, London 1975, pp 291-92, who asserts "Lenin met Germans in Berlin during the Sealed Train journey, learned the scale of the finance available to him and because of this changed his mind on revolutionary tactics". He arrives at this conclusion because "no one has adequately explained Lenin's change of mind".
 2. PSS, vol.33, p 129.
 3. ibid., pp 210-30.

Engel's 1872 Preface to the Communist Manifesto,¹ which was the first thing Lenin read and noted. On 12 February (NS) Lenin ordered the Civil War in France from the Zurich Public Library.² It would not seem unreasonable to assume that, struck by this quotation from the Civil War in France, which he would not have found to his taste as apparently confirming Bukharin's position, Lenin then ordered the book from the library, so that he could check its context. This would place the beginning of the notebook at on or before 12 February (30 January OS) 1917.

About a quarter of the way through the notebook, Lenin comments: "In point of fact, Bukharin is closer to the truth than Kautsky is".³ This phrase occurs in two letters written within two days of each other, one on 17 February to Kollontai, the second on 19 February to Inessa Armand.⁴ We may perhaps assume that these letters and the comment in the notebook were written at the same time.

If we were to assume a constant rate of reading and constant ratio of notes to reading we should infer that Lenin began work on about 10 February and ended round about 10 March. But we cannot assume this, as the first quarter of the notebook

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1. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works, vol.1, M 1958, p 22.
 2. V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.3, p 602.
 3. PSS, vol.33, p 173.
 4. PSS, vol.49, pp 388, 390.

actually corresponds to far less than a quarter of the reading. Not only do the notes get shorter, but the books get longer. The first quarter of the notes refer to only one long work, Marx's 18 Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,¹ for the rest there are just letters, prefaces and the Critique of the Gotha Programme. The last three quarters of the notes refer to a number of quite long and complex books, including Anti-Dühring, The Poverty of Philosophy, The Origin of the Family, two books by Kautsky, one of which Lenin read in two German editions, comparing them to the Russian translation, the Kautsky-Pannekoek debate of 1912, and Revolution and Counter-revolution in Germany (to which Lenin accords one note which closes the notebook).² Thus it would appear very likely that Lenin was working on this material right up to his return to Russia, and even, probably, on the journey back, where he has been described as "working, reading and writing in note books all the way".³

Further evidence that Lenin was still in the process of changing his ideas in March 1917 can be found in his other writings. The first two Letters from Afar written on 20 and 22 March, do not show much evidence of his new ideas. The third, written on 24 March, shows more, and the fourth, of 25 March,

1. PSS, vol. 33, pp 134-72.

2. PSS, vol. 33, pp 172ff.

3. K. Radek, "V plombirovannom vagone" in F. Platten (ed.), Lenin iz emigratsii v Rossiyu, p 127.

more still. The fifth, which was to deal with "the Tasks of Constructing the Revolutionary Proletarian State" was not attempted until 8 April, and remained unfinished. So did the section "What is the workers' and peasants' government doing and what ought it to do?" in another article written on 25 March.¹

One of the reasons why Lenin's thinking on the soviets during March 1917 remained in this transitional, incomplete form, quite apart from the fact that he had not completed his course of reading, is that it remained abstract, unrelated to the real course of events inside Russia. This was simply because Lenin did not know what was going on inside Russia, as his only source of information at the time was the Western European Press:

The Times, the Neue Zürcher Zeitung, the Frankfurter Zeitung, and so on. As a result, some of his comments are extraordinarily inappropriate. At one stage for example, he supposes the Tsar to be "putting up resistance, organising a party, or perhaps even troops, in an attempt to restore the monarchy".²

In addition, we should note that even in its transitional, tentative, incomplete form, the change in Lenin's thought was not known to Party members inside Russia. The last information before the revolution would have come with Shlyapnikov, in the autumn of 1916, a point when, as Shlyapnikov knew better than anyone, Lenin and Bukharin were on very bad terms. After that,

1. PSS, vol.31, pp 11-57, 71.

2. PSS, vol.31, p 1.

all contact was lost until after the revolution. But even after the February Revolution, not much could have been known about Lenin's views. The only writings of his definitely known to have reached the Party in Russia were: a telegram of instructions to Kollontai and others about to leave for Russia, The "Draft Theses" of 17 March, the first, and possibly the second of the "Letters from Afar", an article about Chernomazov's relations with Pravda, and a letter to Hanecki.¹

Of these, only the letter to Hanecki contains any signs of Lenin's new ideas, and even this could be read as being quite in line with his previous policy. The main emphasis of the letter being: no compromise with Chkheidze, something which the Conciliators had heard, and ignored before. What is more, the letter refers to the "Draft Theses" of 1915 as "saying precisely how we should act in a revolution in Russia", this in itself

1. PSS, vol.31, pp 7, 503-04; Shlyapnikov, Sennadtsatyi god, vol.3, p 254. It is not easy to gauge how many of the "Letters from Afar" were delivered. Soch, vol.20, p 632 says only the first one was. PSS, vol.31, pp 503-04 is a fine example of elusive Soviet writing: "9(22) March, the first and second "Letters from Afar" were sent to A.M. Kollontai so that they could be taken to Petrograd; 17(30) March, Lenin asked Ya. S. Ganetskii if the first four letters to Pravda had reached Petrograd, promising to send copies if they had been lost. A.M. Kollontai took (the?) letters to Petrograd and handed them over to the editors of Pravda on 19 March (1 April)". The absence of definite and indefinite articles in the Russian language makes this even more ambiguous in Russian than in English. The implication is that all four letters were delivered. On the other hand, when Soviet editors do not say something outright, there is usually a reason for it. In any case, only the first was published, much cut, in Pravda.

would counteract any suspicion that there might be something new lurking obscurely in the letter.¹

In summary, Lenin was in the process of changing his ideas about the state and the soviets when he left Switzerland for Russia in April 1917. These changes were incomplete, and unknown even in their incomplete form to the Bolsheviks inside Russia, as none of Lenin's writings containing them had reached Russia before his return.

THE DECISION TO RETURN

When news of the February Revolution reached Lenin in Zurich on 15 March 1917, his immediate instinct was to return home.² However, there were great difficulties to be overcome. The most attractive route home lay through France and Britain, thence to Scandinavia and into Russia. Lenin immediately began to make enquiries as to whether he could return this way. The difficulty here was the danger that the British or French Governments might arrest him for his known anti-war views.³

The problem was not peculiar to Lenin. There were anti-war members of all Russian revolutionary parties in Switzerland, equally eager to return, and equally worried about going through France and Britain. The only other feasible route lay through Germany. The problem here was that, even were the Germans to

1. PSS, vol.49, pp 418-23.

2. PSS, vol.49, pp 399, 403-04.

3. ibid., pp 403-04.

grant passage, and this seemed unlikely enough, there was the danger that passage through an enemy country in wartime would mean arrest or disgrace, or both, back in Russia. Nevertheless, the Menshevik leader, Martov, proposed to a meeting of the International Socialist Committee (i.e. the Committee of the Zimmerwald Movement) that the possibility of using this route, in exchange for German prisoners of war, should be investigated. Robert Grimm, of the Swiss Socialist Party, undertook to negotiate the affair with the Germans.¹

Lenin kept both options open, although both seemed equally unlikely,² and settled down to do what he could to get his political directives back into Russia. The only route for this immediately open to him, was via Aleksandra Kollontai, who was in Norway preparing to return to Petrograd. He sent her a telegram which made clear both his policy and, with its references to the Petrograd City Duma, how out of touch with Russian affairs he was. It read:

Our policy: complete non-confidence in
and no support for the new government.
Particularly suspect Kerensky. Arming
of the proletariat the only guarantee.
Immediate elections to the Petrograd Duma.
No rapprochement with other parties. 3

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1. F. Platten, "K istorii vozvrashcheniya v Rossiyu v 1917 godu russkikh emigrantov...", in idem. (ed.), Lenin iz emigratsii v Rossiyu, M 1925, p 34.
 2. PSS, vol.49, pp 409, 414, 417-18, 419.
 3. PSS, vol.31, p 7; this was read out to the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee on 13(26) March by E. Bosh, ibid., p 503.

Then, disregarding her ironic comments about the value of any instructions he could send from Switzerland, when there were good men on the spot in Petrograd, he sent her more material: his "Draft Theses" of 17 March, and the first two "Letters from Afar".¹ The main message in all this was: no support for the Provisional Government, no rapprochement with Chkheidze.

On 23 March, he read an incomplete, and incorrect text, in the Frankfurter Zeitung, of the Manifesto of the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee. He found this most reassuring, especially as the account he read led him to believe, wrongly, that the Russian Bureau had called on the masses to organise around the Soviet. He cabled his approval to Hanecki in Stockholm. Thus, although impatient to return, Lenin had no reason to believe that there was any urgency, necessitating taking serious political risks, as the Party was doing well enough in his absence. The news that Kamenev and the Duma Deputies were on their way back to Petrograd from Siberia added to his feelings that things were not going badly. He settled down to a long wait in Switzerland, possibly until the end of the war.²

On 30 March, all this changed, oddly enough because of events in the Baltic Fleet. Lenin had welcomed the murder of

1. PSS, vol.31, pp 1-6, 11-33; vol.49, pp 401-03.

2. PSS, vol.49, pp 402, 409-14; E.N. Burdzhakov, Vtoraya russkaya revolyutsiya, vol.1, p 270.

"Admiral Nepenin, that supporter of Guchkov and Milyukov" as the shooting of officers and the disorganisation of the armed forces accorded well with the views he was developing on the need to smash the bourgeois state.¹ In this same context, he condemned Skobelev's "pacifying" mission to Helsingfors as "the worst kind of Louis Blanc politics",² and harmful to the revolution. For similar reasons, he supported the election of officers.³

On 30 March, he was shocked to read a report that Muranov had accompanied Skobelev on a similar mission to Kronstadt. He immediately wrote to Hanecki:

If it is true that Muranov went there on behalf of the Provisional Government of the Guchkovs and Milyukovs, I beg you to transmit and have printed that I absolutely condemn this, and that any rapprochement with Chkheidze and co., who from their profoundly mistaken and profoundly harmful social-pacifist Kautskyite position are flirting with social-patriotism, would be, I am deeply convinced, harmful to the working class, dangerous and inadmissible. 4

The most worrying feature of the affair was that the man involved was Muranov: the hardest of hard Bolsheviks, one of the two Duma Deputies who from the very beginning had been in favour

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1. PSS, vol.31, pp 40, 75. I note with some satisfaction that Lenin took my view of Nepenin's position in the February Revolution, and not that of subsequent Soviet writers.
 2. ibid., p 75.
 3. ibid., p 4.
 4. PSS, vol.31, p 420.

of the split in the Duma Fraction, the man who had confronted the court so bravely at his trial in 1915, the man whom Lenin had used as an example of the best type of Bolshevik, as opposed to Menshevik work: work of the Muranov-type.¹

From that moment on, his attitude to returning to Russia changed. He was determined to return as soon as possible, in order to save his Party. For if a man as strong as Muranov was co-operating with the Provisional Government, what might not lesser men be doing? The depth of his concern, and his determination to intervene can also be read in that same letter to Hanecki:

Our party would disgrace itself for ever, commit political suicide, if it tolerated such a deception [i.e. revolutionary defensism]...

...I personally shall not hesitate for an instant to declare, and to declare in print, that I should prefer an immediate split with anyone in our Party, whoever it might be, rather than make concessions to the social-patriotism of Kerenskii and co., or the social-pacifism of Chkheidze and co. 2

On that same day, he received an urgent telegram from Shlyapnikov begging him to return immediately, as every moment's delay put everything at risk.³ Shlyapnikov had written it in despair. He did not have the political standing in the Party to

1. See above pp 16, 54.

2.1 PSS, vol.31, pp 419-20.

3. V.I. Lenin: Biograficheskaya khronika, vol.4, p 29.

override Muranov, Kamenev and Stalin¹ and was calling on the one man who could and, whom he felt sure, would not approve of their conciliationist policies. Lenin immediately sent Hanecki details of the proposed route through Germany, and this was taken into Russia by special courier. Shlyapnikov cabled back: "Ul'yanov must come at once". Then, worried at exposing the Party leader to arrest or disgrace, changed his mind and cabled: "Do not force matters over Vladimir's return. Avoid risks."²

In fact, Lenin received neither telegram,³ but was making his own preparations anyway. On 28 March, he had turned down one plan through Germany as unacceptable, unless certain terms were met.⁴ On 31 March, the day after he had read of Muranov's trip to Kronstadt, and had received Shlyapnikov's telegram, he cabled Grimm:

Our Party has decided to accept without reservations the proposal that Russian emigres should travel through Germany and to organise this journey at once...

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1. Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.2, p 182.
 2. ibid., vol.3, pp 251-52; Ya.S. Ganetskii, "Priezd tov. Lenina iz Shveitsarii v Rossiyu", PR, 1924, no.1(24) pp 103-04.
 3. I infer this from his telegram to Hanecki of 5 April where he says " Shlyapnikov 's opinion desirable", implying that he has not got it (PSS, vol.49, p 429). Also from the fact that the Provisional Government was seizing Bolshevik mail going abroad. See below p 337.
 4. PSS, vol.49, p 417.

...We absolutely decline to accept responsibility for any further delay, resolutely protest against it, and are going alone. We earnestly request you to make arrangements at once and, if possible, let us know the decision tomorrow. 1

Lenin then by-passed Grimm, whom he suspected of deliberately delaying negotiations with the Germans and appointed Fritz Platten, whom, as a member of the Zimmerwald Left, he felt was more sympathetic to his need to return.² He also cabled Hanecki, complaining of "incredible delays" and asking Hanecki to send someone to Petrograd to get Chkheidze to sanction the trip, so that the Mensheviks could feel free to come too, thus speeding the time of departure, and lessening the risk.³

No reply was forthcoming from Chkheidze. On the other hand, Le Petit Parisien published a report that Milyukov had threatened to have any one travelling back through Germany arrested and tried for high treason. The Mensheviks decided, in the circumstances, not to go. Lenin was so anxious to return that he decided to risk even arrest and trial in the hope of being able to prevent the Bolshevik Party destroying itself. His group of thirty people signed a statement that they were fully aware of the risks they

1. PSS, vol.49, p 424.

2. F. Platten, "K istorii vozvrashcheniya...", pp 36, 82ff.

3. PSS, vol.49, pp 428-29.

were running and left Berne on 9 April.¹ Four days later they were in Stockholm. They crossed the Swedish-Finnish frontier at Haparanda-Torneo on 2(15) April. To their surprise and relief they were not arrested, but they still feared that this might occur at Beloostrov, on the Russo-Finnish border, or even on their arrival in Petrograd itself.²

A group of Helsingfors sailors were at Torneo to welcome the party. At Riihimaki, where the Helsingfors line branches off from the Torneo-Petrograd line, there was another, larger party of sailors. At Beloostrov, the platforms were crowded with workers from Sestroretsk, and members of the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee boarded the train to travel with Lenin the whole time he was on Russian soil. Shlyapnikov had managed to persuade Chkheidze and Skobelev to be at the Finland Station in Petrograd, and the Petersburg Committee had mustered as many workers, soldiers and sailors as they could, and were themselves

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1. PSS, vol.49, pp 428-29; F. Platten, "K istorii vozvrashcheniya...", in idem. (ed), Lenin iz emigratsii v Rossiyu, pp 30, 45, 93. It seemed to be Radek's fate to participate anonymously in major events. After the affair of the five "X"'s (see above pp 9-10) and the similar incident at the Zimmerwald Conference (see above pp 65-66). he did not sign the statement on 9 April 1917 for fear of arrest by the Germans as an Austrian citizen.
 2. Platten, op.cit., p 51; G. Zinoviev, "Priezd V.I. Lenina v Rossiyu" in Platten (ed.), op.cit., p 121; O. Ravich, "Fevral'skie dni v Shveitsarii", KiS, 1927, no.1, p 186; D.S. Shuliashvili, "Vstrechi s V.I. Leninym v emigratsii" in Lenin v oktyabre, M 1957, pp 40-41, 43.

there in force.¹

These measures had been taken, not so much because of "the great love of the working people for their leader" as modern Soviet historians would have it² as for hard-headed, practical reasons. "The working people" at the time, for the most part, including even those who supported the Bolsheviki, would have known very little about Lenin. Shlyapnikov, on the other hand, was very much aware of the fact that, by urgently recalling Lenin from Switzerland,³ he was placing him in danger of arrest and imprisonment. He therefore ensured that there should be a sympathetic, and armed crowd present at all places where an arrest might take place, in the hope of thereby dissuading the Government from acting.

Lenin was not arrested. At ten minutes past eleven p.m. on the 3 April, his train drew in to the Finland Station. That night, he addressed a meeting attended by members of the Central and Petersburg Committees, and other leading Bolshevik activists.

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1. I. Demushkin, "Leninskii prizyv vdokhnovil moryakov", in S.F. Naida (ed.), Voennye moryaki v bor'be za pobedu oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii, p 344; F. Dmitriev, "Volnuyushchie vstrechi", in Naida (ed.), op.cit., p 344; Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., p 51; Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.3, pp 257-58; E.F. Usievich, "V Petrograd!", in Lenin v oktyabre, p 47.
 2. This is taken from I.I. Mints, Istoriya velikogo oktyabrya, vol.2, p 73; its equivalent can be found in almost any Soviet book dealing with Lenin's return.
 3. Shlyapnikov could not have known at the time to what extent the decision was Lenin's own, and to what extent influenced by his cable.

LENIN INTERVENES IN THE FACTION FIGHT: THE APRIL THESES

When the members of the Russian Bureau boarded Lenin's train at Bèloostrov, according to one account,

No sooner had they entered the compartment and sat down, than Lenin turned on Kamenev, "What have you been writing in Pravda? We have seen a few issues and swore at you heartily..." 1

This incident has caught the imagination of historians, who have included it in their books, apparently unaware of how strange an occurrence it was.² For the question is: how had Lenin read a few issues of Pravda?

Immediately after the February Revolution, the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee tried to renew contact with Lenin and the other émigré leaders, contact which had been broken since the previous autumn. At first, they attributed the lack of any reply to delays in the post, but after a while became convinced that the Provisional Government was intercepting and seizing anything addressed to known Bolsheviks abroad, or any Bolshevik

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1. F.F. Raskol'nikov, "Priezd tov. Lenina v Rossiyu", PR, 1923, no.1, p 221.
 2. e.g. L.D. Trotsky, The History of the Russian Revolution, vol.1, Ann Arbor 1960, p 295; A.B. Ulam, Lenin and the Bolsheviks, London 1969, p 428; M. Ferro, La révolution de 1917, vol.1, Paris 1967, p 307. We have here incidentally a good example of the "coyness" of Shlyapnikov's writing, which we mentioned above on page 252 . Shlyapnikov recalls, "The members of the Bureau of the Central Committee were supposed to go to Beloostrov. I cannot remember quite who precisely went to meet the émigrés, except for Mariya Il'ichna..." Oddly enough, his memory is much clearer on events at the Finland Station. Shlyapnikov, op.cit., vol.3, pp 257-58.

material going to any address abroad. Shlyapnikov raised the matter with the Petrograd Soviet, which referred it to the Contact Commission with the Government. Believing, correctly, that there it would be quietly buried, Shlyapnikov organised a special courier. M.I. Stetskevich, who had been chosen for her knowledge of foreign languages and her skill in conspiratorial technique, left Petrograd for Stockholm on 10 or 11 March with newspapers and letters for Lenin, with verbal messages to request his speedy return and with instructions to discover where the break in communications was taking place.¹

At the very most, Stetskevich would have been able to take five or six issues of Pravda with her. In any case, all of them would antedate Muranov, Stalin and Kamenev's return and take-over of the paper. In fact, it is doubtful if Lenin received even these early copies. None of his letters or other writing produced before he returned to Russia mention that he has seen Pravda. There are three complaints, on 12(26) and 13(27) March that he has not.² None of his writings before he returned to Russia is based on any Russian paper at all, but always on the Times, the Neue Zurcher Zeitung, the Frankfurter Zeitung and so on, a fact which, as we have seen, led him to make some fairly major errors about events in Russia.

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1. Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.3, pp 249-51.
 2. PSS, vol.31, p 71; vol.49, pp 407, 415. These would be too early for him to have received anything Stetskevich brought out with her.

Stetskevich returned to Petrograd on 20 March, bringing the proposal for the trip through Germany. In her absence, Stalin, Muranov and Kamenev had returned and brought the Party to the verge of a split, and Shlyapnikov was very anxious to have Lenin back. As he had serious doubts about his telegrams ever being delivered, he sent Stetskevich to Stockholm again. This time, however, she was not so lucky and all her newspapers and other written material was taken off her at Torneo, although she herself was able to proceed and deliver her verbal messages, and the money to pay for Lenin's trip.¹

On 22 March(4 April), Hanecki managed to get two parcels and a few letters into Russia via the Russian diplomatic bag. Shlyapnikov, however, was not able to use this route to get material out of Russia.² In addition, Zinoviev recalls that when the party reached Stockholm from Berne, the situation inside the Russian Party was still unclear. Lenin himself, at the Petrograd All-City Bolshevik Conference later in April said that when abroad, he had not been able to get hold of any paper to the Left of Rech', and had only been able to form an accurate opinion after his return to Russia.³

1. Shlyapnikov, op.cit., pp 252-53.

2. ibid., pp 253-54.

3. G. Zinov'ev, "Priezd V.I. Lenina v Rossiyu", in F. Platten, (ed.), op.cit., p 120; Sed'maya (aprel'skaya) konferentsiya RSDRP(b). Protokoly, p 9.

It would seem, then, that Lenin read "a few issues" of Pravda at Torneo or after. But how did he get hold of them? Zinoviev writes that Lenin bought a few issues of Pravda on Torneo Station, and learnt thereby that Malinovskii was a police spy and that Pravda "was not clearly internationalist".¹ This oddly understated way of referring to a call to "meet the enemy bullet for bullet and shell for shell"² can be explained by the alliance between Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin to defeat Trotsky at the time this memoir was written. But even discounting this, how probable is the whole statement? Dybenko records that in late March Pravda was not even reaching Helsingfors, a major city of about 150,000 inhabitants, capital of Finland and only some 12 hours by train from Petrograd;³ a city, moreover, that had two Russian Social Democratic organisations and one Finnish one. How probable is it that Lenin should have been able to find casually several issues of Pravda at Torneo, a small frontier village of some 1,500 people, thirty-six hours by train from Petrograd,⁴ with no Social Democratic organisation, and very likely without even a station bookstall?

On the other hand, he could have got them from the group

1. Zinov'ev, op.cit., pp 120-21.
2. Pravda, no.9, 15 March 1917.
3. Dybenko, Myatezhniki, p 31; K. Baedeker, Russia in 1914, pp 204, 218, 223.
4. Baedeker, op.cit., pp 240, 246.

of Helsingfors sailors, who had been sent to Torneo to ensure him a safe passage across the frontier. It would be fairly safe to assume that the Kronstadt group would have taken some issues of Pravda with them when they went to Helsingfors, indeed, Volna contained articles copied from Pravda.¹ Kollontai, who recalls going "several times" to Helsingfors at this period to agitate in the Fleet, would have kept their supplies up, as would Ul'yantsev who had just been made roving Party agitator for the Baltic Sea area, or any of the Bolshevik agitators who began to flow towards Helsingfors, once the Kronstadt group had established a foothold there.²

Lenin's return was not, after all, accidental. He had decided to go back to Russia, and Shlyapnikov had urgently recalled him, at great political risk, as the only man in the Party capable of dealing with Muranov, Kamenev and Stalin. Shlyapnikov must have been very anxious for Lenin to hear his side of the dispute, before he heard Muranov's. This could not be done at Beloostrov, as the entire Central Committee was to meet Lenin there, and this arrangement had to stand in case there was any attempt to have Lenin arrested there. On the other hand, whatever his disagreements with the Vyborg-Kronstadt group,

1. Zhenevskii, "Gel'singfors vesnoyu 1917 goda", KL, 1925, no.2(13), p 217.
2. Kollontai, "Avtobiograficheskii ocherk", PR, 1921, no.3, pp 296, 298; Anikeev (ed.), Deyatel'nost' TsK RSDRP(b) v 1917 godu. Khronika sobytii, p 54.

he could be sure of their support against Muranov, Kamenev and Stalin. At the very least, when he contacted them to send groups to Torneo and Riihimaki, we may assume that he would have asked them to take the important issues of Pravda (like no.9, with Kamenev's pro-war article in it) and show them to Lenin. He knew, too, that he could rely on the Helsingfors groups to tell Lenin of the faction fight in terms that would do Muranov, Kamenev and Stalin no good at all. After all, the Vyborg-Kronstadt and now Helsingfors Bolsheviki were involved in the faction fight on their own account and would be keen to enlist Lenin's support for their policy of building soviet power from below.

In fact, the Helsingfors group at Torneo would most probably have travelled on Lenin's train with him as far as Riihimaki, both for the lift home, and as an armed bodyguard ready to resist any attempt to arrest him. The journey from Torneo to Riihimaki lasted some twenty-four hours, which gave them plenty of time to tell him of the faction fight inside the Party and discuss Pravda with him. Perhaps these were the "soldiers" that eye-witnesses recall discussing with Lenin as the train came through Finland.¹ At Riihimaki, Boris Zhemchuzhin, who was in charge of

1. Although there are a number of sources for the existence of the Torneo group, see above p 336, none of them name any of its members. Eye witnesses write only of "soldiers". (Zinov'ev, op.cit., p 121; Platten, op.cit., p 49; Krupskaya, "iz emigratsii v Piter", p 115). This may be because of a lapse of memory; or because the group was led by someone about whom it is not politic to write (like Dingel'stedt); or because of a reluctance to give details of any factional activity.

the group of sailors there,¹ could have supplied any further details Lenin might wish to know.

The Right of the Party had also organised to have their side of things put to Lenin, even though they could not call on the help of the Helsingfors sailors, since Garin, who might have been able to organise this, was in Petrograd at the crucial time. Their intervention was planned for Beloostrov, and accordingly, Kamenev took Teodorovich and Raskol'nikov with him, neither of whom, strictly should have been there, but both of whom supported him politically. Raskol'nikov's presence in Kamenev's group cannot be explained in any other terms. He was not a member of the Central Committee, nor was he a friend of Lenin's, whom, indeed, he had never met.² He would have been especially important to Kamenev however, as someone able to give an alternative view of the Vyborg-Kronstadt activities. In the event, Kamenev's preparations were in vain. Lenin's first act was to turn on him with his questions about Pravda. Raskol'nikov did not even get a chance to speak to Lenin, and Shlyapnikov was able to note, a little smugly, that it was clear that Lenin had grasped the situation in the country very well.³

Lenin's speech that night made an extraordinary impression

1. Dmitriev, op.cit., pp 344-45.
2. Raskol'nikov, "Priezd tov Lenina v Rossiyu", PR, 1923, no.1, p 220.
3. ibid.; Shlyapnikov, Semnadtsatyi god, vol.3, p 257.

on all present. "A Rubicon", writes Raskol'nikov, "an eye-opener even to experienced Party workers".¹ F. Drabkina confirms this:

No one expected it. On the contrary, they were waiting for Vladimir Il'ich to come and call to order the Russian Bureau, and especially comrade Molotov, who had adopted a particularly uncompromising position towards the Provisional Government. It turned out, however, that it was Molotov who was closer than anyone to Il'ich. 2

The next day he made, if anything, a bigger impression on the Bolshevik delegates to the Soviet Conference and to a joint Menshevik-Bolshevik meeting. As Shlyapnikov recalls:

Those Mensheviks and Right Bolsheviks who had placed special faith in that comrade Lenin would "give the imprudent Left Bolsheviks what for" had miscalculated. Vladimir Il'ich's position was further left than our left. 3

The impact that it made cannot be explained entirely in terms of the newness of Lenin's ideas. The Right of the Party had expected Lenin to support them on his return, because they attributed Lenin's views in exile to his lack of knowledge about Russian affairs. Lenin's speech of 3 April and the April Theses which he wrote on 4 April, in their assuredness of tone, their grasp of the realities of the situation inside Russia are

1. Raskol'nikov, op.cit., p 225.
2. F. Drabkina, 'Priezd tov. Lenina i martovskoe soveshchanie predstavitelei bol'shevistskikh organizatsiei', PR, 1927, no.4(63), p 157.
3. Shlyapnikov, op.cit., vol.3, p 260.

markedly different from his published and unpublished writings from immediately before his return. No one expected this familiarity with Russian politics and this certainty of judgement from a man who had just stepped off the train, and whose only previously known, recent, statements on the revolution had included the supposition that the Tsar was organising a counter-revolution, and that the main counter-weight to the Provisional Government could be the Petrograd City Duma.

They were justifiably surprised. But the April Theses were not merely the product of Lenin's reading in exile in order to answer Bukharin.¹ Lenin had returned deliberately to intervene in the faction fight in the Party and to destroy the influence of the Conciliator Bolsheviks. He was, after all, above all the creator of a Party of a special type, a Party that he feared was being destroyed. Once past Torneo, he would have been very receptive to the views of the Helsingfors group, and this made the genesis of the April Theses a two-way process, with the Helsingfors group contributing the details of Russian

1. In this respect, I disagree with M. Sawyer's statement, in an otherwise excellent article, that Lenin's "theoretical leap...was in no way connected with the emergence of the Soviet movement in Russia". M. Sawyer, "The Genesis of State and Revolution", Socialist Register, 1977, p 219. But then she, like other writers who deal with Lenin's thought, even those who have understood the importance of the debate with Bukharin, fail to relate his shifts in thought to the practical problems of Party building. cf. R.V. Daniels, "The State and Revolution: a Case Study in the Genesis and Transformation of Communist Ideology", SR, 1953, no.1, pp 22-43; J. Frankel, "Lenin's Doctrinal Revolution of April 1917", JCH, 1969, no.2, pp 117-42.

politics, and of the fight inside the Party, hitherto only obscurely guessed at by Lenin. Perhaps even more importantly they contributed the knowledge of the overwhelming popularity of the local soviets among the masses, knowledge that enabled him to clarify and make specific the views he had been formulating a little abstractly in exile.

Initially, though, the April Theses pleased no one. Shlyapnikov, who had wanted Lenin back to defeat Muranov, was shocked by the Bukharinist content, which he had seen Lenin attack so vigorously the year before. The Party Right merely saw it as evidence that Lenin was either mad, or out of touch, or both. The advocates of the Vyborg line had difficulty in understanding the concept of the soviets as the new state, not just until the Constituent Assembly, but thereafter too.¹

The policy won support so quickly, however, because it contained just the elements needed to resolve the faction fight. To Shlyapnikov and his supporters it gave clear assurance that there would be no more support for the Provisional Government or the War. It also confirmed that they had been right in their tentative moves towards the soviets, if not forceful enough. To the Vyborg-Kronstadt Helsingfors Bolsheviks it gave support, from the top of the Party for a policy of building and

1. Pravda, no.27, 8 April 1917; Abramovitch, op.cit., pp 30-31; Sed'maya (aprel'skaya) vserossiiskaya konferentsiya RSDRP(b). Protokoly, pp 16, 18.

encouraging local soviets. To the old members of the Petersburg Committee, and to the Pravda Group it brought discomfiture, but also, unlike the previous policy of the Russian Bureau, it offered instead a viable Bolshevik alternative to their own policies. When the Right Bolsheviks had criticised the Russian Bureau for being too "academic" and abstract, or the Vyborg District Bolsheviks for being disguised Maximalists, there had been much truth in their criticism. Lenin's policy, although it incorporated elements of Left Bolshevism and Left Populist Bolshevism was quite distinct from either of these. While it advocated the centrifugal building of regional soviets, the election of officers, and the destruction of the bourgeois state, it also advocated the building of a new central soviet state. By so doing, it gave the lower echelon Bolsheviks a policy which enabled them to meet the Left SRs on their own terms, support for local soviets, but with their own Bolshevik perspective. This, neither the Mensheviks, nor the PSR, who had no policy towards the local soviets, were able to do. The April Theses gave the Bolshevik Party the only national leadership able to channel the enthusiasm created around the local soviets. This in turn, gave them the mass support in October.

They also marked the end of one period of Party development. For the first time, since the creation of the Bolshevik Party in 1912, the Central Committee was on the spot, in Russia. Whatever their differences with the Central Committee, the middle and lower echelon Bolsheviks had to reckon with it

knowing as much about Russian politics as they did, and with it being able to check on their day to day activities. Relations between the Party leadership and rank and file were thereby greatly changed, and new ways of influencing and altering policy were to emerge.

CONCLUSION

From the Prague Conference of January 1912 until Lenin's return to Russia in April 1917, the existence of Bolshevism as a separate party was constantly in jeopardy. The leaders of the Second International and a large section of the leaders of the Bolshevik Party itself inside Russia regarded the split inside the RSDLP at most as a temporary aberration, owing more to the clash of personalities than to any real political differences. Only the onset of War in 1914 prevented the development of an overwhelming movement towards reunification, (and hence the political isolation and even downfall of Lenin), both in the International and in Russia. The War gave Lenin a second chance to win support internationally in the Zimmerwald Movement, which grew up in opposition to the leadership of the Second International's support for the War. Even so, by the end of 1916, Lenin was again isolated internationally and cut off from the Party inside Russia. By the end of March 1917, the stage was set for the disappearance of Bolshevism, which was to reunite with Menshevism at a joint Party Conference. It was onto that stage that Lenin stepped with his April Theses: his final, and finally successful attempt to prevent reunion, and to assert Bolshevism's right to a separate existence. From April 1917 on, the "difference" of Bolshevism from any other tendency in the Russian and International Social-Democracy was assured.

The ease with which Lenin accomplished this political victory owed much to a phenomenon of which he had been unaware until the last moment. Part of the Party's rank and file had developed its own tradition, which had grown out of joint work with the rank and file of the Socialist Revolutionary

Party. This tradition had grown up in opposition to the Right Conciliator leadership of the Bolshevik Party inside Russia, and owed much to the latter's inability to provide clear political leadership. Up to the First World War, the Socialist Revolutionaries were the dominant political force numerically and ideologically in this quite different, and radical, union. After the onset of war, the ideological balance shifted in favour of the Bolsheviks, because of their international stand against the War. This tradition was greatly strengthened in February 1917 by the creation of local soviets in which the two parties worked without creating different fractions. However, once again, the Socialist Revolutionaries became the more powerful partner in the alliance because of their numerical superiority, their wholehearted support for the local soviets, and because of the ideological disarray in the Russian leadership of the Bolshevik Party. On the eve of Lenin's return to Russia, the left Populist Bolsheviks were organising wider support inside their own Party, in an attempt to regain some of their former prestige.

The April Theses mark a turning point in this tradition too. Left Populist Bolshevism made Lenin's victory over Right Conciliationist Bolshevism easy. Its very existence, and the coincidence of many of its ideas with those he had been developing in emigration, enabled Lenin to clarify these rapidly and to make his dramatic intervention on 3 April both clear and well informed. It also gave him the numerical support inside the Party that he needed to dish the Right. It is notable that when the Petersburg Committee was reelected barely a fortnight after Lenin's initial appearance, when

"Kollontai alone supported him", the only members to be reelected were those from the Vyborg District. All the other "old" members, however prestigious, had been replaced by young radicals. Lenin's return to Russia had enabled him to establish the direct contact with the rank and file that had been impossible while he was in emigration. The April Theses, then, also marked a difference in the mechanics of policy formation.

On the other hand, the April Theses, and the subsequent national Bolshevik policy that flowed from them, enabled the Bolsheviks to regain the ideological ascendancy in the alliance with the Left Populists. The establishment of the "Kronstadt Republic" of May 1917, and the armed demonstrations of July were both products of the Left SR-Anarchist ascendancy, which the local Bolsheviks followed with greater or lesser enthusiasm. This was very much as it had been before 1915. What had changed since April 1917, however, was the response of the Bolshevik national leadership. Lenin combined public support for these events (and for the Anarchist occupation of the Durnovo villa) in the columns of Pravda, with private reprimands to the local Bolshevik leadership for allowing themselves to be dominated, and with well devised and successful measures to prevent the Government reprisals that these events had invited. This contrasted with the attitude of the national leadership of the PSR, which was at best indifferent and more often hostile to its Left Populist rank and file.

The October Revolution was very much in the tradition of the Left Populist/Bolshevik alliance that we have traced from at least 1905 onwards. The main difference now was that, although they remained numerically the smaller partner in the alliance,

the Bolsheviks were now its ideological leaders. The SR rank and file interpreted the policies initiated by the April Theses, and especially the slogan "All Power to the Soviets", in terms of the Left Populist tradition abandoned by their own leadership. As they saw it, support for the Bolshevik leadership gave the only chance to establish the Republic of Communes. The extent to which they had misinterpreted Bolshevik policy was only to become clear after March 1918.

APPENDICES

Members and Associates of Glavnyi Kollektiv pri PK RSDRP(b)

Arrested Autumn 1915: Sentenced October 1916

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Ship</u> | <u>Partiinost</u> ¹ |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Sladkov I.D. | Imperator Aleksandr II | B (1911) |
| Pisarev N. | I Baltiiskii flotskii ekipazh | |
| Filimonov V. | Uchebno-Artilleriiskii otryad | |
| Kuznetsov-Lomakin F.S. | Uchebno-Artilleriiskii otryad | B (1912) |
| Popov T. | Gangut | |
| Khovrin N.A. | Imperator Pavel I | B |
| Marusev V.M. | Imperator Pavel I | B (March 1917) |
| Khrylev I. | Petropavlovsk | |
| Varyukhin G. | Petropavlovsk | |
| Murashev I. | Poltava | |
| Erokhin S. | Tsesarevich | |
| Filippov M. | Diana | |
| Brendin N. | Rossiia | |
| Mus'yachenko K. | Rossiia | |
| Ul'yantsev T.I. | Rossiia ² | B (pre-1914) |
| Vakhrameev A. | Fita | |
| Peshkov V. | Vzryv | |
| Egorov I.N. | Civilian | B (1903) |
| Mikhel'son A. | Civilian | |
| Stakun M. | Civilian | |

(1) date of joining in brackets; B: Bolshevik

(2) transferred to I Baltiiskii flotskii ekipazh, Kronstadt, Autumn 1915

sources: A. Shlyapnikov, Kanun Semnadsatogo Goda M. 1923, p 243;

V. Zalezhs-kii, Bor'ba za Baltiiskii Flot, M-L. 1925, p 9;

Geroi Oktyabrya, L. 1967, i p 611, ii pp 101, 398, 509, 545;

P.Z. Sivkov, Kronshtadt, L. 1972, p 69;

R.N. Mordvinov, (ed.), Baltiiskie Moryaki..., M-L. 1957, pp 402-07.

Members of the Kronstadt Committee of the Social Movement

1 March 1917¹

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Rank</u> | <u>Unit or ship</u> | <u>Partiinost'</u> |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Zaitsev V.M. | sailor | | B (1905) |
| Gromov F.V. ² | sailor | Mashinnaya shkola | B (1916) |
| Gredyushko S.S. | soldier | 2 Artillery Regt. | B (1917) |
| Kolobushev ³ | worker | | SR ⁴ |
| Glasko(v) | lieutenant | <u>Vernyi</u> | Non-party ⁵ |
| Krasovskii I.A. | ensign ⁶ | | SR ⁷ |
| Khanckh A. | student | | SR ⁸ |

Members subsequently co-opted

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|-----------------|------------|
| Kuprin | sailor | <u>Okean</u> | |
| Filipenko | soldier | Artillery | |
| Gudimov | soldier | Artillery | |
| Trifonov | soldier | Fort Ino | |
| Chashchin | soldier | Fort Ino | |
| Glukhachenkov I.K. ⁹ | sailor | <u>Nikolaev</u> | B (1907 ?) |

Notes

- 1) source: A. Blinov, "Pervye revolyutsionnye organy vlasti v Kronshtadte v 1917 godu", in S.F. Naida (ed.), Voennye moryaki v bor'be za pobedu oktyabr'skoi revolyutsii, M. 1958, p 134.
- 2) M.A. Stolyarenko, Syny partii - baltiitsy, L. 1969, p 171, has him as V.P. Gromov.
- 3) Sometimes Kalabushev, P.Z. Sivkov, op.cit., p 89.
- 4) If this is the Kalabushev referred to in PR, 1926, no.12(59), p 150.
- 5) A.K. Drezen (ed.), Burzhuaziya i pomeshchiki v 1917 godu, M-L. 1932, p 297.
- 6) Blinov, loc.cit. has him as a civil engineer; Sivkov, loc.cit. and Drezen (ed.), loc.cit. both have him as being in the army.
- 7) Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., p 389; S.S. Khesin, Oktyabr'skaya revolyutsiya i flot, M. 1971, p 73.

- 8) Sivkov, op.cit., p 90 has him as a Narodnyi sotsialist.
- 9) According to his biography in Pyat' let krasnogo flota, Pbg. 1922, p 212.
No other source mentions him.

Provisional Kronstadt Committee

1 March 1917¹

| | | <u>Partiinost'</u> |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Zaitsev V.I. (chairman) | Committee of Social Movement | 1905 |
| Ul'yantsev T.I. | Released from prison | pre-1914 |
| Pelikhov S.G. | " | March 1917 |
| Sladkov I.D | " | 1911 |
| Zinchenko E.F. | " | 1913 |
| and others | | |
| (possibly Gredyushko S.S.) ² | Committee of Social Movement | 1917 |
| Gromov F.V.) ² | " " " | 1916 |

1) source: P.Z. Sivkov, Kronshtadt, stranitsy revolyutsionnoi istorii, L. 1972, p 100.

2) Possibility based on the fact that they were on the Committee of Social Movement, and thus presumably had been prominent enough in the mutiny to have won a following.

Kronstadt Committee RSDLP(b) Recognised by the Central Committee

4 March 1917¹

| | <u>Partiinost'</u> |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Ul'yantsev T.I. | pre-1914 |
| Pelikhov S.G. | March 1917 |
| Sladkov I.D. | 1911 |
| Zinchenko E.F. | 1913 |
| Gredyushko S.S. | 1917 |
| and others ² | |

1) source: R.N. Mordvinov (ed.), Baltiiskie moryaki v podgotovke i provedenie velikoi oktyabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revolyutsii, M-L. 1957, p 334.

2) I have assumed that Zaitsev at least would have been too important to have been consigned to this category.

Kronstadt Committee RSDLP(b)

Elected at General Assembly of Kronstadt Bolsheviks

8 March 1917¹

| | <u>Partiinost'</u> |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Ul'yantsev T.I. (chairman) ² | pre-1914 |
| Pelikhov S.G. | March 1917 |
| Sladkov I.D. | 1911 |
| Kolbin I.N. | March 1917 |
| Zaitsev V.M. | 1905 |
| Kondakov D.N. | 1912 |
| Zinchenko E.F. | 1913 |
| Gredyushko S.S. | 1917 |
| Roshal S.G. | 1914 |
| Egorov I.N. (Kirill Orlov) | 1903 |

1) source: P.Z. Sivkov, Kronshtadt, stranitsy revolyutsionnoi istorii, L. 1972, p 103.

2) Other sources name Roshal' as chairman. I have adopted Sivkov's version as he appears more scrupulous with other details on this matter.

Kronstadt Group Going to Helsingfors¹

26 March 1917

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Dingel'stedt F. | student | 1910 (1914) ² |
| Zhemchuzhin B.A. | student | 1915 |
| Il'in-Zhenevskii ³ A.F. | army officer | 1912 |
| Zinchenko E.F. | artilleryman | 1913 |
| Pelikhov S.G. | sailor | March 1917 |

1) F. Dingel'stedt, "Vesna proletarskoi revolyutsii", KL, 1925, no.1(12), pp 210-11; A.F. Il'in-Zhenevskii, "Gel'singfors vesnoyu 1917 goda", KL, 1925, no.2(13), p 209.

2) I. Deutscher, The Prophet Unarmed, London 1959, p 430 (date in brackets from P. Broué, Le parti bolchévique, Paris 1963, p 568.

3) joined the group in Petrograd.

Committee of the Helsingfors Section of the RSDLP

Elected on 21 March 1917¹

| | | |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Garin S.A. | sub-lieutenant | B (1903) ² |
| Khil'yani N. | worker | no faction ³ |
| Smirnov V. | university lecturer | B ? ⁴ |
| Mazik V. | | M ⁵ |
| Sidorov A. | worker | B ? ⁶ |
| Trofimov | | M ⁷ |
| Kraevskii | | |
| Enberg | | |
| Krutov | | |
| Dybenko P.E. | sailor | B (1912) ⁸ |
| Sakman A.F. | sailor | |
| Nozhin | | |
| Brilliantov | ensign | |

- 1) source: IGS, no.10, 23 March 1917.
- 2) Geroi oktyabrya, vol.1, pp 264-65.
- 3) A.F. Il'in-Zhenevskii, "Gel'singfors vesnoyu 1917 goda", KL, 1925, no.2(13), p 214.
- 4) Smirnov apparently did not join the Bolshevik Party, although he regularly wrote for Volna; M.G. Roshal', "Bol'sheviki Gel'singforsa v dni revolyutsii 1917g", IA, 1965, no.5, p 153.
- 5) Protokoly i postanovleniya Tsentral'nogo komiteta baltiiskogo flota, M-L. 1963, p 468.
- 6) Volna, no.8, 8 April 1917 lists him on new Committee, but it is not certain that it was exclusively Bolshevik.
- 7) V. Antonov-Ovseenko, V semnadtsatom godu, M. 1933, p 161.
- 8) Geroi oktyabrya, vol.1, pp 345-48.

Members of the Sveaborg Sailors' Collective

28 March 1917

| | | | <u>Partiinost'</u> |
|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Dybenko P.E. | storeman | Shcha | 1912 |
| Khovrin N.A. | sailor | Pavel I | ? |
| Marusev V.M. | sailor | Pavel I | March 1917 |
| Dmitriev F.M. | sailor | Pavel I ¹ | 1917 |
| Svetlichnyi G.A. | radio operator | Pavel I | ? |
| Mal'kov P.D. | medical orderly | Diana | 1904 |
| Linyaev | ? | ? ² | ? |
| Pelikhov S.G. | sailor | Kronstadt | March 1917 |
| Zinchenko E.F. | artilleryman | Kronstadt | 1913 |
| Il'in-Zhenevskii A.F. | army officer | Petrograd | 1912 |
| Zhemchuzhin B.A. | student | Vyborg District | 1915 |
| Dingel'stedt F. ³ | student | Vyborg District | 1910 (14 ?) |

sources: Mordvinov (ed.), op.cit., pp 343, 385, 391;
Geroi oktyabrya, vol.1, pp 419-21, 455-56, 488-89; vol.2, pp 81-82,
 100-02, 227-29, 775;
 S.F. Naida (ed.), op.cit., pp 244, 574-75, 572;
 Kiuru, Boevoi rezerv revolyutsionnogo Petrograda, p 26;
 Zalezhskii, Bor'ba za Baltiiskii flot, p 23.

- 1) Zalezhskii, op.cit., p 23 has this as Petropavlovsk.
- 2) Possibly a soldier from Sveaborg fortress, as Kiuru, loc.cit., says there was one, and no one else qualifies.
- 3) Membership likely, but nowhere listed, possibly because of subsequent prominence as a trotskyist.

Presidium of Helsingfors Committee

Elected 6 April 1917¹

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Sidorov A. ² | worker |
| Vasten A. | worker |
| Dmitriev F.M. | Imperator Pavel I |
| Il'in-Zhenevskii A.F. | Petrograd |
| Zhemchuzhin B.A. | Kronstadt |
| Khovrin N.A. | Imperator Pavel I |
| Marusev V.M. | Imperator Pavel I |

- 1) source: Volna, no.8, 8 April 1917.
- 2) Formerly on Committee elected 21 March 1917.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CASS | Canadian-American Slavic Studies |
| CSP | Canadian Slavonic Papers |
| IA | Istoricheskii arkhiv |
| IGS | Izvestiya Gel'singforsskogo soveta deputatov armii, flota i rabochikh |
| IKS | Izvestiya Kronshtadtskogo soveta |
| IPS | Izvestiya Petrogradskogo soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov |
| ISSR | Istoriya SSSR |
| JCH | Journal of Contemporary history |
| KA | Krasnyi arkhiv |
| KB | Krasnyi baltiets |
| KiS | Katorga i ssylka |
| KL | Krasnaya letopis' |
| LP | Leningradskaya pravda |
| LS | Leninskii sbornik |
| MS | Morskoi sbornik |
| MZ | Morskiya zapiski |
| NiNI | Novaya i noveishaya istoriya |
| NZh | Novyi zhurnal |
| PP | Petrogradskaya pravda |
| PR | Proletarskaya revolyutsiya |
| PSS | V.I. Lenin, <u>Polnoe sobranie sochinenii</u> , izdanie pyatoe, 55 vols., M. 1970-75 |
| RR | Russian Review |
| Soch. | V.I. Lenin, <u>Sochineniya</u> , izdanie tret'e, 30 vols., M. 1935 |
| SR | Slavic Review |
| SS | Soviet Studies |
| USNIP | United States Naval Institute Proceedings |
| VB | Voennaya byl' (Le passé militaire) |
| VI | Voprosy istorii |
| VIKPSS | Voprosy istorii KPSS |
| VIZh | Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal |
| VLU | Vestnik Leningradskogo universiteta |
| VR | Volya Rossii |
| ZZh | Zaprosy zhizni |

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